



THE DARTMOOR PONY

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

No.25 Summer 2016 £2.00



Western Challenger

The DARTMOOR PONY

Issue No. 25

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

FRONT COVER: The Western Challenger railtour arriving at Okehampton on Saturday 7th May 2016. *Photo: Philip Wagstaff.*

BACK COVER: Top: 47828 at Okehampton waiting to propel S61742 and Lab 11 to Meldon Viaduct on the 12.50 2M06 service on Sunday 8th May 2016. *Photo: David Hunt.* Bottom: Crowds queueing to embark on 153377 for the first up Sunday Rover on 15th May 2016. *Photo: Tom Baxter.*

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Notes from the Chairman

Rev. Philip Wagstaff

Thank you for your continued support for the Dartmoor Railway which is greatly appreciated. Whether you are a visitor to the railway picking up the magazine for the first time or are a volunteer or a member of the Friends who have been part of DRSA for many years, thank you for your interest in the railway.

At the committee meeting following May's Annual General Meeting, I was elected by the committee as chairman again for this year. A report about the AGM is in this edition of the Pony.

The Committee continue to explore ways of developing the heritage side of the railway with services between Okehampton and Meldon using the 08 or the 47 and rolling stock either owned by the Association or by individuals. We envisage that this will give various opportunities for volunteering in the future and our volunteer coordinator is always willing to be contacted by potential volunteers. The articles in the Pony highlight the range of activities with which volunteers are engaged.

The DRSA shop is becoming an established part of Platform 2 together with the Museum and both of these add to the visitor experience. Again my thanks to everyone who gives their time in supporting the railway in this way and to everyone who supports the railway in any way.

OkeRail was launched at the start of the Okehampton to Exeter and Exeter to Okehampton Sunday service. This is part of the ongoing work in which all stakeholders (including DR and DRSA) are consulted and ways forward discussed and agreed by the OkeRail steering group as opportunities emerge for developing the rail link between Okehampton and Exeter.

To find out more about DRSA's current activities and news, please look at the DRSA website or the DRSA Facebook page.

As a committee we welcome feedback and comments which can be left via the website or by post to DRSA via the Station. Any feedback will inform our conversation through the year as your committee explore ways of supporting the Dartmoor Railway both now and in the future.

Thank you again for your support.

Railway News

Okehampton United Charities grant

On April 7th, DRSA's Carriage and Wagon team welcomed representatives of Okehampton United Charities to the Meldon workshop, where a cheque for £950 was presented. This grant was recently awarded to DRSA to purchase equipment enabling safe access to the roofs of railway vehicles. We would like to express our gratitude to OUC for their generous financial assistance.



Front row left to right: Allenton Fisher (OUC Chairman), Nigel Green. Geoff Horner, Michael Ireland (OUC & DRSA), back row l to r: John Davies, John Coxon, Alan Harris, David Clegg, Karen Percival (OUC)
(Photographer: Ian Snell)

Railway Ramble

As part of a holiday week in Devon, the Railway Ramblers group visited the Okehampton line on 19th April. The station tea room was opened especially for their visit. See Rosie's Diary for more details!

New signs at Bow

The station maintenance team's 'homeworker', Simon Jeffery, has rebuilt one of the Bow station running in boards, complete with newly cast finials.



Here Simon is seen at work on the sign at Bow (photo by Dick Henrywood), with a photo by Simon of his finished handiwork.

2016 Sunday Rover

May 15th saw the start of this year's Okehampton-Exeter Sunday Rover service, supported by Devon County Council, and operated by Great Western Railway. There are four trains each day in each direction, calling at Okehampton, Sampford Courtenay, Crediton, Exeter St Davids, Exeter Central, and St James Park. Passenger surveys are being taken on board to document numbers and destinations of people using the service. Please help to publicise and support these services.

Arrival of 47428

47428 finally arrived on the 5th May. It was covered in grime from its recent Railhead Treatment Train duties, except where the Direct Rail Services vinyls had been removed. It has since seen regular use out and about on the Dartmoor Railway.

Membership Matters

Peter Flick, Membership Secretary

Please cast around your friends and associates with a view to encouraging new members. Those joining from 1st July will have membership to 31st December at half the annual fee. Thus it becomes £11.50 for two living under the same roof, and £8.50 for one. Forms can be downloaded from the website www.dartmoor-railway-sa.org

We welcome to membership Mr. and Mrs R.J. Watkins of Dawlish.

News and service updates are available online:

www.dartmoor-railway-sa.org

www.facebook.com/dartmoorrailway.sa

Member's Events

A talk/slideshow has been organised for October 26th 2016 at the Kings Arms, Tedburn St Mary, 19:10 for 19:30 start. The speaker is Simon Foote, title 'An Evening of Steam Nostalgia'.

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

DRSA Annual General Meeting Report

Jon Kelsey

The 2016 DRSA Annual General Meeting took place on Saturday May 21st, at the Ockment Centre, Okehampton. Sadly, only 20 members attended. Chairman Philip Wagstaff, assisted by various committee members, presented a comprehensive review of what has been a busy year. Following questions, and a debate about the limited membership benefits DRSA is able to offer, the meeting approved the committee's proposed amendments to the constitution, which were:

- new objective stating DRSA's support for the initiative to develop a public rail service for Okehampton
- rewording of existing objective clarifying provision of heritage, tourist and enthusiast rail services
- adding a vice chairman to the list of key roles
- simplifying the procedure for electing the committee, so the entire committee is elected every year

[The revised constitution is now available at <http://www.dartmoor-railway-sa.org/constitution>]

The 2016/7 committee was then elected in accordance with the revised constitution, and is: Reverend Philip Wagstaff (chairman), Christine Horner (treasurer), Jon Kelsey (secretary), Peter Flick (membership secretary), Geoffrey Horner (volunteer coordinator), Peter Ritchie, Sue Baxter, Dave Clegg and Tony Hill. (At the June committee meeting Sue Baxter was appointed as vice-chairman).

The poor attendance wasn't just disappointing for the AGM, but also because of the excellent presentation afterwards by local railway historian Amyas Crump. 'Around the Southern in North Devon' was a trip around the various SR lines in our region, presented in the form of a slideshow, and interesting not just for the content but also Amyas's use of contemporary (in some cases restored and digitally enhanced) traditional slides. It is questionable whether we should continue to hire quality AGM presenters in the light of such poor support.

DRSA End of Year Accounts 2015-2016

DARTMOOR RAILWAY SUPPORTERS ASSOCIATION					
<i>Financial Statements for the year ended March 2016</i>					
RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT					
	Unrestricted Funds	Designated Funds	Restricted Funds	Total for 2015/2016	Total for 2014/2015
Receipts					
Membership	3194.50			3194.50	3518
Donations	1755.18			1755.18	2284
Pony Magazine	62.00			62.00	70
Shop Sales/Model Railway	£1,251.43			1251.43	222
Bank interest	0.87			0.87	1
Model Railway	0.00			0.00	341
Museum Donations	140.44			140.44	0
Lab11 Donation	0.00			0.00	2656
HRA Railcards	50.00			50.00	0
Okehampton Charity Grant	950.00			950.00	0
	7404.42	0.00	0.00	7404.42	9092.00
Payments					
Stationery, postage & general printing	1240.79			1240.79	1048
Pony Magazine printing	925.00			925.00	502
Carriage, Wagon and Station refurbishment costs	1346.87			1346.87	1012
Shop Stock/Insce	989.87			989.87	64
Granite Line expenses	3300.00			3300.00	1660
AGM, administration and Examiner costs	140.00			140.00	134
Miscellaneous Expenses	346.48		0.81	347.29	404
Lab11 expenditure	398.50			398.50	2493
Museum	95.00		32.13	127.13	41
Okehampton United Charities expenditure	950.00			950.00	0
HRA Railcards	50.00			50.00	0
	9782.51	0.00	32.94	9815.45	7358
Excess of Payments over Receipts	-2378.09	0.00	-32.94	2411.03	1734
Bank and Cash Balances at 1st April 2015	15588.56	2860.14	32.94	18481.64	16748
Bank and cash Balances at 31st March 2016	13210.47	2860.14	0.00	16070.61	18482
Analysis of Designated Funds					
Yeoford		-			1517
Water Tower		1343.14			1343
		1343.14			2860

DARTMOOR RAILWAY SUPPORTERS ASSOCIATION				
Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2016				
STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES				
Bank and cash balances			16071	18482
Assets retained for Association's use:				
Brake Van (February 2011)			2000.00	
FK Coach			9000.00	
LAB11 Coach			17500.00	
Brake Van			10000.00	
Water Tower			1000.00	
			39500.00	
The Shop income and expenditure has been recorded on a cash basis, however at the year end there was shop stock with a value of £204, at cost				
INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT ON THE ACCOUNTS OF				
DARTMOOR RAILWAY SUPPORTERS ASSOCIATION				
Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2016				
The trustees are responsible for the maintenance of accounting records and the preparation of accounts.				
An audit is not required				
My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions and best practice for community and supporter organisations. The examination included a review of the accounting records and documents kept by the Association and a comparison of the accounts with the records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from trustees (particularly the treasurer) concerning such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.				
In connection with my examination no matter has come to my attention which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, that requirements for the keeping of proper accounting records and the preparation of accounts have not been met.				
Michael White FCA				
Chartered Accountant				

Dartmoor Railway organisational structure

Jon Kelsey

In response to a question raised at the 2016 AGM, here is a brief explanation of the roles and responsibilities of the various organisations involved in the operation of the Dartmoor Railway:

Devon County Council (DCC) owns Okehampton Station. Aggregate Industries (AI) owns the railway, from Meldon Quarry to Coleford Junction. It also owns the quarry itself, and some items of rolling stock, notably the class 08 diesel shunter D4167.

Iowa Pacific Holdings is an American organisation which owns several railroads in the USA, and a UK company, British American Railway Services (BARS). BARS has a number of UK subsidiaries, including RMS Locotec, the freight operating company Devon & Cornwall Railways (DCR), the Weardale Railway (WR) and the Dartmoor Railway (DR).

DR leases Okehampton Station from DCC, and leases the railway from AI. It owns some rolling stock, including the 2 Thumpers, 1132 and 1128. It is a Community Interest Company, which, amongst other things, imposes restrictions on asset disposal.

DR has some paid staff, who report to Tiffany Arthurs, the DR General Manager. They include the Duty Managers, Paul Martin and, less frequently, Graham Isom, who are responsible for day-to-day operational and safety issues. Alistair Gregory is the Operations Manager for both DR and WR. The trackgang is employed by RMS Locotec.

DRSA provides the volunteer workforce. It has no direct say in the running of the railway, or financial interest in it. It owns 4 railway vehicles, Lab 11, the green FK coach S13436, and the grey LMS brakevan, all of which are operational, and the SR brakevan which is being restored.

Other vehicles on the railway are privately owned, including 47828, owned by D05 Preservation. The Polar Express coaches are owned by BARS.

The railway operates under DR's Safety Management System. This is administered by DR, but applies equally to DR staff and DRSA volunteers.

Rail Operations & Line Update

Paul Martin, Duty Manager

Line Update

General maintenance of the track has been ongoing including jobs such as more fishplate oiling, the annual weed killing and spot sleeper replacements. There is also the ongoing work maintaining and repairing line side fences when land owners report issues. The Meldon west ground frame needed some significant attention when it became difficult to operate for the train crew. Work on trackside vegetation to improve sightings at crossings has also taken place.

Den Brook Crossing

The concrete pouring stage of the wind farm construction was completed though it took a number of weeks. The crossing was then locked out of use with the 20 mph speed restriction left in place due to issues with the crossing installation. The large turbine blades are expected to be carried over the crossing from mid-July. Remedial work on the crossing will take place to ensure that normal line speed can be reinstated.



Rail Operations

The EMU vehicles owned by Peter Spokes which were due to leave in March are still awaiting collection, but they are now a rake of 5 vehicles that will all leave by rail once they have passed their ultrasound tests.

Eventually 47828 arrived at the railway on May 5th. It was on static display for the Western

Railtour two days later and also at Okehampton station for the bike show in May. The locomotive owned by D05 Preservation is now based at the railway and has been used as a deputy for the 08 and some

engineering work such as helping bed down some repacked areas of track. Plans for further use of the 47 will be announced later.



47828 and D1015 Western Champion at Meldon (Philip Wagstaff).

The Meldon Shuttle heritage service started on Good Friday March 25th with 08937, Lab 11 and 61743 performing the duties. They have all performed heroically with DRSA providing drivers, guards, second men and ticket office staff. Occasionally 47828 has replaced the 08 when the owners have been at the railway. Despite minimal publicity the service has attracted a steady number of passengers with Sundays usually being the busier day. Feedback is very positive and it's good to see all ages using the service. A number of people have travelled to the railway specifically for the days the 47 has been in use, though someone travelled down from Nottingham for the 08 and due to delays managed one round trip!! The presence of Meldon Buffet helps with what that destination has to offer.

The Devon CC funded Sunday Rover started on May 15th with a number of local dignitaries and even a film crew to witness the first train arrival of the season! The single car resplendent with small 'Okehampton' vinyls was a tad crowded with 108 people aboard (a number matched 2 weeks later).



The afternoon service was supplemented by a second 153 unit. The trains are run by Great Western Railway and are proving popular. In mid-June a 2 car 143 unit appeared on the service - though previously seen here on skid-pan training they have not been on the Sunday Rover service for at least the last 2 years. The week after saw two 153 units on the service which helped with any overcrowding issues.

Training

The operation of the heritage services has also enabled some DRSA members to train towards being passed out as drivers. Presently at second man level are Graham Parkinson, John Wills and Rachael Wilson, whilst Tom Baxter is currently a Traction Trainee. It's a long overdue positive step to see this occurring and it highlights the need for members to train for other roles such as Guards, Ticket Inspectors and work in the Ticket Office. At present the Ticket Office is wholly reliant on the valiant Gerald Hocking who is there every weekend selling tickets and making station announcements.

The opening of the DRSA shop has also highlighted the need for members who can offer some time serving and talking to customers. Christine Horner, Peter Ritchie, and Maureen Harris, with other volunteers, are presently carrying the burden of keeping this venture ticking over. We aim to have the shop open for at least part of each day we have heritage trains running, but we've not quite managed this yet so there is real urgent need for volunteers to help out with what is an important revenue stream for DRSA. If you can help, Christine Horner, whose telephone number is 01363 82383, will be delighted to hear from you



Rachael Wilson under instruction from Graham Isom in the cab of 47828 on 22nd May (Alistair Gregory).

If you are interested in any role and/or training then please make it known to Geoff Horner, DRSA volunteer coordinator. There is also a planned Personal Track Safety course running on August 10th at Okehampton for any of those interested in this, especially if your previous training certificate has expired.

MG Owners Car club – ACE Run

68 classic cars descended on Okehampton station for their annual ‘Atlantic Coast Express’ run on Sunday June 19th, with registration on Platform 3 and long queues at the Tea Rooms as breakfasts were flying out of the door. It became very busy with over 70 people also waiting for the first train of the day to Exeter! This year they were celebrating the 90th anniversary of the start of the famous ACE rail service which ended in 1964. Not long after 11am the cars had all left at regular timed intervals.



The plan was for them to finish the day at the Bodmin Railway gala for cream tea and a trip behind a steam engine. Well at least they started at a Southern railway station!

EXTENDING THE SIDING AT PLATFORM 2, OKEHAMPTON STATION

Dartmoor Railway is starting on the work to extend the siding at the east end of platform 2.

The first work day will be on Wednesday 13th July starting with the clearance of the vegetation. Other work dates will follow.

**VOLUNTEERS WILL BE WELCOME TO HELP WITH THIS PROJECT.
IF YOU ARE INTERESTED PLEASE CONTACT THE VOLUNTEER
COORDINATOR**

geoff.horner936@btinternet.com

01363 82383 or 07769 736536

Gardening

Sue Baxter

We are proud to announce that Kay's Pink Hollyhock has reached the canopy – some people miss it because it is so far above their heads! The mystery plants in the “wildflower” patch by the ladies’ toilet are 8 feet tall now (see photo). They provide a subtle yellow frieze of delicate yellow flower clusters through which to view Poppies, Ox-eye Daisies, Mallow and Foxgloves. Last year the Corncockles seeded and they are already showing their stunning mauve conical blooms. Last year I put a pot with one self-seeded wild Southern Marsh Orchid in the central trough. It appears to have seeded into our tubs where two are now flowering. They are perennial and pointed compared to the neighbouring Sweet Williams.



As I write, hanging baskets are still eagerly awaited from Bow Garden and Aquatic Centre. However they have taken second place this year to the building of their new spacious cafe and terrace overlooking the koi pond. Meanwhile we have some Black Eyed Pelargoniums in our conical wall hanging baskets, and plenty of lemon scented Geraniums with their delicate pale mauve flowers. Paul provided us with a bushy Bird's Foot Trefoil (flower looks like this before it opens) which should look lovely in sunshine draping from a platform pot.

Look out for Mavis' sweet peas to start coming through the fence, above the waving arms of Ann's Ox-eye Daisies. Hopefully Yellow Toadflax seedlings will take and show their brilliant orange lips. Oh, and beware, the odd nettle has had a reprieve because so many butterflies need their leaves, in full sun to lay their eggs. They include Small Tortoiseshell, Red Admiral, Peacock and Comma, not to mention all the beautiful moths – Mother of Pearl, Burnished Brass, Jersey Tiger, Spectacle, Snout and Beautiful Golden Y. We are trying to do our bit during Devon's pollinator month of July. (see www.naturaldevon.org.uk).

STOP PRESS: are the wildflower giants Black Mustard?

Western Challenger Railtour

Paul Martin, Duty Manager

Dartmoor Railway was visited by the Western Challenger tour on Saturday 7th May. The Pathfinder railtour was hauled solely by D1015 Western Champion (though it carried D1010 Western Campaigner and D1058 Western Nobleman numbers and nameplates on the day). The tour recreated an Ian Allan tour from 1966 which saw a non-stop run from Paddington to Plymouth and a return over Southern metals via Tavistock and Okehampton to Waterloo. The 2016 version saw a reversal at Plymouth and then the run to Okehampton via Exeter, before running back to London Waterloo.



*Keith Netherton in the cab of
D1015 at Meldon
(Photo: John Caesar).*



*Geoff Brookes watering one of the
railtour coaches (Photo: Alan Deane).*

The non-stop attempt to Plymouth only failed in the last tunnel before Plymouth station due to a signal check. The lengthy train arrived at Okehampton close to time with everybody disembarking. There were options to use the shuttle bus service to town or go to Meldon with the charter stock as the engine had to change ends there. A fair number of people turned up to see the Western, making it a very busy station for the afternoon. The date clashed with a few holidays for DRSA volunteers so everybody who

was left pitched in with the usual jobs, such as getting the huge amount of rubbish off the train.

Around 180 people took the opportunity to go to Meldon where the only problem turned out to be the fact that the locomotive did not seem to like changing direction, causing a delay there. Still, once back at Okehampton with a water tanker and a fuel tanker the whole train was watered and the loco fuelled at least 20 minutes before departure time with DRSA assisting as usual. The DRSA shop saw brisk business as did the Tea Rooms. The only query was where was the famous station BBQ. We had to inform punters that our BBQ King was sunning himself in Blackpool. Feedback was very positive from all and once again DR and DRSA worked together to ensure things ran smoothly.



The DR team joining the railtour at Crediton: (left to right) Dennis Leworthy, guard, Keith Netherton, driver/pilotman, John Caesar and Gerald Hocking. (Photo: Rob Dark).

Keith (Driver) and Dennis (Guard) conducted the train in and out of Dartmoor Railway, whilst John Caesar and Gerald Hocking sold Meldon tickets on the train from Crediton. All 4 were pictured there in the Crediton Courier newspaper and Keith was asked questions about his railway career. This was all before the

communication breakdown that saw Keith get off on the return trip at Crediton but Dennis stuck on the train to Exeter. He then had to get the service train back to Crediton to pick up his car and Keith!

LDS55625

Jon Kelsey

DRSA's fourth rail vehicle has slipped off the radar of many members, if it was ever on. It's a 25 ton Southern Railway brakevan, LDS55625. We acquired it in 2011, but since then it has been languishing at Meldon, largely untouched. Every so often it gets in the way, and then gets dragged to a different dark corner of the yard.



LDS 55625 skulking behind the workshop at Meldon on 16th April 2016 (J. Kelsey).

We don't know anything of its operational history. The 'S' part of the prefix indicates its Southern origins, the 'D' its departmental usage, and the 'L' probably refers to the Mechanical & Electrical Engineer, Electrification Unit department. It carries an 'Overhead Live Wires' sticker which may confirm the latter. Another sticker indicates that it was maintained at some point by Doncaster Wagon Repair Depot, so it's been around. Unfortunately the works plates are missing, possibly the work of the same kind soul who removed one of the axle box bearings.

We call it a Southern Railway brakevan, but it was actually built by British Railways in the early months of nationalisation in 1948, albeit to an SR design then at least 20 years old. Thus it is our second oldest vehicle, 6 years younger than the grey LMS brakevan. It was built at Ashford, to diagram 1582, part of lot no 3222.

These vans were sometimes known as 'Pillboxes', presumably because of the shortness of the cabin relative to the chassis, resulting in large, seemingly wasted platform areas at each end. Some examples have what appear to be toolboxes or brake cylinders occupying part of this space. Why were they made this way? A longer cabin wouldn't have cost much more, the extra weight could have been compensated by reducing the ballast, and the resultant vehicle surely would have been much more useful.



The van's weight being carried on the top face of the axlebox itself, as the bronze and white metal bearing is missing (left). Axle box deformed having been used as a jacking point (right). (J. Kelsey).

We haven't progressed with LDS55625 in the last 5 years because of the state of the axleboxes. 2 of them have been used as jacking points without anything to spread the load, and are so bent that dismantling will be very difficult. One box on the other axle is missing its bearing. With an embarrassing amount of difficulty we've removed the fourth bearing – the only one we can get out - to use it to identify a replacement. Our grateful thanks to Julian Pope for the jacks and

advice which helped us to do this. (Brace yourself for more ignorant questions Jules).

There are other problems too. The brakeblocks are like no other we can find on the DR, and naturally one of them is missing. Most of the roof canvas has disappeared, exposing some rotten planking underneath. The ballast compartment was full of water, and there's no shortage of rusty iron and rotting wood. Having started to get it cleaned and dried out it's now a bit more civilised to work in, though not much more will be done until we're sure we can source the missing parts.

On a heritage railway which compares unfavourably with most others in terms of interesting volunteer work, LDS55625 has always seemed like an interesting project going to waste, as well as one which would result in a useful, historic vehicle for the railway, so it's good news that work has finally started.

Progress on the van's overhaul can be followed at www.dartmoor-railway-sa.org/lds55625

DRSA Shop

Platform 2

We would welcome donations of railway books, railway miscellanea, model railway items, paperbacks and hardback books, railway DVDs and videos.

Please Support Our Shop!

Contact Christine Horner for further details:
christine.horner@talk21.com

OkeRail Forum Notes - July 2016

Sue Baxter

Mike Davies has now accepted the post as Independent Chairman. His background is in business, he is a Reverend, and has recently been Mayor of Okehampton. He has emphasised the importance of working well together to achieve the collective vision, with everyone having an equal say and a tangible contribution to make.

OkeRail CIC is a supportive entity which has emerged from Destination Okehampton. Its mission is as follows: 'The Company activities will concentrate on providing benefit to the immediate residential community of Okehampton, the wider commuter catchment area in West Devon and North Cornwall, and the environment generally, by promotion, advertising, supporting and fundraising for the instigation and resurrection of a regular daily service between Okehampton and Exeter. For the expanding population of Okehampton and the South West, the provision of a new daily commuter/tourist/shopper train service will mean fewer car journeys, lower carbon emissions and less traffic congestion in both towns, connecting roads and Exeter city centre.'

The Summer Sunday Exeter service is continuing to be monitored carefully with a view to providing clear evidence of the demand for a regular service. At present greatest demand for travel (to Exeter for shopping on the first train) is suppressed principally by the capacity (~80 seats) of the single coach Class 153 unit scheduled for the Sunday service. GWR in response have locally undertaken to provide two coaches whenever they can, and in fact have already done so on about half of the days. This is very much dependent on 100% or more of rolling stock being available at Exeter depot to cover all its planned commitments. Richard Proctor has surveyed as many passengers as possible. The key demand is for the first and last trains of the day. 4% of the Sunday passengers have already used the service to travel to London and 7% travelled to Plymouth, Cornwall and Bristol.

The Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership is involved in negotiations to run a Saturday service for the same duration as the Sunday service in 2017 and 2018.

Two members of the Stagecoach company bid team for the South West franchise met members of OkeRail Forum in Okehampton. They were keen to explore options ahead of the next competitive bid for South West Rail Franchise. Likewise, OkeRail members met with Great Western Railways First Group bid team in London. It has just been made possible for bidders to add another route to their tender. Richard Burningham, manager of Devon and Cornwall Rail Partnership, pointed out that we appear to fit the qualifying statements such as addressing a clear demand for more services, and serving new passengers.

Letters of support from the forum were immediately to be sent. Additionally, a letter of commitment to the future use of a daily service is being drawn up and then all those potential users will be given the opportunity to sign, in particular local businesses. Such a document will give our campaign more strength. DRSA members please point anyone you know in our direction.

Alistair Gregory, Operations Manager of Dartmoor Railway, pointed out that there was a need to find a solution to the potential incompatibility of running a daily service at Christmas during the 20 days or so of the Polar Express trains.

Three task groups have been formed to take matters further, Business Plan, Technical and Communications. Andrew Ardley is our new Devon County Transport Officer, while Bruce Thompson, now retired, has offered to remain to help provide continuity, which was welcomed.

Exeter & Teign Valley Railway

Jon Kelsey

A group of DRSA members spent an enthralling afternoon in a lovely corner of East Dartmoor visiting the Exeter and Teign Valley Railway on May 11th. Sadly we only numbered 7.

The Teign Valley line left the South Devon main line at Exeter City Basin junction, and proceeded via Ide, Longdown, Christow, Ashton, Trusham and Chudleigh to Heathfield on the Newton Abbot to Moretonhampstead branch. First proposed in 1860, it wasn't completed until 1903, and sadly, by then the plan to include a branch from near Christow up the Teign Gorge to Chagford had been dropped. During WW2, four of the crossing points were enlarged to enable the line's use as a diversionary route, but nothing saved the line from closure to passenger services in 1958.

The E&TVR is the brainchild of Colin Burges, and is established in the former Christow goods yard, which still contains evidence of the infrastructure which handled the output from Bridford and Scatter Rock quarries. Well lubricated fishplates and an absence of piles of abandoned junk are the first clues that this is a slightly different railway site.



The main 'running line' is a quarter mile long 2 foot gauge layout around the periphery of the site, on which we travelled on 'Jenny Wren', a 4 seater observation saloon built on the chassis of a skip wagon. It is described as 'manumotive', meaning it is

pulled and pushed by Mr Burges, though the route is carefully planned to make the most of gravity. It's a tad disconcerting to begin with a 1 in 12 descent towards the River Teign, but 4 little flanges and good maintenance keep the passengers dry. The route includes a neat

turntable, and a carriage shed built from the body of a standard gauge van.



A GWR Toad brakevan has been converted into a compact camping van, for which, sadly, patronage is declining as apparently even campers are moving upmarket these days. More fascinating still is 'Tadpole', a tiny camping van built on another narrow gauge skip wagon chassis, and only suitable for people shorter than 5' 9". It's beautifully made, though unfortunately not a commercial success.

A 1949 Wickham type 27 has been extensively rebuilt, and looks 'as new', though it wouldn't start during our visit; a fault with the modern electronic ignition fitted to the Ford 10 engine. The Improved Wickham Turntable enabled Mr Burges to demonstrate how one man could get three quarters of a ton of trolley off the track in a few minutes.

There is a line of standard gauge rail vehicles, comprising a Ferry Van like ours, a Covered Carriage Truck (CCT) also like ours, an 0-4-0 Drewry shunter (like a BR class 04) which came from the coal concentration yard at Exmouth Junction, and a Matisa Neptune track measuring and recording machine. All seem to be deteriorating faster than they are being restored, and suggest that Mr Burges could use some help.



Time was starting to run short by the time we reached the modern cabin which functions as the 'booking office'. The interior was a

surprise as it is nicely crafted in the style of a traditional railway office, and houses a display of fascinating railway paraphernalia, as well as selling replica tickets and railway oriented gifts (but not tat).

It's hard to encapsulate the essence of the E&TVR in a few words. There is much to entertain and educate railway enthusiasts and thoughtful 'normals' alike, but the real point is support of an idealist's campaign for railway reinstatement, and opposition to its alternatives. In addition, there's a great deal of engineering excellence to admire for those who appreciate these things. It's an intriguing place.



Our newest committee member, Tony Hill, pushes a 9 ton van up a gradient (J. Caesar).

There is more detail and a great deal of Mr Burges's writing on his website at <http://www.teignrail.co.uk/>, and Peter Kay's book The Teign Valley Line is one of the better branch line histories. Our thanks are due to Colin Burges for giving up so much of his time to describe his fascinating railway project to our embarrassingly small group, and to Tony Hill for organising the visit.

Rosie's Diary – A Rambling Rover

By Rosie

Most of my rambling is padding through the countryside (and at the moment getting lots of grass seeds stuck in my coat!). However, I was intrigued by the talk by Amyas Crump at our AGM, to hear of 4 paws who were roving collectors. My two legs Tom remembers there were little gravestones to them in Exeter. They were behind the railings before the overbridge on Queen Street. Those 4 paws collected for railway orphans by roving amongst the passengers between Central and St David's Stations. They had collecting boxes strapped to their backs. My friend Dave Hunt (a very good mate who shares his pasties with me) tells me that there are now Railway Rovers with all the up to date technology. Apart from the usual collecting notice on their backs, they carry a swipe card reader so you can donate £2. I quite fancy doing that – much better than having clattering coins every time you wag your tail!



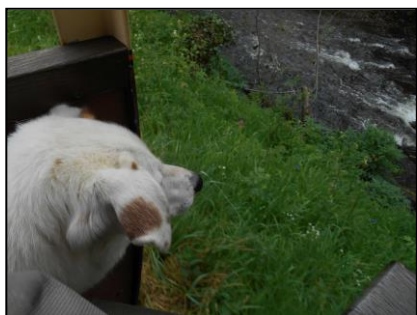
On sunny April 19th I had a really good time joining a large party of Railway Ramblers from all over the country. Sensibly they caught the double decker bus from Okehampton

to Lydford in order to explore all the Southern Line back to Okehampton. First we peered at Lydford Viaduct through the trees. Then I did a closer Inspection for rodents amongst the substantial saplings on the deck. We had to turn up the road a little way before starting eastwards along the Granite Way. To the west the cutting is impossibly overgrown, no chance of tracking rabbits there.



I was offered tasty morsels when we reached Bridestowe, during a

break under the magnificent beech avenue that lines the road up to the Fox and Hounds (oh their lamb shanks are to drool for!). You can see that the well preserved Exmouth standard prefab concrete hut at Lake would also have made an ideal refreshment hut. However we next paused on the sleeper benches which mark the former junction for Bude. You can see that my 2 legs unreasonably insisted that I sat at some distance from all the 26 lunch boxes. If my pets ever become too sedentary I shall suggest that they join the Railway Ramblers. They meet up for a week at a time to pad about exploring an area. Knowledgeable and fit people, with good lunch boxes.



Recently I have been privileged to join not one but two private tours of Significant Small Railways. E and TVR is the Exeter and Teign Valley Railway (otherwise known as The Thinking Woman's Railway) magnificently commemorated at Christow by Colin Burges. Padding across the footbridge over the River

Teign the landscape opens up to reveal the site of former mineral sidings with huge hoppers above. This railway was first needed for lead, then for silver, zinc, iron, manganese, then latterly for roadstone and barytes (which is now apparently used as a weighting agent in drilling fluids in oil and gas exploration!). I think it is a much more pleasant place now.



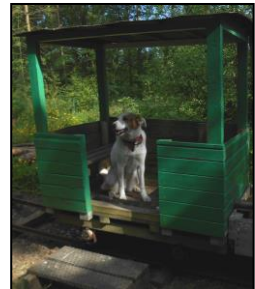
Fancy visiting it in the past when rocks were flying overhead in an aerial bucketway from Scatter Rock Quarry a mile away on the other side of the valley. The noise and not to mention the thick layer of dust covering everywhere, ugh. Nowadays you

can have great fun riding in the Jenny Wren manumotive observation car which sets off like a roller coaster. You can imagine how my haunches were pressed against the seat seeing the Teign was right below! Then Colin performed a feat – turning a beautiful open sided wagon on a turntable and offloading it onto rails at right angles to the track – single handed! Then he pushed a flange-less wheel set along the track. As we watched, it kept itself on the track despite going from side to side. It always righted itself, due to the inward tilt of the wheel faces – of course I always knew that(?!)



My most recent rambling was to one of only two known active Devon timber traffic railways. I was again amazed at the velocity which the manumotive achieved. My nose was firmly inside the loading gauge in order to avoid contact with the trees as we swayed along! Lo

and behold then the carriage top was removed to reveal a flat bed wagon which we loaded with 6 lengths of 8 foot tree trunks. Meanwhile I had to be ready to discipline a charming but boisterous Jack Russell puppy called Heather. We finally agreed that mouse hunting and digging were good fun.



Now, a rambling challenge for you and your rover. See the 2 railway markers I excavated around? Well they are between and immediately adjacent to two bridges, where the former Great Western and London and South Western

Railways ran parallel. Where is it? A packet of my rather excellent chews to the first correct 4 paws response.

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Vice-Chairman: Sue Baxter

Secretary: Jon Kelsey

Treasurer: Christine Horner

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