



THE DARTMOOR PONY

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

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Three's a Crowd

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: Thumper 1132 stands in platform 2 on 10th October 2017 in a 3-car formation, the centre carriage having last been used around 10 years ago! It had been brought down to Okehampton for pressure washing. *Photo: Dave Clegg.*

BACK COVER: Top: The rake of DRSA stock basking in the early November sunshine outside the shed at Meldon. *Photo: G. Horner.*
Bottom: Platform scene at Okehampton. *Photo: Dave Clegg.*

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Notes from the Chairman

Rev. Philip Wagstaff

The last time I went to Okehampton station the repairs to the windows on DR's Mark 2 carriage stock were at an advanced stage in readiness for the winter events. While most of the work is being done by contractors for DR, a team of volunteers from DRSA is replacing the glass in the door droplights. This is a complex operation but it has been successfully tackled thanks to the skill and determination of members of the C&W crew. Many thanks to all the team for giving their time to do this. Getting the stock ready is part of the preparations for DR's winter event, further information is available on the DR website.

Vandalism appears to be an increasing problem for heritage railways. It is intensely demoralising to volunteers who have put many hours into projects only to see them vandalised and having to start again. Our Lab 11 was targeted a while back and this year the DR Mark 2s. Every effort is being made to counter this but we all need to be vigilant and report any suspicious behaviour.

The Association has been around for some time now and just like many other organisations it is important to periodically review what we do. The committee is exploring how we as an organisation may develop in the future. We've just started the process and are planning on bringing some proposals to the AGM next year and will keep you in touch with developments.

Christmas means a busy time for the railway as we welcome visitors to the DR Christmas trains. As we come to the end of the year I would like to thank all of our members, volunteers and DR staff for your support through the year and for all the time, effort and energy that you give to supporting the railway.

With all good wishes for a Happy Christmas and a peaceful New Year.

News Items

Missing Book

The good news is that the missing Okehampton Line book has been found! Thanks to everyone who checked, especially the person who had borrowed it!

DRSA DVD still available

The DRSA DVD, the Southern's Withered Arm, is still available to purchase. Copies are still available and can be purchased by post by contacting David Clegg: clegg.lethbridge@tiscali.co.uk or at 01626 867210. See the advert on a following page detailing the content of the DVD.

Membership Matters

Geoff Horner, Membership Secretary

Since the last edition of the 'Dartmoor Pony' we are pleased to welcome new member Martin Shelley of Morchard Bishop.

Enclosed with this edition you will find the annual membership renewal letter and renewal form. For those of you who have elected to receive their copy of the magazine via email these documents will be arriving in the post. We hope that all our members will be renewing for 2018 and thank you for your support over this year.

The 21st December evening social gathering at the Fox & Hounds on the A386 near Bridestowe has been designated as the DRSA Christmas gathering. All members are welcome along with relatives or friends.

Our best wishes for Christmas and the New Year.

A perfect Christmas present!

The Southern's "Withered Arm"

and other lines in South West England



A collection of professional and amateur archive film.

Produced by Dartmoor Railway Supporters' Association (DRSA).

DVD Content: (1 hour)

"The Withered Arm" (John Doyle 1988); Torrington to Halwill Junction; Last train on North Cornwall Line; Bere Alston to Callington 1966; Stations 1964; Last Train from Plymouth to Okehampton 1968; Snow at Sourton Down 1963; 'Other Railways' 1957; Tavistock North to Okehampton 1959; Exeter to Barnstaple/Lynton 1930s; Exeter to Barnstaple 1975; Exeter to Barnstaple 1990; Barnstaple to Ilfracombe 1898; Lynton and Barnstaple remnants; Beginnings of revival at Lynton; Reviving Plymouth to Exeter via Okehampton 1990?

The South West Film and Television Archive provided DRSA with the archive footage for this DVD. Copyright issues have sometimes required removal of commentary or music and subtitles have therefore been added where practicable.

DRSA (www.dartmoor-railway-sa.org) is the volunteer supporting organisation for Dartmoor Railway, Okehampton, Devon EX20 1EJ.
(DRSA 2017)

Win a £20 voucher in our Caption Competition!

This rather strange wagon load, photographed recently by Geoff Horner, has been lurking in Meldon yard for some while now but will presumably find a use at some point soon! It also presents a perfect opportunity for a Caption Competition!



- The deadline for entries is 31st December 2017.
- Entries to be sent to Geoff Horner, 11 Collatons Walk, Bow, EX17 6LS or E-mail to g.horner936@btinternet.com. Please mark envelopes or e-mail subject line as '*Competition Entry*'.
- The **prize** will be a £20.00 gift card for John Lewis/Waitrose.
- The result will be announced in the first Pony magazine published in 2018.

Events

DRSA Christmas Social – Thursday 21st December 2017

The 2017 DRSA Christmas Social will be at the Fox & Hounds at Shortacombe near Lydford on the A386 Okehampton to Tavistock road. Staff, volunteers and other DRSA members are all welcome.



Please let Geoff Horner know numbers and menu choices by Friday December 15th. Payment is to the pub directly on the night.

The menu can be viewed here: <http://www.dartmoor-railway-sa.org/cms/files/Menu-December-2017.pdf>

The regular DRSA social gatherings are open to all members.

First Wednesday of the month from 18:30 onwards:

The Red Lion, Tedburn St Mary, EX6 6EQ

Third Thursday of the month from 18:30 onwards:

Fox & Hounds Hotel, Bridestowe, EX20 4HF

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

Rail Operations & Line Update

Paul Martin, Duty Manager

Line Update

The new long siding off Okehampton station platform is now in use and looks pretty impressive. You can almost imagine it being double track all the way to Crediton! Some work needs doing to complete the job such as the ballasting but that will occur next year when the Christmas trains have finished.



The DR Mk2 carriages in the newly extended siding at Okehampton on 10th October (photo: Geoff Horner).

With the North Pole village now being located in the rear siding at Meldon Quarry, remedial work has been done on the curve entering that area to enable its use by the Christmas train each night.

Heritage Services

Services ran through until Sunday 1st October. Numbers held up through the last month with over 50 on the last train on one of the days. Thumper managed the whole season with no issues and now can look forward to having some TLC in the off season. On the last day

the middle car S60673 from 1128 was added to the formation and brought back to Okehampton on the 17.05 from Meldon for undercarriage cleaning. This unit has not been used for over 10 years and definitely needs a lot of work before it will be ready for use.

Despite all the challenges, average numbers per day were higher than 2016. DRSA as usual provided all the train crew. Driving was admirably done by Graham Isom, Rachael Wilson, Julian Pope and Graham Flood (some even doing some guards turns as well). The Guard duties saw Don Bent, Dennis LeWorthy, Sue Baxter, Bill Horwell and Dave Thompson in action. Graham Parkinson ably performed duties as Travelling Ticket Inspector, whilst Nigel Green and Alan Harris did some turns as Trainee Travelling Ticket Inspectors. Gerald Hocking manned the ticket office in his own inimitable style and even allowed Peter Ritchie to make some announcements. Hopefully next year's service will be confirmed earlier and promoted accordingly.

Sunday trains to Exeter

These finished in September. Despite all the issues over the season, numbers were good and the service remains popular. Okerail personnel regularly surveyed passengers. The whole season saw the service formed of Class 150 units. On the last day a 3-car Class 150 unit was utilised.

Train to Christmas Town

Instead of the Polar Express, Dartmoor Railway will be running a different themed train. The event will be on a similar scale as in previous years. At the time of writing it's not known what the traction for the train will be.

The same carriages as last year will be used with the exception of the two that were leased in. One of these has left the railway and the other will be removed from the rake. Julian Pope's carriage 70273 has been added to the rake which will now be one shorter than last year. Extensive work is being carried out in readying the train in light of the vandalism reported earlier.

Filming

Dartmoor Railway was being utilised for a safety film on October 26th. The film planned to involve a freight train utilising some wagons from Exeter Riverside yard with a Class 66 loco and a GWR unit. In the end only the GWR unit was used. The filming took place between Bow and North Tawton and necessitated erecting a 'colour light signal'. Other filming will take place at Riverside Yard.

Traction Update

08937: With the work complete on its cylinder heads, the 08 is now up and running and continuing to see lots of use. It moved the rake of carriages to be used for the Christmas train into the extended siding at Okehampton station. More shunting of this stock will require further use of the 08. It is also expected that it will serve as the back-up locomotive for the Christmas train services.

1132 (Thumper Unit): 1132 has now moved up to Meldon shed for the maintenance and repair work required before next season.



A message from Percy

Still as busy as ever here being chief greeter and pest controller. I never did get to Meldon or on the Exeter train, but there is always next year. My postcards have sold out so hopefully we'll produce more next year for the running season. I'm started to get ready for surviving the Christmas train period.

As always, my Facebook page will have all the details!

Carriage & Wagon Team Report

Geoff Horner

The driving trailer of the DR ‘Thumper’ unit 1132 is now in the shed and work has started on the repairs and preparation ready for its repaint. The DRSA owned ex-SR goods brake van is also in the shed and out of the Dartmoor elements. This will enable a start to be made on repairing the roof timbers and applying a new roof membrane and in replacing the timbers to the van sides and ends.



Repair work on the vandalised MK2 door droplights being carried out at Okehampton by members of the C&W team (photo: Philip Wagstaff).



Patrick Doyle and John Coxon attacking yet another rusted-in bolt on the ex SR brakevan on 26th October. The vehicle is now in the workshop (photo: David Bell)

Station Maintenance Team Report

Tom Baxter

Painting has continued at the station this Autumn including the platform side doors and windows on platform 3. Fortunately, with these being protected by the canopy, we have been able to continue when the weather would have stopped work outside and elsewhere. However, we are now approaching the point where everything has to be packed away and removed for the Christmas event trains so we anticipate little further progress before the New Year. The combination of work teams this year has ensured the platform 3 paintwork is in rather better condition than for some time past and will certainly help enhance things over the Christmas period.



Geoff Brookes painting the Okehampton canopy back in August, with Greg Bennett as safety man (photo: Jon Kelsey)

Other jobs done have been relatively routine but have included putting up and moving some of the existing signs. Also fixing up a loaned 'Goods Shed' sign that has been put in the museum which is understood to be the original BR sign from Okehampton Goods Shed. An incident with an electrical cable whilst hanging this caused a

modicum of excitement but fortunately the problem was soon rectified by our 'in house' electrical technician David Bell.

Other than that, the Team wishes fellow members, visitors and supporters the compliments of the season and looks forward to the various unexpected excitements, challenges and head scratching that 2018 will bring along.

In full bloom on 28th October. The sign of a really mild Autumn, and great planting by Bow Garden and Aquatic Centre (photo: Sue Baxter).



On their trolley! One of our heritage trolleys is put into use to transport a newly acquired storage cabinet along the platform to install in the GUV. Gregg Bennett (left) did the steering, assisted by Paul van der Linden (photo: J. Caesar).

‘The Twists and Turns of Rail Policy’

Dave Clegg

Several DRSA members attended this interesting talk by Lord Faulkner of Worcester at Plymouth University on 2nd November. Some of you may have already come across the two highly regarded books which he and Chris Austin co-authored – “Holding the Line – How Britain’s Railways Were Saved” and “Disconnected” which formed the basis of the evening’s talk and the Q & A session afterwards.



Lord Faulkner pictured on the right during a visit to Okehampton in 2011, with Duty Manager John Wills during a First Great Western skid-pan training exercise with a 142 unit (photo: Peter Ritchie)

Bearing in mind the vast number of rail closures in the 1960s, and in our case the loss of the main SR line to Plymouth via Okehampton, the lines in North Cornwall and to most of our resorts, one’s first reaction could understandably be to query the “How Britain’s Railways Were Saved” part of the title of the first book. But in fact some of the proposals worked up at the time would have seen no rail line beyond Exeter, and the far west would have had no trains at all.

It was not just the Beeching report. Research carried out by the books’ authors into official papers from the National Archive revealed that even in the 1980s British Rail itself was campaigning to close most

regional services and reduce the network to a handful of intercity lines. There isn't room here to detail the variety of plots and 'schemings' that were uncovered by their research, but it is apparent that we owe a great deal to an unnamed 'whistle-blower' that created sufficient public outcry that policies were dropped.

Lord Faulkner is also Chairman of the Great Western Railway Advisory Board, so from our point of view, his opinions count! And in this respect it was pleasing to hear that he supports the re-introduction of services between Exeter and Okehampton and the re-opening of the whole route through Tavistock to Plymouth.

For those wanting to know more about why we are where we are, "Disconnected" is still in print. "Holding the Line" is currently out-of-print but is coming out in paperback version in the new year. Neither are rail-enthusiast books in the usual sense, but for those interested in how government policies work (or don't), they make fascinating reading.

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

Memories of Leo Dolling's Time in the Exeter Central Control Office

Leo Dolling

With the regional boundary changes on 1st January 1963 the Western Region took over the operation of all lines west of Salisbury. Southern Region guards based at Exeter Central 'learnt' the road to Plymouth via Newton Abbot and Exeter St Davids guards the road to Plymouth via Okehampton.

One particular Sunday I was late turn on my own in the Exeter Central Control. On this day the Special Traffic Notice gave advice of a special troop train, 13.05 Aldershot to Tavistock North with a load of 12 coaches hauled by a Class 33 locomotive. Salisbury enginemen and guard worked the train from Salisbury to Exeter Central, the only stop, for a crew change. From my window in the control I could see the down platform and witnessed the engine crew change, but when the guards changed I did not recognise the guard taking the train on to Tavistock. I knew most of the 'Central' guards. I looked up the diagrams and found it was an Exeter St Davids guard. The arrival time at Tavistock was 17.25 with the empty stock returning to Clapham Junction at 17.55.

The signalman at Tavistock (Gordon Gawler) phoned in at 17.25 to say that the train had arrived 'right time' and I reminded him ECS to Clapham Junction at 17.55. Some ten minutes later the guard phoned in from Tavistock signal box asking permission for the train to run to Plymouth North Road. I asked why this was and he replied that the loco and 12 coaches were too long to stand in the station between the east and west crossover points. I told him I couldn't do that and to run around twice. "What do you mean 2", he said. I told him, "Pull the train forward until the last coach was in clear of the east end crossover points. Then, cut the train in half leaving six coaches in the platform and run round with the other six which were still coupled to the loco. On recoupling, you will then have six coaches, loco, and the six coaches you have just run round. Pull in again clear of the east end

points and uncouple the loco from the six you have just run round with. Then, run round with the other six".

I heard no more until the signalman advised ECS left at 17.55, 'right time'. On arrival at Exeter Central the Salisbury men relieved, having been booked to wait for the train to go to Tavistock and back. The guard who had taken the train to Tavistock and back phoned in asking, "Are you the chap I spoke to from Tavistock?". I replied that I was. "However did you think of that", he asked. I played dumb saying, "Think of what?" He replied, "Running round twice. All the time I've been a guard I've never seen that done". I said that we had to do things like that on the Southern as we had less facilities than the Western. "But", he said, "Were you a shunter?". I replied, "No, I was never a shunter, but I had a 'Hornby set' when I was a boy!"

This contribution first appeared in the Southern Railway Group quarterly journal 'Southern Notebook'.

Reproduced with kind permission of Leo Dolling of Budleigh, with thanks to Tony Hill (formerly of BR WR and Railtrack).

Leo joined the Southern Railway at Ottery St Mary as a Junior Booking Clerk in 1944, progressing through the ranks including posts at Exeter Central SR District Office Control and from 1966 at Paddington BR WR HQ finally retiring from the new WR Swindon HQ as Timetable Production Manager in 1984.

Raise funds for DRSA whilst doing your Christmas shopping online!

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 £1800 has been raised so far!*

www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/drsa

Rolling Stock – The LMS Brakevan

Jon Kelsey

The emergence of our LMS brakevan in its new bauxite livery, pictured in the summer Pony, prompted a bit of delving into its past. Numbered M731411, it was built in 1942 at Derby to diagram D2068. Vans of this type are relatively numerous in preservation, but it is the oldest vehicle on the Dartmoor Railway, and the only one built prior to nationalisation. It spent the latter part of its operational life in departmental service, in which guise it would have been DM731411 and carried the TOPS code ZTP.



DM731411 at Peterborough on August 30th 1991. Can anyone explain the vertical pipe to the right of the guard's ducket?

Photo © Paul Bartlett.

It is 24 feet long with a 16 foot wheelbase, and has ballast under the floor to get the weight up to 20 tons in the interests of braking efficiency. The body is made of wooden planks on an angle iron frame, with sheet steel ends, all mounted on a substantial steel underframe. In the last couple of years the Carriage and Wagon team has replaced quite a lot of rotten timber, as well as adding doors to enable it to be used for brakevan rides.

For stopping itself it only has a handbrake, but it has a through pipe so that when coupled to a vacuum braked train it can be connected to the train's vacuum brake system. An emergency brake valve enables the guard to destroy the train vacuum, thus applying the brakes on all the fitted vehicles in the train. There is also a recent DR modification enabling an equivalent function with air brakes, for running with vehicles like the 'Sturgeon' rail wagon.



DM731411 soon after its arrival at Shepherdswell on the East Kent Railway in 1993. Photo courtesy of Ken Elks. More of Ken's EKR photos can be seen on the stocklist page on the DRSA website.

It's not clear why it was ever grey. The LMS changed from grey to bauxite for freight wagons in 1936, whilst BR used grey for unfitted vehicles, and bauxite for fitted or through piped vehicles.

Frustratingly we only know snippets of M731411's operational history. The earliest evidence we've found is a photograph in a book, taken in Windermere in 1971, of it in service on an engineer's train.

Unfortunately we haven't been able to track down the picture's copyright. There is a picture of it on photographer Paul Bartlett's website, taken in 1991 at Peterborough and reproduced on p18.

It was purchased by Ken Elks in June 1993 as the best representative of a batch British Rail had for sale at March in Cambridgeshire. Ken moved it to Shepherdswell on the East Kent Railway, restored it, then sold it to a friend who intended to use it at Bishopsbourne on the Elham Valley Railway. The EVR plan never happened, and M731411 remained, neglected, at Shepherdswell. The Dartmoor Railway acquired it from the East Kent Railway in 2006, and later that year sold it to DRSA's predecessor, the Friends of the Dartmoor Railway.

Ken last saw it almost derelict, with the body rotten and the roofing gone, so he was very pleased recently to discover that it is being well looked after. After substantial refurbishment in the last couple of years, the finished vehicle is a credit to DRSA's C&W team. Let's hope it gets plenty of use in 2018.

We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of Paul Bartlett, Dave Harris of the East Kent Railway, and Ken Elks with this article.



LMS brake van 731411, freshly painted, at Meldon on 2nd November 2017 (photo: Geoff Horner).

The Bideford and Okehampton Railway

Jon Kelsey

Browsing the railway related material in the catalogue of the Devon Heritage Centre (the former county record office), I was surprised to come across several references to the Bideford and Okehampton Railway, a scheme I hadn't previously heard of. Especially surprising was its date – 1832 – very early in railway history, particularly for what seems like a pretty minor route. In fact, its main purpose was to drive down the cost of agricultural lime in North and West Devon, partly by importing it direct from South Wales, and partly by supplying Welsh culm (coal dust or 'slack' used to fuel lime-burning) to Devon kilns. The import of Welsh coal for domestic use was also envisaged, as was return traffic in timber, granite, slate and other commodities. Some passenger traffic was also built into the justification.

The main documents available are the contents of a report presented at a meeting in Winkleigh by Roger Hopkins on Sept 25th 1832, and a prospectus for potential investors dated Jan 26th 1833. There is also some correspondence, as well as contemporary newspaper coverage available elsewhere. Hopkins (1775-1847) was a Welsh civil engineer based in Plymouth whose c.v. included the Penydarren tramway where Richard Trevithick's steam locomotive first ran, the first Teignmouth and Shaldon Bridge, the Plymouth and Dartmoor Railway and the Bodmin and Wadebridge Railway.

The prospectus contains a map of the proposed route, unfortunately too large to reproduce here. It's drawn in fairly straight lines and smooth curves, suggesting that Hopkins hadn't surveyed it in working detail at this point. The line initially headed due east from Cross Parks on the east bank of the Torridge at Bideford, before swinging right at Newton Tracey to aim for a point just west of Winkleigh. From there it headed for Sampford Courtenay, then turned slightly west of south to Okehampton and thence to the railway's southern terminus which, despite the railway's name, was actually at Bridestowe.

There were a number of possible future extensions, shown dotted on the map. One diverged from the line at Winkleigh to join an early Exeter and Crediton Railway proposal at Crediton. Another headed south from a junction at Sampford Courtenay, through South Tawton, Throwleigh and Chagford to the iron ore mines near Haytor. A third continued from Bridestowe, following the River Lew to Marystow.

The total length of the line was 34 miles. Hopkins proposed using two waterwheel-driven 1 in 8 inclined planes in the section between Okehampton and Bridestowe. For the rest of the route the maximum gradient apparently was 1 in 115. Ten stations were envisaged: between Newton Tracey and Alverdiscott (4m), Langridge Ford (8.5m), Roborough (12m), Hollowcombe Moor (15m), Four Lanes near Winkleigh (18m), between Broadwoodkelly and Honeychurch (20.5m), Sampford Courtenay (23m), Okehampton (28m), Bowerland (31m) and Bridestowe (34m).

The southern stations on the route served the lime-kilns at South Tawton, Drewsteignton (from Sampford Courtenay), Meldon (from Bowerland), Sourton, Stone, Combebow, Alder near Lobhillcross and Lew Trenchard (from Bridestowe).

It was to be built to standard gauge on a 15 feet wide formation, using 42lb per yard wrought iron rails and 10lb cast iron chairs, attached to stone blocks. 110 waggons of 4 tons capacity and 5 steam locomotives weighing 6 tons were to be acquired - stopping a loaded train might have been a challenge. Hopkins calculated that it would cost about £87,000 to construct the railway.

Hopkins made very detailed estimates of the running costs of the railway and the potential revenue at each of the stations (including an allowance for the higher coal usage in areas with more “Gentlemen’s seats” - the Gentlemen apparently needing more heating than the riffraff). He calculated that the railway would cost £5105 per annum to run, and earn £17395 pa, a net profit of £12290pa, an impressive 14% return on the initial investment.

Of course it all came to nought. Despite support from landowners like John Morth Woollcombe, the High Sheriff of Devon, Newton Fellowes of Eggesford, the 4th Earl of Portsmouth, and the best name in the story, Calmady Pollexfen Hamlyn, the share appeal ran out of steam having reached only about a quarter of its target. In 1833 there were newspaper reports of a cut down version of the scheme, which failed to attract support, and in 1836 there was news of a cooperative agreement between the BOR and the proposed London, Exeter and Falmouth Railway, similarly unsuccessful. In 1852 Rice Hopkins, Roger's son, was the engineer for a short-lived scheme to build another Bideford and Okehampton Railway, this time via Torrington.

Building a 'Lands End Bypass' to connect the Bristol and English Channels occupied the minds of railway (and canal) promoters before it was eventually achieved by the North Devon Railway in 1854. The BOR was one such idea. Like most of the schemes of the time it's notable for its laughable optimism, but it's interesting to speculate how it might have changed the railway map of Devon.

10 Years Ago...



Thumper 1132 (note 3-car formation!) runs into Okehampton back in July 2007 (photo: P. Wagstaff).

Rosie's Diary

By Rosie

Well, were you all flummoxed? No one seems to have recognised a rather excellent cliff railway that I travelled on for my last roving report, the longest electric funicular in Britain. It climbs to the top of Constitution hill at the end of the prom in Aberystwyth. The Victorians wanted to see the fine views from there (over Cardigan Bay and of up to 26 Welsh peaks (if you have much better eyesight than I do). I admit to being distracted (Heather and Fluffy take note!) by the scent of rabbits which have thoughtfully kept the grass very short at the top.

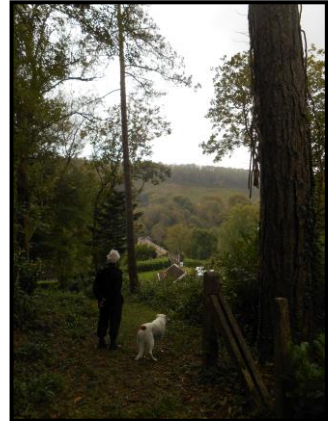
An entrepreneur called Savin made the town accessible to tourists by building a railway to it and then a hotel on the cliff edge. This enabled intrepid Victorians to satisfy their thirst for experiencing raw nature in



wide sunsets, wind and waves. Being so exposed the hotel needed huge maintenance and repair programmes. His finances were also failing. However the building was then taken over as the first College building for the University of Wales in 1872. Soon female students were also accepted and Alexandra Hall was built for the ladies at the bottom of Constitution Hill at the end of the Prom. The year was 1896, the town was thriving and so the funicular was built.

Last issue I mentioned that there is a bar to be kicked at the end of the Prom and sure enough several people, running or walking, forwards or backwards, kicked the bar while I was there. The tradition may have been started by young male students showing off their muscly legs to the gaze of the student ladies from above. As far as I was concerned the beach beyond was much more interesting. Sadly I was restrained from undermining the cliffs despite the fact that they were made of

particularly loose material and with holes already made by *those rabbits*.



My challenge for you this time is to name a station in the middle of some rather magnificent woods with a pleasant circular walk up from the trackbed. There we had views over the station and viaduct. My two legs nosed through the bookstall, drank tea and ate biscuits, while I disciplined the local bumptious whipper snapper 4 legs. Friendly volunteers are restoring the building to a cosy state, with a fire!



At Okehampton I am happy to report that the season drew towards a close with some good passenger numbers. All my efforts in spreading the word about excellent walks from Meldon Viaduct Station have paid off! On Saturday 23rd September the last train carried back 51 walkers from three

different groups. Or it might have been due to the attraction of our all ladies crew!

I have plans to take part in The Welsh Highland Christmas, as children's biscuit crumb hoover.... *Nadolig Llawen a Blwyddyn Newydd Dda!*

Committee of the Dartmoor Railway Supporters' Association

Chairman: Philip Wagstaff

Vice-Chairman: Sue Baxter

Secretary: Jon Kelsey

Treasurer: Christine Horner

Membership Secretary & Volunteer Coordinator:

Geoff Horner

Committee Members:

Tom Baxter, Dave Clegg, Tony Hill, Peter Ritchie

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