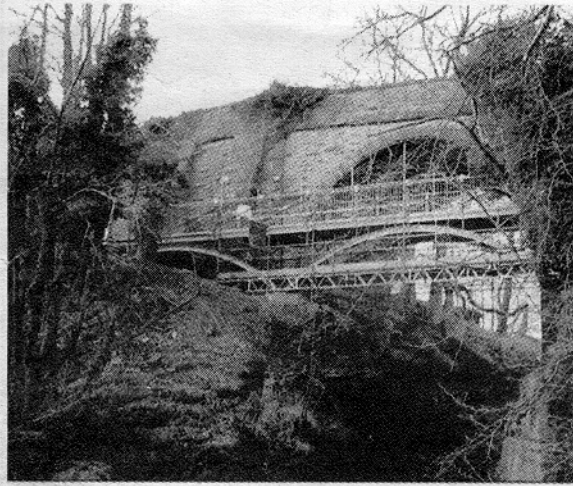


This highlights larger scale environmental government-funded project or organization



**THE WAY AHEAD:** The footbridge starts taking shape on the route of the disused railway

## P Mawdsley, Northern Viaduct Trust, Appleby

**T**URNING a disused railway into a footpath and bridleway has created a unique place for people to enjoy their leisure time.

Appleby general builder and groundworks business P Mawdsley began work on the Hartley-Stenkrith Footpath in Spring 2000, though the project took five years in total to set up – and their main piece of work was the new bridge.

Partner in P Mawdsley, Elaine Mawdsley explained: “The whole project was set up and run by the Northern Viaduct Trust.

“It started out with a plan to turn a disused railway into a footpath and bridleway, at an estimated cost of £342,000, running between Hartley and Stenkrith.”

On St Valentines Day 2000 the Trust took over the disused line from Rail Property Ltd.

Work began immediately with restoration of the Podgill viaduct, repairs to the farm bridge and two bridges.

A footbridge link into Stenkrith part was also incorporated in the project.

The project was funded by grants from European Regional development Fund, Northern Uplands Objective 5b Scheme, Railway Heritage Trust, Rail Property Ltd, Friends of the Lake District, Eden Council and Mainfold Trust.

Elaine said: “The restoration and making of the footpath was finished in August 2000.

“We were then due to erect the footbridge in March 2001 at which time the country was affected with foot and mouth.

“We had to take delivery of the bridge and store it until we were given the go-ahead to erect it, which came through in December 2000.

“We then had to make a new access road into the site to erect the bridge, as foot and mouth was still affecting our area.

“The actual erection of the bridge started in January 2002 and was completed in May 2002.

“The footpath and bridge was opened to the public in June 2002.

P Mawdsley had to excavate rock and form concrete pads for the bridge to sit on – much of the work having to be done manually, with men wearing safety harnesses, until the bridge reached an adequate height for scaffolding to be used.

Elaine added: “We also had to divert the main sewer from Natby and put in a new pipe under the bridge, build retaining walls and do some landscaping.”

It is estimated that the bridge will be used by 2,000 people each year and that figure could rise if it were to become a deviation from the coast-to-coast footpath.

Elaine added: “The bridge looks magnificent and in the walkway over the bridge places have been made for plates to be put in for every child born in the Kirkby Stephen parish in the millennium year.”