

## **Correspondence received at the Spinney Light Railway**

**From Roger and Christine Kent**

**Received January 2014**

**Subject: Distant memories of The Spinney**

Dear Alan

A look at your excellent website suggests that you welcome correspondence and recollections of The Spinney from the early years, so I wondered if I may offer a small contribution?

I am currently a member of the support team at The Millerbeck Light Railway at the south end of Lake Windermere, a set-up which sounds similar to yours (eg a private house with occasional public running). But when I recall how my interest in 7 1/4" railways first started, it was due to a visit to The Spinney in the early 1980s, when we were living in nearby Headley. I remember meeting Joe Dykes, and our mutual interest in The Lakes (we met him soon afterwards whilst he was officiating at the Grasmere Sports). We later moved to The Lakes, and since my mother left Farnham in 2000, we've lost touch with your lovely part of the world

My good friend, Mark Sharphouse, also one of the Millerbeck team, visited The Spinney in July 1999, along with David Everingham, and recorded the event on video (one of his specialities)! He has now transposed this to a DVD, so you are welcome to a copy if it's of interest. Mark was hosted by Mary and Hugh, and although that was shortly before Mary died, she was apparently in good health at that time. She can be seen on the video.

I learned only to-day that Joe was friendly with Major John Hext, creator of the Hollywath railway in Coniston, sadly now dismantled. Another local connection is that Mary's ancestral home was at Merlewood, at Grange over Sands, close to us. Small World!

As for my own recollections of The Spinney, I was most impressed by the civil engineering, the deep cutting, and losing my sense of direction in the tunnels! I was told of the dumper truck incident, ouch! I've searched for photos I took at the time, and found only one! But Mark's video is interesting. The locos I remember were the Hunslet (Emily?) and The Duchess, both apparently still running.

I hope this may be of some use to the archives, and I'm sure that if you ever find yourself in our part of the world, you would be assured of a welcome at Millerbeck.

Sincerely

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