



THE DARTMOOR PONY

**The Magazine of the Dartmoor Railway
Supporters' Association**

No.22 Autumn 2015 £2.00



**Arthur Westlake
Museum Opening**

The DARTMOOR PONY

Issue No. 22

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

FRONT COVER: Former Okehampton railwaymen (from left to right) Richard Westlake, Gerald Smallacombe, Les Glidden, Terry Midgley and Leonard Phare, at the Arthur Westlake Museum dedication ceremony on Saturday 15th August 2015. *Photo: J. Kelsey*

BACK COVER: Top: Thumper 1118 leaving Okehampton with the last train of the day for Meldon on 13th June. *Photo: P. Wagstaff.*
Bottom: New Meldon Viaduct running in board, made and fitted by the Station Maintenance Team. *Photo: J. Kelsey.*

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Volunteering

DRSA would welcome more help with keeping our railway running. For more details contact our Volunteer Coordinator, Geoff Horner, at volunteering@dartmoor-railway-sa.org or by telephone on **01363 82383**.

A message from the Acting Chairman

Philip Wagstaff

Dick Henrywood has resigned as Chairman of DRSA after many years of undertaking that role. Dick has worked hard for the Association over the years and I would like to pay tribute to the way that he has guided the Association during his time as Chairman. Thank you Dick for your hard work on our behalf which is greatly appreciated.

I have been asked by the committee to become Acting Chair of the Association and whilst I am willing to continue in the role, the committee and I feel that it is important to ask the membership to see if there is anyone who might consider undertaking the role of Chair either now or in the future.

If you are a member of the Association and you might be interested in applying for the role of Chair of DRSA could you please let me know by email on philip.wagstaff@methodist.org.uk or 07702 003160 and I can supply further details of the post.

At a recent committee meeting, we explored how Dartmoor Railway operates and the following is an extract from that conversation. It is only a brief guide to the way that **Dartmoor Railway Community Interest Company (DRCIC)**, **Dartmoor Railway Supporters' Association (DRSA)** and **Granite Line Limited (GLL)** work together and a fuller paper is in the process of being produced and may be subject to change.

DRCIC is the lease holder and operator of the line. It provides the safety case under which trains run, insurance for staff and volunteers and maintains the track. DRCIC is responsible for the strategic management of the line including the site at Meldon. The company provides the framework for operations (including determining track access charges), runs the Polar Express which has proved to be a seasonal success, and operates the Meldon Buffet and the (newly renamed) Old Station Tearoom at Okehampton.

DRSA is the supporters' association which promotes the railway and is the channel through which volunteers are recruited and supported.

The Association holds and raises funds which are used to maintain the Association's rolling stock and to provide materials for enhancing the stations. DRSA now holds the lease for the buildings on Platform 2 and is presently exploring an association shop and information point at the station.

Granite Line Limited negotiates with DRCIC and agrees the level of the heritage service that can be provided. The GLL board is responsible for the management of the service (including the financial management) and works with DRSA in the provision of volunteers needed to run the service safely and effectively. GLL has been developing opportunities for travel and events outside of the usual heritage train timetable e.g. the Jazz trains.

Membership Matters

Peter Flick, Membership Secretary

We are sorry to learn of the death, aged 74, of one of our long standing members, Chris Webb, of Winchester. He was a frequent visitor to the Railway and a stalwart supporter.

During the course of 2015, to 30th September, we have been pleased to welcome these new members:

Mr Pat Doyle	Kenton, Exeter
Mr Alex Fowles	Exeter
Mr Nigel Green	Exeter
Mr Alan & Mrs Maureen Harris	Okehampton
Mr RM & Mrs JB Morris	Exeter
Mr Peter & Mrs Hilary Mulley	New Polzeath, Wadebridge
Mr Vincent Roberts	Torrington
Ms Joanne Skinner	Okehampton
Mr Pete Winston	Bradworthy, Holsworthy
Mr David Wotton	Paignton

Railway News

Heritage Services

Unfortunately, we were notified at the beginning of October that Thumper 1118 had picked up a bad wheel flat and was towed away for repair, along with Thumper 1132 which also needed attention. They are scheduled to return at the end of October, so hopefully should be back by the time you read this. In the meantime, 08937 has been pressed into service to provide a temporary replacement service.

Platform 2 Shop

DRSA is in the process of finalising an agreement with Devon County Council to lease two of the rooms on Platform 2 of Okehampton Station; i.e. the former Okehampton Community Transport office and the adjoining room.

The intention is to set up a shop in the first room, to provide DRSA with an additional income stream. It will also provide a focus for enquiries about DRSA and its activities. In addition to functioning as an office as necessary, the second room will be used as a store, both for shop stock, and for the station railwayana which is stored out of harm's way during the Polar Express season.

The shop will sell a gradually expanding range of DRSA merchandise, along with second hand railway books, memorabilia and model railway items. Clearly we will depend heavily on donations from members for the latter, so if anyone is having a clearout or would like to donate suitable items please get in touch. We also hope to have a children's corner with books, toys, colouring sheets etc.

Some work has been done already. Both rooms have been decorated by the Station Maintenance Team, and the carpets have been cleaned. Some bookshelves have been installed and stock is starting to arrive. Chris Horner is investigating the availability of grants to assist with the purchase of shop equipment like a till or a pricing gun.

If you are able to donate, please contact Chris Horner on 01363 82383 or christine.horner@talk21.com. All constructive suggestions, ideas and offers of help will be gratefully received, particularly from anyone with retail experience!

Bow and North Tawton 150th Anniversary

As we went to press there was some uncertainty about the Bow and North Tawton 150th event arrangements because of the unfortunate wheel flat problem with Thumper 1118 and the Den Brook crossing work. By the time you read this we hope a successful event will have taken place. Details will be on the website and in the next Pony.

Rail Meeting at Crediton

Railfuture is planning a meeting on rail development at Crediton on Saturday 28th November. The meeting will take place at the Boniface Centre (EX17 2AH), adjacent to Crediton Parish Church. Parking is available in the church car park for Boniface Centre users. There will be special emphasis on services between Exeter and Okehampton. Non-members are welcome and there is no charge for attending, but donations welcome on the day. To book a provisional place please email: gerard.duddridge@railfuture.org.uk. More info at www.railfuture.org.uk

Farewell to Mary

Andrew Turner

Sunday 13th September marked the last day for Mary Trant, working in and managing the buffet at Okehampton station, deciding that it was time for a change and a well earned break. Mary was one of the mainstays responsible for keeping the station running since the re-opening in August 2008. She had been previously involved during prior to that, when ECT (*Ealing Community Transport*) operated the railway, but came back when the buffet started up again in August 2008, serving tea and coffee from the doorway for the Sunday Rover service and passing cyclists, along with Dennis and Sue LeWorthy, Kay Mills and Andrew Turner.





When BARS took over the railway, Mary took on the running of the buffet again and started building up trade, baking cakes and cooking lovely meals from the small kitchen that got quite hot in summer.

Apart from being snowed in at home in Bridestowe in 2010, and the annual week off after the summer rush, Mary was on duty every weekend almost without fail and can now look forward to a bit of a break with David until the next work comes along.

There was a small farewell for Mary on her last weekend as a thanks for all she has done and for being a good 'boss' for the staff and volunteers who worked with her in the buffet. Good luck Mary in the future!



Of course the station buffet remains open and welcomes Sheena as the new cook and manager.

Granite Line Limited

Roger Webster

Granite Line Ltd. was formed mainly as a vehicle to negotiate with British American Railway Services (BARS) for the operation of heritage type train services on the Dartmoor Railway which was with the backing of the Dartmoor Railway Supporters' Association. A 'stand alone' limited company was formed so, in the event of any financial difficulties, the membership of the DRSA would not be affected. Also BARS indicated they would prefer to deal with a separate limited company.



*Thumper 1118 at Sampford Courtenay on
29th August 2015 on the Jazz evening.
(P. Wagstaff).*

There are five directors who are all members of the DRSA and receive no payment whatsoever for their services; the directors are Dick Henrywood, Nigel Remington, Peter Chapman, Philip Wagstaff and myself. Nigel is the director who deals directly with the management of BARS and, frankly, without his negotiating skills trains would not have run at all during the past two summer seasons. The arrangement is that Granite Line Ltd. pays to BARS access and mileage charges for the running of trains.

This year, Nigel's own Thumper unit (1118) has been operating most of the services. Normally, on Saturdays we run two trips all the way between Meldon Viaduct and Bow (about 12.5 miles each way) as well as one trip to Sampford Courtenay in addition to some journeys just between Okehampton and Meldon. On most Sundays when First Great Western were running trains between Exeter and Okehampton, the Thumper would just go to Meldon (6 return trips).



*Jazz Band at Okehampton on 18th July
(P. Martin).*

We have also operated two successful events on 18th July and 29th August: Jazz, Beer and BBQ evenings. The Jazz Band played at Okehampton then on the train to Sampford Courtenay and Bow. Beer and a superb BBQ were served on the platform at Okehampton. Thanks are due to Mary Trant, Kay Mills, Andy Turner and all the other DRSA volunteers who assisted.

Fundraising update

Kay Mills

It was a successful season on the tombola on Platform 3. Thanks to everybody who donated goods and the ones who bought tickets. A special thanks to all helpers including Freda, Arthur, Marion and Graham and others who sat at the stall. Money raised was given to Tom for station maintenance, Granite Line Ltd., the museum opening and other small contributions around the station. Looking forward to starting on Platform 2 where all the goods have now been stored. Thanks to Tom and the gang for painting etc. to make it a worthwhile venture.



The Arthur Westlake Museum

John Caesar, Museum Coordinator. Photos by Jon Kelsey.

Saturday 15th August 2015 marked the official opening of the Arthur Westlake Museum. A ceremony at Okehampton station brought together community representatives and DRSA volunteers with some of the men who worked on the railway during the days of steam.



The museum is dedicated to local railwayman Arthur Westlake, who was born in 1918 and began his career with the Southern Railway aged just 15. He worked his way up to become a driver, and used to drive steam locomotives over the North Cornwall line through

Okehampton. Later he became a manager at Okehampton station, and worked hard to maintain freight traffic to Okehampton open when it was threatened with closure. Sadly Arthur passed away in 2011, but his efforts helped ensure that the line and station are still here today.



Former local railwaymen (left to right) Terry Midgley, Leonard Phare, Les Glidden, Gerald Smallacombe and Richard Westlake.

Arthur's son, Devon County Councillor Richard Westlake MBE was the guest of honour at the ceremony. Richard followed his father onto the railways and became a train driver himself, eventually driving HSTs between London and the southwest. Other former local railwaymen Gerald Smallacombe, Les Glidden, Len Phare and Terry Midgley participated in the event, and provided a fund of fascinating anecdotes about life on Okehampton's railway.

Also in attendance were representatives of Okehampton Town Council, owners of the line Aggregate Industries, Okehampton United Charity, and Okehampton's Museum of Dartmoor Life. We were also pleased to welcome the renowned railway photographer and former railwayman Colin Marsden, who has assisted with research into Lab 11's history, and Dave Trant, without whose engineering skills Lab 11 wouldn't have a generator. The event also provided an opportunity to thank the DRSA Carriage & Wagon and Station Maintenance volunteers who contributed to the refurbishment of the museum and Lab 11.



After an introduction by the Reverend Philip Wagstaff, DRSA's acting Chairman, Okehampton's deputy mayor Councillor Jan Goffey said a few words about the value of the railway to Okehampton. Richard Westlake then spoke about his father's life on

Okehampton's railway. He and his father watched in 1972 when the last train left Okehampton station before passenger services ceased, and he expressed the wish that passenger trains will once again regularly visit the town. Councillors Goffey and Westlake then unveiled the plaque on the museum door.

The party then moved along the platform to Laboratory 11 which entered service on the railway earlier this year. DRSA acquired the coach in 2011 with the assistance of the Okehampton United Charity (OUC), and then carried out a three year restoration, returning it to its BREL orange and blue livery and fitting out the interior as a lounge for events such as this one.



Allenton Fisher, chairman of Okehampton United Charity, speaking about the Lab 11 restoration before unveiling the plaque.

The chairman of OUC, Allenton Fisher, praised the efforts of DRSA's volunteers, both in restoring the carriage, and in keeping the town's historic railway station in such good condition. He spoke of the fruitful relationship between OUC and DRSA, before unveiling a plaque commemorating the endeavours of the DRSA volunteers, and the financial contribution of OUC and the anonymous benefactor who funded the restoration work.

Seated at the tables in Lab 11, the attendees then enjoyed tea and cake, reminisced about Okehampton's railway past and pondered its future. An enjoyable day was completed by travelling on the scheduled Granite Line/DRSA service to Meldon on class 205 Thumper 1118, where they admired the magnificent views from the viaduct, and the station's smart new Meldon Viaduct running in board.



The event was planned and executed by a group of DRSA volunteers too numerous to mention, to all of whom we extend our gratitude. Our grateful thanks are also due to Granite Line Ltd. for providing a return trip to Meldon for our guests, to Mary Trant for the tremendous cakes, and to the BARS crew who pulled out all the stops to ensure that Lab 11 was back at Okehampton in time for the event.



Carriage & Wagon Report

Geoff Horner, Volunteer Coordinator

The summer months have been as busy as ever for the Carriage & Wagon group, although that is not to say that we don't find time to enjoy those sunny days working in the surroundings of Dartmoor. It has also been a pleasure to welcome new members John Davis, Patrick Doyle and Alan Harris to our ranks.

The freshening up of the DRSA owned 'FK' corridor compartment coach S13436 mentioned in the last 'Pony' was successfully completed. And after a lot more repair work than was originally expected the ex LMS Goods Brake Van 731411 is now ready for use again with gates fitted to both verandas should it be required for brake van rides in the future. Both vehicles are now coupled together with Lab11 and the '08' as a vacuum braked set formed entirely of DRSA owned rolling stock (apart from the '08').



Vac set in the autumn sunshine at Meldon.

Carriage & Wagon have now turned their attention to two vehicles owned by DRSA members Julian Pope and Peter Stokes that are earmarked for service as an air braked set for use in 2016. Julian Pope's ex 4-CEP TSO 70273 (once part of SR EMU unit 1530) is now in the C&W shed. And work on this has begun. So far the roof has been almost completely cleared of the old loose and flaking coating and will soon be ready for the application of the finishing coating of bitumen paint. At the same time preparatory work clearing the under frames of rust and applying a coat of anti corrosion primer has started,

those windows which will require taking out and resealing have been identified and the task of checking the doors, drop windows and locking mechanisms has started.



70273 in the shed (above) and 76398 outside the shed (below).



Peter Spokes' ex Class 423/2 4-VOP driving trailer 76398 (SR EMU unit 3905 and part of the only 4-VOP unit in preservation) is waiting to come into the shed as soon as space becomes available. If all goes according to plan these two vehicles, resplendent in BR blue/grey livery, will be coupled to Lab 11 as an air braked alternative to the vacuum braked set.

Station Maintenance Report

Tom Baxter, Station Maintenance Team Co-ordinator

To start where we left off last time... The smart new Meldon running in board (*see photo on back cover*) was completed and fitted in July and now completes the 're-naming' of the station from Meldon Quarry to Meldon Viaduct. Thanks in particular to Jon Kelsey and John Coxon for this effort.

Otherwise work has been mainly concentrated at Okehampton station and has revolved around preparing the Museum for its official opening in August and the other Platform 2 rooms which the DRSA have recently leased from Devon County Council. This has involved painting and other restoration work.

Another running in board is in the course of production for the down side platform 2. The existing frame is now suffering extensive rot and is not likely to last another winter (*take a close look at the front cover photo*). This board should be finished within the next couple of weeks. We have also completed running in boards for Bow. These have been erected using the surviving concrete posts and replicate the concrete

boards that were formerly there. Astute readers will realise that this now only leaves North Tawton station without a name board!



Finally I should mention the regular stalwart members who continue to contribute to these efforts – Geoff Brooks, John Coxon, Jon Kelsey, John Caesar and our 'out worker' Simon Jeffery. We much appreciate all they do.

Simon Jeffrey on September 26th after fitting the new running in signs at Bow station in time for the 150th anniversary (M. Henrywood).

Glorious Hanging Baskets!

Sue Baxter, Gardening Team

As we go into October we need to issue a warning. Look out for the third hanging basket! If you don't it may just knock your toupee off, so lush and beautiful has it become as the trailing scarlet begonia has been perfectly framed and steadied by the blue trailing lobelia.



The hands that planted all the 10 round baskets hanging under the canopy belong to Sharon at ***Bow Aquatic and Garden Centre***. We are very lucky that our station is continuing to be supported by them under the new ownership. It has been a pleasure going to see Rachel and her team, not to mention allowing ourselves to be lured by the aromas from their cafe. We relaxed on the terrace after exploring their gardens and admiring the huge variety of colourful fish.

They are actually on the A3076 halfway between Okehampton and Crediton at an altitude of 500 feet. So the hanging baskets were properly established and ready to flourish with us on the edge of Dartmoor. If the weather stays mild and calm we may keep them right to the beginning of November!

With Christmas approaching, don't forget that by doing your online shopping via our [easyfundraising](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/drsa) page you can raise donations towards DRSA at no cost to you - *£1333 has been raised so far!*

www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/drsa

Over 2700 retailers take part in the scheme, including Amazon, John Lewis, M&S, Asda, Tesco, Sainsbury's, Argos and Expedia.

Bere Alston to Okehampton by train **in 2 hours 3 minutes**

Dave Clegg

No, they haven't (yet) relaid the track via Tavistock – and the journey won't take that long if the re-opening ever happens. But an unexpected opportunity to travel the 'Great Way Round' did recently come my way on a special trip organised for Friday 2nd October, and which had been arranged in connection with the National Community Rail Awards which this year took place in Torquay.

It all started when I had a call one evening from my 'son-in-law', a FGW (now GWR) driver. "Hi Dave. Guess where I am! I've just driven down to Kingswear in a Class 150/2." (Kingswear, as most will know, is on the Paignton and Dartmouth Steam Railway). He went on to say he'd been given a spare ticket for the Friday Community Rail trip which was going to Okehampton, amongst other places, and would I like it? You bet!

So, on a beautiful sunny morning, and with my special "GWR Community Rail Train" ticket in hand, I was allowed to board the two coach 150/2 DMU at Newton Abbot on its arrival from Torquay and destined initially for Bere Alston. The train was fairly full with members of Community Rail Partnerships from all over the country and other interested parties. All were in full voice on a variety of rail-related topics, including the prospects of reopening 'our' line via Tavistock. At Plymouth we stopped to take on the (free) drink/cake trolley and this was soon in business as we set off on time at 10.03. After taking the single-line token at St Budeaux Victoria Rd, we ran non-stop to Bere Alston arriving at 10.21 which seemed surprisingly quick. Incidentally, the trip up the east bank of Tamar was absolutely stunning, and I'd recommend it to anyone who hasn't travelled this line before. At Bere Alston, several of our passengers were particularly pleased that we had travelled right to the northern end of the platform, which is several yards, sorry, metres, further up the platform than the service train goes (do I hear a groan?). For me, the highlight was the brisk non-stop run back down the branch which

brought back clear memories of travelling behind fast SR steam to Plymouth in the 1960s. Marvellous!

So far, our train had been running right time, but the late-running up Cornish Riviera (in new GWR livery) plus its slow progress in front of us up Dainton Bank meant we were late into Newton Abbot and had lost our path there to the scheduled stopping service as far as Dawlish Warren. This meant we were late through Exeter with no possibility of a right-time arrival at Okehampton where our DR General Manager and her assistants had prepared a great buffet – but unfortunately with too little time to enjoy it properly. Professor Paul Salveson (initiator of Community Rail) also gave a brief but interesting talk about the initial refurbishment of Okehampton station from its earlier derelict state.

During the trip I was fortunate to meet and talk to a number of interesting people including Richard Burningham (head of the Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership), various reps from other Community Rail Partnerships and staff from South West Trains and GWR. Two of the last were the driver and guard of our train, who when I said I was leaving the train at Exeter on the way back, politely pointed out that we weren't scheduled to stop there! However, they did manage a very quick special stop, and I hopped off together with the South West Trains staff (who agreed with me that it would be great to see their Waterloo – Exeter trains continuing on up to Okehampton!).

After leaving Exeter, the train carried on to Plymouth for a visit to Laira Depot, and afterwards returning to Exeter via the Newton Abbot to Heathfield branch. It's a pity I missed that part of the trip, but I had a pressing engagement in Exeter. And I had anyway travelled up the Heathfield Branch to see Father Christmas last year with my granddaughter. She won't remember it because she was playing most of the time with her ipod, or tablet, or whatever it is they do their constant messaging with. But it was a great trip, and it was good to experience how so many people are genuinely enthusiastic about the future of rail – both staff and the public alike.

By the way, I was given a rather large bright yellow T-shirt with a map of the TransWilts rail network area on the front. It's horrible. Anyone want it?

Summer Sundays at Okehampton

Paul Martin, Duty Manager

On Sundays in summer Okehampton station resembles a station on the national network with it being served by four trains to and from Exeter. First Great Western operate the service (funded by Devon County Council), normally a single car 153 unit doing the duties. Keen timetable readers will note, despite it calling at St David's and Central, all but the last train start/finish at little Exeter St James Park. This is to allow the train to use Exmouth Junction to switch lines back for the return journey.

Platform 3 is abuzz with anticipation as the time of the first train approaches, with passengers along most of the length of the platform oblivious to the fact that it will be a single car unit. There is plenty of luggage on display and it's the only time you'll see family & friends waving people off or welcoming arrivals. Most weeks you'll see Richard Proctor, former Duty Manager, interviewing waiting passengers as part of a survey for Okehampton Town Council. As the luggage suggests, some are using the service to use the rail network way beyond Exeter - Germany being one destination! Two holiday makers told Richard that they changed the dates of their stay at the Youth Hostel so they could travel both ways by train. Still the majority of passengers for the first train are shoppers and people exploring other parts of Devon. The record to date is 107 people on the first train when it arrived at Exeter on a 75 seat single unit! Some weeks there are some familiar faces amongst the passengers including our new Pony magazine editor, and even our four legged correspondent has been known to use the service.

It's a busy time for the Duty manager as there is a very short turn-round time for the first 3 trains. The first one having only 3 minutes which requires the Duty Manager to let Crediton Signal box know that the train has arrived, and get permission for the return departure to Crediton. The guard needs contacting to agree that they will let you know passenger numbers then the driver is given permission to pass the stop board and enter section. Once all are on board, along with the

Guard the train is dispatched and then Crediton signal box is called to let them know the time that the train departed Okehampton.

After that Thumper is waiting in platform 2 with the Meldon service hopefully with some of the arrivals from Exeter on board. The buffet is as busy as ever serving endless cooked breakfasts before the Sunday lunches take over. The afternoon will see more cakes and cream teas being served and the hardy bunch of staff and volunteers will wonder why they ever agreed to the 6 pm finish!



The final train of the day from Okehampton arrives at Exeter St Davids in the bay Platform 2 on Sunday 9th August, formed of single 153 unit number 153368 (J. Caesar).

The pattern continues through the day with the station busy and the car park fills up. Some weekends BBQ king Andrew will fire up a barbeque and Kay's tombola stall is there raising much needed funds. Lots of shoppers return from Exeter laden with bags. One family arrived and departed with huge amounts of luggage including a fully laden wheelbarrow for a week at the Youth Hostel. They seemed most put out when told they could not go across the tracks with it, though we did assist in carrying it across the footbridge.

When Thumper completes its service at 16:15 there is still the last Exeter service to run. For some reason it bucks the trend and spends 40 minutes waiting at Okehampton. It is the quietest train of the day and the day winds down with the FGW crew making use of the buffet. Eventually just before 6 pm the final whistle will sound and the train will pull away with a few passengers aboard almost resembling those quiet rural stations pre-Beeching. After it has left the buffet can be closed and it's just a matter of the Duty Manager waiting for the Exeter train to leave the section at Crediton. Then it is all over until the next week!



On a wet Sunday 26th July, 153325 in colourful Citizens' Rail livery stands at Exeter Central after working the slightly delayed 11:58 departure from Okehampton. Citizens' Rail (www.citizensrail.org) is a European Union project to develop local and regional railways through community involvement and spans the UK (Devon and Lancashire), France, Germany and the Netherlands (J. Caesar).

A visit to North Cornwall

Dave Clegg

When Okehampton was an important railway junction up to the 1960s you could travel direct to Padstow along what was known as the North Cornwall Line. You simply turned right at Meldon Junction, left at Halwill Junction, and then carried on down through Launceston, Egloskerry, Delabole and Wadebridge – to name just a few of the stations en route. Wouldn't it be great if we could do that today?

Recently, my wife and I were lucky enough to spend a few days and nights near the North Cornwall Line at Little Petherick. For those who do not know where Little Petherick is, it is about two miles “this side” of Padstow – now sometimes known as “Rick Steinland”. And yes, we did eat at one of Rick Stein's pubs, The Cornish Arms in St Merryn, and the food was good: and the price was affordable - almost. We also bought a couple of doughnuts at his bakery shop in Padstow but one of them, not mine fortunately, had no jam in it. We were unable to take it to complain, having eaten the evidence - but you have been warned in case you decide to visit this part of North Cornwall yourself. And visit you must. The Camel Estuary is breathtaking and provides very different experiences at high and low tides.

I'm fortunate/unfortunate (depending on my mood at the time) at being old enough to have travelled the North Cornwall line in the days of steam. And one particular memory that stands out is the iron bridge at Little Petherick Creek where the Pinkson River enters the Camel – a site that is often featured in books about this line (and in fact I was lucky enough to pick up a picture of a Drummond T9 loco crossing this bridge at our recent AGM). So of course it was an important part of my holiday to walk the Camel Trail, as it is now known, and cross the bridge once more.

The Camel Trail is in two distinct parts: Padstow to Wadebridge, and Wadebridge to Bodmin or Wenford Bridge (depending on which branch you take near Boscarne Jct). Whereas the first part is mainly along the side of the Camel estuary, the second travels through equally scenic wooded valleys, and it is pleasing to note that old platforms

such as those at Grogley and Nanstallon Halts have been retained as landmarks. Walking both halves brought back so many memories for me, tinged with some sadness that this line, which linked Okehampton with North Cornwall was no longer a railway, but a leisure cycle-way.



Bridge across Little Petherick Creek (D. Clegg).

Other things that caught my attention about how things have changed over the 55 years since I travelled here behind steam included how bikes themselves have changed (number of gears, child trailers and so on) and also that Health and Safety has happened: perhaps for the best as it happens, as one problem when walking converted railway routes is that not all cyclists are ambling along at a leisurely pace to take in the view. Some seem determined on “getting there” as quickly as possible, and few deign to use their bell. And when you compare the days of rattling along at 50mph behind a weighty steam locomotive (with no Health & Safety), it does seem a bit over-the-top to see cyclists in HiVis vests and helmets, and rock cuttings now reinforced with metal mesh in case something should fall down – which it probably never did in the past.



Grogley Halt (D. Clegg).

On our final morning at little Petherick, I handed back the key of the holiday cottage to the neighbour living across the stream at the Old Mill and chatted about our holiday, how times had changed and what a shame it was that cars had put the railway out of business. As it happened, he too was a railway enthusiast, but he pointed out that it was the railway, and in particular, the railway bridge across Petherick Creek, that had put the mill he occupied out of business. Apparently the bridge prevented boats accessing the grain store that serviced the mill at the top of the creek. I wonder if people were as sentimental then about change at that time as we are today about the loss of rural branch lines. And I wonder what the next change will be. Perhaps a re-opening of the line as a railway once researchers determine that cycling is bad for your health? And for those speed-merchants determined to continue with the cycling sport, regardless of their health warnings, perhaps an extra carriage at the rear of the train equipped with exercise bikes? Of course the windows would be blocked out to prevent their efforts being distracted by the passing scenery.



Great Western Railway unit 143617 at Okehampton during skid-pan driver training on Tuesday 6th October 2015 (P. Wagstaff).

Old Maps (Part 1)

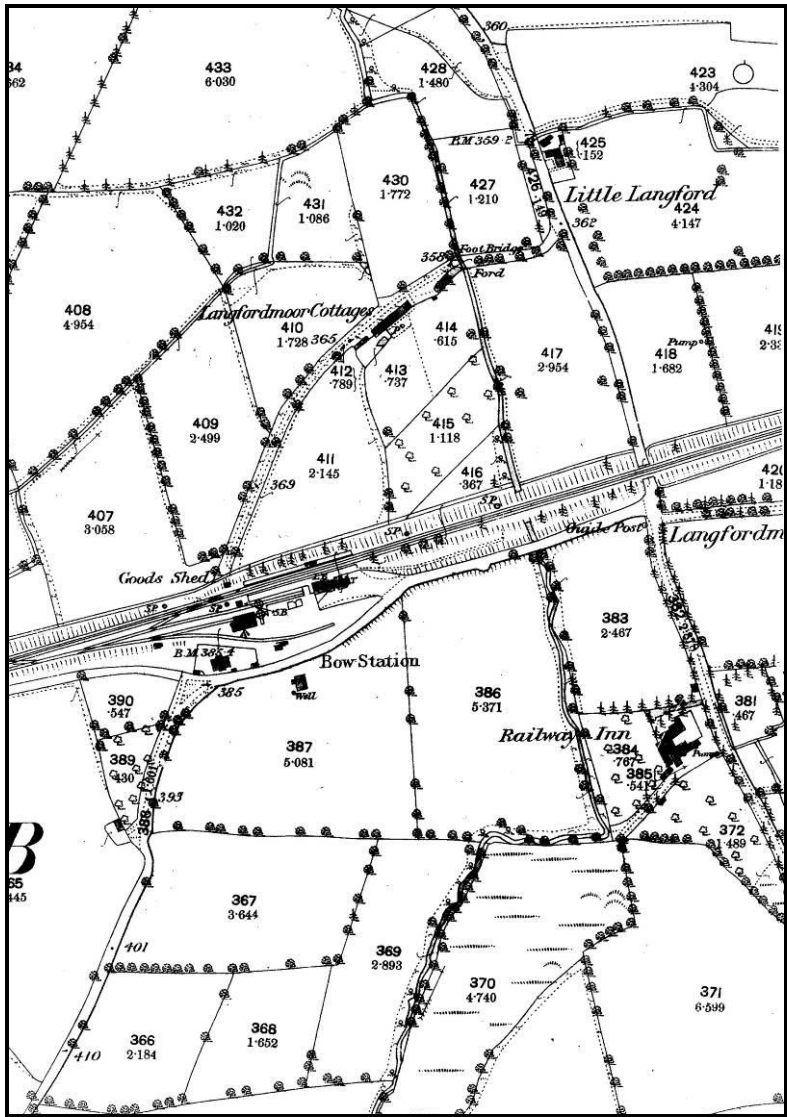
Jon Kelsey

The Ordnance Survey ‘County Series’ maps are the earliest large scale maps available with complete coverage of the country. They were originally produced during the second half of the nineteenth century, and we are fortunate that the maps of the area through which our railway passes date from the 1880s, thus showing it in relative infancy.

They were available in two scales, usually referred to as 6 inches and 25 inches to the mile, but actually 1:10560 and 1:2500 respectively. The Devon Archives and Local Studies Service holds a complete set of the 1:2500 maps of Devon on microfiche, and I have taken images of the DR stations from this source. The process is a little convoluted, involving printing from the microfiche viewer then scanning the print. Coupled with the losses already incurred when the microfiche was first created, the result is some loss of both definition and dimensional accuracy. It would be very nice to have original paper copies of these maps in DRSA’s archive.

We hope to publish 1880s images of all the DR stations in future Pony editions as space allows. We begin the series with Bow, to coincide with the 150th anniversary of the station opening.

Bow station, 1888



Rosie's Diary: Other quadrupeds on the line!

By Rosie



Oh life's been so good! Where to start sharing it with you? I know, blackberries. They can still be picked if there is a good bunch hanging low, grass hiding the prickles from my nose. But a Tuesday Gang mate of mine, Peter W, had me drooling at the thought of blackberry pies and tons of meat one day, when we were at Sampford Courtenay Station. We had just ripped some ivy off the bridge and then scuffed away the earth covering the steps from the road to the Down platform. Peter walked down those steps and reckoned the last time he did that, he was out blackberrying at the age of six.

On a Wednesday afternoon his dad would shut the bakers shop at the top of Okehampton Arcade and the family would catch the Devon General Bus out to Tongue End with baskets to collect blackberries from the lane hedgerows. The fare was 6d from Sampford Courtenay to Okehampton. The Signal Box on the Up platform was controlling the shunting of *wagons of meat* from the slaughterhouse behind. An evening train pulled by a T9 every Monday to Friday picked up perishables between Plymouth and Exeter (strawberries from Cornwall and *more meat* from Halwill slaughterhouse) to reach Smithfield by 5am. I think it would have been a good posting, Station Dog at Sampford Courtenay.

You may remember that I have had the view from the driver's seat in the Wickham Trolley before, so it will be no surprise to you that I carried out an inspection of the Wickham refurbishment in the Carriage Shed. Now a cheeky “No 1” it has had a complete repaint, new windows, some welding and a



new floor. Definitely easier for me to reach the pedals *before* the seat was put back.

Trying to track squirrels leads you to some dramatic locations. So it was when I lost the scent at the bottom of Meldon Viaduct. I was glad of a drink from the West Okement after the chase. Then my 2 legs



slithered down after me and started pointing out inedible things like bricks, granite and concrete bags. Apart from a few missing concrete bags it all looked pretty good, but not as easy to climb as a usual river bank. I must also mention the time in Wales when my 2 legs insisted that I would find a drink *on top of a*

bridge! What use would that bridge be when I don't want to get my paws wet crossing a river? But sure enough near Llangollen (easiest to say that while choking on a bone) is the Pontcysyllte aqueduct. You can see 2 legs Tom was trying not to get vertigo by keeping his back to the view and holding onto my lead for reassurance.

Now, have you been wondering about those other quadrupeds on the line? One Saturday 2 legs Sue was asked where the Dartmoor Ponies were and she went looking for some spare copies of this magazine. Next thing we knew was that an actual



invasion was taking place and a repelling action was being mounted by Paul, Alistair and Tom. It was eventually successful despite two outflanking moves. However the guard found a deposit in the middle of the safe walking route to the ground frame. You can tell *they* were not well trained.

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