



# THE DARTMOOR PONY

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

**No.34    Autumn 2018    £2.00**



**Target Practice**

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Issue No. 34

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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:** DRSA group visiting the Rowtor Target Railway on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2018. *Photo: Nigel Sharpe.*

**BACK COVER:** Top: The Rowtor Target Railway with the rare sight of the Wickham Trolley on the track. *Photo: Jon Kelsey.*

Bottom: Fugro's RILA rail infrastructure survey equipment attached to a road/rail vehicle at Okehampton on 1<sup>st</sup> November 2018. *Photo: David Bell.*

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## **Notes from the Chairman**

*Rev. Philip Wagstaff*

We come into the winter season with the 'Train to Christmas Town' running up to Christmas. This will bring many visitors to Okehampton both to the station and onto the train. This Dartmoor Railway initiative gives a seasonal flavour to the train service in Okehampton using DR's Mark 2 carriages and the class 31.

DRSA has had another successful year thanks to the support from our members and volunteers. Every member is important to us and we trust that you will feel able to renew your membership of DRSA or if you are reading this edition of the Pony and are not yet a member perhaps you could consider joining us. Members receive the Pony Magazine and have the opportunity to volunteer for various aspects of the life of the railway. For further information please look at the Association's website.

Over the last year we have had many visitors to the railway and Dartmoor railway staff and DRSA volunteers have welcomed them onto the railway. The DRSA shop and the Arthur Westlake Museum offer a place to explore and to browse and the buffet continues to offer quality food. I was reading a book last week called 'The Railway Adventures' by Vicky Pipe and Geoff Marshall about their tour of 'All the stations' and was pleased to find a couple of pages on Dartmoor Railway which describe the positive experience that they had when visiting the railway which is a great tribute to all involved.

As with every new year we will face challenges and explore new opportunities as DRSA continues to support the heritage operation at the Dartmoor Railway. Thank you for your interest in and support for the railway. Wishing you a Happy Christmas and a Happy and peaceful New Year.

## **Membership Matters**

*Geoff Horner, Membership Secretary*

At the time of writing it looks as though our final membership total for the year will be 218 members. This is a small improvement on the total of 205 for last year and is the same as we reached in 2016.

Since the last edition of the 'Dartmoor Pony' we are pleased to welcome the following new members:

- Michael Cogher of London
- Roger Griffith of Stewarton, Kilmarnock
- Michael Ash of Okehampton
- Charles & Kay Wild of Throwleigh
- Michael & Christine Grossey of Lifton

Either enclosed with the magazine or separately by post you will be receiving your membership renewal forms for 2019. On behalf of the committee we thank you for your support in 2018 and hope that this will continue in the future. With the end of the current BARS/DRCIC lease approaching and the moves to reinstate the regular service between Exeter and Okehampton gathering momentum this is likely to be a year of change on the Dartmoor Railway and the continued support of our members is vital in making the voice of the DRSA heard as these changes unfold.

### **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)

## **Memories of Mike Ellis**

*Following the sad death of Mike Ellis earlier this year, and the obituary published in the previous edition of the Pony, we received this eloquent tribute from Liz Paffey.*

I was sad to read that Mike Ellis had died. He was a very good friend to my brother Paul Kavanagh R.I.P.

It was through their mutual love of railways, steam trains and modelling that Paul and Mike met when they both lived near Romford, Essex. They belonged to the same Clubs and often went on trips together to shows, exhibitions, and other events together, as well as joining the DRSA and travelling down to Dorset to further their love of railway and steam preservation.

Mike was instrumental in Paul's decision to move permanently to Okehampton, and helped and advised him in his search for somewhere to live. It made all the difference to Paul that he and Mike could work together at the DRSA and Paul was never happier than when he had moved to Okehampton and was part of the volunteer group. I know for certain that Mike was an inspiration to Paul.

When Paul became ill, Mike was there for him on numerous occasions, driving him to hospital appointments and later on, visiting Paul in hospital.

I and our family had the pleasure of meeting Mike, as well as the other volunteers and staff on the occasion of Paul's funeral, and I was pleased that he gave me his address so that I could send him an occasional greeting, Christmas card etc. I also caught up with him a few years ago when I visited Okehampton while my husband and I were on holiday in Devon.

I would be so grateful if you were able to pass on to Mike's family my sincere condolences and these few memories of his friendship with my brother. I know they are both sorely missed.

*Liz Paffey*

## **Events**

**DRSA Socials** – From 18:30, on the first Wednesday of the month. For all DRSA members, volunteers and DR staff. Taw River Inn, Sticklepath, EX20 2NW.

Keep up to date at <http://www.dartmoor-railway-sa.org/events>



One of the vehicles participating in the Classic Truck event which visited Okehampton station on Sunday 14<sup>th</sup> October 2018 (Jon Kelsey).

## **Christmas Reading**

DRSA member Brian George from Nottingham has been in touch to tell us about a book that he has written and published. The book is called LOTTERY MANIA and is based around Corfe Castle, Swanage and Wareham. A tale of intrigue, mystery and skulduggery as an escaped convict tries to get his hands on a fortune – before the 28 days he has to do it in expires!

You can read more about the book in a recent Bournemouth Echo article: <https://www.bournemouthecho.co.uk/news/16966109.lottery-mania-comes-to-purbeck-in-authors-self-published-book/>

It is available to buy on a variety of sites including Amazon, Kobo, Apple Books, Barnes & Noble and Playster. Search for “Lottery Mania” by Brian George.

# **Rail Operations & Line Update**

*Paul Martin, Duty Manager*

## **Line Update**

The Robel trolley is still in use whilst the Wickham trolley is away for repair. Work has taken place on the curve at Meldon to ensure that the Train To Christmas Town (TTCT) can safely run into Line 12 at the Quarry. Christmas Town itself is being erected and painted.

GWR skid training did not take place this year as they could not source a spare unit for the training. Fugro's RILA rail infrastructure survey equipment was used on the railway in November (see photo on back cover). This test trial saw the equipment attached to a road vehicle as opposed to the usual procedure of using a locomotive.

## **Traction Update**

**08937:** Bluebell Mel soldiered on throughout the heritage season providing sterling service. It's now helping out with shunting duties before some duties on engineering trains is required before the start of the TTCT schedule.

**1132 (Thumper Unit):** The overhaul of 1132 continues at Meldon in the capable hands of the C&W crew. The power car has now been moved into Meldon shed swapping places with the driving car which is virtually finished.

**31452:** The 31 continued to be used on event trains such as Murder/Mystery trains. It is now will be the traction for the TTCT schedule. It will also supply the heat for this train.

## **Heritage Services**

The heritage season finished at the end of September. The season again was a success and, despite minimal publicity, attracted a steady number of passengers with over 2,500 in total. Numbers were proportionately similar to 2017 when there was a later start date. 08937 and the vacuum braked rake proved both reliable and popular.



This set was used again to provide a train for the participants of the Somerset & Dorset Vintage Truck Run on October 14<sup>th</sup> with a return trip to Meldon for over 70 people. Thanks to all the DRSA volunteers who made this season a success and trouble free. DRSA provided Drivers, Guards, Travelling Ticket Inspectors and Ticket Office staff.

### **Events Trains**

A final Murder Mystery Train for a local company was run in September. After that a lengthy shunt was put in place to assemble the TTCT rake. This seemed to involve changing the position of every vehicle! Work is underway getting the stock ready. This includes getting all the toilets operational, electrical work, decorating the interior and a deep clean. The TTCT starts on Friday November 30<sup>th</sup> with the dress rehearsal the evening before. It runs until December 23<sup>rd</sup>.

### **GWR Exeter Sunday Services**

These services proved to be as popular as ever, with a slight increase from 2017, and make summer Sundays at Okehampton pretty busy with people going to Exeter and others visiting Okehampton. Most weeks the service has comprised of a GWR 2-car Class 150 unit. However, on one Sunday one of the few remaining GWR 1-car 153 units arrived making it a very crowded train. This just happened to be the week that a party of 4 carers and 4 passengers with wheelchairs had booked with GWR to use the service. Apparently it took 8 minutes to unload at Exeter Central making everything late. One Sunday saw the rare sight of a Class 143 unit, usually only seen here on training run or Skid training.

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

*The final total raised on Percy Day and the rest of the tombola days was £600 for Mitzi's. A great effort – thanks to all who bought anything or helped out. Special thanks to Kay who soldiered on with the stall and tombola through all sorts of weather.*

*I've been hard at work in my pest control duties as well as saying hello to anybody visiting the station. I've even managed to get the DM to*

*get more Percy merchandise out there and available to those who cannot visit. Friends still visit to say hello and sometimes even drop off goodies for me. Of course there is a team of people who make sure I'm fed at the right times. As always keep up to date with me through my Facebook page....*

## **Volunteer Activities**

*Geoff Horner, Volunteer Coordinator*

With the DR Okehampton – Meldon heritage services now finished for this year volunteer activities are now at a slightly lower level to normal, but still continue.

On behalf of the committee, thank you for all your work on the railway throughout the past year. From the feedback we get we know that our visitors enjoy their visit to the Dartmoor Railway and that this is thanks in a very large part to the efforts of every volunteer wherever and whatever your role has been.

## **Online Fundraising**

Remember that by doing your online shopping after visiting our [easyfundraising](http://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/drda) page you can raise donations towards DRSA at no cost to you - *over £1900 has been raised so far!*

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

Over 3300 retailers take part in the scheme, including ebay, Amazon, John Lewis, M&S, Asda, Tesco, Sainsbury's, Argos, Booking.com, Flybe, easyJet, Expedia.....

Please contact our Treasurer, Christine Horner, if you would like more information.

## **Carriage & Wagon Group**

*Geoff Horner*

As this is the last edition of the magazine for this year now is a good moment to look back at what the C&W group have been doing and what is planned for the coming year.

Like old cars, heritage railway stock requires the occasional maintenance work and repairs when in regular service and our heritage set of Lab11, the 'FK' and the ex LMS goods brake van have been no exception. However only minor items needed attention and nothing serious developed during the season. The set is now in its winter quarters at Meldon where the Lab11 generator provides the light and power needed over the winter months in the shed and the saloon provides warm a mess room.



The repainting of the 'Thumper' 1132 driving trailer has reached the point where it is 99.9% complete and the carriage has now been moved out of the shed to allow the power car to move in. The repainting of this will be the task for the first months of 2019.

Most of the timber to the ex SR goods brake van has now been dealt with and repainting of the under frame has commenced. Two of the buffers have been removed and made ready to be refitted (a bit of an 'Iron Man' task!). Once the roof has been re-covered the focus will shift to the rubbing down and repainting. If all goes well we hope to have the van ready for service at some point in the 2019 operating season.

Mainly thanks to David Bell there are regular photographic updates on the C&W group's work posted on the DRSA website at [www.dartmoor-railway-sa.org/wip](http://www.dartmoor-railway-sa.org/wip)

## **Station Maintenance Team**

*Tom Baxter*

Recent works have included further work on the CCT van, vegetation clearance and sundry other jobs.



After clarification of the future access arrangements to the CCT we were able to continue work on the interior workshop area. Much internal work was done by David Bell, John Coxon, Pat Lennon, Paul Vodden and Geoff Brooks. The vehicle now has a brightly painted interior with fully

functioning electrics. It will provide a very useful working area situated at a convenient point in the middle of the station. It has also allowed removal of some of the SMT items that were beginning to clutter up room 2 and causing problems and irritation to the shop staff. Work has recently been ongoing moving some workshop items into the CCT from the GUV van. This will become more of a storage area given its less than easily accessible location.

Recent vegetation work has been dealing with a large fallen branch in the front car park area and clearance of the roadside pavement gully from the station and down the station drive to the entrance. For this we can thank our ‘occasional worker’ Tony Hill who made meteoric progress while the rest of us tried to adjourn for tea. Apparently he was working to Southern principles which require work first followed by tea. On GWR it was apparently the reverse – tea then work.

Otherwise work has consisted of the numerous small fixing jobs which occur routinely around the station.



Including a stitch in time repair to the underside of one of the footbridge steps (pictured right). Some work done also on the 08 including a tidy up and repaint of the cab ceiling by John Coxon. We hope for something resembling the Sistine Chapel although that may be a tad ambitious.

The station team is somewhat reduced at the moment with generally around three 'regulars'. Although it must also be recognised that we have now entered the period when it is difficult to do outside work due to the weather and we are fairly constrained in the run up to the Christmas trains. Although some are rendering assistance there as well given the versatile nature of the team.

## **Station Gardening**

*Sue Baxter*

Our topsy turvy weather means that the hanging baskets have been looking good despite three hard frosts in October. However with the gales beginning they start to get twirled around mercilessly. So down they come, plant material saved and compost used to top up some tubs or pots of bulbs.

One of our compost bins is still a hive of activity as it gets sun through the winter. I had to point out to one volunteer (not quite a Flower Fairy yet) that nettles are very welcome in the compost bins as they are activators speeding up the decomposition process. We keep a patch of nettles as food for the caterpillars of comma, small tortoiseshell and peacock butterflies. They are also the favourite plant for lady birds to lay their eggs. Being high in nitrogen they can also be used to make a liquid feed. The nettle fibres are particularly strong, and in 2011 were found in a Bronze Age burial at White Horse Hill forming part of a belt.

Grass strimmed on the sloping ground above the turntable is going to be raked up and added to the compost bin. We are starting the slow process of encouraging more wild flowers to grow by keeping the

nutrient level low but leaving the ‘hay’ long enough for flower seeds to fall. Thank you to Paul Vodden for this and many other jobs, not least keeping the access ramp to Platform 2 clear of creeping brambles.

We do not have poppies but instead a late flowering phacelia on the fence alongside the image of a First world war soldier. It is difficult to comprehend just how far some of the survivors had to walk from the front when the guns ceased, in order to cross Europe. How many reached England and returned to Okehampton by train, compared with the numbers that left the station?



## **OkeRail Community Interest Company** **Chairperson's Report**

*Dr Michael Ireland, Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2018*

### **Introduction**

In the past year my aim has been to represent the shared goal of members and directors to re-establish the rail link between Okehampton and Exeter at the earliest possible opportunity. To do this I have availed myself of opportunities to present to a wider audience at regional and national events. This has required me to work closely with colleagues in GWR, DCC and Parliamentary representatives and the press. I have learnt that it is vital to build a consensus and ‘speak with one voice’ a position that does require a degree of compromise at times.

## **Key Events – National and Regional**

21<sup>st</sup> April 2018 Royal Oke Special Train to Oxford and Stratford upon Avon in cooperation with GWR.

14<sup>th</sup> – 15<sup>th</sup> June 2018 Community Rail Conference at the Steam Centre Swindon - Presentation

6<sup>th</sup> October 2018 Travel Watch South West - Taunton

3<sup>rd</sup> October 2018 Devon Assn of Local Councils – conference presentation

16<sup>th</sup> October 2018 GWR Stakeholders Conference – London Paddington

6<sup>th</sup> November 2018 GWR Customer Panel – Exeter

Attending these national and regional events gave the opportunity to raise some of the concerns held by the directors and members of the CIC. For example, at the GWR stakeholders conference I was able to ask Mark Hopwood [Managing Director of GWR] if there were any plans to extend the line beyond Okehampton. He was not keen because it requires trains to reverse. However, in the presentation by Matthew Golton [Deputy Managing Director GWR] a very positive picture was presented with one of four GWR projects for 2019 being Okehampton. He said, ‘We are moving along with Okehampton but there is still work to do’.

At a regional level, attending the GWR customer panel in Exeter gave the chance to raise the question of station provision for Okehampton. In the Q&A session I asked, “What provision was being made for station facilities at Okehampton in 2019/20?”, making the point that Okehampton has the potential to be a multi modal hub; to do this there has to be investment in a Parkway Station.

## **Local events**

At every opportunity I put the case for the Okehampton line and this year have spoken to local Rotary clubs, Heritage Rail group [Bideford] and the AGM of Connect Bude.

Community engagement is important and to this end I have helped organise and run a coffee morning in Hatherleigh, with two planned for 2019. Funds raised at these events are intended to be used to support the local community access the rail events. For example, enabling a coach to be chartered with reduce fare for passenger to join the Royal Oke in April.

I am regularly attending the monthly meetings of Connect Bude and serve on their committee.

### **OkeRail CIC**

In a move to help members to become more involved in the CIC I organised a members evening at the Junction Inn, Halwill. The evening was on the whole a positive experience with members.

Among the key points raised were:

- The need for better communication to the membership
- Offer family membership for £30 per household
- Introduce regular members meetings in November & May
- Actively support the building of a Parkway station [A letter was sent to Mark Hopwood, GWR offering support for this scheme]
- Raise awareness of train services in the local area – summer Sunday's and Specials

A very positive outcome of the members meeting was Alan Thompson taking on the role of membership secretary.

### **Conclusion**

I would like to thank the Directors and members for their support and constructive criticism over the last year. In the coming year we need to improve communication with the CIC to members, share some of the task, for example secretarial duties.

I hope to continue to represent the interests of the CIC at national and local level working in partnership with GWR.



## **Visit to the Rowtor Target Railway**

*Jon Kelsey*

On Wednesday November 14th, a small group of DRSA volunteers visited the Rowtor target railway. More properly called H1 Battalion Anti-Tank Range and Medium Anti-Tank Range, it is a 30 inch gauge line a few hundred yards long on the southern flank of Rowtor. It is dumbbell shaped, with a straight section paralleling an embankment for protection, and a loop at each end enabling continuous running. The line itself is readily accessible, but the DRSA group had been granted access to the 2 road shed at the west end of the line, where the Wickham target trolley is stored.

The group was met by Paul Fletcher of Landmarc, the service supplier which manages Dartmoor's military infrastructure, amongst many others. Paul provided a highly informative guided tour of the railway, part of which was a history of the line's Wickham trolley based on notes from Paul's colleague Richard Burt (see an edited version below).



Our visit coincided with that of Nigel Sharpe, Senior Estate Surveyor responsible for MOD estates in the South West, who happened to be there taking photographs. Nigel supplied interesting background information, and subsequently advised us of the Historic England (successor to English Heritage) report on the railway, as well as those on two others in the area, the F Range Target Railway and the OP6 Incline Target Railway. Links to these reports can be found on our website at [www.dartmoor-railway-sa.org/rowtor](http://www.dartmoor-railway-sa.org/rowtor)

We would like to express our gratitude to Crispin d'Apice, Army Training Safety Officer for West Devon, and Paul Fletcher and Richard Burt of Landmarc, for facilitating the visit. Also to Nigel Sharpe for the additional information. Last but not least, our thanks to DRSA's Tony Hill for organising it.

## **The Rowtor Wickham Trolleys**

*Richard Burt (re-produced with permission)*

The original Wickham Trolleys arrived on range in 1943/44. The engine was a 2 cylinder, side-valve unit of 870 c.c. and made by J. A. Prestwyth, makers of agricultural and industrial engines. During the period of WW2, H-range was the anti-tank range and had various old tank hulks as hard targets, and a Wickham target trainer that was made up of two trolleys, a shed and railway line in the shape of a figure-of-eight. This would allow the engines to continue running for long periods and return to the shed when live firing was complete. On top of the trolley would sit a target made of a wood frame and hessian, in the shape of a vehicle, tank or running troops.

The two original trolleys were disposed of in the 1960s. One of these engines went to the Museum of Dartmoor Life and the other to the Army Apprentice College, Chepstow. However, the line and shed remained in-situ.

During 2001, when Foot and Mouth disease broke out in the UK, all military training stopped on Dartmoor and the range staff had to remain on camp. The commandant at the time, Lt. Col. Tony Clark, Para., was very keen on all aspects of military heritage and knew of a collection of Wickham trolleys awaiting the scrapheap elsewhere in the country. He knew of my interest and asked me to help, and on arrival of the 2 engines at Oke they were repainted and running, ready to be returned to the anti-tank range on Dartmoor.

A few days before the new engine was due for the range it appeared that the width of track was greater than the width of the trolley axle! The track being 30 inches compared to the new Wickhams at 24 inches. This extra 6 inches gave the system stability in the high winds and bad weather conditions on Dartmoor. I expressed my displeasure, in a less-than-polite manner, to the Commandant. 'Don't worry Dick' he said, 'I will recover the original trolley from Okehampton museum; they still belong to the Queen!'. The trolley was soon collected from the museum but was in a bad way. Rusty and with no engine, it was

going to be necessary to start all over again and remove all parts from the good trolley and rehouse them in the useless trolley.

The Foot-and-Mouth epidemic was still going on, so, with no range work or live firing, I restarted the project but with far-less enthusiasm than I had for the original project! I cannot remember how long this operation had taken me but I went ahead and, in time, had a working trolley ready to go with the correct axle width for the line. ‘Very good. I’m sure the Queen will be more-than pleased!’

It required helicopter support in order to re-locate the unit from camp to its new home on the range, so, for the next step, the Commandant arranged to send the trolley up to the Joint Air Delivery Test and Evaluation Unit (JATE) at Brize



Norton. The trolley was loaded onto a truck and sent away to visit Brize. After evaluation we were told that we were on a very long waiting list for an airlift so, after the all-clear was given for Foot-and-Mouth, we put the engine on a trailer and delivered it to H-range. We got the trolley on the line, engine running, and after a full day of testing around the figure-of-eight track, all was looking good.

Soon after the work was completed the MOD changed the anti-tank weapon system for the British Military land forces. Overnight this mothballed the Wickham system as it was not compatible with the new weapons. A few years later during a live firing exercise some grenades landed on the line, and destroyed portions of the rail and bent the profile so that the trolley could not run and never has to this day.

<https://www.dartmoor-railway-sa.org/rowtorhistory>

## **Visits to the railway in the late '70's and early '80's**

*Tim Miles*

I used to visit Okehampton station whenever I got the chance during the late 1970's and early 1980's when visiting my grandparents who lived not far away in Sampford Courtenay. There were two British Rail employees at the station in those days, Arthur Westlake and a shunter whose name I never discovered. Arthur had his office in what is now the Bulleid Buffet and used to regale me with tales of his life on the railway. How I wish I had taken a tape recorder along with me on those visits! Arthur knew my grandfather as they both played bowls in Simmons Park. I always took my camera along and recorded the scenes below in 1977.



There was still some wagon load freight handled at the station in 1977.  
The 'Goods Office' sign on the wall is now in the Arthur Westlake museum.



Looking back at the goods shed towards what is now the Arthur Westlake Museum.



The old Pooley luggage scales outside what is now the Bulleid Buffet.

I also used to visit Sampford Courtenay station and applied to the Regional Manager in Exeter to buy the wooden 'Sampford Courtenay' running-in board there. The enamel sign had been removed from it years before but the outlines of the cast LWSR letters for the village name were still clear on the board. British Rail agreed to sell this to me for the princely sum of £3, describing the sign as 'Station running in board (no letters)' and specifying that I had to remove the sign myself. My grandfather and I went down to the station in his Humber Sceptre with a hacksaw and drove off with it on the roof rack.

Here are a few further Okehampton scenes, this time from 1981.



View to the east showing some freight activity in the yard.





The gloomy interior of the goods shed, now a Youth Hostel.

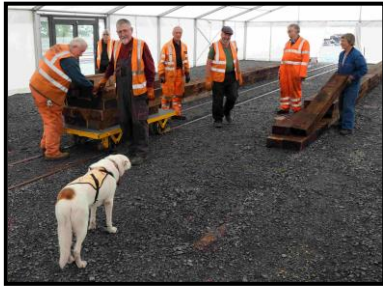
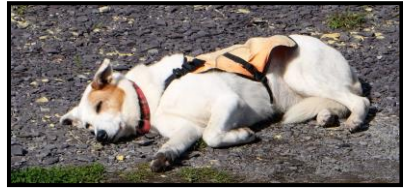


The former military and car carrier sidings to the west of the station.

## **Rosie's Diary - Are They Real Engines?**

*by Rosie*

Some of you may think this shows me asleep on the job. Far from it! I was recuperating, lying on slate waste, during hard work on the Welsh Highland. We do some funny things



on Dartmoor Railway(!) but we have never moved a hundred sleepers, not once but 4 times in, around, and out of a marquee! We ended up with them all laid the wrong way round, despite my best efforts at supervision. Then I discovered large model steam



locomotives like Taliesin from Moors Valley Railway were being off loaded onto them, up off the ground and without any ballast! Where were the safety Elves?

Did you all enjoy seeing our line on the Channel 5 series, programme 3, Walking Britain's Railways with Rob Bell? I thought our rolling stock and station looked really good. However I would like to point out that I am ahead of Rob Bell, because my last mystery station was Midsomer Norton also a Southern liveried Station, and he followed in my paw steps. There



is so much to see on the site. A new replica working signal box, station produce gardens, flowers and greenhouse. A museum in the pill box and another display where I found a 4 legged friend (stuffed unfortunately) in his stable. After enjoying the tail of an ice cream cone,



I went round to see their Sentinel engine which I am assured works very well despite its odd shape, chain drive and 2 vertical boilers!



Now that was not the only odd locomotive I have seen recently. To be frank, the one I am pictured scrutinising next, was kneeling down! Can you see her leading wheels? She might have been saying her prayers asking for the Welsh rain at Llanberis to stop. She thought Snowdon was going to be fun, but

coming as she did from the Brienz Rothorn Bahn in the Swiss Alps her preference was for the fluffy white stuff.

Thinking of white stuff reminds me that one of our passengers, Rita Gilliat, told me she got stuck on our line in snow near Bridestowe on January 9<sup>th</sup> 1963. She had been visiting her sister in Plymouth and was returning to Southampton with 1 year old little Melanie. Luckily a helicopter picked them up. Will we see snow this winter?? I like it when it is fresh and I can just shake it off as it falls. Unfortunately photos of me in the snow, show that I am not so white after all, but it is still easier for me to hide at night!



Would you like to, legally, walk down a track between the rails? Well let me tempt you up on to the top of Dartmoor near West Mill Tor above Okehampton. (Again I had sniffed all around it before Rob Bell.) First of all you see the engine shed and then the glorious views on a fine day. Up until the 1970's it could have got too exciting, as stray shells occasionally fell near the track. I would have shaken for days. This was the target railway for military training. You can see broken rail beside a

granite boulder. One of my mates has arranged a visit to see inside the shed so in my next diary I will give you a peek.

Finally I am taking you into my confidence. Hoping that after you have heard the tale I am about to tell, you will look out for me and give me more biscuits whenever possible as I just don't know what is going to happen next! You see me, in the afternoon of a very



pleasant day having enjoyed the outward journey on the Tallylyn Railway, from Tywyn on Cardigan Bay to Nant Gwernol. This is now in woodland hiding the waterfalls below and the quarry incline above. In 1880, 300 quarry workers alighted here extracting, and then loading, 8000 tons of finished slate onto wagons for the coast.



Next you see me head down, pleading to be allowed back into the comfy little carriages. Then the dismay as they left without us. Why? Because my 2 legs Sue had decided it would be a pleasant stroll back over the mountains to our room in Machynlleth. 2000 feet of climbing to see the quarries, nearly losing the

path in bog, and 5 and a half hours before I had dinner at 9 o'clock at night! But I had the last laugh, because my 2 legs were too late for their proper dinner and had to make do with a snack!

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

**Chairman:** Philip Wagstaff

**Vice-Chairman:** Sue Baxter

**Secretary:** Jon Kelsey

**Treasurer:** Christine Horner

**Membership Secretary & Volunteer Coordinator:**

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