

WEARDALE RAILWAY : NEWS UPDATE :No. 10

17th JANUARY 2009

WORK UNDERWAY TO ACHIEVE TRACK ACCESS TO BISHOP AUCKLAND IN NEXT TWO WEEKS

- **Extending train operations to Bishop Auckland** : After the sterling efforts last year by the track gangs to successfully clear the vegetation between Harperley and Bishop Auckland, work has resumed on this stretch of the railway. Graham Lord reports that materials and equipment will be put in place early next week to fix the two biggest challenges we face in extending the operational railway :- the landslip at Broken Banks (between Escomb and Bishop Auckland) and the stretch of stolen track near Witton Park. The target we have been given by management is to have track access to Bishop Auckland by January 26th. Watch this space or, better yet, call in and volunteer to help. (Contact Graham on in advance on 07918 777 993 to fix location, time etc.)
- **Broken Banks – work commences** : The line here is on an embankment alongside the River Wear and has been a problem area from at least BR times. Eight lengths of rail have been removed and the new track location has been marked out with assistance from personnel from sister company RMS Locotec. Next step is grading to the new track profile over the 140 metres involved. Next week should also see the work start on the replacement of the stretch of stolen track near Witton Park. (G Lord).
- **Abattoir Crossing work underway** : Another obstacle Between Witton le Wear and Wear Valley Junction was the concreting over of the busy crossing connecting the Abattoir with the main road. Working in cooperation with Abattoir owner the crossing is now passable for train traffic and work on upgrading the road crossing will be carried out. (G Lord)



Latest photo of No 40 in the depot. (D Scott)



Next step, refitting the tanks (foreground) (D Scott)

- **Child Protection Policies** : It's a sad reality of life that children are potentially at risk from abuse or exploitation by some adults and, although it is a very small minority that presents this risk, everyone has a responsibility and role in protecting children and following all practical and reasonable steps to counteract this risk. As the Trust operates the Weardale Railway Junior Club we feel that we have to take a lead in the protection of 'our', as well as other peoples, children and give advice and guidance to Trust staff and volunteers. The Trust has decided to adopt a formal Child Protection Policy. As well as developing a Code of Practice for volunteers the Policy covers the procedure for Criminal Records Board (CRB) checks for those staff and volunteers that have the most frequent, regular, contact or supervisory roles with children. The Policy itself will be posted in the Control Office and the Depot, but I appreciate that not everyone may have the time, or the opportunity, to read this so a small booklet will be produced for volunteers which will cover the main points. More details on this in the next News Update. (P Shields)

- **Volunteers needed please :** Anyone wishing to volunteer for track clearing working parties on a weekend please contact Kevin Hillary on 01388 775126 or Mike Wood on 0191 3734317 both of these evenings only please, or if you are available to volunteer weekdays please contact Steve Race on 07918 777 932 day time only please. We are unable to confirm the work sites long in advance due to the fact that they change from week to week, so if you ring one of the numbers we can confirm where you are requested to turn up for duty. Steve Race can also be contacted if you wish to work in the depot. (K Hillary)
- **Where's the new Timetable?** : Its ready – a print run of 50,000 copies. This year for the first time we are using specialist distribution companies who will cover both local businesses and national tourist offices and also make sure supplies are 'topped up' during the year. Ian Gardiner along with Kath Wood & David Million will be attending the Great Days Out tourism event at Bolton in February where we hope to further develop the coach / tourism visitor business. In 2008 we had visits by 30 coach parties. If you are interested in helping this marketing effort in any way, please contact David Million our volunteer liaison officer : david.million@tiscali.co.uk
- **Santa season 2008 :** Ian Gardiner reports that Santa specials were a great success and planning is already underway for the 2009 Santa season. In 2008 we hoped for an increase in the region of 25 to 30% compared to 2007, but with the increase in visits from schools we have topped out at over 50%. Thanks to all the stalwarts who volunteered for these events.
- **Rolling Stock news :** Planned movements have been postponed while all attention is focussed on the track work already mentioned. Before the end of the month it is hoped to move out the Class 31, loaned for the Santa specials and move in a Class 73 and the Shell Tanker previously mentioned. The existing Class 73 is unserviceable at the moment, but again some help may be forthcoming from RMS Locotec to help expedite repairs. Work to complete the restoration of the Trust steam loco, No 40, continues after a break over the Christmas period. Current estimated completion date is March 10.



Two photos of our sister railway (owned by Iowa Pacific) the Rio Grande Scenic Railway, this is how they decorate their coaches for the Polar Express. (Courtesy RGSR)

- **The Sunday Gang update :** Kevin Hillary reports that they are at present working between the 8 mile post and Wolsingham Station, this work involves felling a number of large very coppiced trees and a number that have fallen over the years but have kept on growing, a very sorry sight indeed. This work is being carried out to enable a new drainage ditch to be dug, the old one having been filled and overgrown. This will alleviate the problem of standing water on this section.
- **Earn money by working as a volunteer for WRT – A NEW YEARS RESOLUTION :** This was a headline in the last news update. At the January Trust meeting Dave Million reported that there 5 new adult volunteers had just joined our ranks plus the first 'graduate' from the Junior Club, James Rodenby, who we welcome to the adult ranks – he should help reduce the average age of the volunteer force by a significant number of years.

- **Lafarge Grant** : Through the good offices of Arthur Temple and his liaison with Lafarge management the Trust has obtained a grant of £500 which we plan to use to facilitate the removal of the Shell tanker from Newton Aycliffe. We plan to use it for hauling water from the R Wear, where we have extraction rights granted by the Environment Agency to utilise, when treated, for steam engines etc. (A Temple)
- **Do you have an ID Card ?** : Dave Million reminds all volunteers that It is the requirement for all staff and volunteers to be in possession of a photo ID card when working on the railway, however, we have recently overlooked this and a number of new and established volunteers are currently without such a document. Could I ask that if you do not hold a photo ID card that a passport sized photograph with your name and Trust membership number endorsed on the rear, is forwarded to me as soon as possible please and I will arrange for a card to be produced. Send to Dave Million c/o Trust office at Stanhope.
- **First Aid Training** : The Trust has arranged for this for volunteer training, in conjunction with Bishop Auckland College. A **basic first aid** course is to be run over the two week-ends in February when the Railway is closed (7/8 & 14/15 February). This is a one day course, so it will probably be on the Saturday of each week-end, but places are limited to 14 (7 on each day) so book early with David Million (01388 747683/email david.million@tiscali.co.uk) if you want to get on. In order to meet current legislation standards we need to increase the number of qualified first aiders, so please arrange to attend if you can.
- **More Training News** : Another two courses which are planned are “**Health & Hygiene**” and “**Front of House**”. The first one is aimed at volunteers who work in the café, so can those interested also contact David to book onto that course; it is important that anyone who works around food is properly trained for obvious reasons. The other course is a kind of ‘meeter & greeter’ role to welcome passengers and visitors to the Railway. Again, if your role covers this area give David a call. Thanks to Arthur Temple for the initial arrangements.

Edited by G C Mudd : 17 January 2009