Trackbed Trails

The newsletter for Exmoor Associates Ltd

Issue 14, Summer 2014

COLLARD BRIDGE

You may recall that Collard Bridge over the River Yeo was swept away on the night of 22 December 2012 when Devon experienced some of the worst flooding in decades. We have now heard from North Devon District Council that the river bridge is to be rebuilt, with the intention of it being completed by the end of this year. The funds have been allocated and the planning and design stage is now well under way.

We have been talking to the planners regarding this and they wish to use part of our field adjacent to the former bridge as a contractor's site for the works. NDCC also wish to purchase a small section of our land adjacent to the bridge to construct the new abutments. The main span will be pre-cast sections which will be craned in and in preparation for this the overhead BT line that runs to the adjacent and gauging station is being re-sited. As part of the planning process they are aware that the former railway bridge may not be suitable for heavy construction plant and materials and alternative access to the field is being investigated.

VOLUNTEERING

Our small band of local volunteers led by Andy Hearn, Rob Sadd and Barry Marshall continue to do sterling work. The latest project they are starting is clearance of the cutting between Pound Lane and Wistlandpound Bridge.

If you would like to be involved use the "contact us" email form on the web site and we will put you in touch with Barry our volunteer co-ordinator.

Thanks to all our volunteers and shareholders for their continuing support.

Obviously we would like to see the river bridge re-built but we are also anxious to ensure that no damage is caused to the railway bridge which is currently in good condition.

▲ Collard (road) Bridge as seen after the floods in December 2012. The railway bridge can be seen in the background.

◀ Our thanks to Barry Marshall for organising the Exmoor Associates stand at the L&B Spring weekend and to those volunteers and members who assisted or called in to chat and offer moral support.

TRACKBED PURCHASES

Mike Buse is continuing negotiations for further trackbed purchases. We have made a couple of offers for the section between Collard Bridge and Skew Bridge but these have so far been rejected. At the moment we feel that the price being asked is unrealistically high. Mike continues to monitor land for sale in the southern section but we have always known that this is a very long term project.

NEXT MEETING

We shall be holding our next shareholders meeting at 10 am on Saturday 27th September at the Bratton Fleming Sports Club.

This is the weekend on the L&B's Autumn Gala, so there will be plenty going on that weekend. We will send out a reminder a bit nearer the time and be asking for confirmation of attendees for catering purposes, but please make a note in the diary now.

COLLARD BRIDGE

New ogee style guttering has now been fitted to the front of Snapper Halt which is now looking very much as it did when the railway was running. For comparison the two photos below show Snapper in 1903 and in February 2014.

We have now obtained an SR "Trespass" sign identical to the one that was at the Barnstaple end of the platform. We are looking into the possibility of having a cheap replica made to install on site but will not be putting the original at Snapper whilst it is an isolated and unattended location.

Our thanks to Nik Barrie for spotting this at auction and especially to shareholder Ray Potter for collecting it, paying for it and subsequently refusing reimbursement.

Whilst on the subject of signs, Andy Hearn and Barry Marshall have removed the "Snapper" sign which was starting to show signs of severe water ingress, including some impressive white mould. Barry has volunteered to restore the "Snapper" sign to pristine condition and Andy continues his sterling work in keeping the trackbed clear.

PLATELAYERS' HUT

It has been proposed by some of our active volunteers that we should undertake the re-building of the platelayers' hut that was at the northern end of the Snapper site. This would be a fairly major project as not much now remains of this stone built hut.

Luckily we do have some photographs of it taken when the Ffestiniog Railway volunteers were salvaging the L&B coach 6993 at which time (August 1961) it was still in a reasonable condition. We have investigated whether planning consent for its reinstatement would be required and initial response from NDDC is that it may not be required. We are awaiting written confirmation of this but in the meantime if you would be interested in helping either physically or financially please get in touch. The directors are of the opinion that this project should be independently funded as it does not strictly come within our core purpose of trackbed acquisition.

Thanks to all our volunteers and shareholders for their continuing support. If you would like to be involved use the "contact us" email form on the web site and we will put you in touch with our volunteer coordinator.

▲ Snapper Halt in Southern days, with the trespass sign visible at the end of the platform. The trackbed of course otherwise providing a convenient flat walking route from here into town.
◀ Ogee guttering now fitted to the front of the shelter.

▲ The Platelayers' Hut being used by Ffestiniog volunteers.

WE HAVE MOVED!

Please note that the company's registered address has changed as well as the contact details for the Company Secretary.

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