

WEARDALE RAILWAY: NEWS UPDATE :No. 3

29 OCTOBER 2008

TRACK CLEARED TO WITHIN HALF MILE OF BISHOP AUCKLAND EXTRA TRAINS PLANNED FOR SANTA SEASON

- **Track Clearing Progress:** Vegetation clearance has made good progress over the last week thanks to the effort of the weekday gangs led by Steve Race and Graham Lord and the Sunday Gang led by Kevin Hillary and Mike Wood. Preliminary clearance has reached to within a half mile of Bishop Auckland station, (see photo). The flail which has been following the track gang has reached the area of the landslip just east of the Escomb road bridge.(KH)
- **Track Clearance plans :** To complete the work new arrangements need to be implemented in the proximity of the Network Rail active line at Bishop Auckland. Meanwhile arrangements are being made to acquire the materials to repair the track (sleepers, chairs etc) and to replace the rails which were stolen near Witton Park and the distorted rails at Broken Banks – although any assistance in obtaining materials would be welcome – contact Graham Lord. (GL, SRC)
- **Broken Banks (Escomb):** Now the work has reached this location it would appear that the problem can be solved by infill – there has been no further movement observed over the last five years. The main problem is material can only reach the site by rail and at the moment we lack the wagons to do this – again any help here welcome. (GL)
- **Santa Specials :** Bookings are still going well and ahead of last year. Two trips are completely sold out (14, 21 December- afternoon trips). A local press advertising campaign will start shortly. Last year we ran three extra midweek trips for private parties and groups. So far this year we have firm bookings for seven extra midweek trips and more are being arranged. More volunteer help is required to help Santa get his presents to the children – see below.(IG,DM)

SANTA SPECIALS : David Million has opened the volunteer schedule lists for this years trains. We still need more volunteers to help out at this busy time –as well as the usual operating jobs we need volunteers to help out at the stations, car parks, shop, café and on the trains. This is the Railways biggest revenue earning event – please help out if you can. Days involved are Nov 29,30 and Dec 6,7,13,14,20,21,22,23,24. plus some midweek trips to be announced shortly : Contact Dave Million on david.million@tiscali.co.uk or Kevin Hillary on 01388 775 126 (evenings) or kevinhillary@hotmail.co.uk

- **First Aid :** Thanks to assistance from Bishop Auckland College, funds have been obtained to run First aid courses for volunteer staff engaged in operating and other duties. (AT)
- **Depot : Electricity supply :** Now that we are on mains supply in the depot work is proceeding under the guidance of John Hargreaves and Steve Raine to route both 415v and 240v sockets to the east wall of the depot using cable recovered from the temporary generator supply. Junior Club member Jordan Parker helped with this work have helped with this work. (JH, THr)
- **Depot : Work underway :** Although most effort has been concentrated on the track clearance , in the Depot work continues on the planned programme to return No 40 to service and the Class 73 has been brought into the shed for work to commence – these locos need a lot of batteries and we require some replacements – at least 20 are needed .If anyone can help point us in the right direction – please contact Steve Race on 07918 777 932 (SRC)

- **Broadwood** : Trevor Horner has with the assistance of a colleague surveyed the level crossing at Broadwood (east of Frosterley). The aim being to produce a scheme for track alignment and level to be implemented in conjunction with the edge beam renewal etc. It is planned that this work will take place during the February '09 shut down, (THr)
- **Anoraks Corner** : Mention was made in an earlier update of the arrival in Wolsingham Depot of an 08 Shunter - and more details have been requested. It would have been more accurate to say it was Class 600 shunter, one of a group of 65 built by English Electric in the 1950's for Netherlands Railways. At least 15 of them are now in the UK - one of which was acquired by RMS –it is no 653 – and it was moved to Weardale in September 2009.



Netherlands Railways Class 600 at Leiden Station in 1990



Some of the 'Sunday gang' at the Bishop Auckland distant board

Once again the Sunday gang have been helped by members of the junior section of the Railway, when 3 members joined 8 members to clear the track to within a 1/4 mile of Bishop Auckland station with Latherbrush bridge in sight. The going was as difficult as any we have experienced on the rest of the line. This does not mean that the task is finished all we have done is cleared a corridor so that a Wickham trolley and the Flail can pass, there is lot more to do to make the line passable by a conventional train – can you help?

**If you can work on weekdays please contact [Steve Race on 07918 777932](mailto:Steve.Race@ntlworld.com),
or if you can work on Sundays please contact [Kevin Hillary on 01388 775126](mailto:Kevin.Hillary@ntlworld.com)
Help the railway to reach Bishop Auckland by Christmas!**

- **Junior Club** : Membership now stands at 20, the maximum level we can accommodate and supervise. An award scheme has been instituted and new uniforms – for which they raised the funds- have now arrived. Some members as well as joining in with volunteers at weekends have spent their half term working on the track and in the depot. (DM)
- **Thanks – and Help Please** : Thank you to all who have emailed comments and suggestions since the production of the first two updates – putting it together is relatively easy – but I need input from you, the volunteers on what is happening in your area of activity and what is planned . Also, if you have questions I will try to find answers. Just email to : gcmudd@ntlworld.com

CAN YOU HELP ? : Trust Treasurer needed : Trevor Hewitt has acted as the Trust Treasurer for the last five years and now wishes to hand over the Treasurer post to a new volunteer. Can anyone help, either directly or by (gently) twisting someone's arm. Please ask them to contact James Lynn (j_a_lynn@hotmail.com) or if they wish to talk about what is involved in the job first, to contact Trevor Hewitt on 01388 746 223 or on trevor@hewitt2.eclipse.co.uk