



THE DARTMOOR PONY

DARTMOOR RAILWAY
DRSA
Supporters Association

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Dartmoor Railway Supporters' Association

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Santa Trains
Great Britain II Part 2
Story of a Bus Part 2
Ilfracombe Eventually

THE DARTMOOR PONY

Issue No. 4

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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: Santa and his elfin helpers in his Grotto in the Courier Coach at platform 2
Photo M Ellis

BACK COVER:

Top: 31 452 in D&CR livery at Ruddington
Photo: A.Thomas

Bottom: A reminder of Okehampton Station in last year's snow, looking towards the signal box
Photo: J Wills

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EDITORIAL

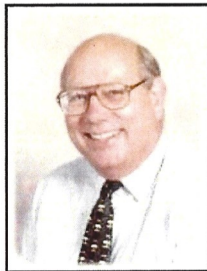
“What the heck is he up to putting a stupid non-train photograph on to the front of our magazine?” Somebody, somewhere is bound to pose this question. The answer is that the photograph is taken on a train or, at least, a railway vehicle. I was so impressed by the decoration of Santa’s Grotto in the Courier Coach that I thought it worthy of the front cover! Really, when you become aware of the incredible effort of our teams of volunteers and all that they have achieved over the past season, you have to marvel at the results they have secured. It is so dis-heartening when, after all the effort, things don’t happen. It had been hoped that *Waverley*, our class 47, would be hauling the Santa train. Regrettably, it failed its Fit to Run Examination – it has a non-acceptable gas drenching fire fighting system in its engine room. Other such engines run with special dispensation which we do not have. Then it was hoped that perhaps D&CR would lend us a loco, but it was not to be. So.....maximum effort again and Thumper, yes, good old Thumper, was prepared and stepped manfully into the breach. Other than the Santa Trains, the 47 and Mk 2s were supposed to run a special dining train for the Okehampton Medical Centre staff. The Mk 2s were brought down to the station and Mary and her staff together with a huge helping of volunteers served up a static on-train dining experience for them. Needless to say, the occasion was a tremendous success. We should be proud of all that our volunteers achieve.

As you will read later, we have lost Geoff Gill from our ranks. Geoff, at 94, was our oldest volunteer. Our thoughts are with Jill.

On the Yeoford front, I am reliably informed that work will commence in January on the platform. I don’t have a completion date. The Yeoford saga seems to have been painfully long. It was mooted years ago and ECT were definitely going ahead with the project. Even Okehampton “Parkway” Station is a near certainty and is back on the cards. Will we see the Devon & Cornwall Railway starting up soon? I would be tempted to put money on it.

In the meantime, our friends up north in County Durham are now connected to NR and we should soon see more attention focussing on the Dartmoor Railway.

It only remains for me to wish you all the Happiest of Christmas’s and a Peaceful and Happy New Year.



FROM THE GENERAL MANAGER

By Graham Isom

Before I say anything else I’ve got to say a big, big thank you to the staff and all the volunteers who have put in such a lot of time and effort over these last few weeks to ensure that we have been able to operate the trains that were needed to fulfil the commitments. There were certainly times when the equipment gave out and alternatives had to be found at short notice. Nothing was available from our owners and we had to make do and mend (an old Naval expression as your editor will tell you). And make do and mend we did. The dining train for the Okehampton Medical Centre was a fantastic success earning accolades from all who experienced it – and it was only down to the grit and determination of the volunteers and staff that made it that success. Santa trains were torpedoed by the Class 47’s refusal of its FTR certification. Again, you all rallied round and using Thumper operating from platform 3 and the Courier Coach in platform 2 the trains are running and providing fun and happiness for the children. Well done to all of you who have supported your railway in such an exemplary fashion.

One bit of very sad news is the passing of Geoff Gill. No doubt more will be said of him but I will miss him on his Sunday visits to Okehampton Station. There was something reassuring about his presence which indicated that all was well with the world. Jill, my thoughts go with you and yours.

I’m sorry I’ve had to put in another photo of me but it is in the form of a pre-emptive strike. The editor was going to use it for effect somewhere else! It serves to remind me of the great atmosphere we have here on the Dartmoor Railway. To see all the Santas and Elves dressed up in their outfits is another indication of the effort put into making a success of limited facilities.



In the New Year we look forward to RMS Locotech starting the rebuild of Yeoford station. Hopefully we will have water laid on to the Meldon Buffet and later in the year we might see a new operator on the line with us – D&CR. In the meantime, have a Happy Christmas and a Super New Year. God Bless.



THE RAILWAY

News from the Line:

Normal services continued until 31st October to cover the half term break for the local schools. The month of November was essentially trainless with much effort being expended by volunteers clearing undergrowth and preparing the stock for the Santa trains running at weekends from the first weekend in December. Enough vegetation had been cleared by the 5th November for Guy Fawkes to be burnt on a bonfire of the resulting harvest (separate note elsewhere) The hardworking volunteers up at Meldon pulled out all the stops for the Santa Trains and Class 47 "Waverley" was due to appear on a train consisting of the Thumper power car, the Courier coach, two Mk 2s with Waverly on the uphill end. Sadly, all was not well and the Class 47 was refused FTR certification and snags were later found with the running gear of the Mk 2s. A Herculean effort by all the volunteers concerned produced what amounted to a near miracle and Santa was transferred to Thumper. After a trip on Thumper, the children were conducted over the bridge by the elves to Platform 2 where Santa had his grotto. So Santa Trains started on 5th December. In the meantime, and before Santa could get down to Oke, a need for a dining train to fulfil a requirement from the Okehampton Medical Centre was met by the Mk 2s in the station with a jury rig for power. The whole event went off extraordinarily well due to a marvellous effort by all concerned. The customers were absolutely delighted with the event.

Back to Santa and the revised arrangements have also met with success judging by the happy smiling faces of the children and the pleased look on the parents faces. Santa continues his work for the weekends up until Christmas. After Christmas there will be Mince Pie Specials running through the week up until 30th December

Volunteer report:

By Dave Clegg

The number of active volunteers working on the railway is steadily rising but we could do with more particularly in catering when we have special events and in the main season. Several volunteers helped provide an excellent BBQ/bonfire evening at short notice and it would be good to see this repeated next year with wider publicity through "The Dartmoor Pony"

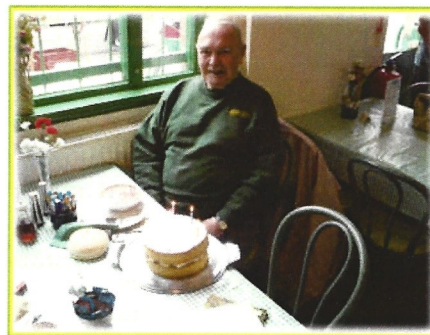
magazine. Progress on the Fish Van by Tom Baxter and his team has been held up by the weather – but it's not going anywhere!

Members of the C&W group completed work on the 2 Mk2 coaches just in time to be used for the dining train and also cleaned up the Brake/Courier Coach for Santa's grotto. Our new power washer proved its worth on this job. Members have also assisted the '47 Group' who have been repainting and repairing Class 47 "Waverley". We expect attention now to be turned to renovating the three Mk1 vehicles that will form an alternative heritage train-set to the Thumper, but priorities do have a habit of changing!

Pressure to get vehicles completed in time for the dining train and Santas has meant the team regularly working extra days at Meldon. So we can always do with more help. We now have groups of between 4 and 8 members working regularly and we are benefiting from the tools purchased through the generosity of Mike Ellis and Paul Kavanagh. and member Geoff Horner has also retrieved much useful equipment, paint brushes etc from an elderly neighbour who was just about to take them to the tip. So often it's all about timing! Conditions in the workshop are less than ideal at this time of year especially with the lack of lighting and ingress of water but we hope that both these issues will be tackled shortly.

There are of course many others working away regularly on Dartmoor Railway covering a whole host of duties. We all owe them a great deal.

Geoff Gill:



Sadly, we lost our oldest volunteer when Geoff Gill passed away on 30th October. His funeral was held on 12th November at East Cleave Farm where he was buried. Several members of the Dartmoor Railway staff and volunteers attended the service. Geoff, who always seemed to be present on Sundays to help Kay and her tombola, is pictured here celebrating his 94th birthday at the Buffet on Okehampton Station. I know that all our thoughts are with Jill at this time. A fuller obituary will appear in the next issue of "The Dartmoor Pony"

Dartmoor Railway and "Children in Need"

Photos by Jeremy Fish



The Railway offered the BBC tickets for the Santa trains as prizes for use in the Judy Spiers programme where the prizes were auctioned off. The winner was the Ellicot family who are pictured above with Santa and with the Chief Elf and Rudolph. The family thoroughly enjoyed their visit and Santa's Grotto produced some delightful presents for the children.

Remember, Remember, the 5th of November...

Report by John Wills

The shrub clearance gangs that have been removing vegetation from the line side in the area of Okehampton station had resulted in a large amount of trees and shrubs for disposal. This gave Andrew Turner the idea that we could burn all the vegetation and celebrate Guy Fawkes at the same time and so, at fairly short notice, we contacted as many staff and volunteers to see if there was sufficient interest in a bonfire party to be held on Thursday night, 5th November.

David Clegg circulated details to as many volunteers as he could (bearing in mind that he was in bed with swine 'flu at the time) and the response was excellent.

Andrew Webb, our fire lighting expert from the permanent way department, built an excellent bonfire in the station car park with a suitably dressed 'guy'. On the night, approximately 50 members attended Okehampton station from 6.0pm onwards to be greeted by the smell of burgers and sausages being cooked on the barbeque at the end of platform 3 and witnessed the lighting of the bonfire by our Ops Manager, Graham Isom. After the fire was well

alight, Tom and Sue Baxter provided a display of fireworks with Graham's assistance.

Everyone seemed to enjoy the event and I am sure that it will be repeated next year with greater publicity!

Devon & Cornwall Railway:

As forecast in the last issue of The Pony, the Class 31 duly appeared in its new D&CR colours at Ruddington on the Great Central Railway (North). As seen below, initially the standard trainset for the D&C is due to consist of



two Mk 2 coaches and a DBSO coupled behind the Class 31. We've already seen the new livery for the loco and the picture shows the new colours of the coaching stock. A photograph of 31452 at Ruddington by Andrew Thomas appears on the back cover.

News of progress on the application to ORR for Open Access Licence is not yet available.

Yeoford:

Delays notwithstanding, rebuild of Yeoford island platform *will* go ahead in January. RMS Locotech will carry out the work

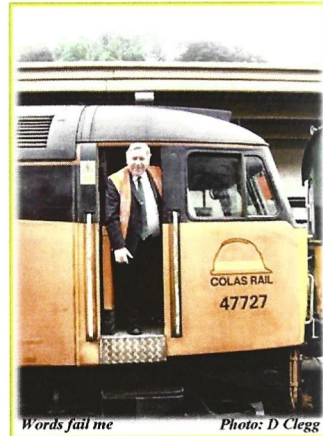
Caption Competition:



Photo: M Ellis

And the photo this issue has someone looking authoritative giving last minute instructions to Rudolph?

Photo taken by Mike Ellis – captions please



Words fail me Photo: D Clegg

And the winner of the last competition is:

“What’s yours then Dave, a Fiat Panda?”

Ed: I am sorry to say that I wasn't exactly flooded with responses to the challenge of the competition.

Mince Pie Specials – 2009

Trains will run on Sunday 27th, Monday 28th, Tuesday 29th and Wednesday 30th December

Trains will depart Okehampton at the following times

0930

1200

1430

Trains will travel via Sampford Courtenay, Bow, Sampford Courtenay, Okehampton, Meldon and Okehampton.

There will be no joining or leaving the train at Bow.

A fully detailed timetable is available on the website
www.dartmoor-railway.co.uk

LETTERS

Dear Peter and Team,

Just to say how much we all enjoyed our trip with you yesterday. You all made the occasion very welcoming and the little ones really enjoyed meeting Santa.



The train was beautifully decorated and Santa's grotto was very impressive.

Thank you very much,

Happy Christmas,

Beverly, Alan, Joel and Luke Greenslade

Ed: Thanks Bev and Alan, the team appreciate comments like yours. I have heard verbal comments of a similar nature. Bev and Alan sent a couple of photos of the children with Santa and the Head of the Elf & Safety Executive!

HIGHLIGHT – Mk 2 Transformation:



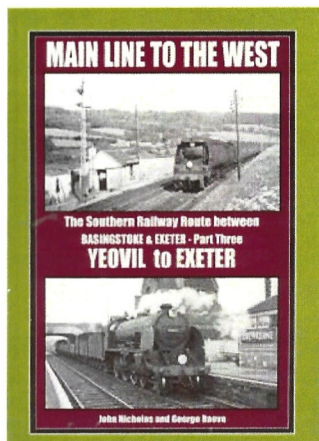
47, Graffiti and Breaktime

Photo: D Clegg



Mk 2s after repainting Photo: P Chapman

BOOK REVIEW



Main Line to the West – Yeovil to Exeter
The Southern Railway route between
Basingstoke and Exeter – Part Three

John Nicholas and George Reeve

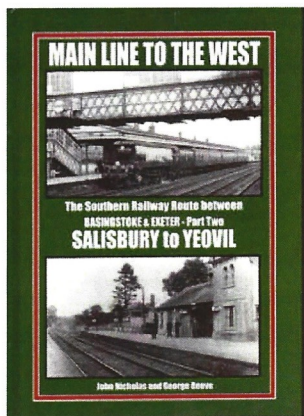
Published by Irwell Press Ltd
ISBN 978-1-906919-03-0

£29.95

Published this year this book completes the series of three volumes which together cover the 123 mile route. The final section between Yeovil and Exeter is dealt with in this volume which provides a detailed history of the line from inception to the present day. All the stations and crossings are described along with both passenger and freight activities, staffing and, of course, signalling. The book also contains numerous track diagrams, timetables (both passenger and freight) and is profusely illustrated with captioned photographs of excellent quality.

The authors mention that it took them six years to complete the trilogy. Surely a remarkable achievement when one considers the extensive research that was needed. If you have read the two earlier volumes (both still in print) you will know what to expect. If not, why not start with this one? Yes, there is a lot of detailed history but the book is very readable and a must for those with an interest in this route

RWFJ



Main line to the West - Salisbury to Yeovil
The Southern Railway route between Basingstoke
and Exeter - Part 2

John Nicholas and George Reeve

Published by Irwell Press Ltd. 2007
ISBN 1-903266-58-0

The Southern Route to London was part of the express way to the West for the Southern Railway. It has had changing fortunes over the

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years which this book chronicles. The book covers the glory days of the route up to the current scene which reflects the downgrading of the line in recent years when track rationalisation happened turning the line to Exeter into a secondary route.

The text is authoritative and is well written, being in no way a dull historical narrative, and the pictures have been carefully selected so as to tell the history of the line, not just from an architectural and historic point of view but also telling the story of some of the people who worked the line as well.

For a novice like me new to the ways of the Southern Railway this book is well written, easy to read, informative and the book overall gives a wealth of information and insight into the working of this line. For the reader with some knowledge of ways Southern this book will deepen both insight and knowledge. This book was three years in the making after Volume 1 was published in 2004 and this reflects the range and level of research that the authors have put into this work.

This is a book to dip into to look at favourite places along the route but is also a commentary on an important piece of railway history which together with the other two volumes in this series chart the story of the Southern way to the West.

Having a reference work such as this available means that the route will not be forgotten and we are fortunate that John Nicholas and George Reeve both have a deep understanding of their subject with a gift in writing which makes the story of the line come alive.

Thoroughly recommended.

PW

Dartmoor Railway/DRSA

Telephone Numbers/Website

Dartmoor Railway Information and Timetables	01837-55164
DRSA Membership Matters	01837-840670
Westcountry Models	01837-55330
Buffet at Okehampton Station	01837-55667

DR/DRSA Website

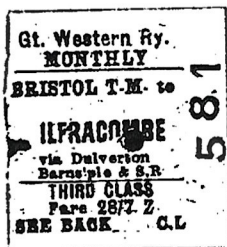
www.dartmoor-railway.org.uk

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TO ILFRACOMBE EVENTUALLY

A Saturday in June 1959

School days were over, an apprenticeship begun 32 shillings (£1.60) saved and exchanged at Bristol Temple Meads for a rather fine GWR monthly return to Ilfracombe. How this Edmondson ticket had survived unissued for at least 11 years at this busy station remains one of life's little mysteries – it was surely not through a lack of travellers to the North Devon coast.

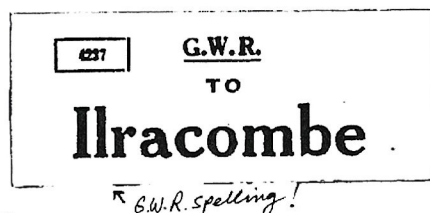


As the day wore on however, I began to think that maybe the old Great Western still had something of

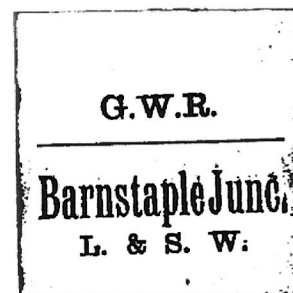
a grudge against that part of the world and anyone foolish enough to think of using their lines to reach it. Why else would the 6.45 semi-fast somehow manage to lose over half an hour between Bristol and Taunton, dumping me out beside the empty bay platform with two hours to wait before the next Devon and Somerset line departure? I calculated that the 8.30 'connection' I should have been snugly aboard was probably somewhere between Norton Fitzwarren and Milverton by now.

Undaunted, I sought comfort in the depths of my duffel bag and mentally penned letters of irate content to obscure railway officials. Having been caught once, I hardly dared leave the vicinity of the bay platform, hovering near it in case an extra train should magically appear. Of course no such thing happened and it was not until about an hour later that ex GWR mogul 6337 backed down with two non-corridors that formed the 10.25 departure. Unlike the 8.30, this train did not run through to Ilfracombe but terminated at Barnstaple Junction; well at least it was going in the right direction.

I hastily bagged a corner seat which was just as well because long before 10.25 every compartment simulated a sardine tin. Far more people wanted to travel than could possibly be squeezed or shoved in – you could almost hear the old Great Western tut tutting to itself about these misguided souls bound for the wrong resorts. Tut tutting there may have been but summer Saturday or not nobody attempted to find any extra carriages so some of the souls had to pace the platform and hope there was room on the 12.50.



Fortyfive and threequarter miles, fourteen stops and two non-corridor hours later, after a lengthy reversal at the train's 'proper' (i.e. GWR) destination, Victoria Road, we were turned out onto the island platform at Barnstaple Junction. At last we were in Southern territory, where the signals went up, the dominant colour was green, and tracks coated in oil from leaking Bulleid pacifics.



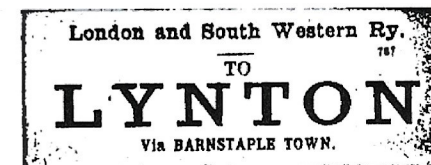
A busy place Barnstaple Junction, with three platforms, two signal boxes, extensive goods facilities and a wooden engine shed with a turntable too short for pacifics, which could often be seen clanking around tender first. Ilfracombe turntable was able to handle these engines so they sometimes ran light to this end of the line for

turning, although how many extra tons of coal per annum were used is probably unrecorded.

The passengers from Taunton were milling around on the island platform still waiting to travel hopefully – did they really all fit into the 10.25? The coaches had been abandoned at the outer face of the platform by the GWR loco which had sneaked into the Southern shed for refreshment. A trio of elderly M7s, already in occupation, didn't seem to object.

Presently a raised signal announced the imminent arrival of a semi-fast from Salisbury. Heads turned, the air of expectation being somewhat spoiled by the appearance of a grubby SR 2-6-0 No 31874, five ill-assorted coaches and a van. At least we all got on, and spirits were raised when the mogul slunk off to the shed to be replaced by streamlined West Country pacific *Tamar Valley*, which had apparently been lurking out of sight beyond the nearby road bridge.

We were soon off, away from the Torrington tracks, picking up the tablet for the single line section from the signalman of 'B' box and rumbling across the long, curved, metal viaduct over the River Taw and along the quayside to the third station, Barnstaple Town. Alas there was no narrow gauge Lynton train to meet us but although the bay platform was empty, I imagined that the little lines still rusted just out of sight below the edging stones. Closed some six years after Barnstaple, the country's oldest



borough, celebrated its millenary in 1930, the L&B had a short life but is well remembered. "Perchance it is not dead...."

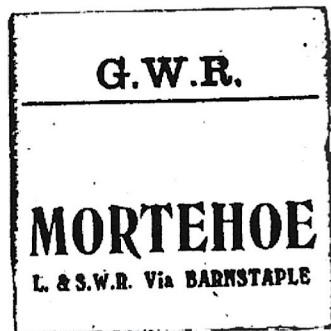
A slipping Bulleid start and over the river Yeo on a swing bridge before double track again at Pottington signal box, then we were steaming along the estuary at a good pace, swinging inland behind the airfield at Chivenor. After Braunton, speed slackened as the loco got to grips with the three miles of 1 in 40 up to Morthoe Station. The SR mogul probably couldn't have coped with this train unaided, which was why *Tamar Valley* was now up front and why Beyer Peacocks had supplied the famous Ilfracombe Goods locos back in the 1870s.

Speed slowed to a walking pace until we panted into this bleak windswept station over 600 feet up and with distant views of the sea. Putting my head out of the window to watch an up train approaching I realised that the very strong head winds had hardly helped our progress.

Now came exhilaration as *Tamar Valley* was given her head to rush down the two and a half miles of 1 in 36 to the terminus at Ilfracombe. Had the driver heard of my delays? Was he keen to give me my 36 bob's worth? I didn't check the speed of our descent but it seemed hair-raisingly fast by anyone's standards. Through the twin bore tunnels we clattered, swaying round the long curve that brought the station into sight. Just like a model it looked, perched in mid air at that, with nothing behind those buffer stops save space and, eventually.....the sea.

I clung to the open window, enjoying the thrill of rushing past the heather at an ever quickening pace. A slight touch of the brakes hardly checked our speed at all. The signal box passed in a blur, the platform rushed to meet us and the brakes jolted full on, bringing us to a grinding, shuddering stop only feet from the buffers.....most uncivilised.

The station sat on a man-made plateau 200 feet above sea level. Had I realised earlier that the platform itself was mostly on a 1 in 71 gradient and that the 1 in 36 continued right to the beginning of that platform, then my excitement might well have turned to extreme terror. Once one studied the place it was easy to forgive the driver his rather crude arrival. Even with the naked eye the terrifying gradients were obvious and finesse with the vacuum brake was surely not the way to avoid running through the buffers – as the

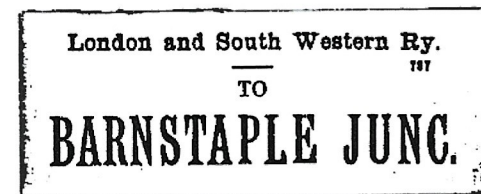


driver of C.M.E Dugald Drummond's inspection train found to his cost on one occasion.

The station's superb position commanded a view of the town and sea and was flanked by sweeping hills. A substantial stone goods shed dominated the yard and to the other side of the single island platform were half a dozen carriage sidings. From the side howled the prevailing westerly winds and a large wooden screen prevented waiting passengers being blown off the station.

Opposite the brick signal box was the engine shed, modern, pre-cast Southern and not unlike a bloated DIY garage, its single road woefully inadequate for 3 SR moguls, 2 Bulleid pacifics and one of Mr. Drummond's M7s which were soon joined by another light pacific, bucketing down the bank in a cloud of dust.

Departing trains made painfully heavy weather of the ascent to Morthoe. A Woolwich mogul with three coaches, eventually destined for Waterloo,



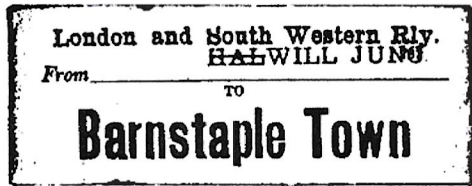
started manfully up the graded platform but soon lost speed until its exhaust became so slow and laboured that one felt it must surely stall. Somehow it staggered on, passing out of sight at least ten minutes later with unaccustomed

passengers no doubt wondering if this was to be the pace of their progress all the way to Waterloo.

While this little drama was being enacted, two coaches and two vans were being shunted into the departure platform and labelled 'Exeter' and I was quite amazed when *Tamar Valley* and sister engine 257 *Squadron* backed down to haul them. This super power for such a light train was presumably prompted by operating convenience rather than necessity but the opportunity seemed too good to miss so I stationed myself at a window in the last coach.

As we galloped off up the platform in fine style and whistled our way past the shed, I glimpsed the 'longer' turntable and remembered stories of turning the beaver-tail observation car from the all-Pullman DEVON BELLE. On windy days it would apparently turn so easily that the problem was actually stopping it again.

The same Atlantic wind was blowing with a vengeance now, but it didn't stop the streamlined pacifics speeding up the 1 in 36, a fine sight recorded by my faithful folding Zeiss from the open window. How I would have loved to see the DEVON BELLE attacking the climb through this beautiful valley headed *and* banked by Mr. Bulleid's new pacifics.



At Morthoe the coaches were actually rocking in the gale and we rushed down through Braunton to be greeted by heavy rain. At the Junction it was farewell to the pacifics as they set off for Exeter

in a cloudburst, wheels clanking, slipping, whistles wailing mournfully and that westerly wind whipping steam from the sizzling safety valves down across the puddly platform.

A Great Western mogul drew a train of vintage GWR carriages out of a siding; it was obviously going my way so I scrambled quickly into a dry corner. Soon we were splashing our way back across the Taw and up to Victoria Road, the loco crew in their minimal 63XX cab no doubt cursing the weather on this tender first section of the journey.

There were few passengers but the business of running round seemed to take an age before we were shunted ignominiously into the bay platform, where everything steamed up and we were seemingly forgotten, until eventually the down train arrived and cleared the single line. Exchanging tokens meant two soakings for the signalman before we set off for Taunton in the gathering dusk, rain sweeping down from Exmoor and shot-blasting the carriage windows.

Volunteers Wanted

Volunteers are required to help in the Catering Department especially at Special Functions.
Contact the Volunteer Co-ordinator Dave Clegg on 01626-867210

Dartmoor Pony

Next issue due in March. Please send copy to the editor, preferably by email in Word format (.doc) with illustrations in .jpeg format by 10th February 2010

THE GREAT BRITAIN II RAILTOUR – APRIL 2009 – Part II

Article and photographs by Richard Proctor

Day 5 - Glasgow Central to Inverness via Perth and Aviemore. Locos -



Departure from Glasgow Central

double-headed with 2 Black Fives - 45231 (built 1936) & 45407 (built 1937). The day started extremely well as. On leaving Glasgow we were visited by two charming Scottish girls giving out free samples of Johnny Walker Black Label Whisky to every passenger - a very apt way of being welcomed to Scotland!! After speeding through Stirling and the beautifully restored station at Gleneagles, our first stop

for water was at Perth - a station well worth a visit. Originally built as a major junction, it has survived contraction and modernisation to a large extent and so retains its majestic century-old ambience - although its train services are now only a fraction of what they were in its heyday. North of Perth the line enters the Highlands and the scenery becomes grand and dramatic - especially traversing the



The magnificent Perth station



Dunkeld and Birnam

Druimuachdar Pass and reaching its summit at 1484 feet (the highest point on Britain's railways). Following that climb there was the rush down to Aviemore for a second water stop, with a chance to see the privately operated branch line of the Strathspey Railway. This runs from Aviemore Station to Boat of Garten and hopefully in the near future on to Grantown-on-Spey.

The day finished with a triumphant steam arrival at Inverness and a two night stay at the old Station Hotel (now

The Royal Highland Hotel), the architecture and décor of which is astounding and takes one back 100 years! This was Richard's most nostalgic element as he stayed at this hotel in the 1970s when working at Inverness Airport and couldn't believe that, apart from a modernised and rather tasteless bar, it had not changed!



Foyer of the Station Hotel, Inverness

Day 6 - Inverness to Kyle of Lochalsh and return. Loco Mogul 61994 'The Great Marquess' (built 1938). In order to integrate with Scotrail scheduled services, the path we were allocated meant an 0630 start from Inverness!! It had been a cool night with a heavy dew but a glorious spring day. This, however

caused a problem as we were the first train on the section and the rails were wet with dew! On the climb to Ravensrock Summit, five miles west of Dingwall, passing through tree-lined cuttings which had not had the benefit of the spring sunshine at this early hour, The Great Marquess started to lose grip, eventually coming to a halt. After half an hour or more and many attempts to get going, sand was applied liberally and slowly we began to move cautiously to the



"The Great Marquess" ready for departure - Inverness

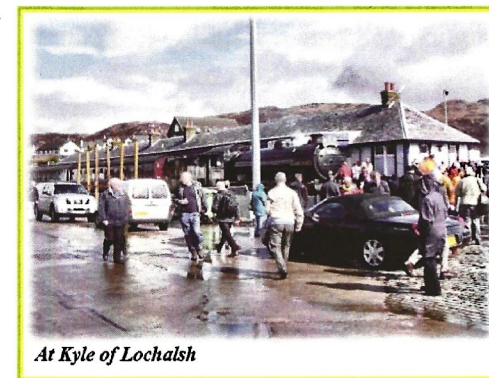
summit. Quite a relief for all concerned, but the cause of various consequential problems. The first of these was that we were nearly an hour late arriving at Garve passing loop which delayed the first eastbound service, with knock-on effects throughout the day! However as soon as the passing train was released we thought we were on our way - but no such luck!



Achnasheen - Westbound Scotrail service overtakes

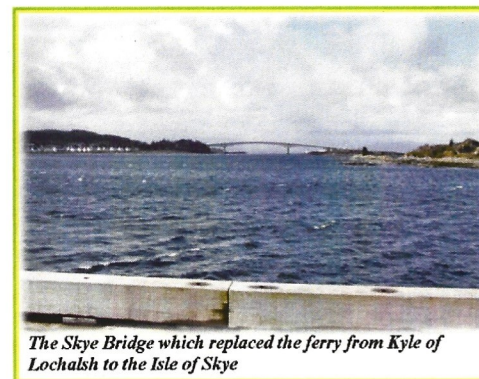
Apparently 'The Great Marquess' had used so much water in her attempts to climb Ravensrock that she needed a top-up before continuing to the first

scheduled water stop at Achnasheen. Unfortunately there was no convenient hydrant at Garve passing loop as it was not a planned water stop, so we had to set back to a location adjacent to a street in the town where the Fire Brigade had managed to trace a hydrant! All this was very time consuming but interesting and gave us a chance to enjoy a memorable Scottish breakfast, stationary, whilst the operation took place. It was then



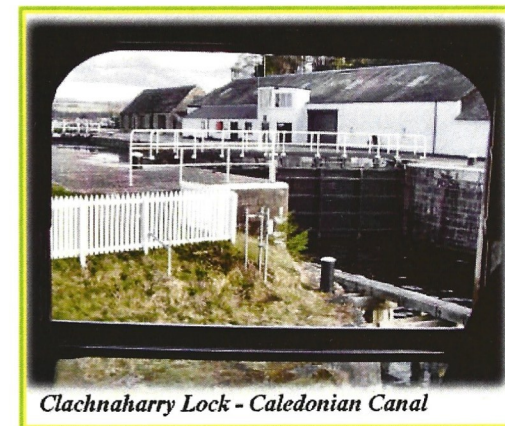
At Kyle of Lochalsh

on to Achnasheen passing loop to the first planned water stop where the return westbound service from Inverness to Kyle was due to overtake us. However, because we were so late, the westbound class 158 unit could not leave Garve until we had cleared the section on arrival at Achnasheen, compounding the delays to scheduled services and to us!! And yes, of course, we could not



The Skye Bridge which replaced the ferry from Kyle of Lochalsh to the Isle of Skye

leave Achnasheen until the 158 had cleared the next section at Strathcarron..... This chasing and passing problem remained with us throughout the rest of the day, all as a result of the slipping incident early in the morning. We eventually arrived at Kyle two hours late, leaving barely an hour for the run-round and shunt - again compounded by the late arrival of the next service from Inverness, resulting from the



Clachnaharry Lock - Caledonian Canal

earlier disruption we had caused! The journey back to Inverness was less colourful, despite a lengthy delay at Achnasheen waiting for the delayed passing 158 (again resulting from the earlier disruption!). However we made up time running back through Dingwall as, instead of a 20 minute wait there for a passing train, we barely stopped and got back to Inverness over the famous Clachnaharry Swing Bridge more or less on time! It was a great experience, thoroughly enjoyed by the passengers who joined in the spirit of adventure - the only people who were not so pleased I imagine, were Scotrail and possibly the West Coast Railways company, who may have had a penalty to pay to Network Rail?!

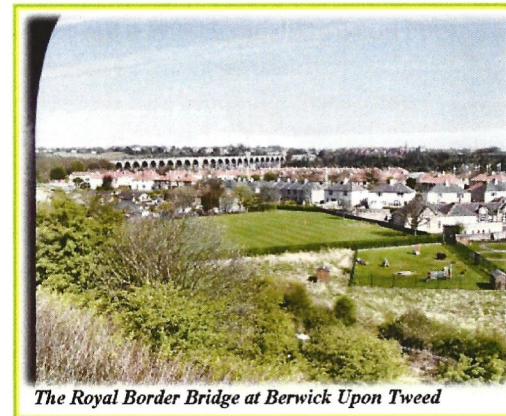
Day 7 - Inverness to Edinburgh, via Aberdeen and Dundee. Locos were the two Black Fives again as far as Dundee, where 45231 left us and we continued with just 45407 to Edinburgh. This was a relaxing day, with several long stops and beautiful 'soft' scenery, so different from the mountains of the previous couple of days.



Union of South Africa at Edinburgh Waverly

Keeping close to the coast of the Moray Firth as far as Forres, we then turned inland to the south passing many whisky distilleries with mountains of barrels stacked alongside the line (what a thought!) - until we reached our first water stop at Keith. (The Black Fives took a lot of water with their whisky!!) The now disused Dufftown branch runs in at Keith, now privately owned and operated by the Keith & Dufftown Railway from Dufftown as far as Keith Town station. The half-mile link from Keith Town station to Keith Scotrail station is still there although not generally used. Our next stop was Aberdeen where we had over an hour to explore the city a little, before the fast run to Dundee. Nearing Dundee the line passes through the famous golf courses around Carnoustie, where there still exists 4 small halts on the golf courses served by trains when golf championships are in progress. At Dundee, we had a chance to walk to the wide expanse of the Tay estuary and get good views of the famous (or infamous!) 2 mile long Tay Bridge, over which we would be passing shortly. Because of weight restrictions on the Tay Bridge, we had to lose one of the Black Fives, the two coupled together being too heavy for the Tay Bridge structure. Thus we left Dundee under the power of 45407 but unfortunately it struggled with the gradient on leaving

the station. A short delay ensued until the grip was established when we proceeded across the wonderful and imposing Tay Bridge. It was then on to



The Royal Border Bridge at Berwick Upon Tweed

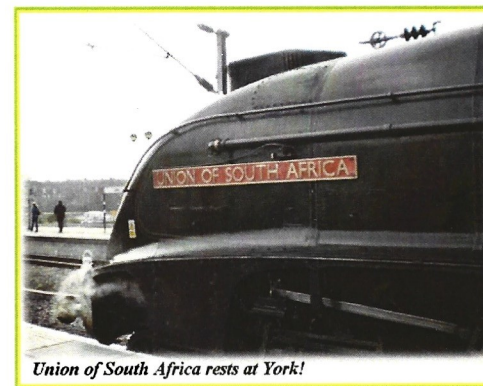
Inverkeithing and the most famous railway bridge in the world - we crossed the Forth Bridge as the sun was setting, allowing us beautiful evening views of the Firth of Forth. From there to Edinburgh by the direct route takes about 15 minutes, the main line running into the city at Haymarket, then through the tunnel into Waverley arriving from the west. However, since the

installation of the Overhead Electric System on the Edinburgh to Glasgow line, the clearance in the tunnel between Waverley and Haymarket is insufficient for a steam loco. Thus we were routed via a circuitous route around the south of the city to arrive in Waverley from the east as darkness fell after a 45 minute tour of the suburbs!



The "Angel of the North" from the train

Day 8 - Edinburgh to York, then York to London Kings Cross Steam hauled from Edinburgh to York by 60009 Union of South Africa (built



Union of South Africa rests at York!

1935) and then diesel from York to London. The fast run out of Edinburgh to Berwick-upon-Tweed was impressive behind the very powerful A4 Pacific doing what she was built for - the countless times this loco must have hauled expresses from Edinburgh to London!! After a brief stop at Newcastle we crossed the Tyne by the King Edward Bridge with stunning views at the

plethora of bridges down the river. Then it was a water stop at Tyne Yard, a small remnant of the vast marshalling yards at Birtley before the loss of freight from rail to road. We sat in the yard under the eye of 'The Angel of



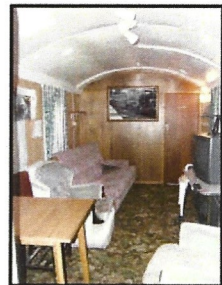
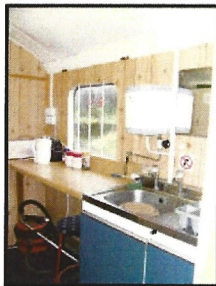
And 47 760 takes over for the last leg.

The North' statue - from the historic to the modern! Then a non-stop high speed run on the East Coast Main Line through Durham and Darlington to the impressive grand station at York, where we said goodbye to steam haulage as 60009 was seen to run off light into the distance. Our faithful following class 47 (47760), which had passed us many times and which we had overtaken again and again

between London, Bristol, Penzance, Preston, Glasgow, Inverness and Edinburgh finally had a chance to pull the train! It was coupled up at York and seemed determined to show off what it could do, pulling us non-stop from York to London Kings Cross at speeds of up to 100 mph, arriving exactly on time (to the minute) and thus terminating a most remarkable and enjoyable 8 day journey.

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



THE STORY OF A 'BUS – Part 2

Words & pictures by Clive Warneford.

Keeping a vehicle of this size is both expensive and time consuming and few people realise just what they are taking on when they obtain one. For instance, there is the cost of insurance, the cost of secure storage and the fuel to be considered, let alone the servicing and M.O.T. and the difficulty obtaining spares and replacement parts. The fuel consumption is 12 miles to the gallon!

When one buys an ex-London 'Bus one has to buy 1 wheel and 7 tyres. London 'buses do not own the tyres but lease them from tyre companies, once the vehicles are sold these must be purchased for private use, why 7? Well you've got to carry a spare!



In company with sister vehicle RMC 1477. RMC 1476 shortly after painting in 1997 (note maroon wheels and LT Logo)

Between 1996 and 1999 we continued going to rallies but at the same time continued to accumulate a number of spares, these included two gearboxes, a 'B' Frame and a spare AEC engine. We had for some time wanted to re-instate the missing luggage racks, and renew the seat coverings and to make



Location of 'Spare Wheel', reinstated luggage racks and new seating

the 'bus look less of a training vehicle. In 1997 with the help of other owners we obtained the correct specification for paint and with these owners set about repainting the 'bus into London Country livery of the National Bus Company a colour scheme that she ran in between 1969 & 1979. Gone now were the 'L' plates although the LT Logo was

used again whilst we obtained the correct National Bus Company graphics. I was able to get components for the luggage racking and handrails manufactured and I fitted these. All the lower deck seating was removed and re-upholstered, using new foam and moquette, specially woven to the

original design. New door control gear was built and fitted, as up to this time the doors did not work and could only be operated by hand. The new NBC graphics finally arrived and I spent a day removing the LT targets and fitting the new logo's. Eddie had authentic route blinds made for the period when



In service Hertford Running Day, 7th June 2009, at Stevenage Bus Station

she was based in the Hertford & St. Albans area of London Country in the mid to late 70's. By 2000 the 'bus was nearing completion and Eddie decided to part with his half of the ownership, which I subsequently bought. Unable to afford all the rent and running costs I sold a share to a friend from the Mid-Hants but I retained the majority holding in the vehicle. This friend was taught to drive the 'bus and we

then both could share the running costs and rally attendances.

The ownership of this ICON has given me a great deal of pleasure over the past 16 years and obviously there comes a point where one has to stop and face up to the consequences of one's age. That point is fast approaching and it is with some regret that I will shortly be selling this 27ft long, 14ft 6in high by 8ft wide piece of history, but in the knowledge that I have had the pleasure of saving (and enjoying) it for others to benefit in the future.



3 Icons - RMC's 1476 & 1477 with Concorde at Duxford in September 2004

A further more comprehensive collection of photos can be seen by logging on to:- <http://clivesphotos.photos.cn.com/c1642352.html>

Clive Warneford.
Gillingham, Dorset 2009.

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