



For immediate release November 2008

Military exercise to remove flytipping from tourist attraction

Two baths, toasters, kettles and other miscellaneous waste scars an embankment of the Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway, but this weekend, Saturday 15 and 16 November 2008, Keep Scotland Beautiful (KSB) joined forces with the Army, in Scotland, Falkirk Council and Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway volunteers to return the surroundings of the tourist attraction to their natural status.

Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway hosts regular events such as 'Thomas the Tank Engine' days, and the seasonal 'Santa Train' but the embankment adjacent to the railway line has become a favourite area for fly tipping – an illegal activity – spoiling the view for the many visitors.

Not only does the flytipping look ugly but the items have begun to cause a major problem in a culvert which, especially at this time of year, fills with water and could result in floods causing line closures.

Keep Scotland Beautiful, which hosts the Scottish Flytipping Forum, approached various organisations to come and clean up the area and look at prevention measures to ensure that flytipping in the area stops.

The Army in Scotland's Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME), based in Grangemouth, will help remove the large items from the embankment which in places is steep, while other volunteers will assist by cleaning up the areas where access is easier. Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway volunteers will provide an engine and carriages to take all of the debris to a more accessible location and Falkirk Council will remove the waste.

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Donna Niven, Programme Manager at KSB said: "I visited the railway with my son recently and was horrified to see the amount of waste which had accumulated on this embankment. I know that it costs local authorities approximately £11 million each year to remove flytipping from their land and that the Scottish Railway Preservation Society simply didn't have the resources to remove the waste. That is why we got involved and it is fantastic that so many volunteers, including the TA, have come together to tackle this problem. Hopefully by clearing up this area we can also raise awareness of the issue across the country.

"With 87% of flytipping incidences involving household waste, such as that found on the embankment here, it is important that we make people aware that what they are doing is illegal and can result in a fixed penalty fine of £50 if they are caught."

John Mayes, Marketing Director for the Scottish Railway Preservation Society, which operates the Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway, said, "This flytipping has been a long term eyesore on what is otherwise a very scenic line, and there were times we despaired at ever being able to get it sorted out. We, and our customers, are very grateful to everyone involved for putting their enthusiasm and expertise to work in getting the mess cleared up in time for Christmas, which is one of our busiest times of the year."

Councillor Adrian Mahoney, the convener of environment and heritage at Falkirk Council, said: "I'm pleased to see this clean-up taking place. It's a big job, but it will hopefully make a huge improvement to this site."

He added: "The illegal dumping near the track has created a real blot on the landscape - giving a poor impression to the 60,000 visitors who visit the SRPS site every year.

"The challenge after the clean-up, of course, will be to keep the 'dump dumpers' away from this woodland site."

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Spokesman for the Army in Scotland, Warrant Officer Class 2 (WO2) Sean Dryburgh, said, “153 Field Company, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME) is based at the Territorial Army Centre in Grangemouth. It is a Company of 102 Battalion REME, and the only REME workshop bases in Scotland, with the other Companies based in Durham and Newcastle.

“As 153 Field Company recruits from the central belt of Scotland we have soldiers who live in and around the Bo’ness area, and when we were approached by Keep Scotland Beautiful to assist them the soldiers jumped at the chance to be involved with the community in clearing the railway embankment.

“The Company will gain several benefits from the exercise, one is to nurture leadership skills amongst all our soldiers, and we will also be able to test them in a totally different environment to that which they would normally work in – whether it is in the workshop or in the field.”

WO2 Dryburgh continued, “The exercise will also encourage team work not only amongst our own soldiers but with the other units that will be assisting us – the sappers from 71 Engineer Regiment, and the infantrymen from 51st Highland, 7th Battalion The Royal Regiment of Scotland (7 SCOTS).

“We also hope to make people aware that we have lots of opportunities to offer people between the ages of 17 to 43 years, and that we are recruiting now for mechanics, electricians, chefs, clerks, drivers, metalsmiths and storepersons.”

For further information on joining the REME people are encouraged to contact Warrant Officer Class 2 Sean Dryburgh on 01324 484422. More...

- Ends -

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Note to the Editor

- Keep Scotland Beautiful is one of Scotland's leading environmental charities, administering anti-litter campaigns under the Keep Scotland Tidy slogan along with the People and Places, Blue Flag and Eco Schools environment programmes, Waste Aware Scotland, Sustainable Scotland Network, Climate Challenge Fund and Going Carbon Neutral Stirling campaign.
- 153 Field Company, Royal Electrical and Mechanical Engineers (REME), is based at the Territorial Army Centre in Grangemouth. It is a Company of 102 Battalion REME which has its headquarters in Newton,-Aycliffe, Durham. It is the only REME workshop in Scotland with the other Companies base in Durham and Newcastle.
- The Scottish Flytipping Forum was established with all of the key stakeholders who are affected by flytipping and the organisations responsible for the investigation and disposal of many flytipping incidents. The Forum is hosted and chaired by Keep Scotland Beautiful.
- A fixed penalty notice of £50 can be issued on the spot to people caught flytipping, but if the case is taken to court fines of up to £40,000 can be issued.41,000 cases of flytipping were reported in 2006/07.
- Members of the public can report flytipping incidents by calling the 24 hour, seven day a week dumb dumpers hotline on **08452 30 40 90**.
- Further information about flytipping and the work of the Scottish Flytipping Forum is available at www.dumbdumpers.org.uk
- The Scottish Railway Preservation Society (SRPS) operates the Bo'ness & Kinneil Railway which has been developed since 1979 on a reclaimed site on the south shore of the Firth of Forth. Several historic buildings have been obtained and re-erected to provide a traditional railway setting. Further details about the Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway can be found at: <http://www.srps.org.uk/railway/>
- All householders in Scotland have access to free waste disposal through their local recycling centres, or civic amenity sites as they used to be called, and they can check the opening hours and facilities available by contacting their local authority or logging onto www.sort-it.org.uk .
- A total of 38,186 incidents of flytipping were reported in 2007/08. However, it is important to remember that the figures generated by Flycapture nationally are really just the tip of the iceberg and only relate to local authority land. Many private land owners such as the National Trust for Scotland, Forestry Commission, and farmers have substantial problems with flytipping and as yet this data is not collected.
- While this exercise has required a military operation, volunteers across Scotland can get involved in sprucing up their local area. In fact in April 2008 20,000 volunteers took part in National Spring Clean. Further information can be found at www.keepsotlandbeautiful.org