



RED WHEEL DAY

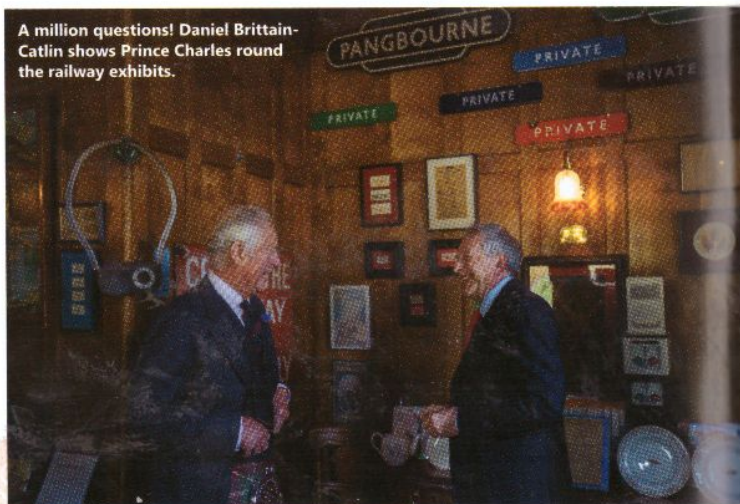


On Sunday 8 August we were privileged to have H.R.H. The Prince Charles, Duke of Rothesay unveil a Red Wheel marking the 150th Anniversary of the opening of the "Duke of Sutherland's Railway". The wheel was sponsored by FoFNL and supplied by the National Transport Trust.

The wording on the wheel is "The Duke of Sutherland's Railway. To boost the local economy, the 3rd Duke planned and financed the railway from Golspie to Helmsdale. Opened 16th May 1871."

The Prince was 'piped in' by Fraser Roach, and welcomed to Dunrobin Castle Station by Sutherland Lord Lieutenant Dr Monica Main.

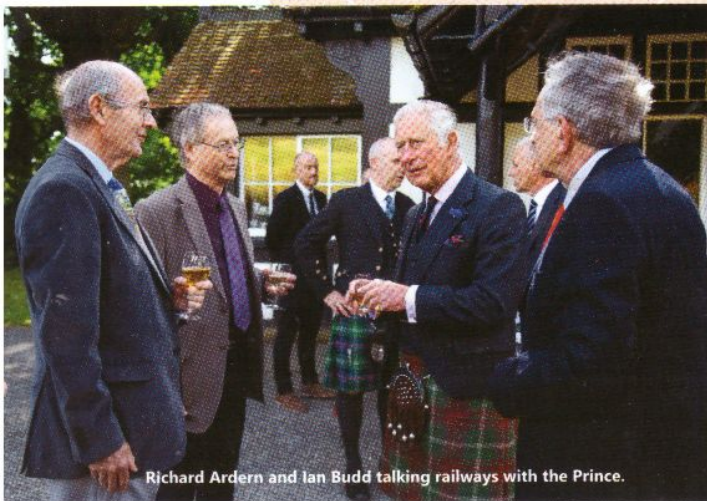
The platform party included The Earl of Sutherland; FoFNL President, Jamie Stone MP and members Daniel Brittain-Catlin, who



A million questions! Daniel Brittain-Catlin shows Prince Charles round the railway exhibits.

organised the event; Ian Budd; Richard Ardern; Anne-Mary Paterson, well known author of books on railway subjects; and Frank Roach, Partnership Manager at HITRANS. Also present were Scott Morrison, Managing Director, Dunrobin Castle; Darius Astell, Transport Scotland project sponsor for the Far North Line; Alan Ross, Network Rail Director Engineering and Asset Management, who gave a speech inviting the Prince to unveil the wheel; Fiona Campbell, ScotRail Regional Customer Operations Manager North; John Cameron CBE, a Vice President of the national Transport Trust (and owner of *Union of South Africa* and *The Great Marquess*, two famous steam locomotives); and Iain Crisp, head gardener at Dunrobin Castle.

The Prince was shown around the museum in the station by Daniel (described as Honorary Station Master) and was genuinely fascinated by the items he saw. Evidently he "asked a million



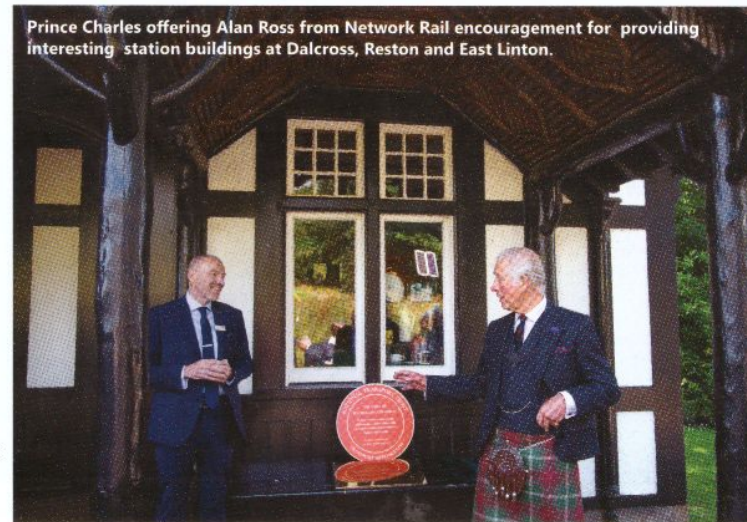
Richard Ardern and Ian Budd talking railways with the Prince.

questions!" He said that it took him right back to his childhood and that one of his happiest railway memories was being given breakfast on the Royal Train as it headed on its final leg from Aberdeen to Ballater for Balmoral. He also said, "They should never have closed that line!"

The Prince was evidently enjoying himself, and made a point of speaking to everyone on the platform, including the extra guests who were not in the greeting lines. Once the Prince had left to visit the gardens of Dunrobin Castle the day was rounded off perfectly by a buffet lunch in Golspie.

Ian Budd

Prince Charles offering Alan Ross from Network Rail encouragement for providing interesting station buildings at Dalcross, Reston and East Linton.



[All photos: John Baikie]

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BOOK REVIEW

Highland Railways - Four Decades of Diesel Traction North of Perth Mike Wedgewood, Key Publishing 2021

Volume 19 of *Britain's Railways* series. Softback, 96 pp. £15.99 ISBN 978-1-913870-94-2

On the face of it this book by FoFNL member Mike Wedgewood is aimed at traction enthusiasts. There is such a variety of locomotives and trains in these pages that I'm sure they won't be disappointed. However, this is far more than a series of rolling stock photos.

The volume is divided into three parts by route: the Highland Main Line, Inverness to Kyle, which covers the southern part of the FNL, and The Far North Line from Dingwall northwards. Altogether there are more than 70 photos of the Far North Line. This is an excellent survey of the scenery and the seasons, as well as the trains and the stations, and is therefore recommended to all our readers.

Most of the 180+ photos have never been published before and were taken by Mike or his enthusiast colleague Eddie Parker. There is only a page or two of introductory text for each section, but every photo has an informative, and often amusing, caption. That makes this an ideal book for dipping into for a few minutes at a time. It also reminds the reader of what a wonderfully varied railway the Far North Line is - and how much we've all missed travelling by rail during the pandemic.

www

Ian Budd

