The newsletter for Exmoor Associates CIC Issue 31, December 2021

NEW TRACKBED PURCHASED

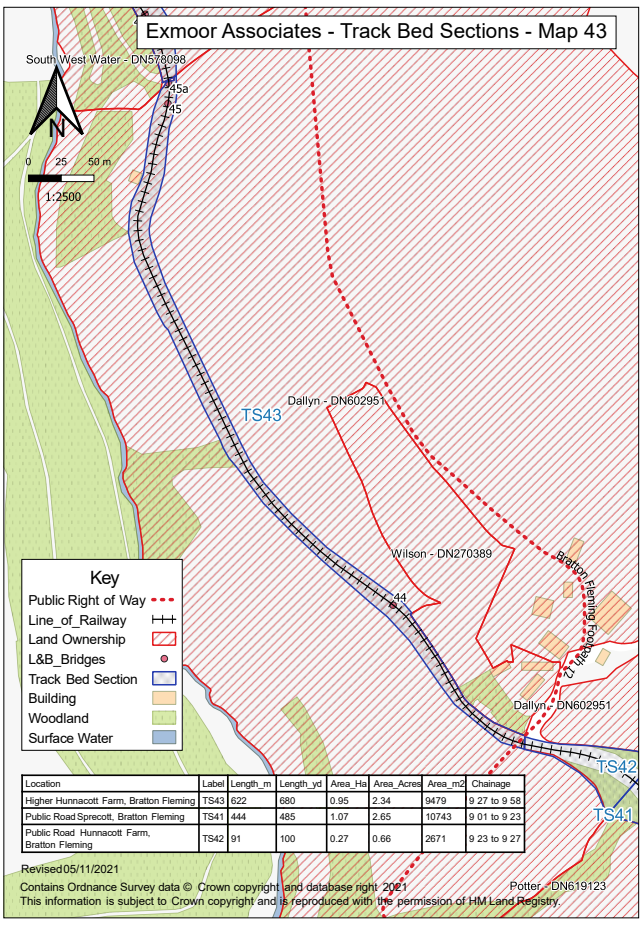
We had an early Christmas present! We are pleased to announce that we have now completed the purchase of another section of trackbed.

This is located south of Wistlandpound and is unusual in that in some respects it is an isolated usable section of track bed. To the north of it any new formation will have to be on the uphill (eastern) side of the original trackbed in order to gain enough height to circumnavigate Wistlandpound reservoir. At the southern end of this section the original trackbed was converted into a road by the local authority and is now Twitchen Lane down to Narracott bridge.

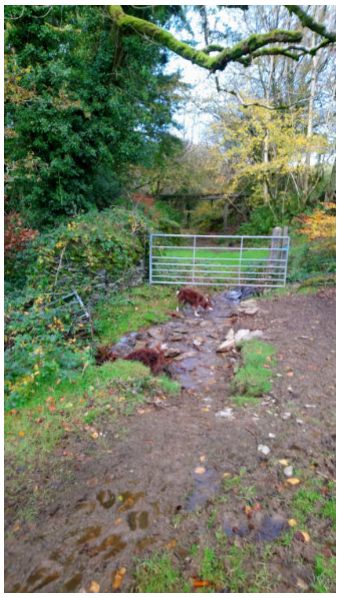
You will see from the map below that the vendor of this section is the Dallyn family, with whom we have had a good longstanding relationship.

What may come as more of a surprise is that Mike Buse, Tony Brown and Nik Barrie first started talking to the Dallyns over fifteen years ago about selling this section of trackbed - no one ever said it was going to be quick or easy!

The acquired trackbed has been moved slightly to the right from the original adjacent to the scale marker on the right hand side to avoid the existing building which can be seen in one of the photos below.



The map to the left shows the extent of the acquired trackbed. Bridge 44 is designated as Hunnacott Cattle Creep, Bridge 45 as Miles Cattle Creep. Bridge 46, just above TS44 at the top of the map, is an aqueduct that was carrying a stream over the railway. It can be seen in the photo to the right but is not on the trackbed that we have purchased. The gate marks the northern extent of this section of trackbed.



The pictures below show the southern end of the new trackbed. The left hand one shows the view from Twitchen Lane (from Google Street View) that leads onto the trackbed via the wooden gate. The right hand one shows the same gate that leads onto Twitchen Lane from a rather muddy trackbed.

All of the photographs on this page (plus the two on the right hand side on page 1) were taken by Margaret and David Cameron last year (November 2020).

We intend to arrange a trackbed walk along this section after our next meeting on the 14th May 2022 (See page 5). Members are advised that this is a working farm with a bull that has free access to various sections of the farm. Members are requested to wait for an official visit!

Readers of Trackbed Trails 26 (pages 4 & 5) may recall that we thought we had this section secured back in 2020 but it all fell through as it was part of a series of linked transactions with the Dallyn family buying additional farmland.hen the “chain” collapsed so did our purchase.

But Mike Buse is not one to give up easily!

Finally a note received from Kevin Dallyn which sums up the work our directors have put in over the years.

Mike,

Just a brief email to thank Andy Hearn, Paul Stileman and yourself for the way in which you handled the deal to purchase the trackbed through our farm, it has been a pleasure working with you all, any issues were speedily sorted, and whilst you were the buyers as a family we were made to feel you all were looking after our interests as well, so rare these days.

We look forward to meeting up with your shareholders in the future at a trackbed walk.

Finally if we can help Exmoor Associates in any way going forward we will happily do so.

Best wishes to you all.

Kevin Dallyn and Family

AND EVEN MORE GOOD NEWS

Yet More Trackbed…

We have now engaged our solicitors to proceed with the purchase of another section of trackbed, more details will be in the next edition of Trackbed Trails. We have been advised that this should hopefully be completed early in the New Year.

The not quite so good news is that although we have the funds available for this new section inevitably we are running very short of funds for any future purchase. More details of how you can help in the next edition of Trackbed Trails.

… an update on the Ruston Diesel…

For those who may not be familiar with this saga, many of you may over the years have seen the Ruston diesel locomotive in the back garden of Lynton station. The loco was bought by Bill Pryor and was the first loco to run on part of the L&B trackbed after the railway’s closure, albeit only a short section adjacent to Lynton Station.

For those who have been following its progress on the News page of our website, as you can see from the adjacent photo it is nearing completion.

The full illustrated story of its restoration will follow soon.

…our next meeting…

The L&B Trust has announced that its next AGM open day will be on the 14th May 2022. We expect that there will be some special events arranged but as yet we have no details.

As has become our usual practice will will have our own meeting on the same day at Goodleigh Village Hall from 10.00 till 1.30 with a trackbed walk and visits afterwards. The hall will be open from 9.00am for tea / coffee and biscuits. More details will be issued prior to the meeting.

...an update on our volunteers' activities…

Graham,Rob and I went to Bratton Fleming Station a few Saturdays ago and trimmed back the overgrowth on the boundary wall alongside the footpath/ bridleway (Opposite)

The navvies hard at work at Snapper still clearing and burning the overgrowth, but we are getting there,hi-viz yellow is Phil Heathcote with Graham in orange and Rob (Below)

Andy Hearn

In November we engaged a local contractor to trim the roadside hedges of our various land holdings.

The adjacent pictures show the Snapper (left) and Collard Bridge sections after the works.

…and an update on progress at Bratton Station

Above

Maggie Curtis the sculptor pictured with the finished finials in her workshop in Appledore.

(Photos Andy Hearn)

Left

Bratton Fleming Station building with the finials intact.

(Photo Tony Brown)

In the past the Yeo Valley Trust has given grants to Exmoor Associates for various at works at Snapper.

The latest grant to be made by the YVT is for the new finials to replace the broken / missing ones from the gable ends of Bratton Station. Seen on the bench they look massive but they seem completely in scale with the building in the last of the photos seen above that we can find with them intact (2008?)

THE YEO VALLEY TRUST

Our next issue will include an update on the Yeo Valley Trust including changes to the trustees, contact details and details of future plans.

Wishing all our shareholders and supporters a very Merry Christmas and a happy New Year. Stay safe and well.

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