

# Ballad of The Old Mumbles Railway

## The Station

When we wished to partake of excitement ,  
That would fill us with joy - more or less  
We would save up our cash and prepare for a dash,  
On the wonderful Mumbles Express

The Station we start from is striking  
The roof is the sky - overhead  
And flat on the ground - the " Platform " is found  
The oldest design - so 'tis said.

The booking hall is round in a sidestreet,  
A shelter from the sunshine - and rain.  
And all rushed pell mell - at the sound of a bell.,  
For then - it was time for our train.

## The Train

Our Train is a wonder of wonders,  
The coaches are gorgeous and grand,  
For the dainty design - of the train on this line,  
Is easily the best in the land.

The Engine - my word what a beauty,  
As slowly she snorts from her shed,  
Then crosses the road - to take up her load,  
And waits for "The full steam ahead " .

Some coaches are " First Class " - some " Second ",  
And " Third Class " and Workman's as well,  
Queer trucks at the rear - all open and bare,  
And no class "at all - I've heard tell.

## The Mumbles Railway

There are carriages nicknamed " The Toast Racks ",  
With leg room for sitters - so slight,  
That to sit at one's ease - we've to dovetail our knees,  
With the Lady or Gent opposite.

And that wonderful Van - for the Workmen,  
If ever we found ourselves there -  
With the fumes and the smoke - we would jolly soon choke  
And be gurgling and gasping for air.

## The Start

The train load is ready and eager for starting,  
And steam from the Engine is hissing,  
The smoke from the funnel causes lots of eye smarting,  
There's hardly a thing missing.

The Guards - in a row with their shrill whistles blowing,  
The Engine bell dismally tolling,  
When all are impatient to see the train going,  
More Passengers - up we see strolling.

They are then put on board with shouting and shoving,  
And cross words and swearwords and grunting,  
But just as we think to The Mumbles we're moving,  
The Engine must yet do some shunting.

We hear lots of squeaking and bearings a creaking,  
As backwards and forwards we're bumping,  
With pistons a 'clanking and whistle a 'shreiking,  
Soon over the first crossing we're jumping.

And this is a picture that's more or less,  
The starting away of the Mumbles Express.

## On the Way

We're off at last - the great adventure started,  
A tolling bell tells all - we're on the way,  
From sleepy Swansea Town we'll soon be parted,  
To reach -in time- The Mumbles, ' Cross the bay.

We leave behind the advertising station,  
And row of cottages that flank our right,  
Then pass the grimy Gasworks - with elation !  
For soon our pretty (!) Prison looms in sight.

And Prisoners within are much elated,  
To hear the great Express - that is all,  
While we are swiftly passing - so 'tis stated,  
The " longest stone " built in the Prison wall.

By School and yards and Church we're flashing,  
And see the waiting people at " The Slip ",  
Then by the Railway Arch you see us dashing,  
But " pull up " for more shunting-on this trip.

They hitch on coaches from Trafalgar Siding,  
To lengthen ( in short time ) this great Express.  
Impatient are some passengers-there riding,  
We'll reach the Mumbles in an hour, or less.

## At The Slip

At The Slip - what a sight,  
'Twas a mystery quite how the thousands of passengers  
vanished,  
From the road - all aboard,  
On the train - they were " stored ",  
By a Magician's wand they were banished,  
No matter the number, the Guards ne're refrain,  
From finding 'em room - on the dear Mumbles Train.

### **By Brynmill**

On, once more - to the " West",  
At speed - near its best  
Brynmill Station our Express approaches,  
Thousands more - for this train,  
Which I'm most certain,  
Some invisible extending coaches,  
For if hundreds or thousands ,the Guards ne'er complain  
They'll find them all room - on the great Mumbles Train.

### **Speeding along**

Off - off again on that long (!) stretch of line,  
Where each Express is proud to show her pace.  
From Brynmill Lane to Gypsy's Cross is fine,  
Here cyclists would oft the Mumbles Train would race.

### **The Mumbles Railway**

The speed (!) we reached by some deemed a crime:  
Yet back-bent cyclists by us sped,  
And reached Blackpill before us many a time,  
For that's the way our racing men are bred.

An " L & N " we passed with sweet disdain,  
We simply " left it standing " as they say,  
( But here I think it best that I explain,  
It was a train that ran the other way ).

Of course we had to " meet " an up-town train,  
At Blackpill Links - where all good golfers play,  
Though every " waiting " goes against the grain,  
We saw them play four holes - 'twas worth the stay.

Our trains now pass - the golf house points we reach,  
Something's gone wrong as oft they will,  
Folks are much shocked - and passengers - they screech,  
" We're off the line " - but much too slow to spill.

With levers, spanners, chains and then a jack,  
The Guards and Driver work with eager zest,  
With bump and jolt we soon regain the track,  
Then reach Blackpill - to take a little rest.

### **In the Bay**

The half-way reached, we're in the Bay,  
The most superb in Britain's Isle,  
At Lilliput we do not stay,  
But dash along the western mile,  
The Passengers inside- on top,  
On stairs and Platform look aghast,  
And wonder when and where we'll stop,  
For we are speeding mighty fast.

Our driver knows what he can do,  
And that the brakes will surely work!  
So, for a test - without ado  
He pulls the train up with a jerk;  
Folks' heads are bumped, some are upset,  
Words to express they're at a loss,  
No need to flurry- fume - or fret,  
The Station Master cries " West Cross "

### **On with the mad flight**

We soon are on the move again,  
The rollicking, rumbling " Mumbles Train",  
And at the speed our engine runs,  
We pretty soon will reach the Dunns.

That's if our train with such a load,  
Can keep the rails at Norton Road,  
She keeps the track - though speeding fast,  
And Oystermouth is reached at last.

Here crowds of passengers detrain,  
Some for their homes - lots for the bays,  
To roam the sands beside the main,  
Where they oft spend such happy days.

And in the station yard you'll find,  
Many a horse trap waiting there,  
Our old friend Peachy - ever kind,  
Lifts whip to cap - he seeks a fare.

The engine bell is heard once more,  
And on the move swift ! as of yore,  
And leave behind dear Oystermouth,  
No station like it North or South.

Upon our right, a glimpse is seen,  
Of tennis courts and bowling green,  
Hotels and shops - along the bend,  
Leads to the sea at Southend.

### **The end - At last**

Now patient passengers prepare,  
To leave the train in just a while,  
The terminus is very near,  
We end our journey with a smile.

And those on top - wipe out their eyes,  
To clear them of dust and grit,  
That from the engine's funnel flies,  
( For years we've all endured it ).

**The Mumbles Railway**

So we've had our share of excitement,  
On the wonderful Mumbles Express,  
Though we say it with smiles, it has covered six miles,  
In an hour or so - more or less.

And the Pier station too, is striking,  
For the roof is the sky overhead,  
But the view al around, is the finest e'er found,  
In the world -anywhere - so 'tis said

By Dan Morgan,  
From the book " The Mumbles - past and present"

by Norman L. Thomas