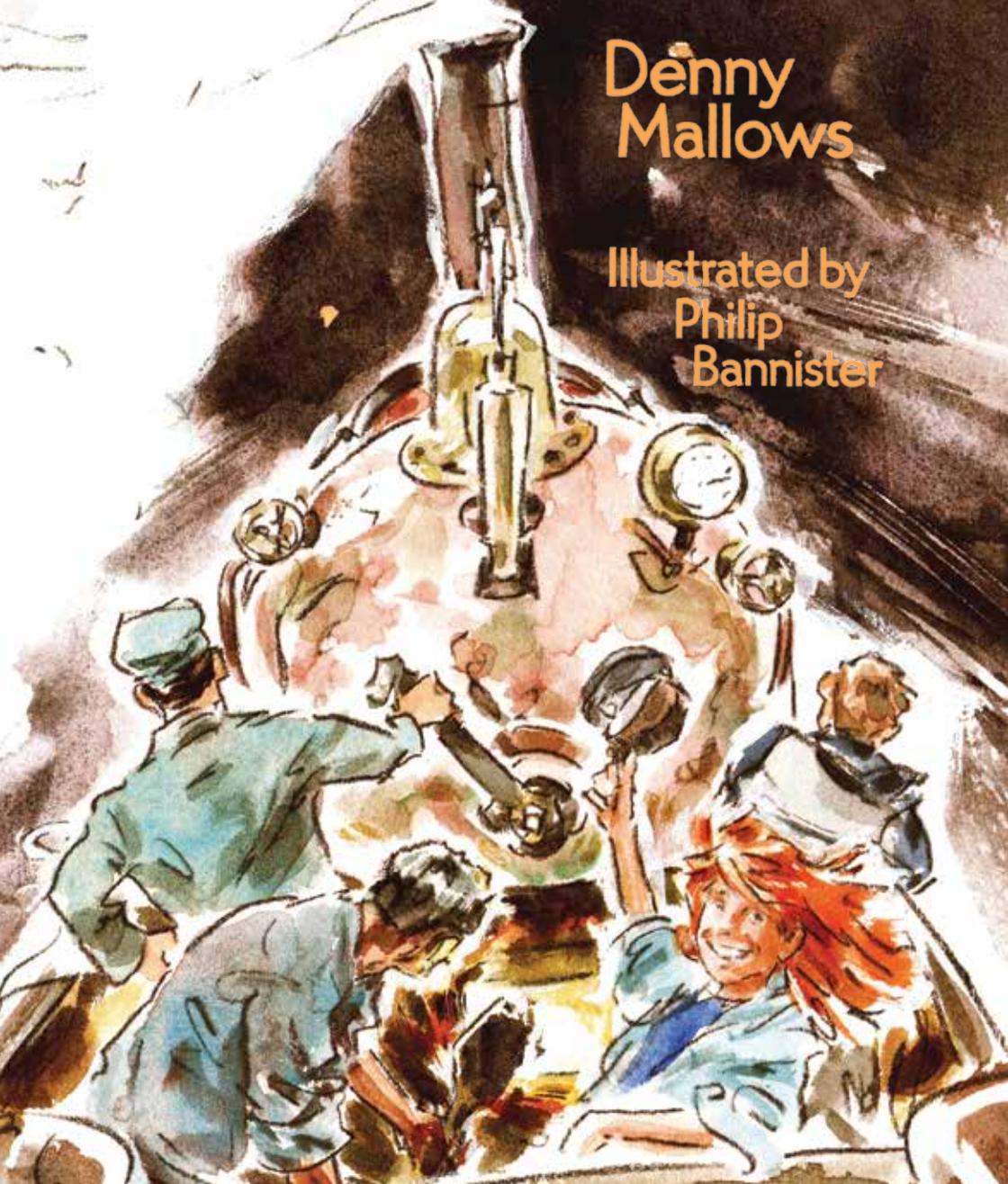


# TIME FOR COPPERNOB

Denny  
Mallows

Illustrated by  
Philip  
Bannister



## Dedication

This book is dedicated to the memory of my parents. Esther Elizabeth Wilkinson read braille with her eyes and helped produce thousands of books for blind children and adults. George Stanley Wilkinson was the best storyteller. He was kind: tenderhearted.



## About the author

Denny Mallows has a passion for stories, especially children's stories. She believes that stories are the best way to describe almost everything that happens. Denny has taught children in London and York and student teachers at York St John University. She lives in York with her husband Richard. They have two children a boy and a girl who have grown up. Denny has found out, since writing this story, that her great grandparents lived in Cumbria and must have known Coppernob.

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Published by the Cumbrian Railways Association,  
104 Durlay Avenue, Pinner, Middlesex HA5 1JH  
The Association is Registered Charity No 1025436  
[www.cumbrianrailways.org.uk](http://www.cumbrianrailways.org.uk)

Design and layout by Michael Peascod  
Printed by The Amadeus Press Ltd, Cleckheaton  
ISBN 978-0-9570387-4-5

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Coppernob is a real engine in the National Railway Museum in York. The story of the engine is based upon fact. Mr Schneider was the mayor of Barrow-in-Furness in 1878 and the 7th Duke of Devonshire lived at Holker Hall and had his own carriage on the Furness Railway. The incidents in the Museum and any other names and characters portrayed in the story are the work of the author's imagination. Any resemblance to actual persons, living or dead is entirely coincidental.

## Acknowledgments

First of all I must thank all the children and students I have taught for encouraging me to tell stories. In particular I must mention the children at Oaken Grove School, York, for asking me to tell them the story of Coppernob. Many people have helped me in the writing of this book. Railway enthusiasts I have found to be generous with their knowledge, fun loving and full of stories.

The people I met in Cumbria could not have been more helpful in telling me about their engine and the explainers at the National Railway Museum met every request with interest and encouragement. I am hugely indebted to Michael Peascod in particular, but also his team at the Cumbrian Railways Association for all their hard work and commitment to publishing my book. I would like to thank Philip Bannister for his bright ideas as well as his beautiful illustrations. Thanks are due to Alan Middleton of the Furness Railway Trust, especially for introducing me to the Cumbrian Railway Association.

I would like to thank my friends who have listened and given good advice and my family who are always ready to add their own creative ideas. Very special thanks go to Richard who believed in my story, enjoyed joining in the research and sustained me through the many re-writes.

On behalf of the Cumbrian Railways Association I would like to thank those who have donated specifically to the production of this book. In particular I should like to mention the Cumberland News Group Charitable Foundation for their generous gift.

The Cumbrian Railways Association is the local railway history group for Cumbria and North Lancashire. They publish a wide range of local histories associated with the railways of the County. For membership enquiries and details of our books, please visit our website at [www.cumbrianrailways.org.uk](http://www.cumbrianrailways.org.uk).

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**CUMBRIAN  
RAILWAYS  
ASSOCIATION**

## *Chapter 1*

# **Time for Change**

**L**IANA was angry. She was angry with her father and now she was angry with her teacher. Deep inside she was also angry about her mother. Given her hair, which was almost red, you might have imagined that Liana would show her anger but you would be wrong. Liana was extremely good at keeping her feelings to herself. The classroom had steamed up. Liana felt stifled. In just a few minutes the bell would go and she would be out in the longed-for fresh air.

The proper teacher had been off school for a while and there had been one supply teacher after another. Now they had a student, Miss Wells. Everyone liked Miss Wells, including Liana. She looked more like a big sister than a teacher, but she didn't stand any messing about. Out of her huge file she produced some really interesting lessons with lots of different things to do. Since Miss Wells arrived time in school had raced along, that is until lunchtime today. Liana had gone back into the classroom to collect the coffee mug Miss Wells had left on the desk, when she caught sight of her own name in the open file:

'Liana (pronounced Lee-Anna) Lagrange Emerson ----- loner or lonely?'

Was she lonely? Liana didn't think so. Did Miss Wells think she had no friends? She would have really liked a special friend, someone she could trust and share thoughts with. It was not as if she was ever left out of things. There was always someone to be with if she wanted. Before her father changed his job and they moved to York, Liana had a best friend in London. When she first started at her new school, girls in her class had often invited Liana home for tea, especially when they heard about her mother. Somehow she had felt uncomfortable in busy kitchens with mothers cooking or rushing in from work. It wasn't that easy to invite friends home with her either, although her dad would not mind if she did. Perhaps she was a loner? Liana looked it up in her dictionary whilst the afternoon register was being taken and that made her really cross. Just because you don't mind being on your own doesn't mean you prefer not to be with others. Why did people have to try and label you anyway?

'Goodbye,' Liana shouted cheerfully to her friends as she pulled on her coat. Miss Wells must have heard them calling back. It was good to feel the cool air but Liana still felt miserable and anxious. Usually she loved the walk across York after school. She could have gone straight home. She liked The Red House with

## *Time for Coppernob*

its tall bay windows and deep red paint, but the three-storey Victorian house was large and empty on your own. Most nights Liana walked to the Museum to meet her dad when he finished work at 6 o'clock. The receptionists, the explainers, in fact just about everyone who worked at the National Railway Museum, knew her father. Liana had to report to the desk when she arrived but she was trusted to wander around for the last quiet hour until they closed.

Liana walked slowly at first, kicking the damp leaves, whilst she tried to decide which route to take to the Museum. Today she decided to walk through Monk Bar and past the shops. She would buy a gingerbread person at Thomas the Bakers to cheer herself up. York, not a huge city, with its centre surrounded by medieval stone walls, feels smaller than it really is. Liana liked the web of narrow streets busy with tourists.

'People come from the ends of the earth to visit our railway collection,' she could hear her dad saying.

At this time of day many people were making their way home or back to hotels. Liana was walking against the flow. A sudden voice made her jump.

'Excuse me pet, could you tell us if this is the right way to Union Terrace Coach Park?'

She knew, and had answered this one often. Many of the tourists she met sounded as if they came from no further away than Newcastle. She liked the sound of the names of the streets in York: Jubbergate, Coppergate, Grape Lane, Whip-Ma-Whop-Ma Gate, The Shambles. She walked on along Goodramgate towards the huge, honey coloured Minster, a towering signpost over York. Lights were already on in some of the shops and inside the walls the city felt welcoming. What would she find in the Museum? She kept a flicker of hope but her strongest feeling was dread.

Thomas the Bakers was almost empty which was unusual. Liana put the white crinkly bag containing just one ginger person in her coat pocket. She usually bought two but today she was not thinking of pleasing her father. He had



## *1 - Time for Change*

been so stubborn about Coppernob. He didn't even seem sorry that he was causing her so much embarrassment. She tried so hard to talk to him, to know him better and find out more about herself, but he had clever ways of changing the conversation. It was even more difficult to get his attention now he had stopped telling her stories at bedtime. Her dad had always done that. The coming of the railways was his favourite subject, describing the people and their problems as if he had been there himself. Liana missed the stories and hearing his voice as she relaxed and felt sleepy. He looked after her and gave her anything she needed, but at the same time he kept a distance between them. Liana guessed it was because of her mother, but as he would not talk about her she felt left out of her own story. She had no relatives that she knew of, so there was nobody else to ask. It had been a good idea to meet her father at the Railway Museum as she used the walk home to talk to him and that was worth the hour she had to wait. There was plenty to do in the Museum, but Liana had long since tired of the activities and the truth was that she was not all that keen on trains, except Coppernob.

When she was younger Liana's father would call her 'copper knob' and ruffle her copper coloured hair. He didn't do this so much now but the connection had been made with the engine and Liana usually went to look at her on the turntable, to pass the time until her father was ready to go home. Coppernob had been given her name because of her bright, copper firebox dome. There was something about the reddish-brown engine called Coppernob that made you feel she had a personality. Coppernob looked as if she had survived a hard life. She reminded Liana of a patient old horse put out to rest in a field. Despite being battered and old, her elegant chimney and huge copper dome glinted warmly under the spotlight in the Museum, attracting both children and grown-ups. She deserved her special place in the centre of the turntable. The other engines facing her in a circle gave the old engine a special air of importance, and that had led Liana to write the poem. All the Year 6 children at her school had been asked to write a story or a poem for the infants. How she wished she had chosen something else to write about.

In the Railway Museum Jenny was pleased to be back working on the entrance desk for the last hour, having spent most of the day serving in the gift shop.

'What a day,' Jenny said, sitting down and slipping off her shoes under the desk. An older woman nodded in agreement as she collected her things to leave, but she carried on her conversation from earlier in the day as if Jenny had never been away.

'As I was telling you before, I don't like him. Dr Emerson might be good for the exhibits and the visitors, but he could be more friendly to us.'

'Well, I think he is a good manager,' Jenny replied. 'The Railway Museum is much better for his new ideas. Since Mark Emerson arrived we have been busier than ever. There has never been a more successful summer than the last one.'

The older receptionist walked round the desk to leave but then turned back. 'Maybe the changes are a good thing, Jenny, but I feel sorry for his daughter.'

## *Time for Coppernob*

She is so serious. It can't be easy for her living with him on her own. He doesn't smile much does he? It must get boring for her coming to meet him every day. I hope he appreciates her.'

'Shhh,' Jenny started to put her shoes back on, 'I can see Liana coming. At least there is plenty for her to do here whilst she waits.'

When she arrived at the Museum Liana was pleased to see Jenny, the chatty young receptionist, at the Main Entrance desk.

'Have they moved Coppernob?' she asked.

'I'm afraid they might have, Liana. I've not had a chance to look yet so I don't know where they've put her. It seems there are to be some major changes. You'd better go and look.'

A small ray of hope had lingered long enough for Liana to feel the bitterness of disappointment. On the turntable stood the wrong engine. It had the wrong name and was the wrong colour. Coppernob had gone. How would she explain this at school? Liana's poem about Coppernob had not only been chosen to be made into a book, but the infants and their teachers had liked it so much they had planned a trip to the Railway Museum. They wanted to see Coppernob on the turntable and the other engines Liana had used in her poem. She had begged her father to delay this move for a few more days. He had the authority; she felt certain.

'Things are complicated just at the moment,' he had said, but he hadn't explained. If he did not understand how she felt it was because he didn't care enough to listen and find out.

Coppernob was still there in the Great Hall but now she was crammed in between a huge engine, with one side removed to show the workings inside, and two other small engines. You could no longer stand back and see her outline and painted rectangle shapes. The lovely old firebox and her brass number 3 did not seem to shine so much out of the spotlight and the dents and scratches were easier to see. Liana felt sad. Walking round the old engine she looked more closely at the paint and ran her fingers over the numerous holes. At least Coppernob was now touchable. What stories could Coppernob tell, she wondered? Had the old engine been damaged on purpose?

With a cautious look around Liana opened the brown door to the little yellow signal box displayed in the middle of the Great Hall, and slipped inside. She sat down on the dusty floor with her back under the sliding window. Recently, she had taken to spending much of her hour's wait in here. No bigger than a garden shed, the signal box was only used to house a video of signals to be watched through the small window. The door should have been locked. As it wasn't, it made a quiet, peaceful place where she would have space to think. Once inside, sitting with her back to the window, she was unlikely to be seen. She felt the gingerbread person in her pocket but didn't feel hungry any more. She pulled out another crumpled piece of paper. It was her poem. She had tried to show it to her father but now she wouldn't. She had thought about him when she had written it, as he would have understood more than anyone

## *1 - Time for Change*

the way she had used the engine's names and the characters she had given them. She read it through again:

### **COPPERNOB**

#### **Engines**

When the lights go out and the children go home  
The Museum engines all alone,  
Come to life and talk in a way  
You'd never imagine in the day.

Round in a circle the engines stare  
At the turntable they want to share,  
That place is saved as it should be  
For Coppernob, so all can see.

#### **Butler Henderson**

Why they love you Coppernob, I don't know  
You're just a rusty heap on show,  
I think you must be very old  
Your dented firebox long since cold.

#### **Evening Star**

Children as they wander round  
Many times your holes have found,  
They count your wheels you've only four  
The rest of us have many more.

#### **City of Truro**

Tell us Coppernob, please do  
Why all the children stop at you,  
You must have many things to say  
About the Furness Railway.

#### **Coppernob**

I am an old engine that is true  
There are so many stories I could tell you,  
I've worked in the wind and the rain and the sun  
There were many disasters and lots of fun.

So night after night when the crowds have gone  
Coppernob tells stories to everyone,  
She gets the other engines to have their say  
And they re-live adventures until it is day.

#### **Hardwicke**

Coppernob, you're damaged on close inspection  
But you're the best in the whole collection,  
We think you did a brilliant job  
That's why we love you, Coppernob.

Liana Emerson

## *Time for Coppernob*

Liana screwed up the poem and threw it at the signal box wall with such force it bounced back towards her. She felt the heat of angry tears. She had tried hard to make things right with her father but he had let her down when she needed him. She was always responsible and grown up and no one even noticed. She was still a child. Maybe it was about time she did something unexpected. Perhaps she would run away but that would need careful planning. There was nothing much she could do in an old signal box. She read the numbered labels on the signal levers:

- 1 INWARD HOME
- 2 INWARD SHUNT
- 3 DETONATORS (Fog)
- 4 DOOR RELEASE ELECTRIC
- 5 OUTWARD HOME
- 6 OUTWARD DISTANT

Liana had often wondered whether these signal levers could still be moved. She would never do anything like that. **OUTWARD DISTANT** sounded far enough away so she chose number 6, squeezed and pulled.

