

**South Tynedale Railway on Friday 30th November 2012**

## **South Tyne and Nent Rivers cause retaining wall collapse near Alston Station**

Almost unprecedented river water levels where flows from the South Tyne and Nent Rivers meet has washed away a section of retaining wall about 50 metres north of Alston Station. The wall is part of the original Victorian railway infrastructure.

South Tynedale Railway spokesman Brian Craven said " We noticed a small crack a couple of weeks ago during a routine safety inspection and had already alerted our consulting engineer to the problem. But the massive amount of rain hitting the North Pennines in the last few days raised the rivers to levels that few can recall seeing before. About twenty large stone blocks have washed away leaving a gaping hole in the footpath beside the railway and threatening the trackbed. We have closed the path. Fortunately it is our closed season so trains are unaffected in the short term".

Full repairs will cost more than £125,000 which is a massive amount for the railway society to raise. In the short term railway society engineers will carry out repairs that ensure Santa trains run as planned. Volunteers are gearing up for a massive effort to complete a project just as soon as it gets the green light.

In the meantime the railway society is starting an urgent appeal for emergency funds to make sure that proper repairs get underway as soon as possible in the new year. Recently appointed STR Chairman Richard Graham said today "We are committed to running our Santa trains later this month. We have hundreds of bookings and we will be working flat out to ensure that our visitors get the first class service that they have always had during our popular Santa trains season".

Funds for the repair work are urgently needed. £50,000 is needed now to prevent further damage. If anyone would like to make a donation, however small or large, please send it to

STRPS Capital Projects Account - "Wall"

A/c no 20212725

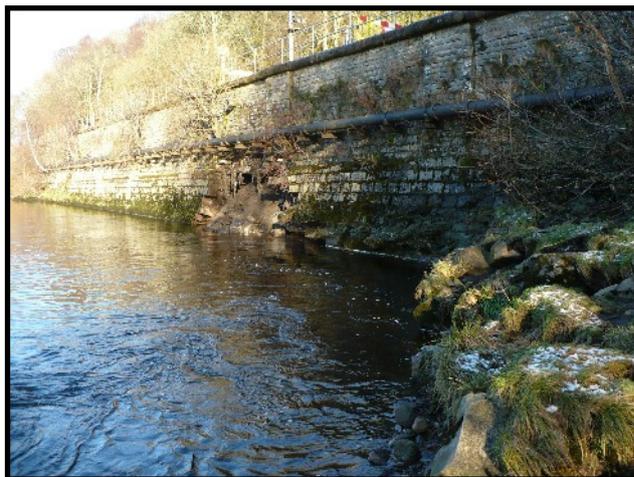
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