

EXTENSION – YEAR END TRACK REPORT

Unbelievable progress – a great big thank to everybody for all your effort.

At the start one member was heard to say that it would be a three year project and that he may not be alive to see it finished.

There is only one place to begin..

“The Bridge” (apologies to BBC4). Congratulations to Paul and his team for designing and building a superb structure – how about a viaduct over the Pond. Another special thanks must go to Phil and his digger in deepening the cutting (twice) and struggling through the roots and clay to dig out the Long Cut. Recruiting Craig, with his yellow instrument, has enabled us to align a smooth track to a norm of 70 foot radius with a maximum of 60 foot.

Early on in the project I was lucky to get two guesses right.

The first was when we where struggling to align the track through the fence and brambles towards the Pond when Richard appeared to cut down the Conifers. We hoped that we had picked the right trees to give us enough room to curve the track into the Pond area. Richard was heard to mutter “I did try to save you” when I asked for another tree to be felled.

The second was when Paul asked how many beams do we need? I had only just worked out what I thought was the total track length in yards. We are using 117 of the 118 beams which Paul constructed and galvanized (thank goodness for that). Still to be fabricated are one longer beam (No. 501) which is the start beam of the Extension, plus two fiddle beams when we know their lengths.

There are 120 pillars on the Extension. At this moment in time we have 69 (57.5%) of the bases laid and levelled with 60 (50%) of them having at least a first block cemented in place. Of the pillars 25 (21%) are built up to their correct height with 14 metal beams already laid out on top.

SEGMENT 1 – Beam 87 to Pond & SEGMENT 2 – Pond to Bridge

On the RHS, working down to the Pond area, 24 of the 27 pillars have been built up with 13 completed to the full height enabling 11 metal beams to be laid. Six more pillars are ready to have the top block fixed. In the Pond area, laid out to a maximum radius of 60 foot, there are 6 pillars built to a height of 3 blocks while the centre one, the highest point at the bottom of the slope, is 4 blocks high. Construction work in this area is about to be stopped as the gradients need to be balanced between the track falling over 27 beams at 1:159, from the existing Beam 87, meeting the beams rising at 1:106 to the Bridge. These 34 pillars must be built from the Bridge end as that is fixed in height. In the long straight by the fence is the fiddle beam.. Only 4 pillars can initially be completed as access is needed into the Cutting to remove soil from the top of the LHS high bank and also smooth its vertical side.

SEGMENT 3 – Bridge to Long Cut

Beyond the Bridge Pillar towards the Long Cut 6 bases have been laid with the first block cemented in. The ground in this area has been dug out and levelled down to the same height as the Bridge walkway. The retaining wall has been strengthened and will be finished off with capping stones. The track is still rising at 1:106 in this area. The track needs aligning before seven more bases can be laid and then built up before work has to stop once the fiddle beam is reached. This is the correction beam where construction from two different directions meet – one way from the Bridge the other up from the existing track. The fiddle beam has been positioned before the top of the ground is reached to enable it to be within a straight length of track.

SEGMENT 4 – Long Cut to Beam 119

On the LHS the bases/pillars are being laid uphill from Beam 119 as this another fixed point in height. Starting from the existing track 20 bases have been laid, 19 first blocks cemented in with 8 of them up to their full height. Strictly we are running downhill in this section at a gradient of 1:101 through the Long Cut. Working in this area is very difficult due to the mud.

Each year we will have a continuing problem with leaves collecting in the trough especially where we join the existing track.

There is a problem in the Cut where the clay is holding the water in a shallow depression. Fortunately no “Great Crested Newts” have yet appeared to halt the work.

On completion the length of the Daresbury track will be .43 of a mile.

When will the Extension be Opened?. The Steam Fair? – Dream on.

A Happy Construction New Year.

Dave