Furness Railway Loans Box

Signal lamp

Originally **signals** were given by hand, using either **flags** or **lamps**. The work was first assigned to **policemen**.

In the days of the Furness Railway there were lots of signalmen and the trains were passed by them all the way up the line, so the position of any train was known.

It was checked that all drivers of trains had **good vision** so he could see signals or **problems** ahead on the line. But the **fireman** would also look out as well (he was **responsible** for keeping the fire going so that the **steam engine** of the locomotive would **power** the train to its final **destination**).

Furness Railway Loans Box

Flags

Originally **signals** were given by hand, using either **flags** or **lamps**. The work was first assigned to **policemen**. Railway policemen wore **uniforms** which looked very similar to those worn by the police on the streets.

The signals worked like this:

"When the line is clear and nothing to impede the progress of the train the policeman will stand erect, with his flag held **downwards** but show no signal.

If it be necessary to proceed with **caution**, the green flag will be **elevated**"

The red flag meant an **immediate** stop.

A **country signalman** had a very different working life to someone working a **major** railway **junction**. At busy times of the day at London's Waterloo "A" box in 1889 three trains departed every four minutes!

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Waistcoat

Just after 7am on 22nd September 1892 at Lindal, the driver of a Furness Railway locomotive, Thomas Postlethwaite, noticed cracks opening up in the ground right below. He jumped for his life, as soon as he was clear the earth opened up to expose a sheer-sided hole 30 foot across and similar in depth. The locomotive fell into it front first, with only a small part visible above the surface. The rails on which the engine had been standing were snapped off and went down with it.

Later on that day the hole opened even further and swallowed the entire 35 ton locomotive. Fortunately no-one was hurt. The book, Thomas down the mine (Thomas the tank engine) is probably based on this story.

But the driver had lost his waistcoat and gold watch and regretted ever after that he hadn't picked it up when he jumped for his life!

Furness Railway Loans Box

Furness Railway Spanner

This **spanner** is much larger than one that you would normally find in the home. Railway locomotives (they are the engines that pull carriages) are very large and in the days of the Furness Railway had six wheels. The locomotive that fell into a hole at Lindal was 35 ton. That means:

35 tons equals 31,751 kg

The average weight of a man today in the UK is 83 kg

So, 35 tons equals the weight of 382 men!

How many children would equal the weight of a locomotive?

Furness Railway Loans Box

Cap

This cap belonged to a **train driver** and dates to the days when one organisation, British Railways, ran all railways in Britain from 1948 to 1997.

In the days of the Furness Railway the engine driver or train driver was a very important job. There were many **different** jobs in the railways and it took a long time to rise up to the position of train driver. It was a **responsible** job and they were **well paid**. It was a job that many young boys, seeing trains pass by them on the line, wanted to have.

Furness Railway Loans Box

Telephone

How do you **communicate** in the days before **mobile telephones**? On the train itself a **communication cord** was first installed in the 1860s. This meant that a passenger could pull on the cord to **summon** a member of the train staff. Nowadays there are buttons on trains to communicate in **emergencies**.

As the train is a moving object it was very important that **problems, delays or emergencies** could be **communicated** along the length of the journey. Communication was important not just to members of staff on the train but also between the stations.

This telephone probably dates to the 1930s. By this point telephones had become more **affordable** and many were **installed** in middle class and upper class homes in Britain.

Furness Railway Loans Box

Guard's Cap

Guards worked with the public and so were given more **lavish** uniforms than some of the other workers for the railways. The passenger guard was an **important** position. The **responsibility** for the goods or passengers rested with the guard. He (they were always men in the nineteenth century) would also have to keep records, pacify irate passengers and look after unaccompanied women travellers.

Furness Railway Loans Box

Furness Railway crest or coat-of-arms

Cavendo Tutus (Secure by Caution) became the company motto when the Furness Railway was formed in 1844. It was also the **Duke of Devonshire's motto** and he was one of the **principal shareholders** of the Furness Railway. This meant that he invested a lot of money into the Furness Railway and then, if the company made a profit, he received a share of the **profit** (a **dividend**).

The **decoration** on the crest is based on the **Great Seal of Furness Abbey**. It shows the Virgin Mary holding the infant Jesus, whilst in her right hand she carries an **orb**, **symbolising** the world. She stands beneath the centre of three arches and is **flanked** by two **shields**, each supported by a **monk**. Each shield is surmounted by sprigs of **deadly nightshade**, symbolising the valley in which Furness Abbey is built.

This crest was in the **Station Master's office** of **Barrow Central** (the main station on Abbey Road).

Furness Railway Loans Box

Timeline

1830s   Barrow was becoming the most important loading point for locally-mined iron ore due to Walney Channel being a natural and sheltered harbour.

A railway line would make the transportation of iron ore much quicker and more reliable.

1844   Furness Railway Act passed by parliament. Land was purchased.

1846   James Ramsden (age: 23) became Locomotive Superintendent

3rd June Opening of the line to passengers and freight

1861   Durham line opened which enabled coke from Durham to help the rapid expansion of Barrow ironworks and creation of steelworks in 1865

1865   Work on the dock scheme started, funded by the Furness Railway

1867   Barrow officially became a town and James Ramsden the first mayor

1890s   Older iron ore mines are worked out

The Furness Railway starts to concentrate more on tourism

1922   By government order, the Furness Railway was absorbed into the London Midland and Scottish Railway at midnight on the 31st December 1922.