



SUPPORTERS'
DARTMOOR RAILWAY
ASSOCIATION

THE DARTMOOR PONY

The Magazine of the Dartmoor Railway
Supporters' Association

No.9

Spring 2011

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A Message from Ed
Stone Trains to Restart?
With the Goods to Wenford
NZ Preservation

The DARTMOOR PONY

Issue No. 9

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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 last day of the month prior to publication date.

FRONT COVER: 31454 The Driver climbs down to change ends at the DR limit of operations during the 31 weekend *Photo: P Ritchie*

BACK COVER:

Top: 31190 at Sampford Courtenay during the 31 Fest

Photo P Chapman

Bottom: The SR Brake Van arrives at Meldon

Photo: P Ritchie

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Dartmoor Railway/DRSA

Telephone Numbers/Website

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DRSA Membership Matters	01837-840670
Westcountry Models	01837-55330
Buffet at Okehampton Station	01837-55667

DR/DRSA Website

www.dartmoor-railway.co.uk

Editorial:

By Peter Ritchie



Welcome to the Spring Edition of The Dartmoor Pony. One of the first things you will notice when you flick through the pages is that activities are being reported through the separate departments. This gives a good indication that the organisation is maturing. Our Volunteer Co-ordinator, David Clegg, is joined by Martin Kent. David reports on the work of the Carriage and Wagon department (C&W) whilst Martin reports on the Traction and Rolling Stock department (T&RS) – basically the mechanical/electrical sides of maintenance. Martin has also been co-opted on to your committee. Publicity has received a major boost by Peter Chapman taking up the reins as the Publicity Officer and, as such, he has reported on progress being made to enlighten the Great British Public as to our existence. He, too, has been co-opted on to the committee. Dennis Barnes has resigned from the committee, finding the distance (Ipswich) is just too far to enable him to play a full part. Thanks, Dennis, for all the hard work you put in especially as the joint Volunteer Co-ordinator with David.

As you will be aware from the Appeal Notice which was sent out, there has been a major change of direction for the Association and we will now be taking on the role of rolling stock owner. Thanks to all of you who have contributed to the appeal. It is already standing at a tidy sum (I don't have the figures at hand), and, together with the grants from Okehampton United Charity, this will enable us to keep the heritage side of the Dartmoor Railway up and running. There will be plenty of work for the volunteers to do.

It is hoped that stone trains will restart in April but confirmation is still awaited.

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.

From The General Manager

By Graham Isom



Well, 'Spring is in the Air' and, as we pass the fields, the lambs are dancing away and the daffodils are in abundance. By the time you receive this latest addition of the DRSA 'The Dartmoor Pony' magazine, you will have 'Sprung' your clocks and watches forward by one hour.

Talking of going forward, the 'Dartmoor Railway Season' will be upon us soon. Services start again on Saturday 9th April. The volunteers of the C&W Department are busy making sure that 'Thumper' looks spick and span whilst the L&R department are coming near to finishing their maintenance on the engine. Other groups are clearing linesides and sprucing up stations in readiness for our seasonal visitors from near and far. The more we impress with the appearance of the railway and the hospitality we offer the more people want to join the DRSA. That comes from the enthusiasm each one of you shows. To further improve our visibility the committee are arranging visits to various railway exhibitions and shows with our new publicity stand.

Although the Devon County Council has had to make cuts to some bus services which were part of the 'Sunday Rover' connections, the 'Sunday Service' between Exeter and Okehampton, will again run between 22nd May and the 18th September 2011. First Great Western will run this service.

The support that the 'Dartmoor Railway' receives from you all enables us to move ahead, improve what we have and work towards a future not only as a 'Heritage Railway' involved in tourism, but also to cater to the demands of the local area, for a service to Exeter. The recent 'Exeter Railway Service Feasibility Survey', commissioned by the British American Railway Services (BARS) and carried out by Dr Michael Ireland and Paul Vaschon, has highlighted some important items. These will be published at a later date in 'The Dartmoor Pony' magazine.

It is with regret that I have to announce the passing of one of our members, John Locke OBE. Our thoughts and sympathy go out to his son Matthew and his family. Later in this edition is an obituary by Matthew.

Since the last issue we got through December and January and although the weather did all it could to beat us, it failed. The 'Santa Specials' were enjoyed by all who rode upon them – children of all ages from one to one

hundred. The 'Mince Pie Specials' followed after Christmas. In both cases these were better supported than in 2009. The final activity of the operating year was the 'Class 31 Weekend' which turned into two good days of locomotive adventure for all. Thanks must go out to all the 'Volunteers', in all capacities, that made these events the success they were. Thank you all very much.

As I near the end of my article, I would like to remind you all of the forthcoming DRSA Annual General Meeting on Saturday 21st May 2011 at 19.00 in the Ockment Centre in Okehampton. So please come forward and support your 'Association' and the committee.

Once again I thank you all for the support given to me, through the DRSA membership and I look forward to seeing you all in 2011 and working with you to the benefit to us all the 'Dartmoor Railway'.

A Message from Ed Ellis, Dartmoor Railway's President...

Before anything else, I want to thank Dartmoor Railway's volunteers and supporters on behalf of everyone at British American Railway Services. We have had a good year, and it was only possible with all of the hours that you invested in the railway, including maintaining rolling stock, painting *Thumper*, landscaping the station, and staffing the café and the ticket office.



As a direct result of your efforts, we were able to:

- Operate heritage steam trains in August;
- Run *Thumper* in heritage service between Sampford Courtenay and Meldon from Easter through November;
- Continue First Great Western's summer *Sunday Rover* service;
- Operate very successful Santa's Specials (and the Grotto!) in December; and
- Have a very successful year with the café.

Our goals for 2011 are ambitious.

- Repeat and expand steam heritage operations.

- Have a "Polar Express" event (themed trains based on the *Polar Express* book and movie), which our affiliates in the U.S. have operated with great success.
- Continue to explore options for implementing community service to Exeter.

In addition, we will be investigating the potential for operating freight service on the Dartmoor Railway. Adding freight service to our service mix will help provide a firm financial basis for the railway.

Thanks again for all of your efforts in 2010.

THE RAILWAY

General Activities

Considering the weather in December, the Santa and Mince Pie trains were very successful bringing the year to a successful conclusion. The two D&CR locos were due to return northwards in January to undertake a rail tour at the end of the month. Once a date for their move was known, advantage of their presence in the south west was taken and a Class 31 weekend was organised at very short notice for Saturday and Sunday 8th/9th January. Regrettably, because of the short notice, the news could only be disseminated by email and the enthusiast bush telegraph. Thankfully, we had a healthy number of passengers on both days and the whole event was most enjoyable. Bernard Mills took some very "atmospheric" low-light photos at Sampford Courtenay and these are featured elsewhere.

Maintenance on *Thumper*, both engineering and carriage refurbishment, has continued apace but it will not be ready for the start of the season, 9th April. The gang do try their best but they aren't quite up to the impossible yet! This means that "Bluebell Mel" will be providing motive power for the first session. The new timetable reflects this.

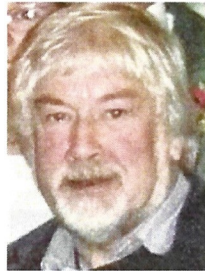
There have been several stock movements at Meldon with some privately owned coaches leaving and an SR freight guard's van arriving. Two coaches, one donated and one bought by your Association, will be arriving in the not too distant future. This new stock is very necessary to provide flexibility of braking systems, both vacuum and air braking. We will be in a much better rolling stock position if we have a steam engine visiting, for instance.

On 29th March Freightliner are due to send a Class 66 to Meldon for route-learning refresher courses for its traincrew. However, confirmation is still awaited about the start of stone train running.

Volunteer Report 1: C&W Group

Dave Clegg Volunteer Coordinator

The 'C&W and Pasty Team' are working hard to finish the paintwork on our DEMU ('Thumper') before it is due back in service in early April (and if you are wondering about the expanded name for the group, this is because Tony Bradbury has donated a microwave for heating pasties – and this is being used so well that we might soon have to start a Meldon Weight Watchers group). Our team is also often referred to as the 'Last of The Summer Wine' - a comparison well justified, as three of us were booked in with the same consultant in Exeter in the same week (but I'm not saying which department!). More seriously, several of our group are unfortunately experiencing health problems currently and we wish them well and speedy recoveries. On the positive side, we are delighted to have a new member in the group, Roy Cunnington. Despite being locked in the Quarry toilets by an over-zealous security guard on the second week



(who I hope has now learnt to check inside the building before turning the key in future) he doesn't seem to have been put off too much. Ah well, it's all in a day's work.

The atrocious weather conditions experienced earlier in the year which sometimes prevented any sanding or paintwork being carried

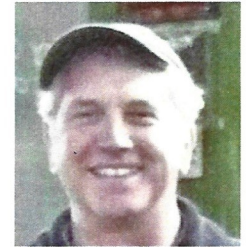
out are thankfully easing. And with the generous grant from the Okehampton United Charity we now have a space heater which works quite well (if we heat it up first!) and also an additional scaffolding tower. These, together with a number of additional power tools, means we can now accept more members! And you don't have to be over 65 to join. There is much to do, and



more rolling stock arriving, all of which is going to need both skilled and unskilled work. Give me a ring if you'd like to give it a try (01626 867210).

Volunteer Report 2: Stations Maintenance Team

By Tom Baxter



Recent activity by the Team at Okehampton have included further repairs to woodwork on the Platform 2 access ramp and a clean and sort out of the contents of the GUV Van on Platform 1. As a result we are now able to walk through the GUV from end to end without falling over or disappearing en route in the assorted clutter. We have also undertaken a clean of the brickwork and steelwork under the canopy at the Meldon end of Platform 3. This area seems to have suffered from the effect of fumes from the barbecue which appears to have ignored the "No Smoking" signs! Other items tackled recently have been replacement of a broken tap in the disabled toilet and work on various other plumbing issues. We are hoping to re-activate the station watering system shortly so that the "Flower Fairies" can have their toils on plant watering reduced. The system



Clearing the down platform at Sampford Courtenay

has to be shut down each Winter to prevent freezing and subsequent damage to the Water Timer. Despite that we have again had to replace the Timer which on this occasion failed because its electronic brain got itself a tangle. We seem to be gradually working through all the makes of Timer on the market in the hope that one day we can find one that lasts longer than 12

months.

You will probably note the change in title from the Okehampton Station Maintenance Team to the Stations Maintenance Team. This is because we have "morphed" into an organisation covering all of the operational DR stations. Okehampton station will, of course, remain the main centre of attention but Sampford Courtenay and Meldon Quarry now also fall under our remit. For a small team (we number somewhat less than 10 regulars) this will be something of a challenge and we would welcome any further

volunteers. You don't have to possess any special building or maintenance skills (although if you do have they would be most welcome!). Work is varied and, hopefully, interesting. We also help in other departments and some of our team "multi task" and can, for example, be found up at Meldon with Carriage and Wagon and down the line on vegetation clearing with Alan and his gang.

Volunteer Report 3:- Traction and Rolling Stock Department

By Mental Martin The Manic Mechanic. (Martin Kent)

It has been suggested that the T&RS department might like to give a report, so cover your seats with newspaper because the black-hand gang are here! For those that don't know us, we hang out in a well lit, moderately warm workshop at the boggy end of Meldon (that could really do with a better floor if anyone has a hundred cubic metres of concrete to spare). We are not overly furnished with numbers of bodies (although several of us are well furnished in the stomach department), but we are keen and dedicated in what we do, reporting to the railway's traction and rolling stock engineer, who has to pass all work before entering service.

Our role is to maintain, prepare and repair all safety critical and mechanical aspects of the traction and rolling stock operated on Dartmoor Railway, and do some of the 'needed urgently' bodywork when required.



Our current jobs include:-

The top end engine overhaul and other fitness to run work on Thumper.

The production and fitment of an under slung generator on the 61743 driving trailer, including fitment of an approved fire system and modification approval by the vehicle acceptance board.

The design and modification of the railways disabled access vehicle (utilising the ferry van).

Preparation of 47701 to enter revenue earning service.

Future projects include a minor top end overhaul on the 08, work on the big buffet, refurbishment of and fitment of a train brake to the Flying Falcon, and

possible reinstatement of the Track Access and Maintenance Machine. This list is by no means exhaustive!

We have limited facilities, a long walk to get in at the weekends, and loads to do, but if you are interested in getting filthy-dirty and have some time to spare, we do one of the most rewarding jobs on the railway - and have a really good laugh at the same time.

Volunteer Report 4:- Catering News

By Mary Trant

Well at last I put pen to paper. My new years resolution!. It's been just over two years since the buffet at Okehampton re-opened. Sunday lunches of roast beef sell out almost every week. The all day breakfasts are very popular. Home made cakes sell out very quickly and I can not always keep up with the demand. We have had some very successful events including a five course meal served on the train to the staff of the medical centre for their Christmas party back in 2009. We had very successful mince pie specials in December which exceeded all our expectations. We also served refreshments



on the popular Top and Tail weekend in January. Meldon buffet re-opened in July last year providing welcome relief for walkers and cyclists alike. Both buffets are staffed mainly by volunteers. Without their help and support the buffets would not open. I currently have a shortage of volunteers and would welcome anybody that would like to help either at Okehampton or Meldon.

You can choose the days and hours to fit around yourself. You are welcome to come along have a look around and have a chat. Full training will be given. I look forward to seeing you in what will be a busy year in the buffets. I would like to thank all the volunteers past and present for all their hard work in the buffets over the last two years.

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.

Publicity Report

We have a number of exciting developments on the publicity front coming up soon. Firstly we will shortly be launching the new DRSA website to compliment the DR one. This will be a focal point for all things involving the DRSA and is especially designed to speed up communications to members and to act as a recruitment tool for new members. It will be regularly updated and feature lots of news and up to date photos of what's going on. The DRSA is entering a dynamic new phase in its history and the new website will help to keep everyone informed of developments as they happen. One feature for working volunteers will be information on all up coming workdays. We anticipate the site going live in the next few weeks; keep an eye out for it at www.dartmoor-railway-sa.org. This is your website so please send me all items of news, information, photos etc. that you think would be suitable.

The next development is our new publicity stand. It will be taken to several events during the summer with the aim of promoting the railway and recruiting new members to the DRSA. Its first outing will be to the Exe Model Railway Society Exhibition at the Matford Centre, Exeter on June 4th & 5th. If you are planning to visit this excellent show do pop in and say hello; if you feel you could help out for a short while it would be much appreciated, to give others a break. Staffing the stand is going to be a challenge when we are running trains, so if you have not volunteered at the railway before perhaps you would consider helping with this - "no previous experience necessary!"

In connection with the stand we are producing a DRSA leaflet to hand out to prospective members. These will also be available for members to distribute amongst friends and relatives etc. There will also be an information leaflet for the DR and we will need lots of help to distribute this both locally and far and wide. If you are holidaying in other parts of the UK perhaps you could take some with you, especially if you are visiting other heritage railways. Please contact me if you feel you can help with leaflet distribution.

Unfortunately there is a phrase that has become all too familiar to us - "I didn't know there was a railway there". With your help we can make this a thing of the past in 2011.

Peter Chapman
DRSA Publicity Officer 07758 895999
chappie333@blueyonder.co.uk

31 Fest – Action at Sampford Courtenay

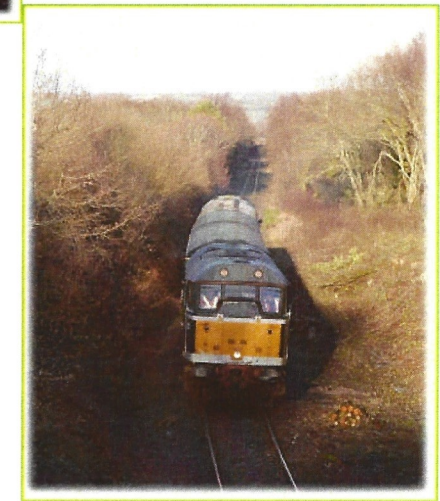
Photographs by Bernard Mills



The light conditions at Sampford Courtenay station when the 1500 Coleford Junction to Okehampton train called were such that Bernard



was able to capture these different "moods" with the same train



John Locke, OBE 1926 – 2011

If it's eccentric to wear a black arm band to mark the death of a railway branch line then my father was eccentric. The 1956 closure of the Princetown branch of the Plymouth and Dartmoor railway prompted the response from a man whose fascination with steam engines and parallel rails started in a pram at Addison Road station in the West London suburbs in the late twenties. Hissing steam and belching smoke stayed with him despite the electrification and diesel domination of the network.

As a two year old one of the first (and few) slogans my father taught me to chant was "Down with Dr. Beeching's trousers!" The other one was "I hate Kathy Kirby". At a maturer age I now think the first was justified and the second wasn't. The line destroying civil servant overdid his pruning, and can rightfully be cursed with not leaving options in place for the re-opening of lines.

John travelled on the Dartmoor branch up from Plymouth as a schoolboy with groups of friends for fishing and hiking because his sister and brother-in-law ran Prince Hall as a sort of outward bound centre for the Astor Foundation (Nancy Astor was one of the Plymouth MPs at the time.) It's ironic that with its far-reaching views on all sides the line could have been a very popular and profitable tourist and moor-walkers' line today. Winning a history scholarship to Oriel College, Oxford meant that any early ambitions to drive steam locomotives were put on indefinite hold. The river took over from rails and he steered ("coxed") the College eight to quite a few victories over bigger colleges. Tutorials with J R R Tolkien (before he was famous) took place in the Eagle and Child pub in St Giles. I remember his descriptions of strangely formed trains carrying him to university across the Vale of Aylesbury with the tank engine placed in the middle of mixed goods wagons and passenger carriages ferrying pigs in harness and farmers' wives in long skirts.

He was granted a commission in the Royal Navy on VE Day 1945 but his service as a minesweeper navigator still kept the rest of the flotilla on its toes.

.....A lifetime marriage to Val followed and he became, via Unilever traineeship, the creator of an association for the UK bacon and meat manufacturers – effectively an advocate. Lots of time analysing pig production, arguing with Europe, eating and drinking.

Later back in Devon he was very happy to be near another Dartmoor Railway - a proper railway, properly funded with a future. I think he'll be watching with interest.

Matthew Locke 20th March 2011

Rosie has a Long Way to Go

An Introduction to Rosie – Trainee Railway Dog :-

My name is Rosie May Bluebell, you can tell when my birthday is I'm sure. I am a dog twice rescued by the RSPCA. After being beaten I was timid and just simply scared of everything. Then I got lucky and chose a good owner, Kathryn. When I first met her friend Sue I hid behind my owner with my tail between my legs. Now Sue and Tom are my Special Friends. They have helped train me and told me time and again that I Shouldn't Worry as people are really very nice. I began to believe them when I started getting biscuits, kind words and cuddles. Even better, I go for long walks on Dartmoor. Now I am trying my paw at Station Duties. This is not straightforward as my weekends are now very busy, and start Early! I like a lie in until about midday. Now my Number One Mum says magic words - "The Station" and I struggle to stretch, get a cuddle and then gulp down breakfast. I get to the gate for 9.30 and then wait eagerly for sight of the car. Eventually the Baxters arrive, I've been ready for 20 minutes. Greetings are important. I like to say hello to both and decorate their black trousers and fleecy jackets with my white hairs, ignoring cries of "Best Clothes. Rosie! Down!" It's a good job I have so much hair to donate because I now have so many friends to decorate!

In front of the station I dig my claws into the tarmac, its my right to visit Tramlines Wood before doing Station Duties. Number Two Mum thinks I might get cold. So Tom has wrapped me up in her hi-vis jacket. It is droopy and irritating. I have no problem getting rid of it in the brambles below the oak tree where the ground is so steep 2-legs don't follow.

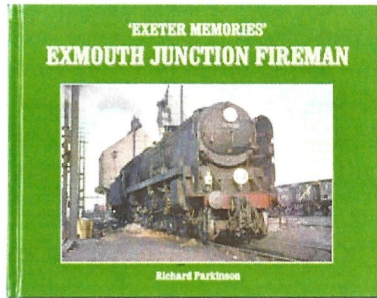
Back up on the station there is a freezing wind along the platform. I am grateful when Peter Ritchie lets me in to the ticket Office to lie on his wooden floor. I've heard about his Jess who was a perfect Railway Dog. I'm grumpy sometimes so I still have a long way to go to become the best, like Jess. I'll keep trying, and tell you about the sights and smells along the way.

Kathryn Dobie

Sue Baxter.

The Dartmoor Pony Spring 2011

BOOK REVIEW



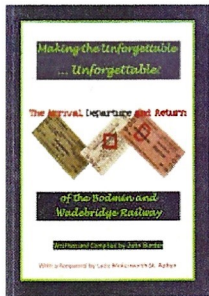
Exeter Memories – Exmouth Junction Fireman

Richard Parkinson

Published by Noodle Books
ISBN 978-1-906419-40-0
£14.95

We are so lucky to have people like Richard Parkinson who took their cameras “on the job” with them. This is a delightful, personal reminiscence of his days as a fireman at Exmouth Junction well illustrated with both colour and monochrome photographs. The majority of photographs are by the author and are of good quality with anecdotal captions attached. Starting with his attempt to join the Western Region of BR it ends with the takeover of the Southern by the Western and the sad decline thereafter. Well worth the money.

PGR



Making the Unforgettable.....Unforgettable The Arrival, Departure and Return of the Bodmin and Wadebridge Railway

John Burden

Published by Wessex books
ISBN 978-1-903035-35-1
£7.50

This book is different, different to most other railway books. It is about the history of the railway through the people who promoted it to the volunteers who work so hard to maintain and operate the present day preserved railway. It well illustrates how the railway became part of the social fabric of the area and continued as such until the advent of the dreaded motor car. It is lavishly illustrated with both monochrome and colour photographs which support the script throughout. The cover in itself is eye-catching and unusual whilst the font used inside might deter some people. DO NOT BE DETERRED. It is a delightful read

PGR

Meldon Visitors' Centre

Article and photos by Mike Ellis

The building here is not entirely fit for purpose and requires a number of



improvements before it can be used as a visitors' centre. Current access is through the centre doors. In future the public will be unable to reach these doors for safety reasons. Main access will be via the pathway around the building and entry through the end doors. The centre doors will be retained as an emergency exit. To enhance security, the gap beneath the centre doors has been rectified by Tom Baxter which now enables the doors to be locked securely. The 'foyer' has been moved to the end doors. Ramps for the disabled will be built. Internally, lighting has been improved, damaged windows have been repaired and sealed and wire mesh screens for the windows are awaited. The interior will be redecorated once leaks in the walls have been sealed.



Meldon Model Railway. For those of you who can remember the old display layout, it was an 00 gauge representation of Okehampton station. This layout has been extended by an additional 8 feet to feature Meldon quarry. A further board, to include the viaduct, will be an extra 9 feet long taking the overall length of the layout to approximately 36 feet. It will be, I hope, a good representation of railway operations in the area albeit with a degree of 'Modellers Licence'.

A further 00 gauge layout has been erected. Rob Stevens and 'Bunny' Warren have set up a 26 foot model of Ilfracombe. This will be a major attraction in the Centre and my thanks go to Rob for his generosity in lending his layout.

So, there we are. It is a story of steady progress over the last few months. Any other DRSA members who would like to assist with any of the areas of

work would be most welcome. Just contact me and I will give you the details. I'm particularly looking for 'scenic' modellers at the moment.

I would just like to give my personal thanks to all who have helped so far. Our aim is to be up and running in the summer of 2011



Okehampton layout on the left



Iffracombe layout . Note the entrance "foyer" in its new position at the new main entrance.

Volunteers Still Wanted

There is still room for new volunteers to assist **Mike Ellis** in the refurbishment and extension of the 'OO' layout at Meldon?

If you'd like to help please contact

Mike on 07930-443771

Mike can also be found up at Okehampton station on most Saturdays and Sundays

CAPTION PLEASE



I don't know what it is about Keith but he's certainly elicited a response:-

Garth Netherton :- 1. Tripping the light fantastic
2. Now, what's for breakfast?

Pete Chapman:- "Can I be one of the Flower Fairies too?"

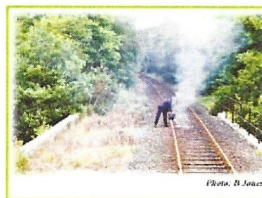
Nicholas Wren:-!31 again.'

Dave Clegg:- "Whoops! I should have worn my platform heels!"

Derek Andrews (0136):- 1. One big step for mankind.....
2. You put your left leg in

Denyse Bettridge. NZ:- Keith--those ballet lessons you took are working well!

There are some clever ones here but I think the honours go to Dave Clegg

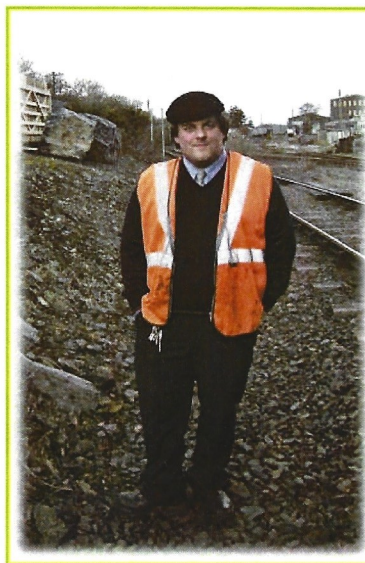


There were two suggestions for the picture of Ross:-

Dave Clegg:- "Now, what's the smoke-signal 'for hot pasty please on next train'?"

George Ware:- Who suggested serving curry on this train?

George, I think you win that one.



For this magazine, can anyone come up with a suggested caption for this photo of Julian during the Class 31 weekend

TREASURER

Richard Proctor, our Treasurer, intends to retire from that office and the Association would like to invite a volunteer to take over the post in the near future. Any such volunteer should be local to Devon and Cornwall preferably. If you have some accounting experience and would wish to become involved with the railway please contact Dick Henrywood, the Chairman of the Committee via Okehampton Station.

WITH THE GOODS TO WENFORD

Tuesday 14th August 1962

By Peter Barnfield

The 1.55am Bristol-Plymouth dumped me out at deserted Plymouth in the grey half-light at 5.15. I walked down through the silent shopping centre in an effort to enliven myself after a sleepless night, but soon returned to North Road where the station had started to stir itself into life. There was a pannier tank with the Tavistock auto, a Bulleid pacific bound for Waterloo, *Kingswear Castle* and a 45XX pottering about. My train for Cornwall stood in the platform, a DMU, so I took advantage of the front seat and ate apples while the driver read his newspaper until departure time at 6.10am.

We didn't carry many passengers, mainly BR men going to work, dropping some by the lineside near St Germans where trackwork was in progress. The train terminated at Liskeard before returning to Plymouth so I had half an hour to wander around and watch another DMU rattle off down the hill towards Moorswater before continuing to Bodmin Road behind a 'Warship' on a Penzance train.

An ugly 63XX Diesel delivered me to Wadebridge at 8.30, just in time for the local rush hour so it seemed. Both town and station were bustling with activity and two North Cornwall trains I saw were well filled. On shed was a motley selection of moguls, two Beattie well tanks and three GWR panniers sent from the Weymouth Harbour line to replace them.

I was a little disappointed to learn that 1369 was the Wenford engine that day as I had hoped to ride behind a Beattie, but these had performed their last duty on Monday. I was one day too late. The two locomotives still at Wadebridge however were destined for preservation so all was not lost - maybe one day.....

I had written to the stationmaster some weeks before in order to arrange this journey and he now greeted me, supervised the issue of a ticket and announced that there were four other passengers for the goods. Another enthusiast, together with his wife and two sons, was also making this pilgrimage and in view of the crowd it was thought best to add a second brake van. This turned out to be a large eight-wheeled Southern Railway vehicle and the stationmaster came to direct the shunting of it before we finally set off at 9.30.

There was 1369, 5 loaded coal wagons, our brake and the normal 4-wheeler bringing up the rear swaying along the wooded valley at what was probably the engine's not very high top speed. On the footplate, apart from the crew and the shunter, whose pole was carried across the front of the engine, was the Wadebridge Shedmaster, in traditional trilby and long mackintosh, who had come to check on the performance of the engine.

At Boscarne Junction, where the LSWR and GWR lines diverged, we dropped off the five wagons - did the signalman use this much coal? We had a long wait here until the following passenger train, bound for Bodmin North, overtook us and we were finally allowed to steam a little way along the LSW line to Dunmere, before trundling through a wooden gate opened by the guard and onto the Wenford branch. The gate was then locked behind us and the guard set off on a half-hour walk to return the Boscarne - Bodmin token to the Boscarne Junction signalman. One imagines that this may have involved the brewing of railway tea, but at length we were away again being flagged across the busy main road to Bodmin at an ungated crossing.

Since leaving the North Cornwall line at Wadebridge we had been running through wooded countryside but now the trees crowded in around us, often meeting overhead to form a tunnel of greenery. 1369 and the two brake vans, more a passenger than a goods train, plodded slowly uphill beside the River Camel and paused a while in Pencarrow Wood to take water from an ancient tank. I was reliably informed that the tank took its supply from a handy tributary to the Camel and sometimes disgorged fish and various items of rubbish which were not at all desirable to have in the water tanks of locomotives.

It soon became apparent that the water tank had been built with low Beattie well tanks in mind, they had after all had the monopoly for over sixty years. Getting water into the much higher pannier tanks of 1369 meant arranging for it to run slightly uphill, a difficult task at this somewhat primitive trough.

The lengthy stop gave me ample time for photography and alongside the line I discovered one of the original Bodmin & Wenford Rly stone mileposts marked in miles, furlongs, chains and yards.

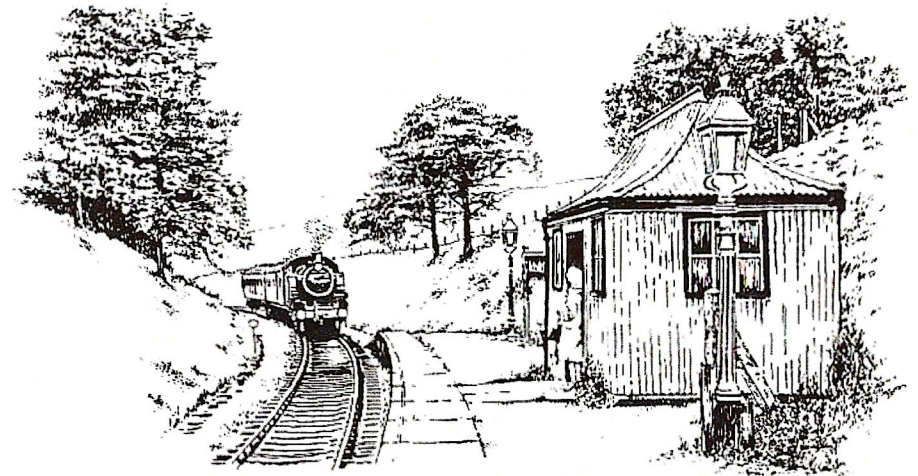
Having satisfied its thirst, 1369 took us on further up the valley to the china clay works and after half-an-hour shunting we finally drew into Wenfordbridge itself, some half a mile further on, at about 12.30 - 12 miles and three hours out of Wadebridge. For crew and passengers now was the time for the general consumption of sandwiches and as the sun shone brightly I went exploring. This did not take long for there were only three sidings, the remains of an old quarry line and a little country lane winding away out of sight. A small shack, the parcels office, completed the picture and I was afraid to stray too far for fear of being left behind in such a remote spot.

The Shedmaster, having finished his lunch, climbed down from the brake van to enjoy the sunshine and we stood beside 1369 while he told me all about his problems with the panniers. He was concerned about the water supply since these GWR engines were very thirsty and it was impossible to fill the tanks at Pencarrow. They were also too slow to be used on passenger trains, something which the Beatties enjoyed occasionally. 1369, like all Wadebridge engines, was very clean and there did seem to be some local effort at keeping the locomotives looking good. Talking to the railwayman in charge I could see that there was still plenty of pride in the job at this far flung depot.

Our conversation was cut short by a sudden vicious thunderstorm which sent us scrambling for cover and very soon we were setting off back down to the clay works taking 5 wagons from one of the sidings. After some shunting we were on our way again but didn't get far as one of the workmen came running after the train waving his arms and shouting to make himself heard in the storm. Apparently we had left the wrong wagons behind and so the guard and the shunter had to venture out into the downpour again, once more unlock the wooden blocks across the private sidings and begin a rather complex shunting manoeuvre.

After they had managed to sort everything out we set off beneath the dripping canopy of branches, rain drumming on the roof in squalls and slashing in on the rear platform where I rode with the Cornish guard. He was very friendly, yarned about his job and told me enough stories to fill a book. As the rain had stopped when we arrived back by the wooden gate at Dunmere, he suggested that I walk up to the nearby halt and ride back to

Bodmin North on the 3.25 since to stay on the goods all the way back to Wadebridge might mean missing my connection at Bodmin Road. So while



Dunmere Halt 14th August 1962

someone set off for Boscarne Junction Box to retrieve the token, I strolled up the road and found a wicket gate leading down a little rustic path to Dunmere Halt. The whole of this railway system seemed to be hidden away in valleys or screened by trees, it was a world apart, carrying on daily routines and rituals almost in defiance of the modern world.

Here at this rural halt, with its pagoda shelter, archaic oil lamps and tiny platform, you might have expected one of Dugald Drummond's railmotors to steam into view, such was the timeless quality of the place. The 3.25 was in fact headed by what was known locally as the 'London Midland Tank', No 41272, an Ivatt 2-6-2T which had replaced the old Adams 02 and which carried a plate on its side proclaiming it to be the 7,000th locomotive built at Crewe. It had been given the Wadebridge treatment, was spotlessly clean and took me back to Bodmin in good time for a stroll across to the GWR station and a train for the Road.

I remember trying to write a letter as we attacked the South Devon banks but sleep got the better of me long before my 9.35pm arrival back at Bristol T.M.

Help to keep the last of "The Withered Arm" alive – tell everybody that the Dartmoor Railway lives. Volunteers are required.

A Not Very Knowledgeable View of New Zealand railways

By Adam Jenkins

Hello all, my name is Adam Jenkins, one time Okehampton resident and still a member of the Dartmoor Railway. For the past three years or more, we (my wife Becky and I), have been living in the North Island of New Zealand, in the province of Taranaki. We live in a small town called Urenui, about 35 kms from the region's largest centre, New Plymouth.

Since our arrival, I've been a member and worker at our local railway society, the Waitara Railway Preservation Society (WRPS), and I thought you may be interested to hear about it. I should point out at this stage, that while I have an interest in all things rail related, I am by no means an expert in any of it (as some of you who remember me working up at Meldon could no doubt confirm!) So I apologize in advance for any incorrect terminology. Our current Chairman here, Denyse, is still trying to explain the difference between an engine and a motor. I'm just a willing, if not qualified, volunteer.

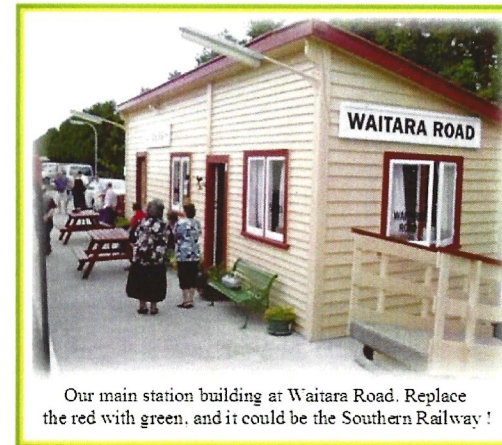
The railways here, although originally based on British practices, have a very different feel about them. For a start, railways in New Zealand are 3ft 6in gauge. They are found on both the North and South Islands, and currently have 2565 miles of track, most of it single line. These carry freight in the main nowadays, but with some passenger services in the main cities (Wellington and Auckland) and on some of the major routes.

Just as in the UK, many of the smaller lines were closed during the 1960's and 70's. After some years in private ownership, the last Government took the railways back into state ownership and they now operate as "Kiwi rail".



DXB 5143, one of the main line locos for Kiwi Rail

The actual railway infrastructure here is a lot more open and accessible than in the UK. It's not uncommon to see a line running along side the road with no fences in between, or through towns in much the same way. In fact, in a few places, they actually run down the middle of the road! Although accidents do happen, often at road crossings, usually common sense prevails and most people realize that standing in front of an oncoming train is not a good idea!



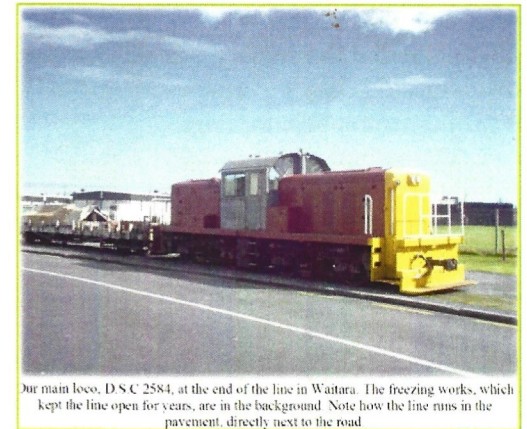
Our main station building at Waitara Road. Replace the red with green, and it could be the Southern Railway!

Railway architecture is also usually much simpler than in Britain, with many station buildings made of wood, with a simple low platform. Having said that, the landscape has produced the need for some fairly impressive viaducts and tunnels, and we still have a spiral on the Main North Island Trunk Line.

There are some great passenger trips available, the three best

known being:

1. The Overlander, which runs up the North Island from the capital Wellington to the largest city, Auckland, and takes in the famous Raurimu spiral.
2. The Tranz Alpine, which runs from Christchurch to Greymouth in the South Island, across the Southern Alps.
3. The Tranz Coastal which takes you from Christchurch to the ferry terminal at Picton, along side the pure blue sea where you get to see seal colonies and go whale watching.



Our main loco, D.S.C 2584, at the end of the line in Waitara. The freezing works, which kept the line open for years, are in the background. Note how the line runs in the pavement, directly next to the road.

Added to these are a good number of preserved railways running both steam and diesel, many of which our Society has good links to.

The Waitara to Lepperton branch line, which is now owned by our society, is 7.2km in length and has seven level crossings along the way. These are all unmanned with no lights. We've had one or two near misses over the years with the occasional driver trying to beat the train! The track consists of 70, 85 & 90lb rail, and is single line with a loop at the Waitara terminus.

The line was opened in 1874 and as such, was the first railway in Taranaki. In 1874, while the land was being cleared at Sentry Hill for the new railway, the daughter of William Perrett (a labourer working on the line) was abducted after he had ignored requests not to dig through a Māori burial



DSC2584 approaching the station at Waitara Road

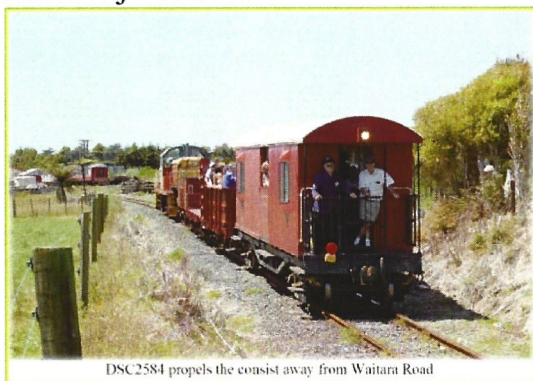
ground from the “land wars” 10 years earlier. Caroline Perrett (known to all as Queenie) was not seen by her parents again and not rediscovered by her original family until 1926, 52 years after the incident occurred.

The line ran from the port of Waitara to New Plymouth, which at that time had no deep water port of it’s own, so was

used to ferry mainly freight to the larger and ever expanding New Plymouth. As time went on, the line was extended to join the rest of the national rail network, and the Waitara end became a branch. (It is this branch line that the society now owns and runs.)

Departing from Waitara, there is a 1:40 gradient climb towards Lepperton where the branch joins the New Plymouth to Marton line.

Back in the days of steam, this gradient meant that most trains were taken up the hill in



DSC2584 propels the consist away from Waitara Road

two parts and re assembled at the top. The branch carried on however for many years, largely serving a freezing works in Waitara, as well as providing passenger services. With the decline in industry, the increasing use of cars, as well as road haulage, these services gradually declined and the line was eventually closed. Sounds familiar doesn’t it!

So, on 25 May 1999 our society was established with the primary aim to save the branch line from Lepperton Junction down to the township of Waitara. We run on every other Sunday, as well as special excursions and charters. Our main train is usually a converted Guards van with seats installed, together with an open car, which is especially popular during our nice hot

summers. (Maybe an open car to Meldon in mid January would be an idea?) This is hauled by D.S.C 2584, a diesel electric locomotive, previously owned by Tranz Rail (one of the private forerunners of Kiwi Rail)

As well as helping out at our workdays, I also do my share of “Guarding”. As we propel out of Waitara, with the Guards van leading, this involves keeping a sharp lookout at road crossings, as well as ensuring passengers



The railway in the middle of the high street, this one at the Bay of Islands Scenic Railway, a preserved line in Kawakawa in the North Island

resist the urge to grab any overhanging foliage from the open car. We also often meet people taking a stroll along the tracks as well as the odd cow! Whilst we are as professional and as safety conscious as we can (and of course meeting our operator permit requirements), it’s all done in a very relaxed atmosphere. We often stop for tea and cakes at our main station building at Brixton, where young and old get the chance to explore the cab of the loco, as well as blow the horn!

During these past few years, I’ve attained my guard’s, shunter’s and jigger licences. The jigger is a small petrol powered track inspection cart, on which

you feel every bump and stone on the track. I remember one icy morning, having to push the jigger up our 1 in 40 gradient out of Waitara, as it couldn’t get enough grip in the rails. As with most similar groups, the number of active members is small, so we get involved in everything, such as track laying and maintenance, rolling stock restoration, line side vegetation control, staffing the train on running days and the list goes on.

Currently I’m also the editor of our newsletter, “The Tablet”, a copy of which does go to Peter Ritchie. (Ed: I can always send on a copy if anyone would like one) If anyone else would like to be added to our email list, or has any enquiries, feel free to contact us using the details at the end of this article.

If any of you read “Continental Modeller”, we had an excellent write up on the society by Phil Barnes (who has visited us several times), in the May 2009 edition. Likewise, if you ever visit New Zealand, please contact us and we’ll do our best to show you the line, we don’t need much of an excuse to roll out a jigger and go for a spin!

We're back to the UK for a visit in June/July 2011, so I'm looking forward to visiting the station to see the developments, as well as popping into the model shop for a few treats!

I hope this has been an interesting introduction to railways in New Zealand, and to the WRPS in particular, and I look forward to receiving the next "Dartmoor Pony" from Peter, which I might add, is read with interest by many of the WRPS members here.



One of the frequent main line steam excursions, this one at New Plymouth

Best Wishes

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WAITARA 4346

Email: wrps.charters@yahoo.co.nz
www.members.tripod.com/waitararailwaypres

Kiwi Rail link:- www.tranzscenic.co.nz

A Letter from New Zealand:-

By email:

Hi Peter, I am Denyse [Dennis] Bettridge, the Operations Manager / Chairman for the Waitara Railway Preservation Society just out of New Plymouth in the North Island of New Zealand.

I always look forward to Adam Jenkins forwarding the "Pony" to me & enjoy it very much. It is uncanny how we all have similar problems with the mountains of paperwork etc & maintenance issues.

My working life was on the rail system here in NZ for 45 1/2 years before retiring & still at it! al-be-it with a 6 year or so break.

I was a fitter / Locomotive maintainer, worked on steam, Diesel electric, Diesel Mechanical & diesel hydraulic locomotives, Railcars, fork lifts &

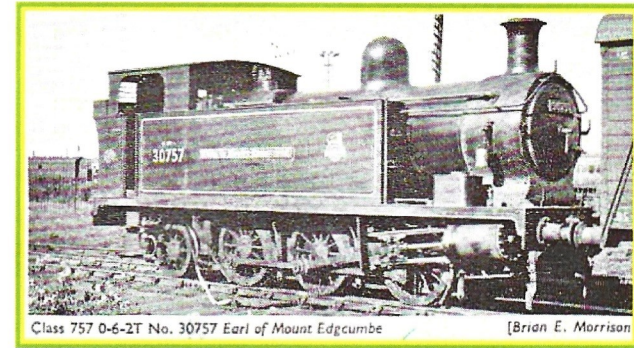
cranes & motor trolleys. Also in the later years I worked on freight rolling stock.

So I am quite conversant with a lot of the UK supplied locomotives, both steam & diesels, But to be honest the General Motors locomotives were superb, The General Electric Locomotives were like the English Electric Locomotives, difficult to get at, but a lot more reliable.

The Caption.----Keith--those ballet lessons you took are working well!

Yours etc,
Denyse Bettridge.

Ed: It's good to know that our little magazine has a circulation in the Antipodes!



Class 757 0-6-2T No. 30757 Earl of Mount Edgcumbe

[Brian E. Morrison]

The GWR were not the only railway to have an "Earl of Mt Edgcumbe"

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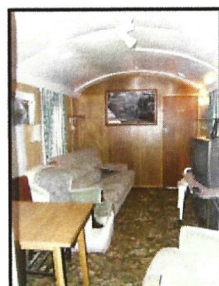
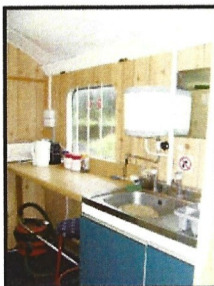
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**Whether Cantankerous Old Curmudgeon,
Or Hyperactive Whelp,
The thing your Railway wants the most,
Is a little bit of Help!**

To volunteer on the Dartmoor Railway
please contact:-

Dave Clegg :- 01626 867210

Martin Kent :- 07866 210399

DARTMOOR RAILWAY

Okehampton Station, Station Road, Okehampton, Devon EX20 1EJ
Tel: 01837.55164

Timetable

(Saturdays, Sundays & Bank Holidays from 9th April 2011 until further notice)

Okehampton	dep	10.30	11.30	12.30	14.00	15.00	16.00		
Meldon Quarry	arr	10.45	11.45	12.45	14.15	15.15	16.15		
Meldon Quarry	dep	11.00	12.00	13.00	14.30	15.30	16.30		
Okehampton	arr	11.15	12.15	13.15	14.45	15.45	16.45		

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