

Halsgrove Railway Series

THE SOUTH DEVON RAILWAY

Don Bishop

The iconic South Devon line runs for 7 miles through some fine riverside scenery alongside the River Dart in Devon. Formerly known as the Dart Valley Railway, until taken over by volunteers from its previous commercial owner in 1991, the line has steadily built on its strengths and has now gathered an excellent fleet of GWR locomotives and carriages creating an almost unrivalled atmosphere of the classic Great Western branch line.

The line follows the course of the fast flowing River Dart throughout its 7 miles, with many fine views of the river to be had from passing trains, from the mainline junction at Totnes through Staverton to Buckfastleigh on the edge of the Dartmoor National Park.

Don Bishop has captured the line through many visits and photographic charter events over the last 14 years. A number of the scenes he depicts are so close to the line in the 1950s that even the same engines are shown still at work today. A particular emphasis of the book is Don's liking for "steam in the landscape" photographs showing the railway going about its business with the wonderful Devon scenery around it. Through around 150 magnificent pictures included in the book Don portrays The South Devon Railway at its best with the aim of encouraging the reader to visit the line if they have not already done so and contribute towards its ongoing success.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Don Bishop has been a keen railway photographer for many years and travels widely around the UK looking for that often seemingly elusive "master shot". Nowadays working professionally as a freelance photographer, concentrating on his steam and UK landscape images, Don has an extensive collection of images of the UK steam scene and regularly has work published in magazines. He also runs workshop days for people to learn about his techniques in getting quality landscape and steam railway photographs. Through his Steam Recreations brand he has organised many private photographic charter events at steam railways around the UK, including the South Devon line, in an attempt to recreate scenes long past, with a particular emphasis on the 1950/60s. He is the author of *The West Somerset Railway*, also in the Halsgrove Railway Series.

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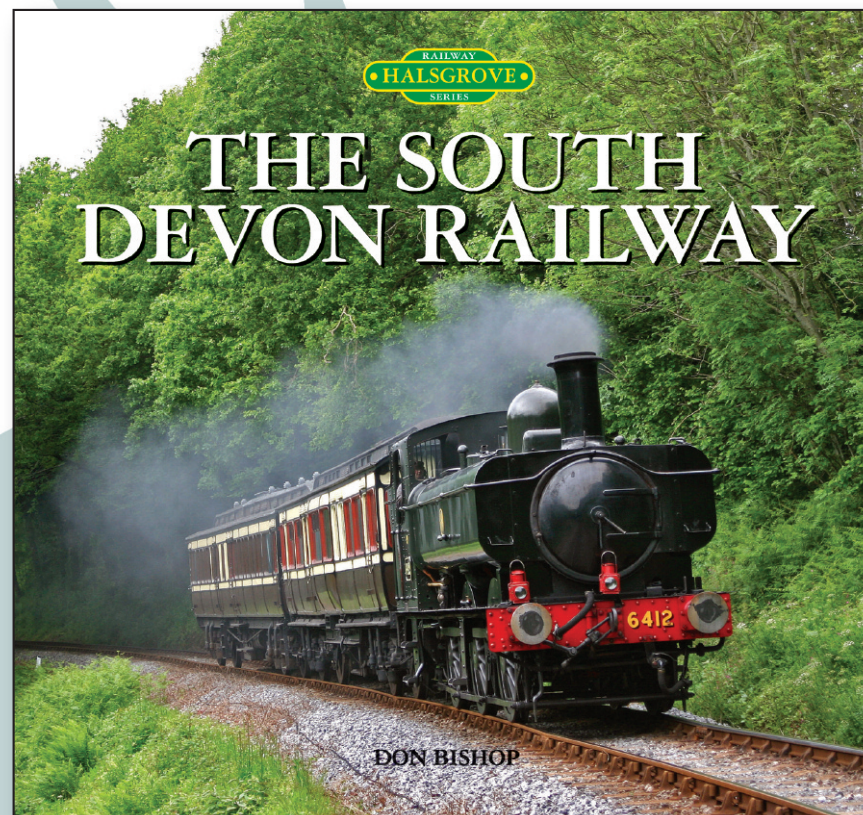
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No. 5526 shunts stock ready for the morning's departure at Buckfastleigh on 25 April 2004.



A damp autumn morning at Buckfastleigh as No. 5526 leaves with the red and cream set on 1 November 2008.



Pannier No. 6435 & GW 0-6-2T No. 6695 head through dappled light at Riverford Woods on 12 April 2009.

Example of a double-page spread.



West Somerset Railway Association-owned Prairie No. 4561, on loan to the SDR in 1998, with a photo charter recreation of the Ashburton branch goods on 1 May 1998.



Left
A rather dull morning sees Prairie No. 5526 as it heads a single Guller coach alongside the river at Hood Bridge forming an early morning Tynes to Buckfastleigh service on 24 March 2008.

Above
GWR Prairie No. 3542 drifting towards Hood Bridge with a Tynes-bound train on 9 April 2009.



The South Devon Railway completed the restoration of Small Prairie No. 5526 on behalf of the owning group and the engine is now based on the line. Here the BR Black-liveried engine heads a local train through Bishops Bridge on the evening of 24 March 2004.



Before the bridge was modernised in order to allow locomotives with higher axle weights to cross, the bridge over the River Dart at Nursery Pool near Buckfastleigh was a real classic photo location. Here a timeless scene is recreated as 0-4-2T No. 1466, on loan from the Great Western Society at Didcot, propels an autococh across the bridge amid autumn hues in October 1995.