

The Cumbrian Engines

By Eliot Andersen

Volume 6 – Cumbrian Winter Engines

Dear friends,

This winter season, the engines had many jobs that they had to undertake. Several days before Christmas, snow was promised, and as told in our Christmas special this year, caused chaos for the Carlisle station Christmas party. This was just the start of our worries. You can hear about the full story in this volume!
Have a very merry Christmas!

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, operated by Direct Rail Services

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

Craig – CR 0F 0-4-0ST 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

Hermione – LMS 5P4F 2-6-0 steam locomotive, owned by Cumbrian Engines Enterprises

Jack – LMS 4MT 2-6-4T steam locomotive, owned by Cumbrian Engines Enterprises

Michael – LMS 5MT 4-6-0 steam locomotive, owned by Cumbrian Engines Enterprises

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

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

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

Scafell Pike – BR Class 44 1Co-Co1 diesel-electric locomotive, owned by Cumbrian Engines Enterprises

On Christmas Night

The engines had returned to the shed at Carlisle after the Christmas party on Christmas Eve. It had been a very tiring day, especially for City of Carlisle. The snow had caused commotion on both the roads and on the rails.

The snow, however, was back again. It had begun to fall again, covering everything in a mystical white blanket.

It was very cold in the sheds. The engines needed to warm themselves up. They decided to each sing a Christmas carol, and if the others knew it, they would join in.

Arthur began with "Silent Night", while Calder followed with "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer". Fred and George tried to sing a rude rendition of "While shepherds watched their flock by night" but were sternly silenced by City of Carlisle.

Roger sung "White Christmas" while Scafell Pike quietly gave them a lovely "We three kings." Rory refused to sing, as his excuse was that he couldn't sing and he thought singing was silly and for little, annoying engines.

The others called him a Scrooge and whenever he tried to argue they would shout all in chorus "Bah humbug!"

Fred and George decided to be good and gave a brilliant "Calypso Carol". City of Carlisle decided to have some fun and sang "Personent Hodie", which is in Latin. The others stared in amazement as he sung four whole verses, without fault.

Michael gave them an enchanting Pavarotti-like version of "O come all ye faithful" and Jack and Craig did a wonderful duet of "We wish you a merry Christmas".

The engines finished in unison with "On Christmas Night", which they all found a great deal of fun.

The engines happily went to sleep, dreaming of what their drivers would arrive with to give them the next morning. It was not, however, what they ideally had in mind.

A bit of Christmas Cheer

“A snowplough!” moaned Rory. “I’m an important railcar, snowploughs will slow me down!”

His driver chuckled. “Too bad.” He said. “If all the other engines are wearing them without complaining, then you can too.”

“Shan’t!” said Rory crossly. “I don’t want to go out into the snow anyway.”

Just then the manager arrived. “I don’t care what you do or don’t want to do.” He said crossly. “You will wear your snow plough whether you want to wear it or not.”

Rory was not impressed at all. He banged out of the shed and into Platform Seven. There were few passengers, but they were still as important as those on normal days.

He was even more annoyed when his driver told him that they were going to Glasgow Central because some of the power lines for the Pendolinos had been brought down by heavy snowfall.

Rory set off northwards, while the other engines got ready for their tasks for the day.

Lots of remote villages in the countryside had been cut off by road because of the snow. It was the engine’s job to create access to them and to take them supplies of food and other essentials.

Fred and George were on standby as passenger carriers in case of emergency transportation for residents who need to move from their homes to where they must travel.

Arthur and Calder were clearing the tracks, hauling several coaches of workmen each. They were starting at opposite ends of the line, and would meet at Whitehaven station. They would relay messages there before continuing down the line.

Roger was pulling a long line of vans full of supplies that would be distributed at each station, and the people could collect them there. City of Carlisle was pulling Daisy, Rosie and Lilly, who were laden with gifts and passengers who were attempting to access the stranded people.

Ewan and the other EWS diesels were clearing the mainline. They were pulling Virgin Trains coaches to transport passengers up and down the line.

Jack and Craig were assigned to shunting trucks of grit in the yard. Scafell Pike would then collect the trucks and take them down the lines to where they were needed.

Michael was in charge of the permanent way trains. He hauled the breakdown crane along the line, clearing fallen trees out of the way, and helping derailed train back onto the tracks.

The people who had been cut off were delighted when they found out that they had been reached by the engines, and they had enough food for an enjoyable Christmas dinner.

Hermione the Mixed traffic engine

City of Carlisle returned to the yard at Carlisle where he found the station master talking to a crimson steam engine. It had two small front wheels, and 6 bigger drive wheels. It also had a tender full of coal.

City of Carlisle backed down along side the new engine. "Hello." He said to it.

"Hello there." It replied. City of Carlisle was rather shocked to here that it was a girl.

"My name's Hermione." She smiled softly.

"I'm City of Carlisle." The big engine replied. "Welcome to the Citadel station. The sheds are down in the yard, but all the engines are out at the minute."

"You'll be helping City of Carlisle." instructed the station master. "He'll show you the ropes of working the line."

The two engines puffed out of the station to the yard, where they found Daisy, Rosie and Lilly waiting in one of the sidings.

They found some more spare coaches that Hermione could use, and they set off down the line.

At Workington station, City of Carlisle was needed to take over from Terry the shunter, after his engine had failed. Hermione collected the other coaches and continued down the line with the heavy train.

They rumbled towards Bransty tunnel, and Hermione whistled just before she entered it. Before she knew what was happening, an avalanche of snow fell and she ploughed right into it before stopping. She tried to reverse, but the snow fell around her wheels, sticking her.

"Help!" she wailed, as her wheels spun aimlessly in the snow. Fred and George were waiting in the terminus platform. They promised to get help on their journey north.

Roger arrived an hour later. He pulled the coaches away while the workmen dug out Hermione. Her fire had gone out, and Roger pulled her away. The workmen then made sure that no more snow could fall onto the tracks anywhere else.

Roger returned Hermione to the sheds, where City of Carlisle was already waiting. His snowplough needed to be mended, and there were no spares available.

City of Carlisle saw a tear leak out of Hermione's eye. "What's wrong?" he asked her." She then burst into tears. "It's what happened today." She sobbed. "On my old line, nobody liked me, and because they always blamed me for accidents that were their own fault, I got sent to the scrap yard. It's only now that I've got friends who deserve to be called friends."

"We're all friends here." City of Carlisle said quietly. "I was nearly scrapped too."

Hermione gasped at the word. "Why would they scrap a useful engine like you?"

"Well, this was nearly forty years ago now." said City of Carlisle. "The diesels had just arrived, and they were trying to modernise the line. But then, the preservation society formed,

and bought all of us. And the preservation society would never get rid of any of us steam engines.” He smiled. Hermione smiled too. She knew that her new friend was right.

Girls can do just as well

Hermione was warmly welcomed into the family by the other engines. The engines all showed her the routes and stations. She even got some new coaches as a present to make her feel better. They would travel with Hermione all of the time, whatever the weather. They were brand new coaches and had sparkling dark red paint.

Rory found it very amusing that they had a girl engine to do work. He would joke about it anytime he saw one of the steam engines.

At last Roger lost patience. “Be quiet.” He said to Rory. “Or I’ll have to tell her about the time where Ewan had to rescue you from the snowstorm.”

Rory was unusually quiet for the next couple of days, because he couldn’t risk being laughed at again.

One morning, the manager came to see Hermione. “You are doing very well.” He said. “But, you are now to go onto goods duties. Jack will look after your coaches for you while you work with the trucks.”

Hermione collected some empty flatcars from the yard and took them to the steelworks. They were then loaded up with rails and she departed for Ravenglass. The rails were unloaded for the little engines, and old rails were put onto her trucks. They were to be taken back to the steel works to be melted down again.

She returned to Carlisle feeling very worn out. She backed down onto a train of coal hoppers and took them down the mainline to Lancaster. When she returned to the yard, she found Richard with a long line of trucks, all with lots of freight loaded on or in them.

Richard could not pull the heavy train on his own. He was stuck on the points coming out of the yard and onto the coastal line. The stationmaster was arguing with him, but he still couldn’t move.

The station master then saw Hermione. He instructed her to back down onto Richard and his train and pull them into the siding.

Hermione pulled, but with Richard’s weight on the heavy train, she could move it very little. She heaved at the trucks, but to no avail. They took off Richard to lighten the load, and Hermione could move the trucks more, but not much further.

“Look at her straining at it!” said Richard to Rory.

Rory agreed. “They should get rid of her already, she’s useless after all.”

The two engines laughed but were sternly silenced by the stationmaster. Hermione knew that the diesels were right, she was a failure. She wasn’t strong enough to pull the long train.

Just then, City of Carlisle arrived in platform 2. “Come on Hermione.” He said encouragingly.

Hermione saw that he was there. She somehow knew that she could do it. She pulled the hoppers forwards. First six feet, then fifteen, then she was puffing out of the station. She deposited the heavy trucks in a siding, and puffed away for a well earned rest.

The wintry season ended soon, and the manager came over to the sheds. "Well done." He beamed proudly. "You have all worked really well in the snow, and have helped out lots of people. You have proved that you are true Cumbrian winter engines!"