

Letters to the editor

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Write to: The Editor, The Yorkshire Post, No.1 Leeds, 26 Whitehall Road, Leeds LS12 1BE

Please include your full postal address and the publication date if referring to a Yorkshire Post article or a previous letter.

Please print as well as signing your name. The Editor reserves the right to shorten letters.

Amazing rescue story of Blea Moor rail crash

**From: Bob Swallow,
Townhead Avenue, Settle.**

Moor. Space prohibits telling all her tales but that concerning the train smash takes some beating.

The up Thames Clyde Express was passing Dent Head when some permanent way workers noticed that the brake rod on the pilot engine, a class 2P locomotive, had come adrift and was flailing around striking the ends of the sleepers. They were powerless to do anything about it and the train disappeared into Blea Moor Tunnel. Emerging at the far end there was and still is a facing point into the up loop where matters came to a head. The wild appendage struck the point changing bar which moved the point blades beneath the second train engine, Royal Scot Class number 6117 *Welsh Guardsman*. Whilst the pilot engine and tender remained on the rails the train engine fell onto its side dragging several coaches after it. The train

was reckoned to be travelling at 55 miles per hour at the time.

Nancy was then 14 and, it being the weekend and a warm balmy day, was sunbathing – as you do – on top of their pigsty. She sat up at the sounds of an almighty crash in time to see the train engine rear up dragging several coaches behind it, the couplings holding firm. Bar the signalman who promptly put all his signals to danger before contacting control seeking help, there was just Nancy and her mother on site. Nancy as a Girl Guide had received first aid training which she put to good use rushing to the crash site with her mother and helping several lightly injured passengers. They rescued a baby still in its carry cot which had been flung through a carriage window. Their home became a casualty clearing centre.

It took some time for the rescue

services to arrive, when they did being appalled to find the embankment littered with bodies though much relieved to find these in the main to be passengers who having done all they were able to assist were now sunbathing!

Later Nancy was presented with a watch (which is still going) and citation from the Railways Board and also a similar citation from the Chief Guide for England. *Welsh Guardsman* was recovered, speedily re-entering service. Although now long ago scrapped its sister locomotive number 6115 *Scots Guardsman* based at Carnforth is a regular performer over the S&C. Nancy until recently during the summer months would visit Ribbleshead entertaining visitors with tales of her family at Blea Moor. She still lives not too far away though in a little more temperate surroundings.

I refer to the photograph of the railway accident at Blea Moor (*The Yorkshire Post*, April 4) which evoked some memories. Many years ago I created an audio visual production on the Settle Carlisle Railway focusing on the people who lived and worked on or around the railway. One such was Nancy Edmondson, nee Dawson, who lived at Blea Moor for 17 years from 1939. Her father John Dawson was the sub ganger in charge of the section from north of Ribbleshead station to across the legendary viaduct to midway through Blea Moor Tunnel. The attraction was the property which came with the job, No 1 Blea Moor Cottages.

Nancy was the youngest of three daughters, she being only 12 months old when arriving at Blea

From: "Bob" <bobandpauline153@gmail.com>

To: "YP" <yp.editor@ypn.co.uk>

Sent: 05/04/2023 11:00:36

Subject: The heroine of Blea Moor

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