

The Cumbrian Engines

Volume 4 - Ewan the Scottish Diesel

Dear friends,

During a trip to Carlisle station recently, I got chatting to a Scottish diesel engine whose name was Ewan. He told me that he worked on the lines north of Carlisle and pulled long freight trains. He loves his work and likes to pull the trucks down the main line as far as Crewe. He has had several adventures recently, and I decided to hear them and tell them to you all. I hope you like meeting Ewan and his friends!

The Author.

Dramatis Personae

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

Brian – BR Class 60 Co-Co diesel-electric locomotive, owned by English Welsh & Scottish.

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.

Ewan – BR Class 37 Co-Co diesel-electric locomotive, owned by English Welsh & Scottish.

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

Joe – BR Class 67 Bo-Bo diesel-electric locomotive, owned by English Welsh & Scottish.

Marcus – BR Class 09 0-6-0 diesel-mechanical locomotive, owned by English Welsh & Scottish.

Richard – BR Class 90 Co-Co electric locomotive, owned by English Welsh & Scottish.

Rory – BR Class 156 “Sprinter” diesel multiple unit, operated by First ScotRail.

Tim – BR Class 66 Co-Co diesel-electric locomotive, owned by English Welsh & Scottish.

The Scots

Ewan is a cheery Class 37 diesel who works all over the north for EWS. He pulls freight along the West Coast main line and also to places like the steel works at Workington and the ship yards at Barrow. He is good friends with the other engines and is based at the EWS depot at Carlisle.

One morning, Ewan has just got back into the station at Carlisle from delivering a long load of coal trucks to Glasgow. He now wanted a rest, but he saw in Platform 7 a sight which made him groan. The sight would soon turn into a sound...

“You are a nuisance!” shouted a voice to Ewan. It was Rory, the railcar who worked on the line to Dumfries and beyond from Carlisle. “I’ve been waiting here for fifteen minutes to let you pass!”

Rory was a ScotRail Class 156 sprinter railcar. He was always grumpy about something, usually about trains being late. He would frequently moan about being overworked and being held up by goods diesels that would dawdle their way down the main line.

Ewan rolled his eyes at Rory and shunted his trucks into a siding. Rory left the station with his passengers.

Ewan was a friendly and helpful diesel, and would always try to pull his trains of coal hoppers. He saw Arthur being refuelled and decided to say hello to him.

“Hello there, Ewan!” Arthur said cheerfully.

“Hey there, Arthur!” replied Ewan as he stopped to have a chat with Arthur.

“I heard old misery Rory giving you a mouthful.” said Arthur. “He’s a right pain. Gave me a lecture about how I was coming from the wrong end of the station, and then realised that it was supposed to be you that he was criticising.”

Ewan chuckled. “His engine’s too big for his wheels. We’d better make sure that he doesn’t mistake you for me again.”

Just then, Fred and George the railcar twins bustled into platform two. “Old Rory been having a nag at you?” asked Fred.

“Naturally.” Replied Ewan. Rory would love to lecture the younger engines about how to properly behave, and how to enter a station correctly, and how to pull a train so that the coaches’ buffers wouldn’t clash.

“Well,” said Arthur. “I’ve got a sightseeing tour to take down to Barrow now, so I’ll have to leave you.” And he bustled to the platform where his coaches stood waiting for him.

Ewan had to go down to the steel works at Workington to pick up a load of new rails. He waited in a siding whilst Terry the little blue diesel shunter pushed them into place behind him. The guard fastened the coupling then scrambled into his van as Ewan set off again.

At the Carlisle yard, he shunted the trucks with the rails on out of the way, and returned to the EWS shed. There were quite a few other engines that also lived in that shed. There was Marcus, a

small Class 08 shunter, Brian, a Class 60 diesel who liked to grumble a lot. Tim was a Class 66 diesel. He would do a lot of work with Ewan. There was a Class 67 called Joe, who was a good friend of Tim. A Class 56 diesel named Martin was one of the older diesels. Luke was a Class 86 electric locomotive. The Class 90 electric loco was called Richard who was very stuck up and snobbish and there was a Class 92 whose name was Jeremy.

Ewan was the oldest diesel of the group, and sometimes couldn't do his work as well as the others because he needed to be constantly repaired. The others would joke about how he would supposedly blow his engine on purpose so that he could rest more, but Tim and Joe would keep them quiet. They felt sorry for Ewan. His type was getting rarer around their routes, and the spare parts pile had few parts that would fit him.

It was costing them a lot of money to keep Ewan in working order and recently they had lost a lot of profit because companies were sending much more of their stock by Lorries. The post train was getting lighter as more letters were being taken by air and not by rail.

The other engines were all called out of the shed to do their work on the mainline as all trains had been halted at the weekends because they were doing work on the West Coast Main line so that the new Pendolinos could go at their maximum speed and tilt round the bends. Ewan was left alone in silence and he wished that he could be out helping them.

Ewan's Cheesy Delivery

A couple of hours later, the station master arrived at the shed. "I need an engine that can pick up a special delivery. It is very urgent" he announced.

Ewan was the only engine that was available so Ewan was ordered to go down the coast line to pick up his special delivery. He passed the railcar twins as gave them a friendly toot from his horn. He rumbled further down the line and stopped when he saw some people on a bridge over the railway waving a red flag.

The main road travelled over the bridge, and Ewan assumed that the people's car had broken down. They stopped by the bridge, and the people shouted down at Ewan's driver.

"The lorry that carries our cheese has broken down. We can't get it to start, so could you take it up to Carlisle for us please?" asked the farmer.

"Of course we can!" replied Ewan's driver. "It's the farmer from the cheese farm just up the road." He told Ewan. "They make cheese their in their own special dairy. We'll head back to Carlisle and collect a guard's van to put the crates of cheese in."

Ewan returned to the yard and shunted a guard's van behind him. They set off again down the line. The farmer and his workers clambered over the fence and down the embankment to load the crates of cheese into the van.

Ewan said good bye to the farmer and reversed up the line, delivering the cheese to Carlisle station. The station master was very pleased with Ewan and gave him a nice easy job to do. He was to return some empty flatcars back to the Steel Works at Workington.

He collected the trucks from the sidings, and set off down the line. As they neared the Cheese farm bridge, Ewan's driver slammed on his brakes. Ewan skidded down the line. A cow had gotten onto the tracks and was unaware that Ewan and his train were ploughing towards them!

Ewan frantically sounded his horn to warn the cow. She turned her head, and galloped off the tracks and onto the embankment. The farmer watched in horror from the bridge. Ewan slowed down but his front bogie came right off the rails.

"Are you alright down there?" called the farmer.

Ewan's driver climbed out of his cab. "Yes, we're fine, just call the breakdown crew to get us back on the rails." He replied.

The farmer led the cow back to the farm and telephoned Carlisle station. Soon, Arthur had arrived with the breakdown crane and they lifted Ewan back onto the rails. He continued his journey and returned the trucks to the Steel works.

That night, when he returned to the sheds, the EWS manager and the farmer had come to see him.

"You were very brave today, Ewan." Congratulated the Manager. "You deserve to get mended, and you shall do as soon as the main line reopens and we can spare you. The farmer said that you helped him out twice today, and I am very proud of you."

The Raitour

The manager rewarded Ewan for his bravery. He arranged a raitour down the Coastal line for railway enthusiasts. The other engines were very jealous that he was taking it. They all thought that they should be pulling the train, and be looking very grand.

“Why couldn’t a grand electric engine like me pull the special train?” demanded Richard to his driver.

“Because there are no power lines for your pantograph to pick up power from.” Explained Joe.

“I don’t need power lines.” Stated Richard. The others rolled their eyes. Richard was full of ideas that were all nonsense. “You just watch me this afternoon.” He told them. “I’ll derive the laws of psychics!”

And he rolled out of the shed to collect his awaiting goods trains. The other engines chuckled.

“The only thing he’ll achieve will be to bore the trucks to death.” Tim chuckled.

Marcus had marshalled Ewan’s coaches on platform one. The passengers took pictures of Ewan as he backed down onto the train. The stationmaster put a notice saying “THE CUMBRIAN COAST EXPRESS” on Ewan’s buffer beams.

The guard blew his shrill whistle and waved the green flag and Ewan slowly but surely rumbled out of the station. The passengers waved out of the windows and Fred and George’s passengers waved back at them.

The journey went by quickly with no problems at all. They arrived at Barrow right on time and the passengers all climbed out onto the platform.

Ewan was low on fuel so his driver carefully took him to the refuelling depot. Calder was also at the depot. His driver was rubbing him down because he had become very dirty.

“Hello Ewan.” He said cheerfully. He was a good natured diesel who would always try to please their manager. “Are you having fun pulling the raitour?”

“Oh yes.” Replied Ewan. “It’s splendid fun. I wish I could do it all the time.”

Calder chuckled. “You’d get a bit fed up after a while, though.” He said. “It’s over eighty miles from here to Carlisle and then you’ve got the return journey. It’s about 170 miles that you’d be clocking per day.”

“Still, it would be a nice change from goods work.” sighed Ewan. He told Calder that Richard was jealous that he couldn’t be taking the raitour instead.

“He would complain, wouldn’t he.” said Calder. “I’ve met him before. He’s a right old idiot sometimes. He’ll come to a bad end one of these days.”

“Well,” replied Ewan, “I’d better go and turn around for the journey home. I’ll see you later, Calder.”

“Goodbye Ewan.” said Calder. “Have a safe journey home.”

Ewan collected his coaches from the station. It had started to rain while he was getting refuelled, and now it poured down heavily. The wet rails were slippery and Ewan’s driver had to pour sand of the rails so that Ewan’s wheels could grip it properly.

Ewan started slowly but surely. His wheels spun sometimes but he pulled with all his might and the heavy coaches moved out of the station.

When they reached Whitehaven station, they were signalled to stop. Ewan’s driver was told that there was a blockage of the line at Carlisle and they had to proceed with caution.

The wind and rain buffeted Ewan and his coaches as they continued up the line. They crossed under the Cheese farm bridge without trouble.

“So far, so good.” Muttered Ewan quietly to himself.

They neared the station but all the signals were at danger. Ewan carefully inched forwards. Something was on the tracks, and it wasn’t moving.

The breakdown cranes were attempting to move it, but the wind prevented them for doing much. As Ewan moved closer, he could make out that the obstacle on the tracks was actually Richard and he had no power supply to let him move back.

Ewan buffered up in front of him. “Well, well, well.” He said. “Thought you didn’t need power lines?”

All Richard could do was scowl as Ewan pushed him back to the shed. Ewan then took his coaches to the platform. The passengers all got to their coaches and cars safely, and Ewan returned to the shed.

Don't judge a book by its cover

The heavy rain continued to pour down all through the night and still hadn't subsided the next day. Lots of trains were delayed all around the country, each affecting the other. Alex's train from Euston arrived in Carlisle almost an hour later than scheduled. Fred and George had already begun their journey and the passengers were facing a long wait, as the other railcars were out of action being mended.

Marcus had found some coaches in the back of the shed in the yard. They were old, but serviceable. City of Carlisle was overjoyed when he realised who the coaches were. They were his old coaches from when he used to pull the special Caledonian train. It went from Euston to Glasgow in the olden days, and was very important and posh.

The coaches' names were Rosie, Daisy and Lilly. Rosie was first class, and was very posh. Daisy was second class but was still very posh and comfortable. Lilly, however, was the third class brake coach. She had less room for passengers and all the seats in her were very squashed up. The station staff cleaned the coaches out and the awaiting passengers climbed aboard. They found it very exciting to be travelling on a steam engine instead of a railcar.

City of Carlisle pooped loudly and set off into the rain. Great clouds of steam towered into the air from his funnel as he puffed away.

Later, Brian was passing through Carlisle station with a train full of heavy coal hoppers. The rails were still very wet even though the rain had stopped for the time being. As he was about to exit the station, Brian's front bogies skidded on the wet track and came off the rails. His driver inspected the damage. One of his front wheels had actually broken when he came off, and he was now stranded on the mainline.

Ewan came to see what the matter was. He was the only spare engine, and he had to drag Brian out of the way into one of the spare sidings where the Scottish trains came in. Rory was at platform seven.

"What you going to do 'bout those coal hoppers?" asked Rory nosily. "You can't leave them on the middle road like that, now, can you?"

The stationmaster ran over to them. "You'd better shift these trucks." He ordered. "We've got a non-stopping express coming through here in a few minutes!"

Ewan was horrified. "I'm not strong enough to pull those things!" he exclaimed anxiously. "There's over thirty of them, and they're all full of coal."

"Well, old boy, we'll have to move them, and fast." Said his driver.

"We can't get through to the Pendolino." The station master said. "The weather's disrupting our signal. We can't set the points to danger because of the speed that it is going at. It'll need over a mile of track to slow down enough from what speed it's rocketing along at."

Ewan backed down onto the trucks and pulled as hard as he could. The trucks wouldn't budge.

"It's no use!" exclaimed Ewan. "What are we going to do?"

"Pah, you're useless, that's the problem." Snorted Rory. "You need to be retired, or even better,

you could be – ”

“-Silence!” ordered the station master. There was a large crowd which had gathered to watch. Arthur and Calder had arrived in the station after double heading a goods train and they were watching intently from platform two.

“You can do it, Ewan!” encouraged Arthur. “Just try with all of your might!”

“He’s right, Ewan.” Agreed Calder. “We know that you’re capable of doing it!”

“I’ll do it.” Ewan muttered through gritted teeth as he took the strain and pulled his hardest. He had such a look of determination on his face. The first truck gradually began to move forwards, inch by inch.

“You’re doing it!” called Arthur. “Keep up the effort!”

The next trucks were beginning to move forwards. They heard a toot or a horn in the distance. The Pendolino was approaching.

All of a sudden, the trucks were moving forwards much faster. The signalman set the points so that Ewan could move the trucks onto the other line, out of the way. The Pendolino appeared from round the bend. The watching crowd gasped in horror. There were still several trucks and the brake van blocking the main line!

The Pendolino rocketed closer and closer. The crowd closed their eyes and braced themselves for the horrific collision that was sure to follow. But the collision never came in the five seconds that followed, nor the fifteen seconds that followed. The Pendolino was out of sight further up the line, and all of the trucks were safe on the other line.

The crowd gave a deafening cheer. All the engines tooted their horns loudly as a congratulations to Ewan.

The EWS manager stepped out of the crowd and approached Ewan. “You have shown your worth today, Ewan.” He said in admiration. “You shall go to the works to be repaired and improved.”

When Ewan returned from the works, all the engines were pleased to have him back, even Rory. Rory has been heard to be quoting Ewan as his hero! Whatever next?