

## Tales from DalesRail

### DalesRail Personalities – Steve Wells DalesRailer with additional material from Bob & Pam Jackson

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](mailto:richard.watts.crl@gmail.com) or Simon Clarke at [simon.clarke.crl@gmail.com](mailto:simon.clarke.crl@gmail.com).

Regular DalesRailers will remember **Steve Wells** our long time on-train caterer of **Rolling Riot** fame who sadly died several years ago. Steve lived in Stockport but got up early on Sundays to travel to Blackburn Station, unload his van, wheel his equipment and stock up to the relevant platform and await the arrival of our train. Sometimes he wouldn't have had any or little sleep having been out serving refreshments on a charter train the previous day. However, he felt, he would always be smiling as he chatted to passengers and passed down the train. He enjoyed a good natter especially if the topic was railways about which he knew quite a lot. Even now passengers, who haven't travelled for a while, ask about him. In the photo

Steve is serving regular DalesRailer, David Eaves. Steve's stock in trade sales patter was, **'Tea, coffee, light refreshments'**.



Asked what he found enjoyable about DalesRail, Steve replied:

***"It is so much like an excursion train as so many passengers are regulars, and all are friendly and sociable"***.

**He continued,**

***“There is a good atmosphere and it’s like going out for the day with a group of friends”.***



Steve with many other well know DalesRail personalities. (Photo John Barnes)

## **Thoughts from Bob and Pam Jackson**

### **Our memories of “Steve the Trolley”**

We would join the train along with others at Bamber Bridge. The train would continue to Blackburn Station and Steve would be there waiting on the platform ready to come on board with his trolley of refreshments, hot water boiler and precariously balanced towers of paper cups. A Sunday DalesRail meant long hours for him, he would set off from his Stockport home early in the morning to arrive in good time for the arrival of the 09.30 a.m. train. Sometimes his Saturdays had also been long and tiring ones, he provided the trolley catering service on numerous weekend rail excursions to various destinations up and down the country. Steve’s catering service was a dedicated family affair, sandwiches were made and packed in the kitchen at home, all necessary provisions of biscuits, crisps, drink cans, tea, coffee, hot chocolate all needed to be kept in stock. On the rare occasions when he was unable to be on the train, his wife, daughter and son-in-law would provide the valuable service.

The train would leave Blackburn Station and after settling down with everything in order Steve would begin to guide his trolley down the aisle of each carriage, his friendly familiar call of “Tea, Coffee, Light refreshments” then a pause followed by “any milk, sugar?” alerted passengers that he wasn’t far away. They had to be patient and wait in their seats before being served, his rule was “I come to you, no queue jumping or pushing past me allowed”, anyone trying to do so would have to face his wrath!

The Settle-Carlisle route was very familiar and loved by him, he knew every station, branch line and signal box. He often said that he would never let the DalesRail service down.

On arrival at Carlisle, Steve's trolley and provisions needed to be taken off the train and moved, first pushed along the platform then across the bridge which went over the main lines, to the platform on the other side, then taken and stored in the Staff Rest Room. Here he stayed and relaxed until the return time drew near – all his provisions had then to be taken back to the train waiting at the platform for its journey back to Lancashire – Steve once again supplying the hunger and thirst of his customers.

Another DalesRail season and the news of Steve's death shocked and saddened all those who knew him. A replacement trolley service was provided from Settle, too far into the journey into the Dales for most passengers already on the train....