

Tales from DalesRail Recollections of DalesRail By Aidan Turner-Bishop

DalesRail may not be operating in 2020 but that doesn't stop us sharing our many interesting experiences about our journeys. We hope you will share your interesting stories, favourite walks, fascinating anecdotes, and pictures about DalesRail. Please send them to richard.watts.crl@gmail.com or simon.clarke.crl@gmail.com

Like many Prestonians I have enjoyed opportunities provided by Lancashire DalesRail, to visit parts of the country not easily accessible by public transport from Lancashire. Some motorists may not appreciate how few are the bus links across the Pennines to places like Barnard Castle and Kirkby Stephen. DalesRail is, to some extent, public transport.

Since Howard Hammersley invited me to get more involved with DalesRail history and town walks my awareness of the treasures and quirky history along the Settle & Carlisle line and over the Borders in Scotland has grown. So has my appreciation of the area's local history and, of course, my ignorance of it. But that's part of the fun: self-improvement through DalesRail.

Some of my favourite discoveries so far include:

- The Loki Stone in Kirkby Stephen parish church that depicts the Norse God Loki, sometimes referred to as the Bound Devil: how did it get there? More detail can be seen by clicking www.ksparishchurch.com/loki-stone



The Loki Stone (Photo Karl & Ali)

- The Norges Hus in Dumfries: the centre for Norwegian servicemen exiled in Scotland during the Nazi occupation of Norway.

- The remains of the once mighty Roman fort of Uxelodunum (high fort), or Petriana, in the car park of the Cumbria Park Hotel, Carlisle. For more information about this fort see <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petriana>
- The pathetic graves of Dean Tait's five young children who died of smallpox in a few weeks of 1856
- Scottish marriage laws and the truly bizarre story of Gretna Green.
- W. H. Auden's lifelong interest in the industrial archaeology of the Pennine lead mining industry (he even wrote a poem about them)
- The determinedly energetic story of Lady Anne Clifford (entombed in Appleby in a mausoleum of her own design) – what a marvellously feminist Wolf Hall style television programme her life would make.
- The spooky tale of the 'Luck' of Eden Hall. I once tracked down the actual Luck – an ancient glass vessel - in a display case in the Victoria & Albert Museum. The moral of this tale: is never cross the fairies! See also *'Travellers and Tennis in Eden Hall'* by Stuart Leese for more about Eden Hall..
- Then touching and extraordinary love story of John Bowes and Josephine, Countess of Montalbo, the founders of the marvellous (if expensive) Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle.

You find out more about these tales by researching but also by 'recce-ing'. One memorable discovery was what I call 'Biscuit Lane', a narrow lane beside the McVitie's biscuit factory in Carlisle. It leads from Caldecotes down to wasteland and the banks of the River Eden. If you walk down the lane during the working week you're struck by the immense heat from the exhausts of the baking ovens. The lane smells deliciously of spicy cooking biscuits. Only DalesRail gets you to places like 'Biscuit Lane'. For more about Carlisle see *'Carlisle & District'* also by Aidan Turner-Bishop.

It's a pleasure to share these delights with fellow walkers.