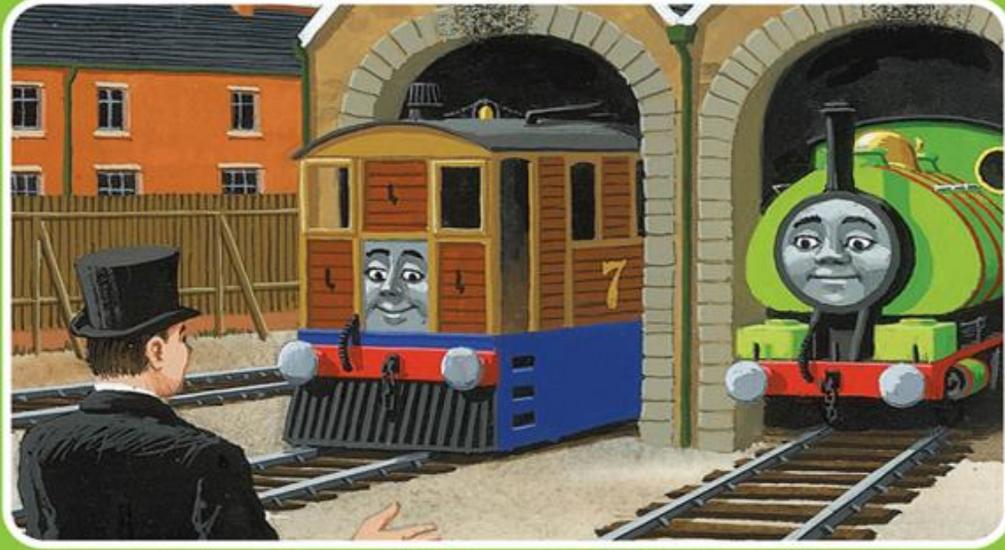


THE RAILWAY SERIES NO. 32

Toby, Trucks and Trouble



CHRISTOPHER AWDRY

FOREWORD

Dear Friends,

Trucks are silly things. They rattle, bang and chatter to each other so much that they can never hear what their engine says. Even if they did, they probably wouldn't take any notice. They pushed Mavis into a lorry, and that made extra work for Toby and Percy while she was being mended. But on the other hand, perhaps they're not all bad - after all, they did teach Bulstrode a lesson. See what you think.

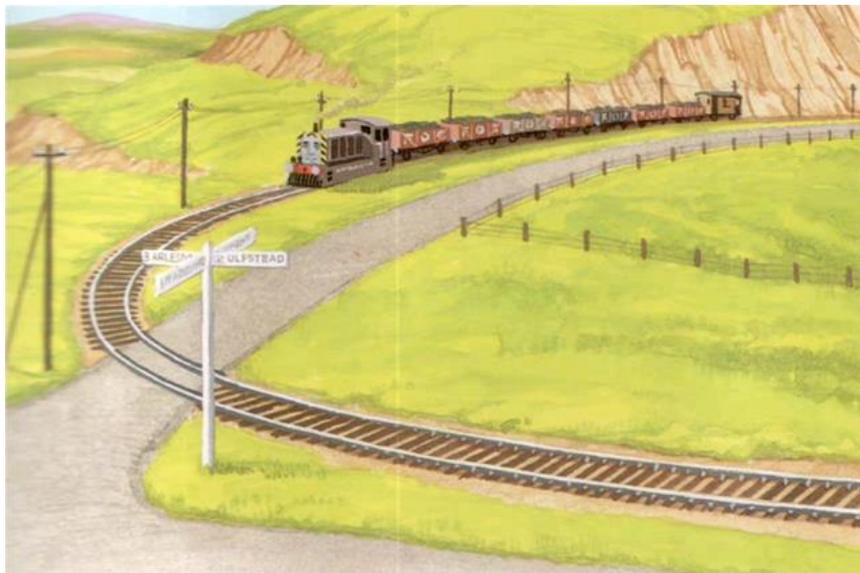
The Author

Mavis and the Lorry

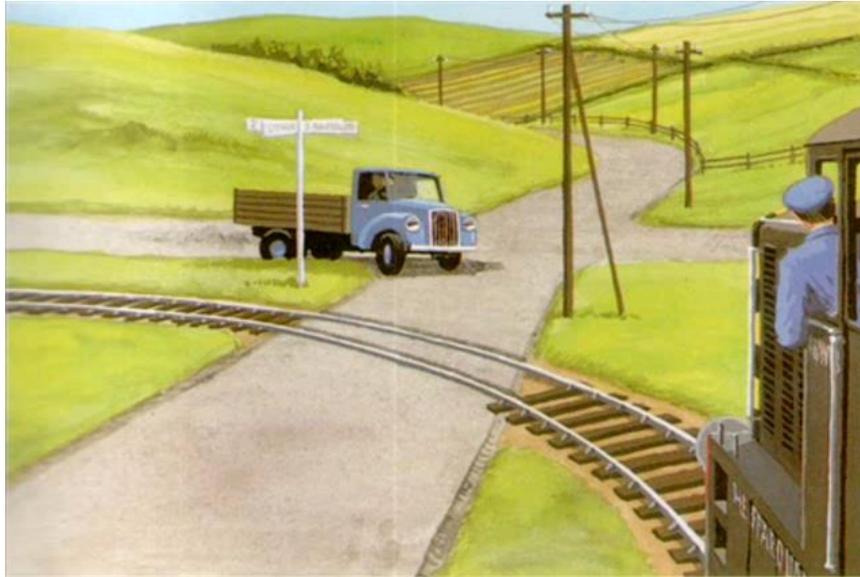
Mavis is a diesel engine belonging to the Ffarquhar Quarry Company. She is in charge of the stone trucks at the quarry, and when Toby is busy or there are too many trucks for him to manage by himself, she's allowed to bring a loaded train down to Ffarquhar. She enjoys this, because the journey gives her a chance to stretch her wheels. Besides, she sometimes finds it dull up at the quarry with no-one to talk to but trucks.



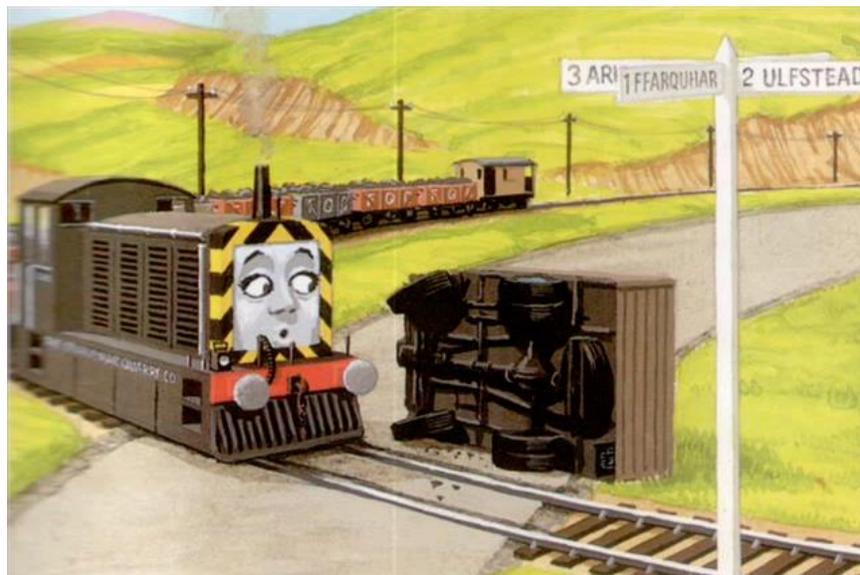
For most of the way, the line runs beside a road. Mavis is very careful, especially at the place where Thomas once had an argument with a policeman. A road cross the line here, and though there are warning signs, some of the cars and lorries come around the corner much too fast. They make Mavis nervous. "There'll be an accident one day", Mavis' driver often says as they pass the place, and she feels sure he is right.



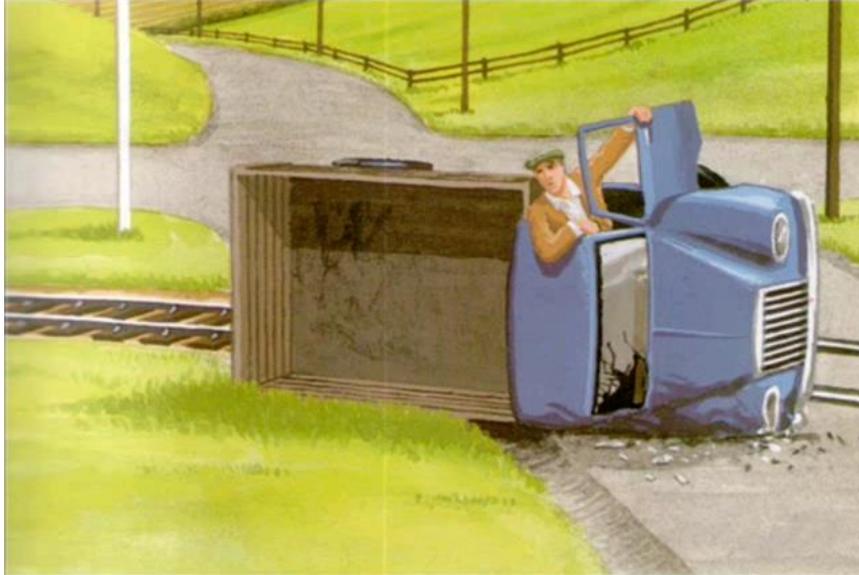
One day, Mavis was late. The trucks had been in all the wrong places and she had to waste time sorting them out. As she came down the line she felt them surge against her. "Stop pushing", she growled. They neared the crossing and Mavis saw a lorry coming towards them. "He'll stop when he sees us", she thought, but she couldn't know the lorry driver was new the island. The last thing he expected to see was a train.



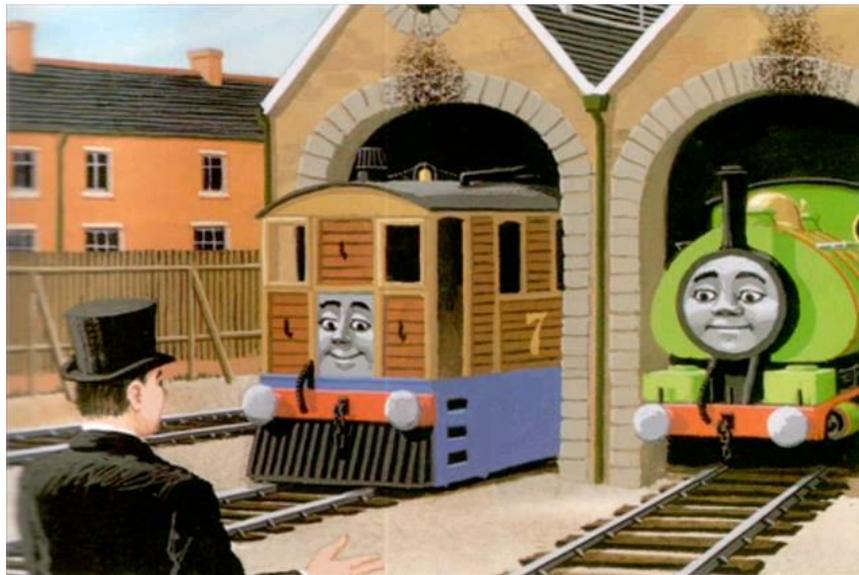
Much too fast, the lorry approached the corner. Too late the driver realized it was sharper than he expected. He swerved, and at that moment he saw Mavis halfway across the road. He braked hard and swung the steering wheel, but he was too late. The lorry's front bumper just caught Mavis' cowcatcher, and the lorry left the road and skidded into a ditch. With a loud crash it fell onto its side. Mavis, who had already stopped, watched in horror. "Ouch!", she exclaimed. "That hurt!"



"I didn't push him over!", she cried in alarm. Her driver laughed and jumped down. "No-one's blaming you", he said. "But I hope the lorry driver is alright." The lorry's right-hand door was deep in the ditch, but now a figure could be seen trying to struggle out of the other side. Mavis' driver went to help. "Is that a train?", the man demanded. "It certainly is", laughed Mavis' driver. "You must be new here not to have seen us before."



Mavis' front was bent, but she wasn't badly hurt. Her owner sent her to be mended, and asked The Fat Controller if he could borrow Toby while she was away. "What about the trucks down here, sir?", Toby asked anxiously. The Fat Controller nodded. "I'm afraid it will mean more work for you, Percy", he said. "But Toby's sideplates make him the only engine who can go up there. You remember what happened to Thomas, don't you?" And with that, they had to be content.

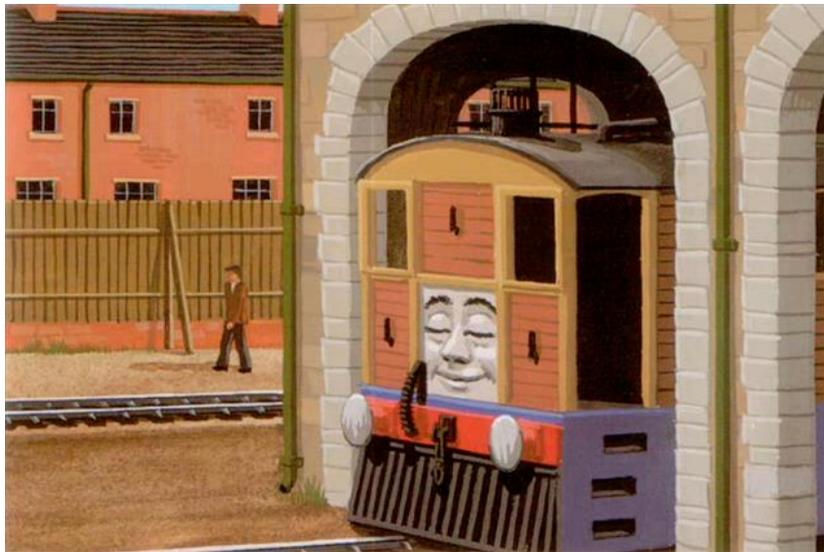


Toby's Seaside Holiday

The Fat Controller first met Toby and Henrietta a long time ago, when he was on holiday in East Anglia. Later, when their line was closed, The Fat Controller heard about it and brought them to Sodor. Before that, Toby had worked at a harbour with several of his brothers. The harbour had been busy, and the engines were kept bustling about, but Toby never really had a chance to exercise his pistons properly until he had his own line to run on.



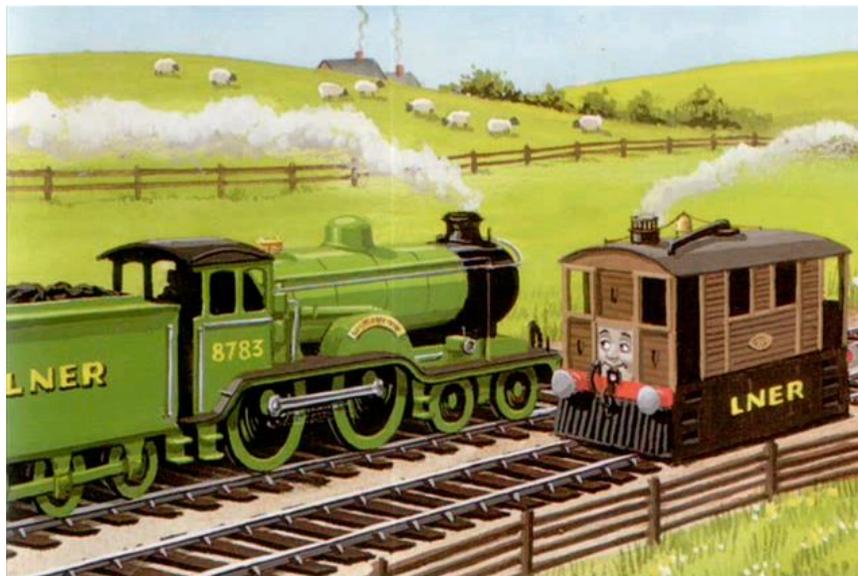
One day, Toby was resting alone in the shed at Ffarquhar. That morning, Percy had been talking about the harbour at Knapford. Toby remembered the old days when he had worked at a harbour too. "I'm too old to dash about now like I did then", he thought. "Backwards and forwards all day long between the harbour and the big station, with never any chance of a holiday. But I did go to the seaside once", he remembered. "For a while, anyway."



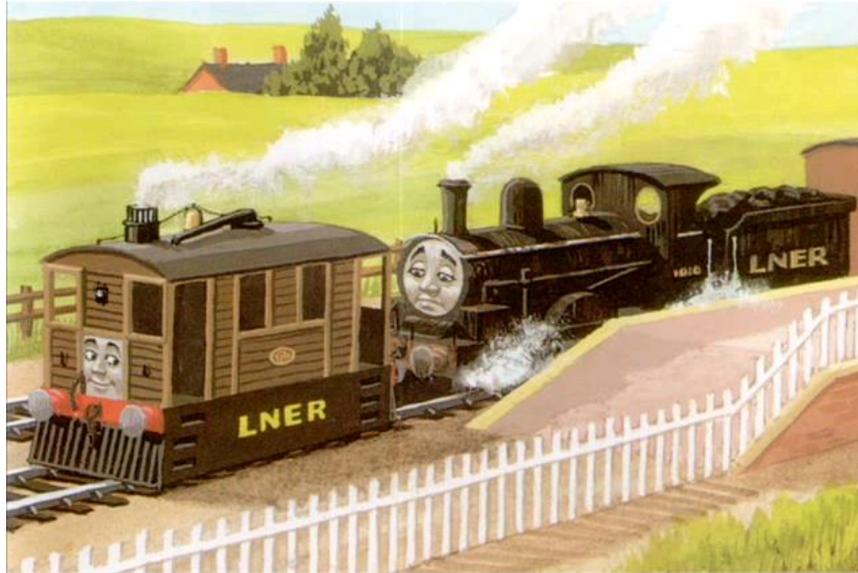
His driver and fireman had been so excited when they came to work one day. "We've been promised a trip to the seaside", they said. "What do you mean?" asked Toby. "There's a seaside village near here", explained the driver, "where they have a festival each year. Lots of people come to it, and one of the organizers thinks it would be a good idea to have a display of engines at the station as an extra attraction. And you, Toby, are to be one of them."



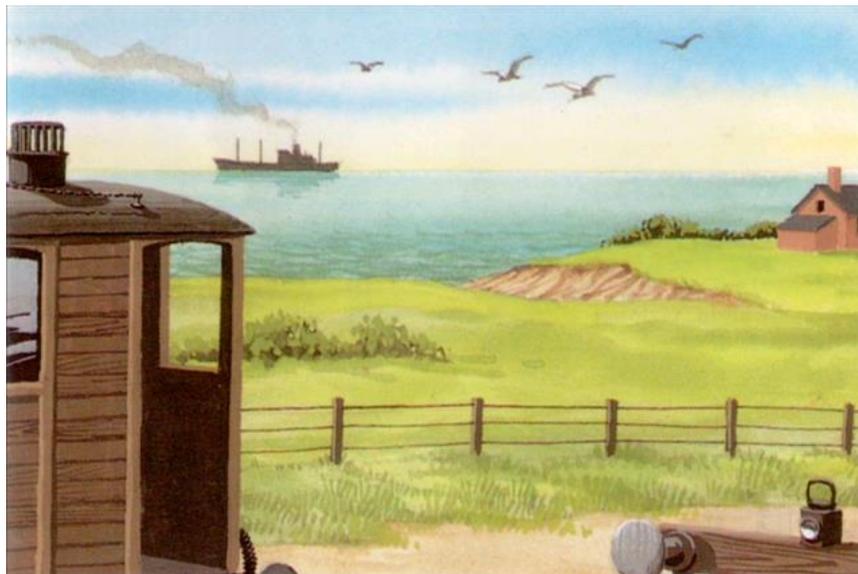
Toby went to the shed at the big station. He was given new paint, a new bell and his brass work was polished until his driver could see himself in it. "You haven't looked so smart for years", he said. "I nearly didn't recognize you." They set out for the junction where the branch line to the village began. As they arrived a train came in from the branch. The engine was younger than Toby, but he was dirty, his rods clanked and steam leaked from everywhere.



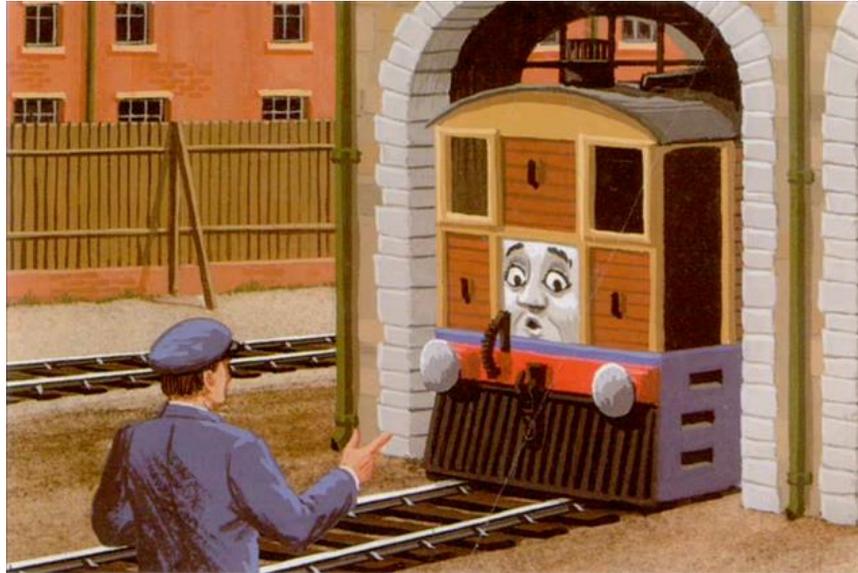
"The poor engine", said Toby. "Can I help pull his next train to the seaside please?" The station master agreed, so Toby was coupled in front. "Festival time is the best time of the year", the other engine said. "Lots of extra trains and visitors. I expect you'll be able to stand on the long carriage siding." They soon reached the seaside station, where the stationmaster came out to see them. He was surprised to see Toby. He stared, frowned, and went away shaking his head.



Next day, Toby was excited. He woke early and saw the sea sparkling in the distance. White birds wheeled and squeaked overhead making loud noises. "I wonder what they are", thought Toby. "I must ask my driver when he comes." But his crew arrived looking glum. "It's all off, Toby", his driver said. "They say there's nowhere for you to stand." "But what's wrong with where I am?", wailed Toby. "I'm not in anybody's way here."

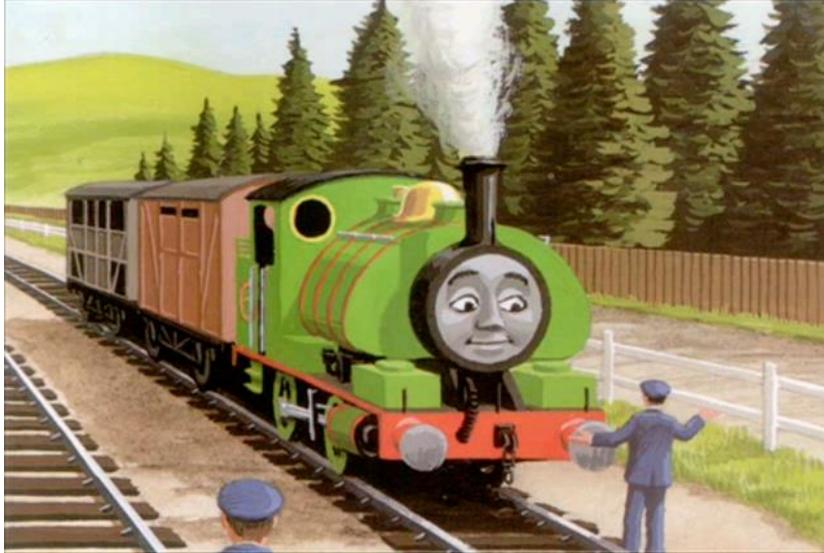


"It's just an excuse, I reckon.", said Toby's driver, lowering his voice. "The real trouble is you're too smart, Toby. They're afraid you'd show their branch line up." Just then, a door banged. Toby jumped. "Wake up Toby", smiled his driver. "Time to get back to work." Toby sighed as he moved from the shed. "Well, I did get to the seaside", he murmured. "Even if it wasn't for long. But I think The Fat Controller would have managed all that festival business much better."

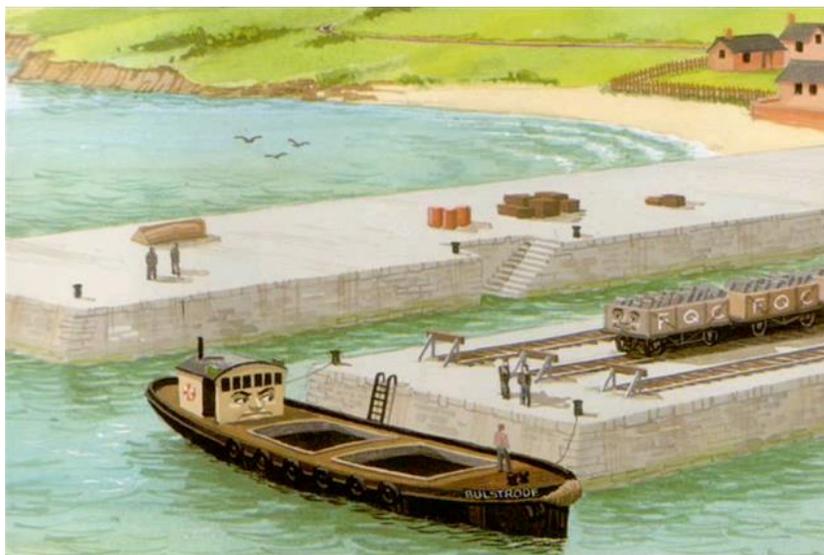


Bulstrode

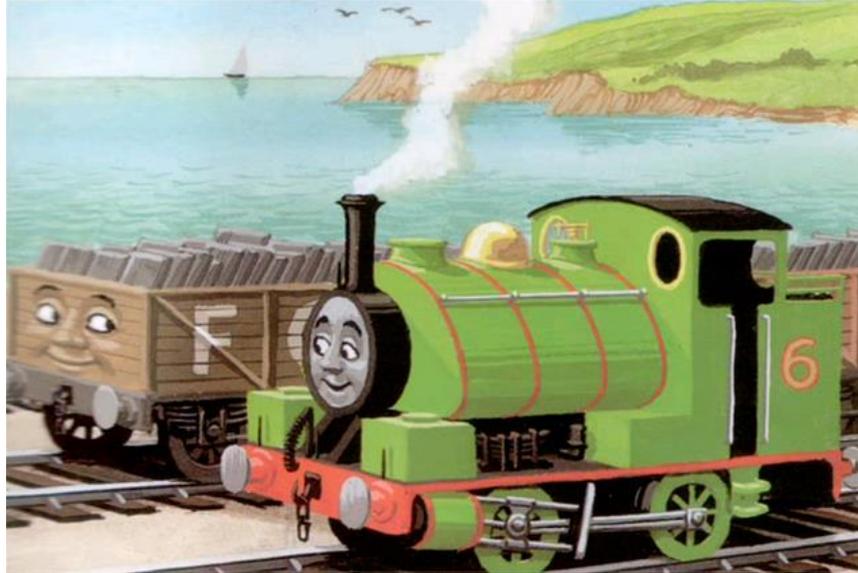
A few days later, Percy was shunting in the yard at Ffarquhar when the stationmaster came up. "Leave those trucks please, Percy", he said. "There's an emergency down at the harbour. The Fat Controller wants you to go and sort it out straight away." "But Toby can't-", began Percy. "Never mind that", the stationmaster said. "The Fat Controller needs you double-quick. Leave us to worry about the shunting." He hurried away to make the arrangements.



Bulstrode was a barge used for carrying stone. He was a disagreeable barge. Nothing was ever right for him and he grumbled unceasingly. Trucks grumbled too, but they weren't a patch on Bulstrode. "Come on, come on", shouted Bulstrode rudely one morning. "Why aren't you trucks where you should be? How can I be loaded if you dawdle about up there, aye?" "There's no engine and we can only go where we're put", retorted the trucks crossly. "You're in the wrong place, not us."



They argued for some time, but it made no difference. Bulstrode *was* in the wrong place and he was not due to leave until the next day, but he wasn't going to let a little thing like that stop him complaining. When Percy arrived, Bulstrode was sulking and the trucks were annoyed with him. "Our stone is for Bulstrode", they said. "Please push us into the siding so that we can load him up and be rid of him as soon as possible."



The line sloped down to the harbour. Percy pulled the trucks a little way up the hill, clear of the points. As he stopped, one of the trucks' brakes slipped on. When Percy began to push, the trucks started with a jerk and a coupling broke. Four loose trucks, heavy with stone, gathered speed. "Help, help!", they wailed. A shunter bravely tried to stop them, but only broke his pole. The trucks rattled along the quay, straight towards Bulstrode, unsuspecting at the end.



Bulstrode heard a rattle, and a shout or two, but he could see nothing. The first he knew of anything wrong was when four loaded stone trucks shot one by one off the end of the quay to bury themselves in his hold. "Oof!", he exclaimed, but anything else was lost in a gurgle as the trucks burst a hole in his hull, and water began to pour in. Bulstrode experienced an awful sinking feeling. "Save me!", he spluttered. "I'm drowning!"



But Bulstrode didn't drown. As chance would have it, the tide was out, so he did not go right under the water. The trucks were upset at losing some of their friends, but were very little bothered about Bulstrode. "Nothing but a nuisance, he was", they said to each other. "Always barging in and moaning about not being loaded fast enough", they sniggered. "This time he got his load faster than he bargained for. Serves him right, if you ask us."

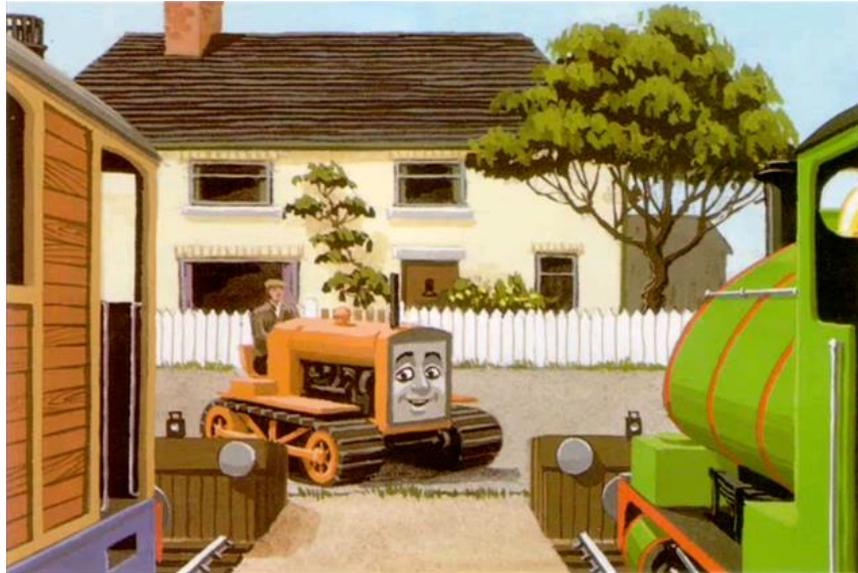


Percy was kept busy for some time afterwards clearing up the mess. When the remains of the trucks had been lifted out of the water, he took them to the scrap yard, while workmen rescued what stone they could. As for Bulstrode, when everything else had been cleared, his remains were towed to a nearby beach where they could do no harm. Now children play happily among the wreckage. If Bulstrode is still grumbling, as I expect he is, the children take no notice.

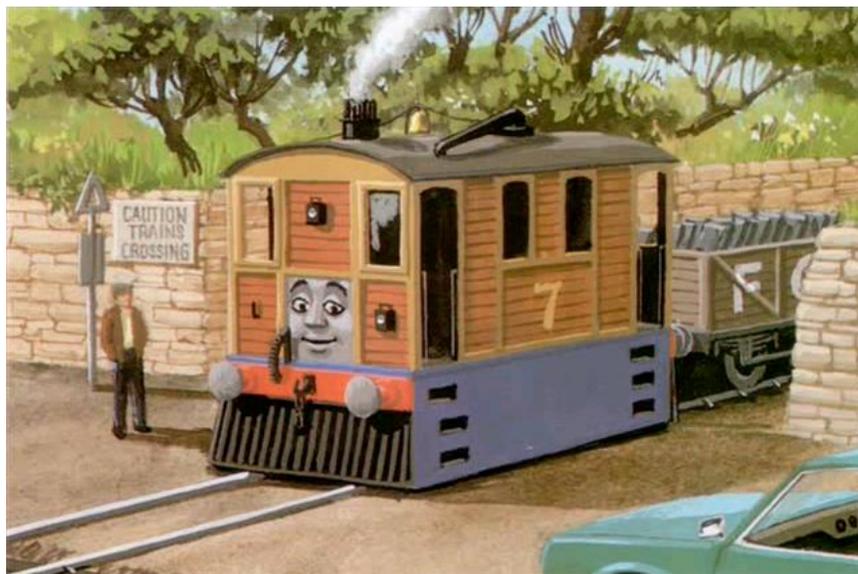


Toby Takes the Road

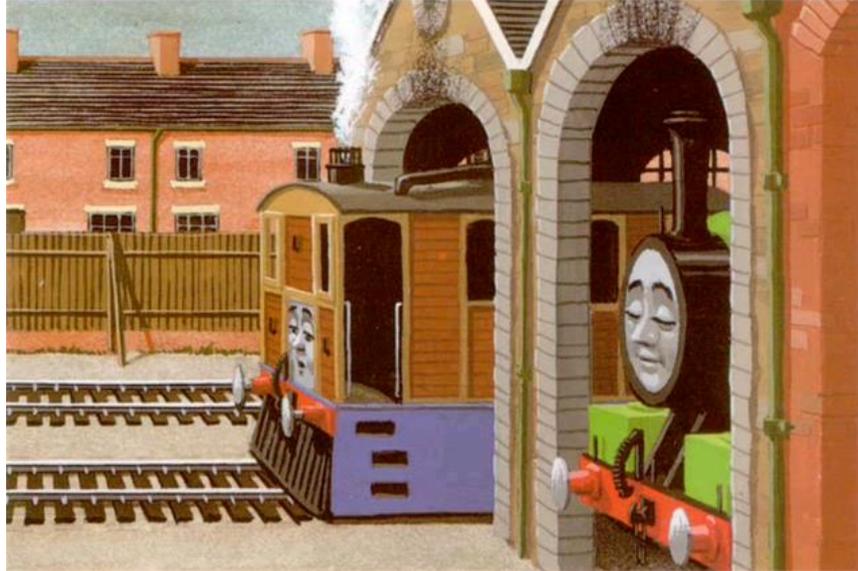
While Percy was away, Terence had done all the shunting in the yard. "Adaptable", he boasted. "That's what my owner says I am. Go anywhere, do anything, that's me. You take my advice and scrap your rails. Broaden your outlook, like me!" "Pooh!", said Percy. "Me, plough a field? I'd prefer to stay on my rails, thank you." "Steam engines did plough once upon a time", Terence chuckled. "And ran on roads." The engines remembered Trevor, and had to admit that Terence was right.



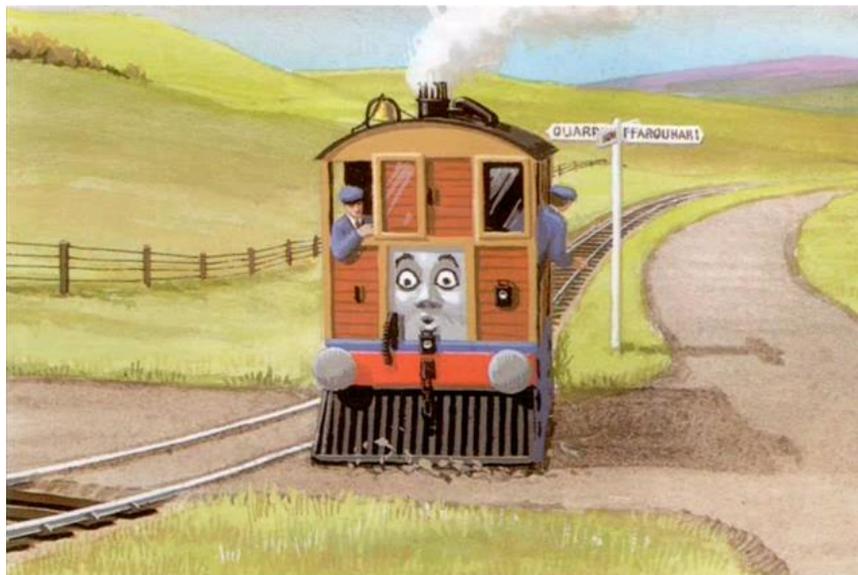
Repairs to Mavis took longer than expected, and Toby became used to trundling off to the quarry each morning. Because of Toby's small watertank, his driver and fireman had arranged with the quarry manager that they should bring loaded trucks down to Ffarquhar at lunch time, instead of later in the day. It saved time too, for Toby would otherwise have needed an extra journey to fill his water tank. This way, he delivered the trucks and got water in one visit.



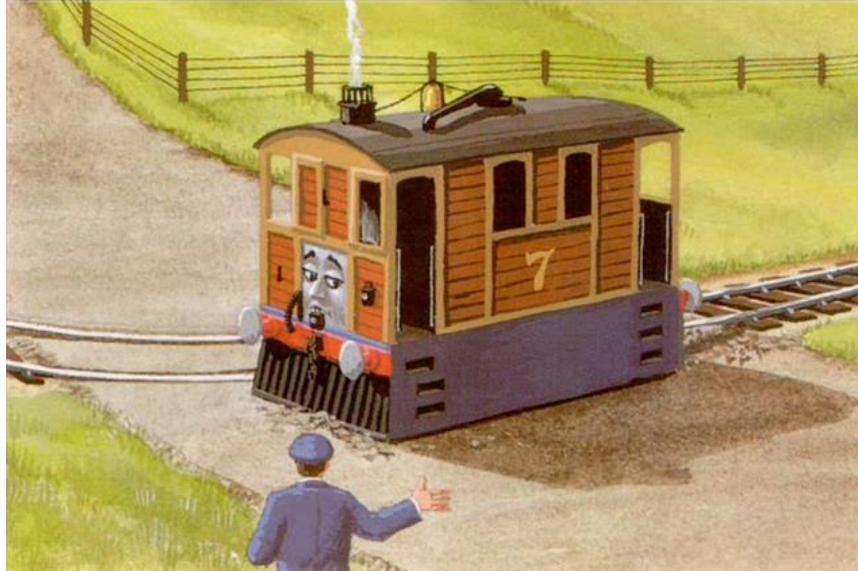
Time passed, and the weather became colder, with hard frosts during the night. They didn't worry Toby. His fire kept him nice and warm, and he puffed happily to and fro arranging the trucks, taking them down to the yard and bringing back empty ones. One night it was particularly cold. The ground froze solid and even Toby felt chilly. "Brr", he shivered as he left the shed and set out, light engine, along the line towards to the quarry.



When the ground freezes, it swells. At the road crossing, where Mavis had had her accident, the frost had swollen earth in the ruts beside the rails so much that Toby's wheels were lifted clean off the track. There was a crunching noise, a rumbling, and Toby began to shudder. He was horrified. "Ooh-err", he exclaimed. "What's happening?" The line here curves away towards the quarry, but Toby, with no rails to guide his wheels round, simply went straight on.



Toby was not going fast. "Whoa there Toby", said his driver at once, and put on the brakes as hard as he dared. Shakily, Toby came to a stop with all six wheels firmly on the roadway. "Oh dear", he said, looking at the grass verge in front of him. "Now what?" His fireman jumped down. "No problem", he said. "With care, we can have you back on the rails in no time." "I don't see how", said Toby sadly.



Directed by the fireman, the driver carefully reversed Toby along the ruts his wheels had just made. At last, with a thud and a jolt, Toby felt the rails safely beneath his wheels once more. He heaved a sigh of relief. "Well done Toby", said his fireman. "Now I'll spread a few hot ashes from your fire along there so that it doesn't happen again. Then we can get safely up to the quarry and no-one will be any wiser."



But they reckoned without The Fat Controller. When Mavis was home after being mended, he came to see the engines. "What this I hear, Toby?", he asked. "Trying to be a traction engine were you?" Toby blushed, but The Fat Controller wasn't cross. Toby told him about Terence. The Fat Controller laughed. "If I were you", he said, "I should leave the roads to what they were made for. You stay on the rails. You'll find them much for comfortable." Toby the Tram Engine was quick to agree.

