

## Various Efforts for Railway Communication (written 1934 - Venning)

For more than 60 years many strenuous efforts have been made from time to time to place Callington, which is the centre of East Cornwall, in communication with both the Great Western and Southern Railways, and the publisher has been either directly or indirectly connected with most of the schemes that have been started during the last 66 years; but none of them was completed for passenger traffic until 1908, when the **Plymouth, Devonport and South Western Junction Railway** was opened at Kelly Bray on March 2nd, with great rejoicings, and a 'Public Demonstration' was arranged by the publisher. A large procession of schoolchildren attended from Callington and had buns presented to them. Sports were held in a field adjoining Trafalgar Square, lent for the occasion by the publisher, who also provided a public luncheon in Trafalgar Hall, and speeches were given by Rev. E. V. Stephens and others. In the evening an entertainment was held in the same hall, in which the Rev. C. B. Walters, then Rector of Stokeclimsland, took part, and the publisher recited the verses he had composed on the opening of the railway, for the occasion, and now published with this edition, and also the verses on Dupath Well and its story.

### Opening of Railway

The Directors of the Company did not intend to have any opening ceremony at all, but in consequence of the demonstration being advertised, it brought hundreds of people over the railway for the first time in its history, and it was admitted that over £100 was taken for railway tickets.

A much larger crowd, however, travelled over the same line from Bere Alston to Kelly Bray fifteen months later, when the publisher, as Portreeve of Callington, received H.R.H. The Prince of Wales, now King George V, when on his royal tour through Cornwall.

### Railway Pinoneers

No one will ever know the strenuous and persistent efforts made in the latter half of the nineteenth century by Mr. Edward Nicolls, solicitor, who was the great pioneer of railway schemes, and with whom the publisher was associated for 25 years. It was so far back as 1864 that a bill passed through Parliament called "**The Tamar, Kit Hill and Callington Railway Act**," of which he was the principal promoter. It was intended to be made from a junction with an incline at Kelly, Calstock for goods traffic, in just the same route as the **East Cornwall Mineral Railway** which was constructed in 1871, but the terminus was intended to be made nearer to Callington, hence the deep cutting that was made at Kelly Bray which some older inhabitants well remember. This cutting fell to the lot of the publisher to fill up with hundreds of loads of earth when he laid out Trafalgar Square and Waterloo Terrace, Kelly Bray, for building sites in 1906-7, and which was afterwards made the site of the reception of the Duke of Cornwall by his tenantry and the Portreeve of Callington, in 1909. The next scheme promoted by Mr. Nicolls was '**The East Cornwall and Delabole and Boscastle Line**' which proposed to start from Kelly Bray, go through the parishes of Stokeclimsland, Linkinhorne, Northhill, Altarnun, thence across Davidstowe Moor, right on to Delabole slate quarries, branching off to Boscastle, so as to link up the Tamar with the ocean traffic in coal and other merchandise. The publisher well remembers more than 60 years since referencing a part of the proposed line in the parish of Altarnun, on a very windy winter's day; but this scheme went into oblivion.

The next scheme was for a line from '**Saltash to Callington**' connecting with the Great Western system. A company called **The Callington and Saltash Railway Company** was formed, a board of directors appointed and some shares subscribed, but the Great Western held out no offer of encouragement to the company and the scheme was abandoned.

It should be noted that many years later Col. Marsack of Callington, promoted a scheme for connecting Callington with Saltash by rail, but after considerable efforts were made, this also was abandoned. Eventually the **Great Western Railway Company** proceeded to take steps to construct the line from Saltash to Callington, and went so far as to buy the land along the whole route, and applied for extension of time again and again, but in consequence of the advent of the motor lorry, buses and cars, this scheme also has been held up and not yet proceeded with,

### Cutting the Sod

It must not be forgotten to mention the ceremony that took place upwards of 50 years since in connection with the proposed construction of the line from Calstock to Callington, when the first sod was cut at Kelly Bray. A contractor called Maddison had signed a contract to construct it and make it a passenger line, but like many other schemes it came to nought but the sod cutting.

The day, however, will never be forgotten by many of the older inhabitants, not only because of the long procession of wagons and other vehicles decked with flags and mottoes, exhibiting along the route emblems of the various trades, etc., but more especially the drenching rain that continued incessantly throughout the day. It will ever be remembered by those who witnessed it, and it was the subject of great hilarity for many years afterward.

In connection with the ceremony of Cutting the Sod for the Railway to Callington, the following extract was taken by the publisher from *The Morning News* of 17th November, 1932, under the heading "Fifty Years Ago, from *The Western Daily Mercury*, Friday, November 17th, 1882."

"Tremendous enthusiasm attended the official celebrations for the cutting of the first sod of the **Devon and Cornwall Central Railway** at Callington yesterday. The town was elaborately decorated; indeed, it is stated that nothing of the kind had been seen in the town before. Triumphal arches were erected, and trees were planted all along the roads. A great procession was formed, headed by the band of the D.C.L.I., followed by 500 children from the various denominational Sunday schools; then a good number of the members of the Ancient Order of Foresters, with the officers mounted in full regalia; while the procession was completed with many tableaux of various trades, &c." **The East Cornwall Mineral Railway** for goods traffic only was completed and opened in 1871, and the first cargo of coals that was carried over this line was chartered by me as Manager of the Gas Company.

This railway was fed by the river traffic in coal, grain and other merchandise, brought to Calstock in vessels and barges, and hauled up over a steep incline worked by a stationary engine for many years, until the **P.D. & S.W. Junction Railway** took it over and after some years made the line from Bere Alston to Kelly Bray, which was opened as before stated in 1908 after the bridge across the Tamar was built connecting Cornwall with Devon. The construction of this bridge occupied some years, the cost of which had been the chief cause of delay in railway communication for many years between the two counties, on account of the undulating nature of the land on both sides of the Tamar.

### Kelly Bray to Congdon Shop and Five Lanes

About 18 years since an extension of the line from Kelly Bray to Congdon Shop was promoted and evidence given of goods, manure, and other merchandise that would develop if the line were made, which would be very cheap to construct, as the gradients were easy and no engineering difficulties to cope with. Finally, only about 7 years since, Mr. Foxlee, formerly Engineer to the **P.D. & S.W. Junction Railway Company** (now deceased), endeavored to promote a scheme for a line to Five Lanes in Altarnun parish, but this also shared the same fate as most other schemes; so at present there seems to be no prospect whatever of any further extension of railways in Callington district, especially now that the motor buses of the "Western National" are giving a good daily service.

### Deputation to Railway Directors

A short time before the opening of the railway to Kelly Bray, strenuous efforts were made to bring it into Callington. The Lord of the Manor (the Marquis of Northampton) had promised to give all that was required of his land through which the extended line would run. The publisher headed a deputation which waited on the directors of the **P.D. & S.W. Junction Railway Co. in** London, consisting of Mr. A. Cruwys, Agent of Lord Northampton, the late Dr. G. Brown, and Mr. J. Huggins, but all pleadings were unsuccessful.

### Opening of the Railway to Kelly Bray, Callington, 2nd March, 1908.

We hail with joy the new Railway  
From Berealston to Kelly Bray:  
We've waited such a length of time  
To see the opening of this line.

Chorus.

*But now the day is come we'll say  
Hurrah! Hurrah! for the new Railway.*

For forty years or more in vain  
We looked forward to see the train:  
Which bears its load of living freight,  
And now to-day we've seen the sight.

This Railway like a serpent winds,  
Alternately descends and climbs;  
It has so many curves and bends,  
From where it starts to where it ends.

The scenery is surpassing grand,  
As any scene on sea or land;  
The Dartmoor hills for miles are seen,  
And winding Tamar lies between.

The Morwell Rocks, majestic, bold,  
That look so new and yet so old;  
In solitary grandeur rise,  
Lifting their peaks toward the skies.

At Phoenix, Seven Stones Halt, there lies.  
A vast expanse before your eyes;  
From Caradon Hills to Brentor heights,  
And many other splendid sights.

A saddle-back hill, quite unique,  
Of tors and valleys we could speak  
That boldly stand in grand array,  
Such as not seen for many a day.

It seems to make one think and feel  
It is a pity soon to steal  
The voyager from scenes so fair,  
And beauteous sights beyond compare.

The winding scenes it passes through  
Expansive land and river view;  
Possesses charms for every one  
Who loves to see the setting sun.

Oh, do not miss this charming scene  
Of river, hills, and pastures green;  
And you will say this is the best  
In north or south, and east or west.