



# THE DARTMOOR PONY

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

**No.27    Winter 2016/17    £2.00**



**Dartmoor Peak**

# The DARTMOOR PONY

Issue No. 27

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## DARTMOOR RAILWAY SUPPORTERS' ASSOCIATION

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

**FRONT COVER:** With the northern Dartmoor Tors in the background, 45060 'Sherwood Forester' passes through Sampford Courtenay on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February 2017 with the 12:55 Meldon Viaduct to Coleford Junction service. *Photo: Bernard Mills.*

**BACK COVER:** Top: 33035 passing under Tors Road Bridge with the 15:00 Okehampton-Meldon Viaduct on Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> February with Graham Isom at the controls. *Photo: Bernard Mills.* Bottom: 47828 in Platform 2 at Okehampton on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2017 *Photo: Philip Wagstaff.*

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## **Notes from the Chairman**

Thank you for your ongoing support for DRSA and for the Dartmoor Railway. Since the last edition of the Pony, Dartmoor Railway management, staff and volunteers have been busy with the Polar Express and the Sulzer Weekend and we are looking forward to a new season of heritage trains planned to be operating in April following repairs to the 08.

The Polar Express was successful again this year and brought many visitors to the Station. The locomotives from Polar were once again used for the Sulzer weekend with 33035, 45060 and 47428 all in action. This event brought many railway enthusiasts to the station who had the opportunity to travel to Meldon and to Sampford Courtenay and the railway boundary.

During the Sulzer weekend the DRSA shop and the Museum were open and many people visited both of these as well as the buffet. Much planning goes into these events and thanks go to the General Manager and to the Duty Managers, the drivers and guards and to all of the DRSA volunteers who helped, both behind the scenes and front of house.

An event that is making news locally is the Okehampton United Charity/Okerail special train on March 18<sup>th</sup> which sees an HST set making its way from Okehampton to London. This will be the first through train to London for a while and it's good to know that the indications are that all seats have been taken.

As an Association we are always seeking ways of supporting the railway and have been able to do so through volunteers who work in different areas including Station Maintenance, Lineside Maintenance, Carriage and Wagon, Train Staff, the shop and volunteering around the station. New volunteers are always welcome and if you would like to volunteer please contact our volunteer coordinator.

In order that we can discover more of the way that our members want the Association to move forwards we hold an Annual General Meeting every year. This year's AGM will take place at the Ockment Centre in

Okehampton on Friday 19<sup>th</sup> May at 6.30 pm. Please note the change of day to a Friday evening as it was felt that Saturday was not the best day to meet. At the AGM we will review the past year and there will also be time for everyone to share their views, so if you are able to, please come along, or if you can't make it and want to put a question please let me, or a member of the committee, know.

Some members of the committee have been in contact with the South West Film Archive who have put together a programme of historic films about the Withered Arm and Railways of the South West. The full programme will be shown at the AGM and there is also a version which is for sale in the shop. The screening is due to start at 1930, and will be open to non-members for a charge of £3

Further details of the AGM will be sent out in due course.

We look forward to welcoming you and our visitors to the Railway for the 2017 season.

*Rev. Philip Wagstaff*



*47828 and 33035 side by side at Okehampton on 4<sup>th</sup> February 2017  
(Philip Wagstaff).*

## **Railway News**

### ***The 'Royal Oke' from Okehampton to London***

On Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> March, a specially arranged GWR HST train will run from Okehampton to Paddington offering residents a day out in the capital without changing trains. Tickets went quickly and the train is now sold out. Organised by OkeRail, this is an initiative intended to demonstrate the community's interest in a possible regular service between Okehampton and Exeter St David's.

### ***Heritage Services 2017***

It is anticipated that heritage services will recommence, and the Meldon Buffet will reopen, in early April. This will be dependent on repairs to 08937 taking place in time. As well as planned exams and servicing carried out by Julian Pope, 4 reconditioned cylinder heads will be supplied and fitted by DRCIC's associate company, RMS Locotec.

The service will be similar to last year running between Okehampton and Meldon. Hopefully occasionally services will run to Sampford Courtenay and/or the DR/Network Rail boundary. Keep checking the DRSA website for the latest news.

### ***Grant received towards repainting of SR platform seats.***

We are very grateful to the Devon & Cornwall Community Rail Partnership for the grant of £25, arranged by their Manager Richard Burningham, for use in repainting into Southern Green the four Southern platform seats recently acquired from the WSR, where they had been displaced by new GWR seats. These seats will enhance the passenger facilities at Okehampton and also allow provision of a seat at Sampford Courtenay station.

### ***Repainting of DRSA's MK II First class coach S13436***

It has been decided to repaint this coach in a slightly lighter shade of green than before for a variety of reasons; not least that this colour was the view of the majority of suggestions, easy to apply and that it will match the colour to be used for the restored and privately owned DMU trailer vehicle 59520 which is planned to run with S13436.

### ***Test Train***

Great Western Railway ran a 143 Pacer unit as a test train to Okehampton on 21<sup>st</sup> February in preparation for the HST special to London Paddington on March 18<sup>th</sup>. Numerous stops were made to carry out gauging and measuring activity.

### ***Special Half Fare Winter promotion on North Devon 'Tarka' line.***

Introduced in October, and running every day until April 17<sup>th</sup>, a half price fare of (for example) only £5 Adult Return to Barnstaple is available after 0900 from Exeter stations and correspondingly less from (and between) intermediate stations (e.g. £4.10 from Crediton) on the North Devon line. Full details available from staffed stations, or the National Rail website.

### **Membership Matters**

*Peter Flick, Membership Secretary*

Thanks to all those who have renewed for 2017. Welcome to two new members since our last edition:

- Andrew Garka of Tunbridge Wells
- Stephen England of Okehampton.

Please do your best to encourage your friends to join. Forms are on the website. Or from Peter Flick (contact details on Page 2).

### **Online Fundraising**

Before doing your online shopping, please first visit our [easyfundraising](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/drsa) page and you can raise donations towards DRSA at no cost to you - *over £1600 has been raised so far!*

[www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/drsa](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/drsa)

## **Events**

These events are listed on the website at <http://www.dartmoor-railway-sa.org/events>. We try and publish details of other organisation's events which might be of interest to members. Please contact [jonathankelsey@btinternet.com](mailto:jonathankelsey@btinternet.com) if you hear of anything that could be added to the list

DRSA Social Gatherings continue twice a month at the usual locations in Bridestowe and Tedburn St Mary.

### **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

**'From a field to the National Railway Museum' –  
19<sup>th</sup> April 2017, 19:30 at Morchard Bishop.**

The speaker at the monthly meeting of the Mid Devon Tractor Engine and Machinery Group at Morchard Bishop Memorial Hall (EX17 6PL) will be Nick Stringer. Nick's subject, 'From a field to the National Railway Museum', covers the restoration of a 1930s LNER Gresley teak carriage. The standard of restoration was so high that the carriage was 'borrowed' by the NRM to sit alongside 'The Flying Scotsman' as part of the recent NRM exhibition.

Anyone interested in attending is welcome, at no cost. A phone call to Michael Coleman on 01363 84622 would be helpful for catering purposes as there are refreshments in the interval.

## **New DVD - “The Withered Arm and other lines in South west England”**

We are delighted to announce that this new DVD, produced by DRSA in association with the South West Film & Television Archive (SWF&TA), is now available to purchase by post. **Priced at £15.00 plus £1.50 package & postage** and lasting approximately one hour, the collection of archive amateur and professional film includes rare footage, much of which has not previously reached the public domain. Content includes film of the last train on the North Cornwall line, the Torrington to Halwill Junction line, the Callington line, the Princetown line, Exeter to Barnstaple and Ilfracombe, Barnstaple to Lynton, plus some lovely steam shots between Tavistock and Okehampton. For those of us who managed to travel these lines in the dim and distant past, this DVD will bring back many memories. Younger members will be able to see what they missed! All profits from the sales of the DVD go into DRSA funds of course, which is by itself a good enough reason to buy one – or perhaps two?

One ‘health’ warning. This is a collection of old material gleaned by SWF&TA from a variety of sources, some of which was taken with the limited technology of the time. So “Star Wars” it isn’t (which in my book can only be good). However it is suitable for under-fifteens and over eighties!

Copies should be ordered by phone to David Clegg on

**01626 867210**

or by email to [clegg.lethbridge@tiscali.co.uk](mailto:clegg.lethbridge@tiscali.co.uk)

quoting the delivery address.

Payment must be made at the time of ordering, by post please to:  
David Clegg, 23 Strand Hill, Dawlish, Devon, EX7 9JJ.

Cheques should be made payable to Dartmoor Railway Supporters Association. Thank you!

# **Rail Operations & Line Update**

*Paul Martin, Duty Manager*

## **Line Update**

With Polar Express running the focus has been on ensuring the smooth operation of that service. There has been ongoing work repairing fences and keeping sheep off the line. A piece of rail from the extension siding requires swapping out with one in the Den Brook Wind Farm crossing area. One of the next jobs to be tackled is remedial work on the downhill curve on the approach to Meldon.



*47828 and 33035 at Okehampton on Friday 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2017 (Philip Wagstaff).*

There is also ongoing work on the back roads at Meldon which have not been available to DR for a number of years. These becoming available greatly expands the space available for stabling rolling stock there. From mid-February the line reverted back to 2 sections, controlled by Crediton-Okehampton and Okehampton-Meldon one train working staffs.

## **Polar Express (PE)**

Another successful PE season saw crowds flocking to Okehampton station. We ran either 2 or 3 trains per night getting through copious amounts of hot chocolate and cookies.

Traction was provided by 45060 and 47828 in the main. The stand by loco 33035 ran on the front of the train one night to ensure it was operational and it replaced the 47 on a couple of night when there was an issue with the 47 brakes. All performed admirably throughout. There were no major problems just usual endless challenges re toilets and electrics.

BBC Spotlight news broadcast their whole show live from the railway one night which went very well and was excellent publicity for both the PE and Dartmoor Railway. That had to be the only night when we had to swap engines between trains!!!

### **Sulzer Weekend**

On February 4th and 5th we ran our second Sulzer Weekend using the 3 classic traction locomotives still on the railway after Polar Express. We focussed on the 33 and the 45 as the 47 has been resident on the railway for some time.



*The 1500 Okehampton-Meldon Viaduct climbing away from Tors Road on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2017, with 33035 front and 45060 rear (Bernard Mills).*

The event itself went off almost without a hitch. After gales and pouring rain on the Friday for the Pioneer Diesels Group driver training we were blessed with mainly dry weather over the weekend. There were lots of DRSA volunteers helping over the weekend, many  
The Dartmoor Pony Winter 2016/17

on both days. Passenger numbers were similar to last year. Along with the ticket sales the Buffet and BBQ did a good trade. The DRSA shop on Platform 2 made a good number of sales. We were able to expand the on train catering and this proved very popular with DRSA providing the staff for this. A cleaned out 'Rocket' proved a popular attraction.



*1525 Meldon Viaduct-Coleford Jct with 33035 on the rear passing the Military Sidings on 5<sup>th</sup> February 2017 (Bernard Mills).*

When I say almost without a hitch, after running the same locos all day Saturday we performed a complex shunt to have the different combination for the first train on Sunday. This went OK until we realised the 33 could not provide the train heat despite doing it all day from the other end. Numerous tests proved fruitless and it became apparent that no one could remember the last time the 33 had run train heat from that cab. Alistair Gregory and Mike Jacobs soldiered on late into the night looking at the schematics and eventually found a wiring fault from some rewiring done eons ago. Thanks to their work beyond the call of duty trains were able to run as advertised or as we had

planned. (My proof reading let me down and the fliers on the day suggested 47701 and 33103 reappearing later on Sunday!!)

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.



*45060 with driver Keith Netherton visible at the controls approaching Okehampton on Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> February 2017 (Philip Wagstaff).*

It was a great example of Dartmoor Railway and DRSA working together and an exciting way to start 2017. DRSA providing Drivers, Guards, TTIs, Stewards, Ticket Office staff, help in Tea Rooms and on train food/beverages. Thanks to Pioneer Diesels Group, D05 Preservation Limited for use of the locos. Sadly too many people individually to name to thank for all their efforts and support in making it possible and a successful event, but it was greatly appreciated and hopefully it can be an annual event.

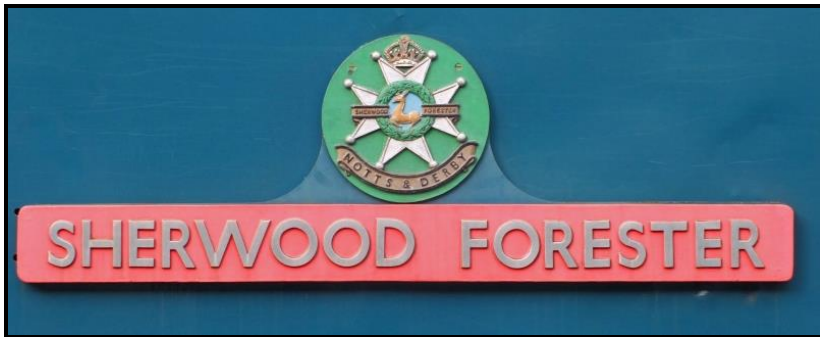
## Traction Update

**08937:** 'Bluebell Mel' is currently stored out of use in the small engine shed at Meldon. It has been drained of liquids and is awaiting attention as outlined in the previous issue. It is hoped to take place in time to enable the 08 to haul heritage services from April.

**47828:** D05 Preservation's Class 47 worked the Polar Express season and completed one run on the Sulzer weekend. It is still planned to have its roof grilles replaced with earlier version grilles which are now being chased up and should be fitted at Meldon. A full repaint into a new livery is also planned to take place in March/April at Meldon into InterCity 'Swallow' livery. 47828 will be going to the SVR Diesel Gala in May with the other Polar Express locomotives. Plans for the rest of the year are still being finalised. Recently D05 also acquired mainline registered DRS loco 37688. Plans for where this loco will be based are not known at this time.

**1132 (*Thumper Unit*):** Still at Meldon awaiting developments.

Visiting locomotives 45060 and 33035 owned by Pioneer Diesel group are expected to leave the railway in May to be part of the Severn Valley Railway (SVR) Diesel Gala. In the meantime they are stabled in Meldon Quarry sidings.



*45060's nameplate (Philip Wagstaff).*

## **A message from Percy...**

For those of you who have not visited me at the station and/or on Facebook (and why not?) I'm still at Okehampton performing my duties. I survived the hectic Polar Express season either in the Tea Room helping the hot chocolate gang, and sleeping or restricted to the Signal Box. I got to say 'hello' to some of the many visitors, though some were a bit boisterous and my cat flap entrance is a bit worse for wear.



Now my GPO trolley is back on the platform I'm often there surveying the scene. Lots of people turned up for Sulzer weekend with cameras pretending to be interested in the old noisy diesel engines, but really they just wanted to get a picture of me.

## **DRSA Shop**

### **Platform 2**

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

Contact Christine Horner for further details:

[christine.horner@talk21.com](mailto:christine.horner@talk21.com)

## **Volunteer Activities**

*Geoff Horner, Volunteer Coordinator*

### **Sulzer Weekend**

The 'Sulzer Weekend' event took place on the weekend of 4th/5th February. There was a good response by volunteers for assistance over the two days, with over 20 volunteers giving their services on one or both days. Good feedback from the event proved once again that DR and DRSA are able to put on well organised rail events that attract visitors to the railway.

### **Carriage & Wagon**

The Carriage & Wagon team have continued their work on the 'FK' carriage and the LMS Goods Brake Van. We have just learnt that it is the intention to utilise these two vehicles plus Lab11 as the vacuum braked set hauled by the '08' for heritage services starting in April. There is still a fair amount of work to be done in a relatively short period of time on all three vehicles but C&W will do their best to get them ready in time.

It is understood that DR will be putting the repairs to the '08' in hand so that the heritage service between Okehampton and Meldon Viaduct can resume in April as planned.

### **Station Maintenance**

With the lull in SMT activity over the Polar Express/winter season now coming to an end, the main focus has been the repainting of the station Booking Hall. This is now complete and the hall has a fresh welcoming appearance to it once again.

### **WANTED**

#### **TRAVELLING TICKET INSPECTORS (TTI)**

Dartmoor Railway are keen to recruit a number of DRSA members to the role of TTI in order to free up the guards on the heritage train services from this responsibility. No previous experience is necessary and on the job training will be given.

**IF YOU ARE INTERESTED AND  
ARE FREE TO WORK AT  
WEEKENDS AND MAYBE SOME  
WEEKDAYS PLEASE CONTACT  
THE VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR  
[geoff.horner936@btinternet.com](mailto:geoff.horner936@btinternet.com)**

**01363 82383 or 07769 736536**

## **Museum & Shop**

Both were open for the Sulzer Weekend and proved very popular with the visitors. The museum is now open at weekends. The shop will re-open when heritage services resume in April.

## **Station Gardening**

*Sue Baxter*

Bulbs have been taking their time to bud up this year. Thank heavens as last year the first daffs were out unseasonably early in November. The late January rains are welcome after a dry autumn and winter. The sunflowers, teasels and evening primrose held up good seed heads for the birds. Another year perhaps someone will have captured the goldfinches on camera with beaks down inside the evening primrose seed cases.



Sadly the wildflower patch took the overflow from the bins at the end of Polar Express. All but one of the seed heads were flattened. Thankfully the rubbish was cleared up relatively quickly so that next year's seedlings will come through. However, Rosie was very interested and Percy probably even more so in the base of the pile. It turned out that rodents had already started shredding bits of plastic(!) to make nests in the ground.

We are looking forward to better daylight and warmer weather to rejuvenate the two grit boxes and some tubs. Meantime enjoy the promise of spring as the bright green of the bulbs shoot upwards.

## **Exploring the North Cornwall Railway**

*Dave Clegg*

***A reminder about our Withered Arm DVD which is now for sale price £15 [plus £1.50 P&P!]***

When I worked for BR Southern Region in the 1960s, I had the ‘perk’ of a couple of free rail tickets each year, and I took the opportunity now and again to travel the Southern lines in the West Country. The recent process of putting together a DRSA DVD on the “Withered Arm” lines west of Exeter provided me with an incentive to explore the route and closed stations of the North Cornwall Railway (NCR) by road; and fellow committee member Geoff Horner joined me.

Starting out from Okehampton, the first part of our journey was familiar as the line to Bude and Padstow branched off the once Plymouth main line at Meldon Junction and soon closely followed the A3079 to Halwill Jct, where the NCR really started. This was a road that I have driven on many a time on my way to Bude and the North Cornwall coast. Before reaching Halwill Jct, trains would have called at Maddaford Moor Halt and Ashbury. We discovered the site of the first just a few yards from the road, reached by an overgrown grassy track. Though the route of the line was immediately obvious, no sign of the halt could be seen at first, but after a few minutes rooting about in the undergrowth the shape of where the platform had once stood could just be made out.

Ashbury station, however, is still well-presented as a private house, though the separately owned goods-yard is an eye-sore. But with a bit of imagination you can still envisage train bound for Padstow pausing at the station hauled by a West Country Class loco, or a grimy N 2-6-0, or perhaps even a T9!

In the 1960s there was little in the way of housing at Halwill Junction but the 'footprint' of the station was quite large as the lines from Padstow, Bude and Okehampton all converged here as well as the little-used line from Torrington. I can remember being the only passenger on the one-coach train from Torrington and being invited onto the footplate of the Ivatt tank engine for most of the journey, though I had to revert to the coach before we arrived in the bay platform at Halwill. Sadly, this sort of thing couldn't happen today: more's the pity. However, I did have my father's cine-camera with me and I took a small amount of footage which is now included on the DVD. At certain times of the day, trains arrived within a few minutes from all directions, coaches were shunted from one train to another, and then they all continued on their separate journeys, leaving total peace for the next couple of hours. One wonders what the staff got up to then! No doubt time for a cuppa and a chat - which is exactly what the train crew had done at Petrockstowe en-route from Torrington, not



that they offered me one! Unfortunately there is now little of railway interest to see at the junction, though the old trackbed is clear enough and seems to be popular for dog-walking.

*Ashwater Station House.*

Up until now we had driven on main roads, but to reach the next station, Ashwater, which was five miles away by rail, we were on minor roads. The station is in Ash Mill, rather than Ashwater and is still intact as a private residence. Again as we found throughout this trip, the line threads through rural countryside, with no towns or villages of any size, and no signs of recent development. It made me

question why these remote stations were ever built, and why over/underbridges on the line were built to take double track - indicating that greater levels of traffic were anticipated.

We drove on to Tower Hill, by which station we had dropped from Halwill's 600ft above sea-level down to 300ft, following the river Carey. In contrast to the footage on our DVD which showed the station buildings intact after closure, all remnants of the station have since disappeared though an interesting and massive overbridge remains. So we hurried on to Launceston for lunch, having now crossed the county boundary into Cornwall. The site of the SR station and adjacent GWR terminus is now a supermarket and industrial estate though the narrow-gauge tracks of the delightful Launceston Steam Railway (closed at the time of our visit) were evident as they begin their journey westwards in the direction of Egloskerry using the SR trackbed.

Egloskerry station, just over four miles deeper into Cornwall was an absolute delight, complete with what appears to be a PMV (parcel/mail van) in SR green livery and enamel station signs. The goods yard (all these minor stations seemed to have one) is now a small housing complex, and apart from a small boy racing about on his trike making awful noises, the whole station area had the feeling of rural tranquillity. The track crossed the road on the flat, meaning there was once a level crossing here.



After a hunt along more minor, muddy roads, we reached our final station for the day, Tresmeer, 234 miles from Waterloo, and 5 hours 24 minutes journey time by the 11.0am Atlantic Coast Express. Situated a good way from the village that it takes its name from, it was difficult again to imagine why a station was built in such an isolated spot. But reading later more about the history of the line (“An Illustrated History of the North Cornwall Railway (Irwell Press)), I learnt it was originally a busy station dealing with farming supplies, cattle, general merchandise, coal, roadstone, slate from Delabole quarry and substantial flows of (dead) rabbits destined mainly for London.



Apart from the usual store for coal there were others for fertiliser and seed. It has all gone now of course, but isn't it good to see that it still looks like a station with the platforms

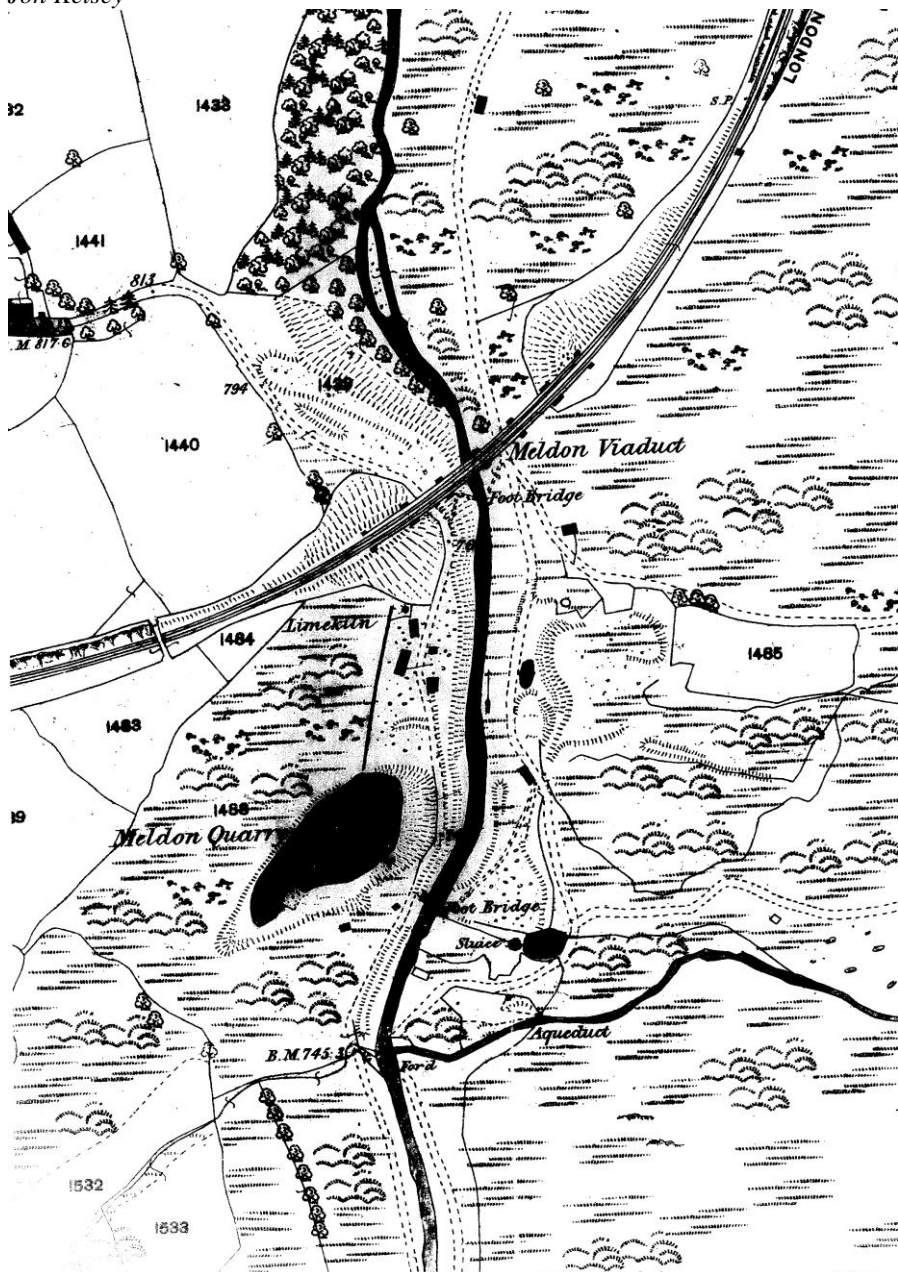
still intact? But this line is not another candidate for a future re-opening (as we hope for the SR Okehampton to Plymouth route). By car it took us just 30 minutes to drive back to civilisation -well, almost - at Okehampton. My 1959 Southern Region timetable (which I would have used when travelling this line), shows that by leaving on the afternoon train from Tresmeer at 4.34pm it would have taken nearly an hour and a quarter, to reach Okehampton - plus the walk into the town!

It had been a fascinating day, taking us off the beaten track where we would not normally explore even by car. I hope in 2017 that we shall work our way down the remainder of the route to Wadebridge and Padstow. The scenery is not dramatic, but John Betjeman described this Cornish landscape so aptly in “Summoned by Bells”:

*Attend the long express from Waterloo  
That takes us down to Cornwall. Tea Time shows  
The small fields waiting, every blackthorn hedge  
Straining inland before the south-west gale.  
The emptying train, wind in the ventilators,  
Puffs out of Egloskerry to Tresmeer  
Through minty meadows, under bearded trees  
And hills upon whose sides the clinging farms  
Hold Bible Christians. Can it really be  
That this same carriage came from Waterloo?*

## Old Maps (Part 5) – Meldon, 1884

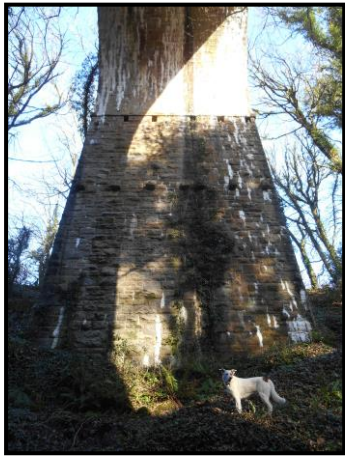
Jon Kelsey



## **Rosie's Diary – Do you know where I went?**

*By Rosie*

I am glad to say that I have already had some fun this year and I hope the same is true for all 2 and 4 paws reading this. Well, for a start, as an enthusiast no railway can ever be long enough, can it? So I have been off down the line investigating the way ahead. What a magnificent structure there is across the River Lyd, just above the gorge section owned by the National Trust. I hope my profile in the photo gives an impression of one of the 7 spans, each 40 feet wide. Look carefully and you can see the line that shows how it was widened to carry 2 tracks on 22<sup>nd</sup> December 1879 just



5 years after it was first opened. Like Lake viaduct, it is built of masonry with beautiful granite capping stones. You can see I investigated the deck and found that, beneath the rodents in the leaf litter, the ballast is still in place. Below I dodged some drips that evidently came from still working drainage pipes.



A gent named Derek Hatten, whom I first met at the consultation in the Charter Hall, has been reminiscing about his time at Meldon. He was a quarry worker and rented Meldon Cottage number 11 from British Railways in the 1970s. The first 6 had slate rooves but the others had galvanised tin, boarded underneath. It was quite warm apparently as long as he had enough paraffin for heating. However, one year when the snow was bad, he had to walk to Sourton Garage (now under the truck stop) to get more.

The landlord did not upgrade the properties, which had outside toilets, so Derek set about improving the kitchen by putting up some wall cupboards and converting the larder into a shower. The agent was not impressed on his next visit, saying he would not be able to take the cupboards away with him as they were now fixtures, and that he hadn't gained permission to install a shower, and would have to remove it. Derek was able to reply that he would take the cupboards with him when he left because they were screwed, not nailed. As for the shower, he suggested the Health Authority would not be impressed if they knew he was being forced to wash in a bucket of cold water outside after working in the dusty quarry. He was then left alone, to enjoy what he believes to be some of the best views in Devon (when Quarry lorries were *not* going past his front door on the original road into the site).

During the drought of 1975-76 a pump was floated on a platform in Meldon Pool and used to keep the West Okement flowing. As the water level went down about 15 feet he went exploring and found remnants from the glassworks, including a green twist walking cane! I don't think I will go looking for one of those, not a good chew!



Now, are you ready to work out which fascinating railway I have been on lately? You can see it is a lovely ride in compartment stock with closely slatted wood seats and expansive views across water. It is efficiently timetabled to meet up with other public transport, some twenty services the day I visited. There are 3 passenger carriages and a flat wagon to carry luggage. I only just had my paws inside when

the driver took off without any ceremony, and the sliding door closed with the momentum. No smoke or diesel fumes, I am pleased to say, because beside the 2 foot rails is the third electric rail. Stop and starting without fuss or bother. I was only slightly alarmed at the sight of the red safety buoy outside the drivers cab on the engine.



The engine began life in a mustard gas factory and is a hundred years old this year. Now it works in the fresh air alongside curlews and oyster catchers. A real fun ride for me, and the way to work, shops, an RSPB reserve, university and football for others!

I will leave you guessing, answer in the next Dartmoor Pony. Then I hope to have found more out about the circus animals that came to Okehampton on rails.



## **Committee of the Dartmoor Railway Supporters' Association**

**Chairman:** Philip Wagstaff

**Vice-Chairman:** Sue Baxter

**Secretary:** Jon Kelsey

**Treasurer:** Christine Horner

**Membership Secretary:** Peter Flick

**Volunteer Coordinator:** Geoff Horner

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Printed by Ink Print, 3, Station Road, Okehampton. Tel: 01837 52937