

The Cumbrian Engines

By Eliot Andersen

Volume 1 – The Coastal Engines

Dear friends,

The County of Cumbria is a wonderful one. It has beautiful countryside, with both the highest mountain and longest lake in England. It also has a rich Past and Present of Railways. This book is a selection of some tales of happenings on the Cumbrian Coast Line, which runs from Carlisle to Barrow-in-Furness.

The Author

Dramatis Personae

Arthur – BR Class 25 Bo-Bo diesel-electric locomotive, owned by Cumbrian Engines Enterprises.

Calder Hall Power Station – BR Class 31 A1A-A1A diesel-electric locomotive, owned by Direct Rail Services.

City of Carlisle – LMS Princess Coronation 8P 4-6-2 steam locomotive, owned by Cumbrian Engines Enterprises.

Fred and George – BR Class 142 “Pacer” diesel multiple unit, operated by Northern Rail.

Roger – BR Class 9F 2-10-0 steam locomotive, owned by Cumbrian Engines Enterprises.

Meet Arthur

Fred and George are twin diesel railcars. They work on the Cumbrian Coast railway line, from Carlisle down to Lancaster, stopping at places such as Workington, Whitehaven, Ravenglass and Barrow-in-Furness. They work together at all times and have matching dark blue coats of paint, with gold stars also painted on their sides.

The twins are quite mischievous, and like to play jokes and have a good laugh with the other engines on the line. Although they play pranks, they always make sure that their trains are on time. They have lots of friends all along the line, and frequently stop to talk to them at stations.

The only engine who can truly keep them in order is an experienced steam engine that formerly ran the line they work on, back in the old days of LMS. He is City of Carlisle, a grand scarlet steam engine, who now lives up at Carlisle. He doesn't have much work any longer and feels rather sad at times because of this. But the twins always keep him informed of the goings on occurring down the line.

"Morning, Fred, morning, George." called City of Carlisle one morning.

"'Ello there, old friend." the twins chimed. "How are things?"

"Not bad, I suppose. I woke up nice and early, and I'm going to be steamed ready for this afternoon. I really don't know why, I don't think it's a special event or anything." City of Carlisle said.

That afternoon, some important-looking business men walked to the manager's office in Carlisle station. The manager, a kind and friendly man called Mr. Clark who had with a bushy beard and moustache but significantly less hair on the top of his head then came to see City of Carlisle.

"These men," he told him, "Have come from the National Railway Museum in York. They would like to see if you want to go to York to be able to go on show for a while and pull some special passenger trains."

"Ooh, yes please sir! I would love that!" replied City of Carlisle, who had been wanting a good long run to make sure that he still performed well.

So it was arranged, and later on that week, City of Carlisle puffed out of the station, bound for York. His replacement was a big green diesel named Arthur. He had come to help Fred and George with the passenger trains.

"This is Arthur, who we have acquired on loan." Mr Clark told Fred and George. "We've got some nice coaches awaiting him in the yard, but please show him around the station and make him feel comfortable here."

Arthur and the twins quickly became friends, and it wasn't long before he was shunting in the yard, and pushing and pulling the mail train up and down the line. Arthur quickly made some other friends. Calder Hall Power Station, a sensible diesel who worked at Sellafield was always there to greet Arthur when he pulled in with his trains and Josh and Ian, two more railcars, who could work together or independently.

As Arthur settled down for his first night in the big shed at Carlisle, he thought about the new friends he had met, and he just knew that this new line was just what he wanted.

Arthur and the Railtour

Arthur was happy working at Carlisle. He had plenty of trucks to pull around, and life never got boring. There was always something different happening, and this tells you of one of the more exciting adventures Arthur had.

One day, Arthur heard the twins chattering excitedly as they were being refuelled in the yard. He went over to see what they were talking about.

“The manager says that there are people coming up here in a special train to see us.” Fred said.

“A railtour, he called it.” added George.

“It sounds very exciting,” replied Arthur, “but what on earth are they coming for?”

“Well, I think that manager said that they have railtours all over the country.” Fred explained.

“I think this one’s called the Cumbrian Coast Express or something like that.” his brother said, “I bet you wouldn’t mind pulling a train like that.” and he winked at Arthur.

George was right. All week, Arthur couldn’t stop thinking about the railtour. He knew that if he pulled one then he would be made to look very smart, and he would feel very proud.

The weekend came, and soon Arthur and the others were back at work as usual. Arthur was waiting in Carlisle station with a “down” train when he saw steam coming from the coast and a big black tender engine emerged from the distant junction. He pulled into Platform 3, and stopped.

As he puffed away to the turntable, Arthur saw that he looked very weary, and before he reached the yard, he crawled to a slow stop.

What happened next was all a blur, but Arthur could remember that the manager had come over to see his driver and before he knew it, he was uncoupled from his train and had backed down onto the coaches of the railtour.

“Why am I pulling the train?” Arthur, who was now more shocked than anyone else, asked his driver.

“48151, the steam engine that has brought the train up is very tired and it’s been decided that you’ll have to substitute for him. The train leaves very soon, so we can get cracking straight away.” Arthur’s driver calmly explained.

“Oh, right, but what about my train?” Arthur asked.

“The steam engine should be alright by the time that your train has to leave, so he’ll take it for us.” the driver smiled.

Soon, Arthur was rocketing off along down the coast, the heavy coaches parading after him. Lots of people were stood on the station platforms as they went past, and took lots of photographs of him.

Through Bransty tunnel they sailed, over the Ravenglass viaducts, onto the Barrow avoiding line, across the Arnside viaduct and before too long they rolled proudly into the station at the end of the journey – Carnforth.

48151 arrived about an hour later, and explained that Arthur's coaches were waiting for him at Barrow for his return to Carlisle.

That night in the sheds, Fred and George were full of questions for their friend.

“How many coaches were there?”

“How fast do you reckon you were going?”

“How long did the journey take?”

“Would you want to do it again?”

But their questions didn't get answered, for Arthur was so tired that he was sound asleep.

Thunderbird Arthur

There is a narrow gauge railway that winds its way up the Eskdale valley. It is connected to the coast line at Ravenglass. Arthur was charged with the task of taking trips from Barrow up to Ravenglass for passengers wishing to ride the little train.

During his stop at Ravenglass station, Arthur would usually chat with Perkins, a small yellow diesel shunter on the narrow gauge railway.

Today, Calder Hall, one of the diesels who worked at Sellafield up the line, rumbled past, pulling a train full of uranium flasks behind him. The signal ahead was showing an amber aspect, so he came to a stop at the station.

“Morning, Calder!” Arthur called from the siding.

“Ah, good morning, Arthur.” Calder smiled. “Had a nice journey down?”

“Yes, never better.” replied Arthur. “How has your day been so far?”

“Well, I’m glad to get away from Sellafield.” Calder sighed. “Babysitting the triplets is enough to send any engine ga-ga.”

Arthur chuckled. Tom, Dick and Harry were three rather mischievous diesels who were brothers and lived with Calder at Sellafield. It was reckoned that Calder was the only engine that could actually stand them, but Arthur thought that they were nice enough, which was true.

Later that week, Calder was pulling the long lines of trucks up and down the lines. Today’s train of wagons was even longer than usual. Calder struggled along the line, eventually halting at Barrow station.

He strained as the weight of the trucks pulled on his coupling. He stopped short of the platform.

Arthur, who was resting nearby, came to see what the matter was.

“This train’s too long for Calder to pull alone, and we must get to Heysham before too long.” said the guard. “Would you please help us if we split the train in half?”

“Of course,” replied Arthur, “But what will happen to my train?”

“One of the shunters will have to pull it, I presume.” said Calder. But no sooner than he said that, City of Carlisle pulled into the station, pulling a special train.

“Hello there!” he said happily. “Having trouble?”

“Yes,” replied Arthur, “We need an extra engine to pull my coaches back to Lancaster.”

“I’d love to help you!” said City of Carlisle. “I’m headed that way. Just get those coaches coupled on to my others, and I’ll have your passengers back at Lancaster in no time at all!”

“Thank you very much!” smiled Arthur. He was pleased that his passengers wouldn’t be late to get back to the station. He backed down onto the other half of Calder’s trucks, and was

coupled on. The guard blew his whistle, and waved his flag, and Calder set off, followed closely by Arthur.

City of Carlisle went on the other line, and overtook the two diesels on his way down. He gave them a friendly whistle, to which they replied with happy toots from their horns.

The three engines are all good friends, and live in a shed together near Carlisle station. Arthur and City of Carlisle often help out Calder with the goods trains coming down from Sellafield, and City of Carlisle sometimes takes the mail train. One thing is sure though, they are all proud to be Cumbrian engines.

New Addition for the Fleet

During that summer, the goods traffic on the branch line increased rapidly. Calder and Arthur were rushed off their wheels and often spent several days in the workshops being repaired from the consequences of overloading their trains.

The manager promised that a new engine would arrive soon to help them out. He told them that this engine was big and specialised in goods traffic. All the engines were very pleased, and couldn't wait to meet him.

The day before the new engine arrived, City of Carlisle took a long passenger train up to Carlisle. It was then taken by another engine up to Aberdeen, where the passengers would spend the night, before returning the next day. City of Carlisle stayed up at Carlisle to be able to bring his train home the following afternoon.

Around about lunchtime the next day, a great big black steam engine puffed into the station. He had 10 huge driving wheels, and had smoke deflectors either side of his smoke box. He had the letters "BR" written on each side of his large tender.

"Hullo there," he said quietly to City of Carlisle, "My name is Roger; I've come to help out with the goods trains."

"Welcome to the line!" replied City of Carlisle cheerfully. Roger looked very nervous and shy, but after a while, he and City of Carlisle were chatting together like old friends.

The station master came out of his office and went over to Roger.

"Excuse me, but would you be able to take over from this Class 66 diesel that has come down from Glasgow?" he asked. "Its trucks need to be taken down to the Workington steel works."

Roger was happy for a chance to run down his new line. He backed onto the trucks carefully. The shunter fastened the coupling, and Roger set off down the line. He passed the sea, and watched the gulls flying around in the air.

Just outside the steel works at Workington, there is a level crossing. Today, a lorry had stalled halfway across it. The driver had no idea that Roger was steaming down the line towards him.

Luckily, Roger saw the truck and frantically whistled as loud as he could. The lorry driver jumped into his van and restarted the engine. Roger was drawing closer and closer. He closed his eyes. The gates opened. The lorry's wheels spun and it zoomed off the level crossing. Roger skidded over the level crossing as his driver applied the brakes.

Roger opened his eyes again on the other side of the level crossing.

"I've done it!" he exclaimed happily. He pushed his trucks into the siding, and set off again, bound for Barrow.

As he passed through Whitehaven station, he saw Fred and George, who were waiting at the platform.

"You need to help Arthur." They called to Roger. "He's stuck down at Sellafield. We can't continue until the line is cleared."

Roger went down the line towards Sellafield, followed by Fred and George. He found Arthur stuck on some points, blocking both lines. Calder was already up at the front of the train, being coupled on.

“Hello there” Calder said to Roger. “You must be our new engine.”

“Yes,” replied Roger, and he quickly introduced himself to the others, before being coupled up behind the guard’s van.

“Are you ready back there?” Calder’s voice came from up the front of the train.

“Yes I am!” shouted Roger.

The 3 engines set off together, grunting and snorting, pushing and pulling the long train.

They eventually arrived at the station. The manager came out of his office to see all the engines. City of Carlisle pulled in with his train beside them, along with Fred and George.

“I am very proud of you all.” The manager told the engines. “You all acted bravely and helped each other out. This has proved that each and every one of you is a credit to our railway, and I am more than happy to announce that the Cumbrian Engines Enterprises is here to stay as a Train Operating Company for this part of the country!”