



THE DARTMOOR PONY

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Supporters' Association**

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Sulzer Weekend Success

The DARTMOOR PONY

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

FRONT COVER: Dartmoor Railway CIC personnel and DRSA volunteers line up with 45060 'Sherwood Forester' and 47701 'Waverley' at Okehampton on Sunday 24th January 2016 on the second day of the Sulzer Weekend. *Photo: P. Wagstaff*

BACK COVER: Top: 66109 on the 'Tre, Pol and Pen' railtour which visited Okehampton and Meldon on Saturday 12th March 2016.
Bottom: 33103 and 47701 at Okehampton with the 12.55 Meldon Viaduct to Coleford Junction on 23rd January 2016. *Photo: David Hunt.*

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Notes from the Chairman

Rev. Philip Wagstaff

As we approach the new running and tourist season and as the heritage services have just started we have had news that the D05 Preservation are is going to bring 47828 down to the Dartmoor Railway, which is good news for everyone at the Railway.

One of the recent DRSA projects has been the development and opening of the shop on Platform 2. Chris Horner and the team have been busy with the shop itself and have been looking at ways of developing this facility. The shop, together with the Arthur Westlake Museum, is an additional visitor attraction and the aim is to initially open the shop during the weekends. Please come along and say hello to Chris and the team and have a browse around. Thanks to everyone who has worked hard to bring this project to fruition.

The shop and the station as a whole became busy when the charter UK from Railtours' 'Tre, Pol and Pen' tour visited Okehampton earlier in March. Hauled by 66109 and 66177, the 12 coach train brought in around 500 passengers, many of whom visited the buffet and the shop. Many complimentary comments about Dartmoor Railway were received from our visitors. There are some pictures on the website.

I would draw your attention please to the AGM which is due to be held on Saturday 21st May at the Ockment Centre, North Street in Okehampton beginning at 6.30 pm. All members are invited to attend and to contribute to the conversations around the life of the railway.

The committee have been exploring some changes to the constitution which we will bring to the AGM. Basically, what is being proposed is that all members of the committee will be elected annually at the AGM. It is envisaged that the officers will continue to be elected by the committee as it is constituted each year.

During the meeting a report on the activity of the committee over the past year will be presented. Following our conversation and any votes being taken we will have a slide show given by Mr Amyas Crump entitled 'Around the Southern in North Devon'.

Please come along if you can or if you're not able to attend and you would like your views expressed to the meeting please let me know by e-mail to philip.wagstaff@gmail.com or by post to the station.

There will be much happening over the summer which the Association will be able to support. Please continue to look at the website for further details.

I hope to see you at the AGM if you can make it – a summary report of the meeting will be in the next edition of the Pony.

Thank you all for your support for Dartmoor Railway which is greatly appreciated.

Railway News

Dartmoor Railway welcomes D05 Preservation

Following discussions with Dartmoor Railway CIC and DRSA, D05 Preservation has been offered a home for 47828. It is hoped to have the loco in service on the line as soon as possible.



47828 at Colchester on 25th May 2013 (Philip Wagstaff).

47828 will be moved from Longtown to Meldon depot by rail where volunteers from all parties will commence their work on preparing it for service on Dartmoor Railway for this season.

2016 Heritage Services

Dartmoor Railway services for 2016 started on Good Friday, 25th March. Trains will run on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holidays between Okehampton and Meldon Viaduct. Services will be diesel operated until further noticed, initially using D4167 hauling Lab 11 and 61743. Note that Day Rovers now replace return tickets, allowing unlimited travel on the day of purchase. Please see our services page for timetables, fares and service updates:

<http://www.dartmoor-railway-sa.org/services>

Okehampton-Exeter Sunday Rover

It is confirmed that train services will operate again this year on summer Sundays between Okehampton and Exeter from May 15th to September 11th. Please keep an eye on our website for updates.

Rail Operations

Paul Martin, Duty Manager

As usual it's a quiet time of year in terms of train movements. A number of engineering trains have been run mainly using the Polar Express locomotives. There was also some ongoing driver training for the Pioneer Diesel group on 45060 as a part of the hire deal. Usually 33103 was utilised at the other end of the rake.

Hired-in coach 5647 left by road in February returning to the Mid-Norfolk Railway. The EMU stock, owned by Peter Spokes, were due to leave in March having being stabled at Meldon for a number of years. This all frees up more space in Meldon sidings and with Dartmoor Railway now having potential use of roads 12 to 14 again there is much more flexibility there.

The Polar Express locomotives left on March 1st collected by the usual suspect, DCR Class 31 31452. Graham Isom conducted the train to and from Crediton. A few manoeuvres were required at Okehampton

as the order of the locos needed changing after 45060 developed some faults on an engineering run. 33103 and 47701 were dropped off at Nemesis, Burton (the 33 already now moved on to Ecclesbourne Railway) and the 45 was stabled at Derby before completing its move to Barrow Hill later in the week. It is hoped that the Class 45 will be back next year for the Polar Express season. With the arrival of 47828 it should mean that 47701 will not be returning, though we've thought that before!!

The start of the Meldon Shuttle heritage service was delayed until March 25th Good Friday with 08937, Lab 11 and 61743 performing the duties.

Line Update

Paul Martin, Duty Manager

General maintenance of the track has been ongoing including jobs such as fishplate oiling and drainage improvements. The digging out of drainage ditches at Meldon Quarry especially making a significant improvement there.

Charlie White has been carrying out Signal & Telegraph checks and jobs. The line was returned to 2 sections (Crediton–Okehampton & Okehampton–Meldon) on March 18th. This was a week later than planned but delayed to enable the Tre, Pol & Pen charter train to go from Crediton to Meldon non-stop on March 12th. The Crediton to Meldon staff being taken out of use for another year. The Okehampton – Meldon staff is now in resplendent red!

Track work Volunteers wanted

DR are about to implement plans to install new signalling cabling between Okehampton and Meldon and also to extend Eastwards the current siding serving Platform 2 at Okehampton. Any DRSA member who would like to assist in this work will be most welcome. The work is scheduled to start next month and it is hoped it will take place on both weekdays and weekends. If this interests you please email g.horner936@btinternet.com with your details and availability.



*D4167 moving the DRSA SR-type brake van on 18th March
(Alistair Gregory)*

Major shunting at Meldon Quarry has seen the old engine shed cleared with the DRSA owned 1948 SR-type brakevan moved out to a new position. The shed is hopefully going to be put back into use with the integral pit being drained. The Mk3a sleeper and the CCT van were also moved into the yard from their long standing position next to Meldon buffet to open up that area.

Work continues at Den Brook crossing with Alan Cocker seemingly living there Monday to Friday as crossing supervisor. The crossing is operational and DR presence is continuing whilst the crossing is in use for road vehicles.



A 10 mph speed restriction was put in place before the Sulzer weekend and this was then increased to 20 mph on 11th March after remedial work was completed. In the week commencing February 29th the concrete

pouring started with a large number of lorries using the crossing daily. As this was time critical special arrangements had to be put in place for the removal of the Polar Express locomotives in that week.

Western Challenger Railtour

On Saturday 7th May the Pathfinder Tours 'Western Challenger' tour is scheduled to visit Okehampton behind D1015 'Western Champion'. More details: <http://www.pathfindertours.co.uk>

MG rally

The MG Car Club is starting its annual Atlantic Coast Express run from Okehampton station on Sunday June 19th. The usual plan is to come to Oke for breakfast and then set off at intervals from 0900. It will commemorate 90 years since the first (railway) Atlantic Coast Express.

News and service updates are available online:

www.dartmoor-railway-sa.org

www.facebook.com/dartmoorrailway.sa

Membership Matters

Peter Flick, Membership Secretary

Since our last issue, we have been pleased to welcome to membership David Bell of Hatherleigh, Scott Holmes of Potters Bar, and Alistair Gregory of Matlock.

We very much hope that the resumption of train services will encourage acceleration of recruitment, so that the total number of members will climb well above the current figure of 200

Membership forms can be downloaded from the website. Please do what you can to swell our numbers.

Members Event

Visit to Exeter & Teign Valley Railway, Christow Wednesday 11th May 2016, 14:15 to 17:00

Colin Burges has invited DRSA members to visit his Exeter & Teign Valley Railway at Christow station ('The Thinking Woman's Railway' and 'Centre for the Campaign for Real Railways').

Sited in the goods yard of former Christow station, the afternoon will include:

- an introductory talk
- approx 10 standard & numerous narrow gauge items of rolling stock
- exhibitions
- demonstrations & displays
- rides in a narrow gauge manumotive inspection saloon
- the world's smallest sleeping car
- work in progress etc.

All intended to 'conjure up a railway atmosphere in a pleasant setting' and exploring the past, present and future.

Platform tickets £1. Tea will be provided at the end of the afternoon (donation box- please give generously). There is also a 'Gift Shop' in part of a superbly recreated ticket & station office of days gone by.

Meet at Watersmeet SX 838867 (EX6 7LE). A traffic cone and signpost to car park will be on the left of the road just before the Teign House Crossroads on the B3193 if coming from the Exeter/Moreton/Dunsford direction and on the right just after the Teign House crossroads if coming from Chudleigh/ South Devon.

Pre-booking required by 6th May. If you wish to come please contact Tony Hill – telephone 01837 83934 evenings or email tonyjlhill@gmail.com.

DRSA Annual General Meeting & Talk

With this issue of the Pony, members will have received formal notification of DRSA's Annual General Meeting on Saturday May 21st. Following the formal business of the meeting, we are delighted to announce that renowned local railway historian Amyas Crump will be entertaining us with a slideshow.

Although Amyas is a long time member of the Great Western Society and involved with Tiverton Museum's 'Tivvy Bumper' locomotive exhibit (GWR 0-4-2T 1442), he doesn't neglect the Southern, and will be presenting a talk entitled 'Around the Southern in North Devon'. All the images he uses are original, so apart from some published ones, most won't have been seen before.

The talk is provisionally scheduled for 8.00pm, but the exact starting time will depend on how smoothly the AGM runs. Please tell your friends that non-members are welcome to attend the talk. For that matter they can attend the AGM too, though without voting rights of course. Non-members attending the talk will be asked for a small donation, and are requested to arrive by 7.45pm.

DRSA Social Gatherings Open to all members!

First Wednesday of the month from 18:30 onwards:
The Kings Arms Inn, Tedburn St Mary, EX6 6EG

Third Thursday of the month from 18:30 onwards:
Fox & Hounds Hotel, Bridestowe, EX20 4HF

Volunteers Rallying Round

Geoff Horner, Volunteer Coordinator

It is a well known fact that heritage railways would find it extremely hard, if not impossible to operate without the army of volunteers who support them. These dedicated souls work away at their chosen tasks week in and week out very often unseen by the passengers and general public who benefit from their labours. It is only when there is some special event taking place on their railway and the call goes out that “we need volunteers” do these behind the scenes regulars come out into the public view.

It is therefore very gratifying that this willingness to rally round is alive and well on the Dartmoor Railway, supported as it is by a DRSA membership and volunteer base with fewer numbers to call on than other many other heritage railways. This has already been brought home to me on two occasions this year.

The first occasion was at the end of January when the ‘Sulzer Weekend’ took place. Very early on in the planning it was recognised that for the event to be successful there would be the need for a large number of volunteers prepared to offer their services over the two days of the weekend. The roles to be filled included drivers, guards, ticket sales, platform stewards for Okehampton and Meldon Viaduct, on-train stewards, on-train bar sales, buffet assistance at Okehampton and assistance in the new DRSA shop. Quite a challenge with a wide variety of roles to be filled! That our volunteers responded to the challenge was proved by the success of the event and by the many complimentary comments received from passengers and other visitors.

The second occasion was the visit on Saturday 12th March when the rearranged UK Railtours ‘Tre, Pol & Pen’ tour paid a hurried visit to Okehampton and challenged the buffet staff in the course of a mere 20 minute stop to feed some 500 passengers whilst our DRSA volunteers got as much water into the coach tanks as possible, cleared a trainload of rubbish (much to the relief of the on-train dining car manager), marshalled the crowds and manned the DRSA

shop. Once again and in response to a very ‘last minute’ appeal, our volunteers willingly came forward. The visitors all seemed to enjoy themselves and take away a positive impression of DRSA and the railway, many expressing their gratitude for the reception they received.

Our thanks are due to everyone who made these two events such a success. Hopefully word will go out to the heritage rail and railtour worlds that the Dartmoor Railway supported by the volunteers of the DRSA can stage successful weekend ‘gala’ events as well as offering a well run and welcoming destination for visiting rail tours.

Finally, and at the risk of becoming repetitive, I will end with the usual appeal for new volunteers. Even if you feel that your circumstances prevent you from becoming a regular member of one of the teams supporting the various departments of the railway it would be most useful if your name could be added to those who might be able to help on the sort of occasions described. Please don’t be shy in coming forward!

Volunteer ‘Carer’ Required for Meldon Viaduct station

Our station and the nearby picnic area is in need of somebody who has the time to give it the necessary ‘TLC’ needed to keep it looking neat and tidy and welcoming to our visitors throughout the season. This will entail strimming the grassed areas, keeping the bushes etc. trimmed and generally keeping the station and surrounding area in good order.

If you are a keen gardener/DIYer, can spare perhaps at least one or two days a month and would be interested in taking on this role please get in touch with our Volunteer Coordinator, Geoff Horner, by email to g.horner936@btinternet.com or on 01363 82383.

DRSA Shop

Christine Horner, Treasurer

As announced in the Winter 2015 edition of the Pony the DRSA shop located on Platform 2 at Okehampton Station has opened for business and is already proving popular with visitors to the station. This was very much in evidence over the ‘Sulzer Weekend’ event at the end of January and for the recent UK Railtours visiting train, although passengers on the latter had just 20 minutes to get across the footbridge and make their purchases – a genuine ‘rush hour’ scene! We are confident that once the heritage train services and other planned DR events get under way and visitor numbers to the station increase the custom will continue to grow.

Items for sale include:

- A good selection of second hand railway books plus some books on other transport systems such as buses and trams
- Second hand railway videos and DVD’s
- Railway picture cards
- Railway postcards
- Souvenir mugs, pencils and pens
- ‘Totem’ sign fridge magnets featuring ‘Okehampton’ and ‘Meldon Viaduct’ stations
- Second hand ‘OO’ gauge model railway locomotives, rolling stock, trackwork, station and other lineside buildings
- General souvenirs
- A selection of cold drinks and confectionery bars

More stock is always needed, so if you are having a clear-out of your unwanted railway books, videos, DVD’s etc, model railway items or anything else with a railway connection these would be most welcome. Our shop organiser, Christine Horner can be contacted by email on christine.horner@talk21.com or on 01363 82383.

At present the shop is generally open on Saturdays between the hours of 11.00 and 15.00 but these hours will be extended once the

train services and other activities at Okehampton Station get underway. However opening times will depend on the availability of DRSA volunteers to staff the shop. If you have a few hours to spare and would like to volunteer to help in the shop please do get in touch with Christine.

**Raise money for DRSA when you shop online
via our [easyfundraising](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/drsa) page:**

www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/drsa

Wildflower Gardening

Sue Baxter

Our patch by the Ladies entrance is stirring. Lungwort, primroses and grape hyacinths are flowering, soon to be followed by forget-me-nots. Look out for the knobbly leaves of teasels, furry grey mullein leaves and pink edged young leaves of evening primrose.

Ann is getting in some more corncockle plug plants this year as we felt last year they looked so special. Few of us have ever seen this in an arable field, before herbicides were used. Likewise the corn marigolds were a treat, long lasting little yellow daisies.

Kay's Hollyhocks are now in their second year, so we hope they are going to tower above you all, while Mavis's scented sweet peas should wind their way through the railings, and find their way into the buffet. So they will not all be natives but do see if you can recognise the plants there before they flower. For example what is the plant emerging strongly now with large dark crinkly leaves tinged purple?

Sulzer Weekend

Paul Martin, Duty Manager

It all seems a long time ago but the railway started 2016 off in fine style when they ran a weekend of trains for enthusiasts. With 3 classic traction locomotives still on the railway after Polar Express duties and the available stock it seemed too good an opportunity to pass up. Not likely that we will have 3 locos on the railway available for use until Polar Express 2016.



45060 and 47701 (33103 on rear) arrive at Okehampton on 28th November 2015 with a Polar Express training run from Sampford Courtenay. Photo courtesy of David Hunt.

DRSA stepped up to the plate and confirmed they could provide volunteers for everything from train crew to stewards. Alistair Gregory negotiated with the loco owners for their willingness to let us use the locos. Once we got the go ahead it was decided to run 3 trains over the full length of the line on both days using a shortened rake of stock. The event was promoted locally and over internet rail forums and then we realised the depth of feeling people had over certain locomotives with endless advice on what we could and could not pair up on the trains. It soon became apparent we would never please everyone in terms of what was used and which end the locos were on.

The positive thing was it was apparent there was a lot of interest in the event with people willing to travel long distances with the Class 45 'Peak' especially being a big draw. This coupled with ~13 miles of mostly uphill working non-stop the boundary up to Okehampton giving the locos an opportunity for a real 'thrash' as the enthusiasts would say.

The event itself went off almost without hitch. We were blessed with mainly dry weather and certainly better than expected for January. There were around 20 DRSA volunteers helping over the weekend, many on both days. It was hard to know what to expect in terms of passenger numbers but all agreed it exceeded our expectations with over 175 on the Saturday and just under half that on the Sunday. In addition there were lots of photographers and observers at Okehampton and many more along the line. Along with the ticket sales the Buffet and BBQ did a good trade. The DRSA shop on Platform 2 got its first experience of trading on a busy day and made a good number of sales.

When I say almost without a hitch, all the plans of what locos were to be used on which train went awry when the 47 failed on the shunt over before the first train! As this was the loco providing train heat it meant it had to stay in the consist with the other 2 doing the work top and tailing the train. Though when the 47 failure was announced it brought the biggest cheer from the platform of the weekend! Once we'd quickly got the 33 out of Platform 2 and on the train we ran the trains as planned for Saturday. Repairs late into Saturday night saw the 47 hopefully OK and one full run with the 45 as insurance saw it then removed, and the 47 behaved for the rest of the weekend.

Feedback on the day and social media were all very positive with requests for it to be repeated next year. Photos and videos abound over the net from virtually every vantage point on the line. It was a great example of Dartmoor Railway and DRSA working together and an exciting way to start 2016. Too many people to name to thank for all their effort and support in making it possible and a successful event, but it was greatly appreciated and hopefully can be repeated in 2017

What is Destination Okehampton?

Dr Michael Ireland - Chair of Destination Okehampton – A Council Working Group.



Who we are

Destination Okehampton is a working group of the Town and Parish Councils (not a Committee) with a membership drawn from Councils in West Devon, Torridge and North Cornwall. Representatives are invited to contribute to the work of the group on an occasional basis - these include local businesses and experts who act as special advisors. The group was formed in 2009 as part of an Okehampton Town Council initiative to regenerate the area.

What we do

The original aim of *Destination Okehampton* was to address specific issues affecting the town of Okehampton, namely: tourism development, economic regeneration and transport. This remit has broadened since the severe storms of 2014 showed the vulnerability of the peninsula's rail transport network with the reliance on one line through Devon into Cornwall. In response *Destination Okehampton* widened its remit to support the reinstatement of the former LSWR route to Plymouth via Okehampton and Tavistock.

The working group had already undertaken research in 2008 and 2011 on the feasibility of providing a seven day rail service to Exeter and the national network from Okehampton. *Destination Okehampton* is now the lead local council working group. We have representation on the Peninsula Rail Task Force, Peninsula Rail Group and work with Devon County Council through the Locality Officer in support of the Northern Route (Exeter – Plymouth) and local service to Exeter.

Engagement based on research

The working group is very fortunate to be able to call on a wider range of professional expertise, with special advisors on rail operations (timetabling and infrastructure), finance, investment, marketing, planning and construction. Drawing on this expertise the group is able to produce working papers and respond to national government

requests for information through the local MP, Mel Stride. For example the Chair and Chris Bligh (Rail Advisor) have met with Claire Perry (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport) Patrick McLoughlin (Secretary of State for Transport) and visited Parliament to put the case for the railway.

Our current projects

Marketing - Destination Okehampton is not just about rail reinstatement, that is ONE of our objectives. The group is presently supporting a marketing initiative with the aim of economic regeneration of Okehampton, and the railway is part of this plan to boost the prosperity of the town with tourism as a key to regeneration as part of widening our horizons. The intention is to produce promotional literature that would be available for visitors to the town and travellers from Okehampton.

Sunday Rover 2016 - Part of the success of the Sunday service in 2015 had been because of the production and distribution of a leaflet designed by Michael Ireland and Chris Bligh. The aim this year is to get leaflets for 'inbound services' from Teignmouth, Exmouth and Exeter, thus boosting the economic benefits to the area. For there to be real benefits things need to be open in Okehampton for the inbound service to be popular (museum, shops and cafes).

Hatherleigh – Okehampton Rail Link - A new service for 2016 is the setting up of a Hatherleigh – Okehampton bus link to the station from the Sunday Rover trains. Currently members of the working group are discussing the feasibility of providing a bus service with the Okehampton Community Transport Group.

Corporate Branding - The rail related activities of *Destination Okehampton* need a clear identity to attract funding and support. The Group has adopted the name *OkeRail* with its own logo and descriptor.



Okehampton Rail Forum Meeting - 3rd February 2016

Sue Baxter

This meeting was chaired by Andrew Leadbetter of Devon County Council, and, as before, the 20 attendees represented a wide range of organisations. Tony Hill now also represents DRSA. A working name for the group was discussed and the appointment of a Chair and Vice Chair. Both are expected to be decided at the next meeting on March 31st. A website will be developed for the group.

Aggregate Industries identified the need to consider that the current lease of the line expires at the end of 2019, also for a future lease to accommodate the train service and recognition of the increased infrastructure maintenance costs which will arise from the increased usage of the line.

Train Operating Companies are being asked to provide costs of operating the service as

- a) “on the margin” within existing resources
- b) using one train unit all day long from early morning to late in the evening.

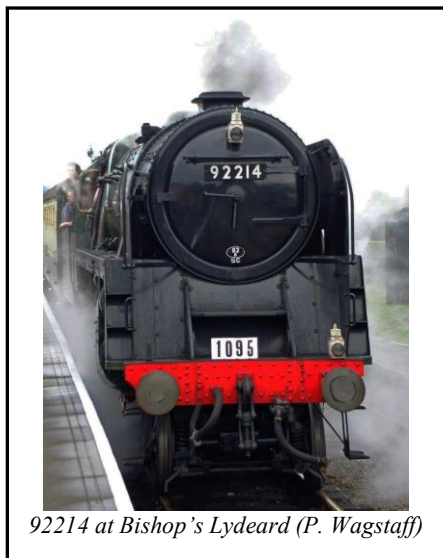
A draft Business plan is to be worked up and any particular skills needed from outside the group are to be identified. All organisations are to consider funding options.

DRSA requested access to Summer Sunday services be given for the purpose of surveying passenger travel patterns and needs. This evidence will help in Demand Forecasting, an important aspect of the case for government to include the line in a future franchise.

Ten scenarios for how the service might be delivered were briefly described, with pros and cons for all organisations to consider. For example using existing stock, new stock, or gifted old stock. GWR, SWT, BARS or new Train operating Company, or a combination. The aim is to achieve the early reinstatement of services on the existing track/infrastructure. It is assumed that the entity emerging from Okehampton Rail Forum will commission the service and set the specification, fares, timetable etc. Offers from DRSA members to help identify funding, and to assist with on train passenger surveys would be appreciated.

West Somerset Railway S&D Gala

Andrew Turner



On Saturday March 5th a group of DRSA members met up at Bishops Lydeard station on the West Somerset railway for a day out along the line to Minehead and return. The occasion was the railways recreation of the closure, 50 years ago, of the Somerset and Dorset line that ran from Bath Green Park to Bournemouth West (both stations no longer exist). The stations along the WSR were renamed for the event so we started at 'Templecombe', travelling on to 'Bournemouth West' (Minehead).

The idea of visiting came up a few weeks earlier and it was an good opportunity for a get together before our running season starts. With the weather slightly overcast, and a bit of a chill wind blowing, we set off on the 0950 departure behind loco 9F 92214, one of the visiting engines, all of which had either run on the S&D or represented classes that did.

Our first stop was at Williton ('Evercreech Junction') where some of us alighted to look around the diesel and restoration workshops, while others either stayed on the train or made for the tea room where it was a bit warmer. Outside the workshop was Thumper 1118, an old friend from Okehampton. After an hour the next departure was at 1134, behind double headed LMS 4F 44422 and 53808, and on to Washford ('Midford'), the home of the Somerset and Dorset Railway Trust. The station is painted in Southern colours to make us feel at home and we visited the small museum before watching the Barclay 0-4-0 shunting wagons in the sidings. At 1226 it was on to 'Bournemouth West' behind BR Standard 80072, renumbered 80043 for the gala, as that

engine worked the last trains over the S&D on March 6th 1966. Arrival at Minehead was just after 1300 and it was off for lunch for most then a look around the station where there was plenty of activity and the turntable was in action.

In the sidings were the unused GWR locomotives, strangely silent for the gala. It was a shame that Peter Ritchie, former editor, was unable to attend as it was a site that would have

gladdened him. Other engines that we did not ride behind were 34053 SR 4-6-2 'Sir Keith Park' which was re-numbered 34098 'Templecombe' later in the week, 34070 'Manston' and 53809 sister engine to 53808.



Our group met up on the 1450 departure pulled by LMS 8F 48624 and we travelled all the way back to Bishops Lydeard, picking up Sue Baxter and Rosie at Watchet on the way after their beach stroll from Blue Anchor. We stayed on the train to travel

on to Norton Fitzwarren where the turning triangle is located and 53808 was attached to the front of the train for our return and final journey of the day to Bishops Lydeard. Our group were the only passengers in the one coach and it really felt as though it was a private DRSA charter as we arrived back at Bishops Lydeard at about 1730.

A good day out was enjoyed by all and with over 6600 visitors for the whole gala the West Somerset did a great job celebrating a railway that enthusiasts still miss today.



LMS Stanier 8F 2-8-0 48624 at Minehead (P. Wagstaff).



1910 built Barclay 0-4-0ST no 1219 shunting at Washford. Caledonia Works was the name of the Andrew Barclay factory at Kilmarnock, and 1219 was originally their yard shunter (P. Wagstaff).

Further coverage of the WSR S&D Gala can be found on our website:
<http://www.dartmoor-railway-sa.org/miscellany>

Tre, Pol and Pen Railtour

Paul Martin, Duty Manager

Dartmoor Railway was visited by the UK Railtour's Tre, Pol & Pen tour on Saturday 12th March. A trip to Meldon and a stop at Okehampton were added to the itinerary when they were denied access to the Parkendillack branch due to late submission of paperwork.

The 12 coach train was already sold out and also visited Plymouth Friary and the Fowey branch. The whole tour had very tight timings with Meldon and Okehampton being the last stops before returning to Euston. We were requested to attempt to water the train, clear bagged rubbish and offer food in the planned 25 minute stop at Okehampton!! At least the train being top and tailed with 66177 and 66109 meant there was no need to turn any locomotives round.

It was agreed with the tour operator that the 15 minute stop at Meldon was not long enough for passengers to get off the train as only 3 coaches would be usable at Meldon for disembarkation. The train was conducted to and from Crediton by Graham Isom (Driver) and Don Bent (Guard). Plans to speed the Meldon stop up by providing another conductor to jump in the rear engine were thwarted when DB Schenker only provided 1 driver.

DRSA provided not only the conductors, but SMT were on hand to try and water one end of the train, others to help the hired in fire tanker to do the other end. Volunteers also helped clear the rubbish and helped with general stewarding.

In glorious weather we waited for the late afternoon train, watching it gradually lose time on Real Time Trains, and it was no shock when it arrived at Crediton 14 minutes late. The line had been left in 1 section to enable the train to be signalled straight through Okehampton to Meldon. This meant we were treated to the rare sight of a passenger train running straight through Okehampton station (apart from Polar Express trains under the cover of darkness). It also allowed Peter Ritchie to make an announcement asking people to step back from the platform edge as the approaching train was not stopping! In a desperate attempt to save time we even ferried the driver and Graham

in the 08 (driven by Alistair Gregory) between the 2 locos at Meldon. Still we waited at Okehampton and eventually it pulled in 1 minute before its booked departure time. As it seemed to be the longest stop of the day for the passengers they all piled out and fortunately the tour operator decided on a 20 minute stop after assuring DR that they would be liable for any consequences of the delay.



66109 on the rear of the train at Okehampton during the short stop.

The actual stop lasted 22 minutes in which SMT watered the rear kitchen car as much as possible and the tanker, with more SMT help, filled the front kitchen car. The rubbish was cleared and the Tearooms with its wares set up on the platform did a roaring trade. The DRSA Shop made sales and some passengers even got over to the museum. The passengers, staff and coordinator seemed very happy with our efforts and were very complimentary about the station. Then they were gone and the clear up could start.

At 7pm with the platform lights shining in the darkness whilst waiting for Don to get back from Crediton with the radios I could only think it was all a lot of work for 30 minutes or so of frenetic activity. Still it was great to see everybody pitching in again and hopefully the next rail tour in May will stay a few hours and it all can be a bit more civilised.

‘An insignificant piece of line’

With the celebration of the opening of the first part of our line taking place in November 2015 the railway is still in its 150th year. The transcription below looks back on how that opening was reported in the local press. The opening of the line through Bow to North Tawton as reported in Trewman’s Exeter Flying Post of 1st November 1865.

DEVON AND CORNWALL RAILWAY OPENING OF FIRST SECTION

The first section of the Devon and Cornwall Railway, namely the piece of eight miles, from the Yeoford station of the North Devon, line to Northtawton (*sic*), will be opened for traffic today. It was examined and approved by Colonel Yelland, the government inspector, on 25th ult., and on Saturday morning we had the pleasure of a run over the line in company with the engineer under whose superintendence the work has been carried out, Mr. R.F. Church, CE. This piece of line in itself is very insignificant, presenting no difficulties to test the skill of the engineer, no magnificent or beautiful landscapes to attract the eyes of our local artists, opening up no fresh scenes for pleasant summer picnics, and only, as yet, promising to give the archaeologists of Exeter a shorter cut than any they yet poses to that scene of picturesque desolation which speaks only of a mysterious past, and speaks of that past in a language of hieroglyphics-Dartmoor. But as the first link in that series of lines of railway which in a few years will not only open up the whole of Central Devon, but give a shorter and more direct route from London to Cornwall, connect by a three or four hours journey each of our great arsenals, and supersedes the necessity of navigating the Lands End by bringing into direct connection the ports of Plymouth and Bideford, the opening of this piece of railway from Yeoford to Northtawton (*sic*) ought not to pass unnoticed. The first turf was cut in March, 1864, by Lady Portsmouth, and to-day the opening of the line will be celebrated by a general holiday, a public dinner, and a ball at Northtawton (*sic*), graced by, it is hoped, the presence of the Earl and

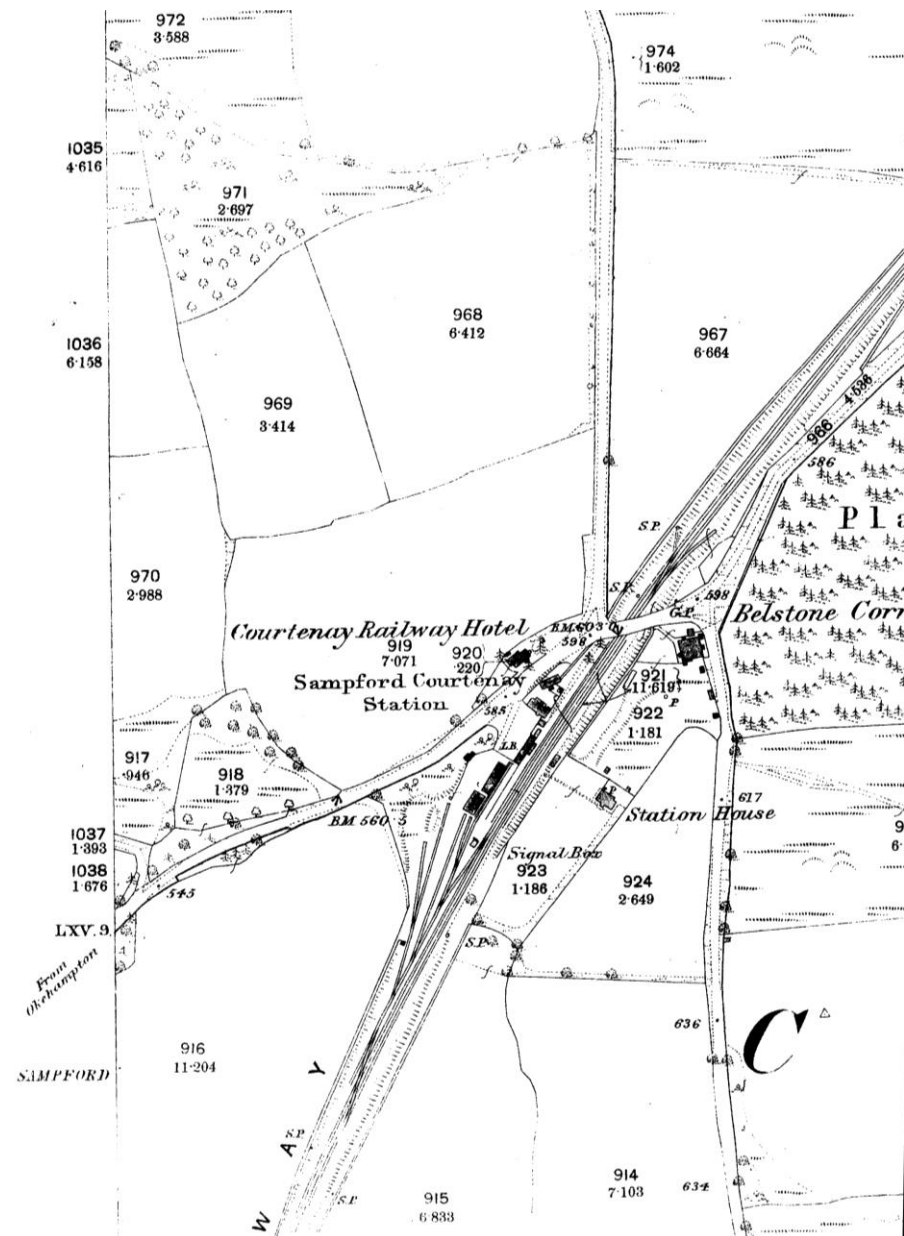
Countess of Portsmouth, and probably by some of the other landowners through whose estates the line passes. Starting from Yeoford the line runs for about a mile alongside of the North Devon line to Penstone where it glances off at an angle and runs, as the crow flies, through or past the villages of Colebrook, Clannaborough and Bow to Northtawton (*sic*). Four and a half miles of this distance, that is more than half, is a perfectly straight line and the curves and gradients of the rest are very fair,-the sharpest twenty chains and the worst of the gradients one in eighty.

The most difficult part of this work is the first mile from the Yeoford junction. The cutting lies through the stratum of new red sandstone which stretches from Crediton to Hatherleigh. The rest of the line is through a sort of carboniferous shale, ending, apparently, in coal, near Northtawton (*sic*). There are only two stations on the line, at Bow and Northtawton (*sic*). They are pretty and commodious little structures, built with Hamhill stone dressings. The traffic will be worked by the London and South-Western Company, under an arrangement guaranteeing the Devon and Cornwall Company a dividend of four per cent on their capital. We have only to add that the engineer of the line is Mr. W.R. Galbraith, the engineer of the South-Western Company; and that the works have been carried out most satisfactorily by Messrs. Sharps, the eminent railway contractors, under the able superintendence of the resident engineer, Mr. R.F.Church. Messrs. Drew and Son, surveyors, conducted the land purchases which have been completed most satisfactorily to all parties. The landowners, with but very few exceptions, recognising the value of railway accommodation through their property, met the company's agent most liberally in the sale of their lands.

That was the perception of the line in the middle of the 19th century. Who knows whether the early/mid years of the 21st century will see this line of 'very little significance' come to have a very significant role to play in the redevelopment of railways in Devon and Cornwall? Only time will tell!

Old Maps (Part 3) – Sampford Courtenay station, 1886

Jon Kelsey



Rosie's Diary – Station Dog or Station Chicken?

By Rosie



I have had an exciting time since I last pawed my diary and have also done some serious railway research.

First I will boast about looking down on Parliament. Well it is possible if you climb Arthur's seat in Edinburgh! I must say that the ride there on the Borders Rail from Tweedbank was very smooth and comfortable, with a very pleasant sensation of speed when the 158 unit accelerated away from a station and took the curves. I braced myself against my 2 legs. It is very popular and has carried 80% of predicted first year passengers in just 5 months. No wonder when you see the smart unit at Waverley Station. (Just don't ask me to read the gaelic phrase below Scotrail!) But best of all, see the welcome bar awaiting me on the concourse – I knew then that I had entered a civilised city.



It has always seemed a shame that, although I know how to behave myself on a sofa (you know, only turn round once before lying down instead of the usual 4 times) that I have never been allowed on a railway seat. It means that I miss the passing scene. However there is a treat in store for 4 paws in the Edinburgh trams. Just

manoeuvre your 2 legs to a front seat, and sit demurely at their feet to have the most wonderful lineside view through the fully glazed door. Another sensible design feature is being able to jump straight down onto the track when you want to change platforms. Much easier than

hauling 2 legs over a footbridge. Back again on the Borders Rail we alighted at Stow, and viewed the Disabled Ramp. Well, of course, it was brand new and functioning perfectly; but really, the distance one would have to go if one was in



traces to a wheelchair or pram was extraordinary. Imagine something similar at Yeoford?!

The wildlife in Scotland taunted me. From red squirrels that wrapped their tails around bird feeders 3 metres away, to ptarmigan squawking in the snow, or a mountain hare washing herself, I had to be *so restrained and good!* My patience score was about 95%.

A newspaper cutting sent to us by former railwayman Graham Harvey, booking clerk at Halwill Junction, has set me wondering. Would life be better as a chicken? Or does the story I am about to recount just reflect life before PTS, Hi vis and nutrition experts? It was Leading Goods Porter Mr Bill Rouse who came across Rhodie, clucking her way around the station. She appeared to be a 2 year old Rhode Island Red, a possible escapee from a crate in transit by lorry to a local poultry dressing station. Bill provided her with a perch in the Halwill Junction lamp room to roost on and a box with straw in which to lay. She was a 4 day a week layer. From April to October 1965 she not only charmed the *7 station staff as well as the permanent way men*, but also regularly met the passengers from both the up and down trains. She enjoyed tasty morsels of anyone's crib, including soft cheese (the silver wrapped triangular portions) ham, pasties and milk. Rhodie was quite at home in a railway carriage. Eventually, for her own safety, she was handed over to a poultry keeper to range for the rest of her life away from station hazards. On second thoughts I am happy to stay as I am. Those dairy foods make me itch whereas I have been successfully blagging and enjoying leftover sausages for six years now!

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