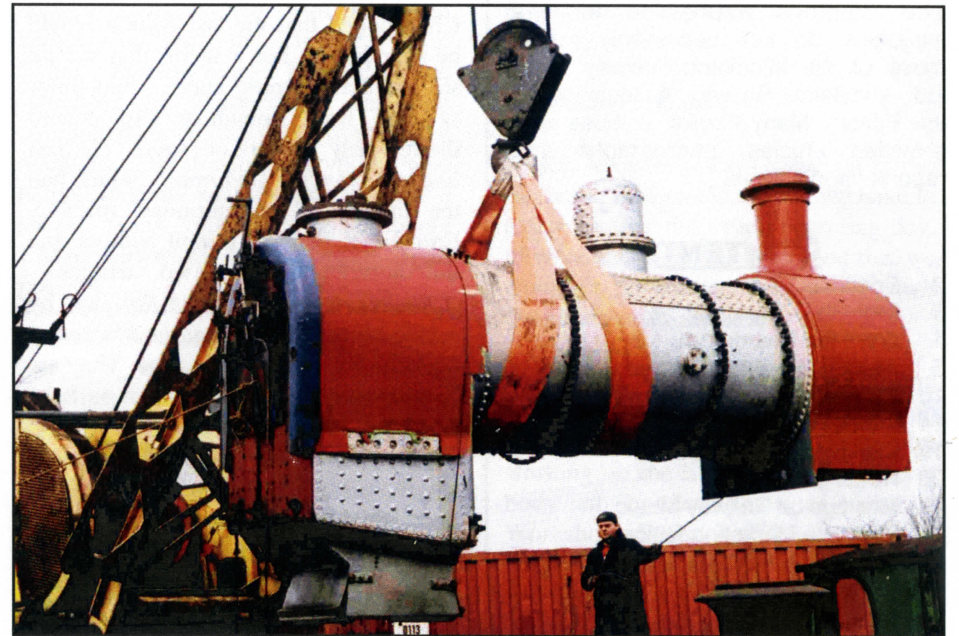


THE OLD RUN

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THE OLD RUN

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EDITORIAL

EDITOR: Vacant
ADDRESS:

TELEPHONE:
E-MAIL

The opinions expressed in this magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Middleton Railway Trust Ltd, Middleton Railway Association or the Editor. Many thanks to those who provided articles, photographs and reports for this issue.

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FRONT COVER: The overhauled boiler for No.67 is lifted for re-fitting into the frames on 12 January 2002

REAR COVER: Douglas Lovely is the proud fireman on Matthew Murray during the naming ceremony on 29 September 2001. (Photo by Sheila Bye)

If all went well you should have received the last Old Run on, or about, February 19th. We had hoped to get it out during January but, although the copy was put together, we have had a fair learning curve to go through with the printing which has all been done 'in house'. This edition is planned to go out at the end of March.

I had hoped that the last edition would be near perfect but it seems that we are still on that learning curve. Four lines of text have somehow disappeared though only two are obvious! The last line of 'From the Chairman', which had the final word 'compromise' missing, Emmanuel Lanne's e-mail address and the authors of the two articles - 'Changes at the Middleton Railway' by Jackie Maples and 'From the Marketing Officer' by Emmanuel Lanne. They are on the proof copies but seem to have been missed off during the printing process. We think we know why and hopefully this will not happen again. It is essentially due to the magazine being composed on one version of the software and printed using another, later version. Apologies to everybody for this.

Despite these problems, we hope that you liked what you received. If not, please tell us.

Steve Roberts

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Steve Roberts

Members may have read in the railway press that the Middleton Railway has been awarded the Heritage Railway Association's John Coiley Award for Locomotive Preservation. This has been awarded for our work in restoring our Manning Wardle locomotive 'Matthew Murray'. The fact that we chose to have an all-riveted boiler instead of the cheaper welded option was a significant factor in our favour. This award is all the more heartening as it was won in direct competition with the Princess Royal Class Locomotive Trust whose 'Duchess of Sutherland' has just completed a £500,000 grant aided overhaul. Well done everybody who helped in some way towards this and a special thank you to Douglas Lovely whose generosity helped make it all possible.

A lot of time has been spent over the last few months in discussing the organisation and management of the Railway both in Council and outside it. Two buzz phrases have had much of an airing: 'Responsible Officer' and 'Workshop Supervisor'. In an ideal world we should have such people to manage the operations and volunteer workforce at the line but in reality, this has always proved to be very difficult. People might ask why we need such persons - we've operated quite successfully for the last forty years with no problem. That may be true but, unfortunately, in the twenty-first century different attitudes prevail and management, supervision and responsibility are seen as essential for safe operation of virtually everything.

As far as train operations are concerned, there is an increasing pressure from the Railway Inspectorate to have a Responsible Officer on duty each day we operate rather than just on the occasions when we have special events. We are a small organisation and there are times - admittedly few - when we cannot fill the roster and our service has to be operated with the absolute minimum staff of just four people:

Shop/ticket salesperson
Guard
Driver
Fireman/second man

So far, we have always managed to run our advertised service but, if we have to roster another duty each operating day, there would be a real likelihood that we wouldn't be able to operate on some days because of the lack of staff.

A similar situation affects non-operating volunteers, generally those working in the workshops but also anybody else working on the line. There is a strong body of opinion that we need a Workshops Supervisor. Whilst most of our volunteers are seasoned regulars and can work on most tasks with little, or no supervision, this is not totally the case. We often have new volunteers who must be carefully nurtured and integrated into our way of operation. They need to be shown where tools and equipment are and to be given guidance. Similarly our Junior members have to be carefully watched and guided so that their enthusiasm is encouraged and lack of experience and knowledge does not

pose a danger to them and others.

In truth, it really would be the best thing to have a 'Supervisor' rostered on every occasion that we have volunteers working at the line. However, this is perhaps an even harder task than providing a Responsible Officer as there are volunteers present, not only at weekends, but for many other hours each and every week. How our work output and volunteer morale would fall if members could only carry out work if someone was rostered to supervise them.

From the problems that we have in getting shop and train staff to volunteer and commit themselves it is obvious that it is going to be a real struggle to fill these two new posts but fill them, we must.

FROM THE BOARDROOM.

Bits from the January 2002 meetings, extracted by Ian Dobson

Future developments:

The possibility of Lottery Funding for a Display Hall - the technical term for the proposed Southerly extension to the shed - was discussed. This is to be taken forward with (hopefully) assistance from Jackie Cope of the Vintage Carriages Trust.

We have provided some input into the Management Plan for Middleton Park and surrounding area. A draft document is expected early in 2002.

Discussions on the extension of our lease with Leeds City Council are ongoing and no problems are anticipated.

I say that we will struggle to fill these two posts yet, in reality, we shouldn't. We generally have a considerable number of members who could eminently fulfil either of these roles and it is a very rare occasion indeed when there is not some suitable person around. However, for the most part, there is a reluctance from people to take on these responsibilities.

We have to find a solution to each of these problems very quickly. If we don't we will find that, although we have a working Railway with a strong body of skilled and dedicated volunteers, the Railway will no longer be allowed to operate.

Finance

With £75,000 in the bank at the end of the year we have a healthy bank balance at present but there are plenty of plans afoot which could absorb some (or even all) of it! The budget for 2002 will be considered next meeting

Passenger numbers increased by 9% in 2001 over 2000. This is a very good result in the current economic and social climate.

Supervision of working members/ Responsible Officer

An open meeting on 12th January had produced some interesting and valid

points. The likelihood is that a position of Responsible Officer will be created to cover the position of shed supervisor and also overseeing the operation of trains on running days. It was generally felt that one person could cover both positions and training will be offered to those that need it - some volunteers had already come forward at the 12 January meeting.

The Rules and Disciplinary Sub Committee (R&DSC) would consider the matter and bring recommendations to the next Council Meeting.

Engineering

The propose purchase of a 'Dogfish' ballast wagon had not been pursued due to lack of time to inspect one. It was still hoped to acquire one.

Council accepted a quotation for £5653 for a contractor to complete the overhaul of the Sentinel's boiler.

Other Matters

Mr Lanne (Marketing Officer) reported that Gullane (who issue licences for 'Thomas' events) have proposed significant increases to their charges in 2002. The Heritage Railway Association is co-ordinating the objections to this and our voice will be added to these in due course.

The Dartmouth branch was discussed in view of recent developments alongside it (and on it in some cases!) The situation is being reviewed, as we would not wish to lose the right to run trains on it.

Mr Lanne has had discussions with Leeds Museums Department and it was agreed that we would seek to foster links with them in future to our mutual benefit.

Following an incident on the last day of Santa operations guidelines are to be written for all staff as to how to deal with complaints.

AUSTIN No.1 AND THE PECKETT DIESELS

Steve Roberts tells about the diesel locomotives built by Peckett & Sons and leaves an unanswered question.

Our newest arrival on the locomotive front is Austin No.1, built by Peckett & Sons as Works No. 5003 in 1961. Or is it? For the full story, read on.

The Bristol firm of Peckett came into being in 1880 when Thomas Peckett bought the existing firm of Fox, Walker. It became Peckett & Sons in 1885.

Thomas died in 1891 and the elder son, George, took over the reins. The 'sons' continued to run the firm with Thomas (junior) in charge from 1921-39 and Frank from 1939-53. Thomas Peckett's grandson, Wilfrid became the last Managing director in 1953 and continued in that role until he sold the works in 1961 and effectively closed the company.

Pecketts had built up a grand reputation for supplying robust, reliable small industrial steam locomotives, generally for the home market. Many of these still exist to this day and two excellent examples can be found at Middleton in our 2003 and 2103. However, by the early 1950's it was obvious that the future way forward was with diesel traction. In pursuit of this they employed a new Works Manager in 1954 by the name of Robert Taylor. Bob, as he was known, came to them with plenty of experience in the design of diesel engines and transmissions and it was he who was essentially responsible for the design of all the Peckett Diesels.

The Diesels

I say 'all the Peckett diesels' but there were only five. The works list was, as follows:

5000 Although the worksplates state 'built 1956, it was actually built in 1955. It was fitted with a 200 hp Crossley reversing engine and Hobbs automatic transmission. This transmission had its origins in tanks and had proved to be eminently successful for that purpose. The locomotive initially went on trial with the well known firm of Albright and Wilson at their Portishead works, near Bristol, and was recorded as being under test there on 29 December 1955. Legend has it that, whilst carrying out a brake trial, and propelling a long rake of wagons, the loco brakes were applied. The loco successfully stopped in the required distance but those concerned seem to have forgotten about the slack in the couplings of a loose coupled train, the last vehicles of which carried on for

quite a distance further, demolishing the yard gates in the process!

The loco was deemed too large for Albright & Wilson and, after being returned to Pecketts and spending some time there, was eventually sold to the British Soda Co. Ltd. at Sandbach in Cheshire, arriving on 27 January 1958. Here it gained the name of 'Sir Arthur'. The loco went out of use in the early 1970's and folk lore has it that it was apparently cut up in error. The tale is that someone had expressed an interest in preserving the loco and it had been put aside. Meanwhile, the Soda Co's other loco, a venerable Fowler 0-6-0 diesel, had been sold to a scrap merchant who arranged to cut it up on site. The scrap merchant, however, started to cut up the wrong loco and it was too late before the error was realised.

5001 was built in 1956 and was identical to 5000. It was sold to the car making giant, Fords, and went to their Dagenham plant. Here it soon gained a reputation as a problem loco. Apparently the automatic gearbox used to get so hot that it was claimed you could fry an egg on it! The problem was perceived to be due to the fact that the sudden jerks created by the loose coupled wagons caused the gearbox to think that it was being overloaded and change into a lower gear, only to change up again a moment later as the couplings went slack. The loco was soon shunted into a siding and left. What happened next is not too certain. Some authorities say it was eventually cut up on site but others say it was returned to Pecketts.

5002 Although the trial of 5000 at Albright & Wilson had not been totally successful, the company was sufficiently impressed to order a smaller locomotive. This was supplied to them in 1957 and was powered by a Gardner engine developing 107 hp. This loco, too, was fitted with the Hobbs automatic gearbox. Perhaps because its duties were not as arduous as at Fords, the loco seems to have been more successful and was eventually cut up for scrap in the early 1970's

5003 Built in 1961 and supplied to the Dewsbury firm of James Austin & Son. Like 5002, this loco was also fitted with a Gardner engine, but this time it was an 8L3 developing 204 horsepower. Unlike the earlier locos, though, it was married to a Wilson epicyclic gearbox in a similar manner to the many small BR shunters then coming into service. The loco was very much oversize for the limited tasks it had to perform and it had an easy life. It eventually found retirement on the Worth Valley Railway where it was generally used as the Haworth yard shunter. A tendency for it to run hot axleboxes limited its excursions onto their main line.

5014 became the last Peckett diesel when built in 1959 for the CEBG at Aberthaw Power station in Wales. Unlike all the other Peckett diesels, this loco was an 0-6-0 but it was again powered by a Gardner 8L3 engine and Wilson gearbox. The loco is still at Aberthaw but is no longer active, being preserved near the entrance.

Works Nos. 5004 - 5013 were not built but Pecketts did order a total of thirteen engines from Gardners - twelve 200HP

and one 100 HP and a similar number of air brake sets from Westinghouse (for 5002-12, 5014 & ?) . Whether some of these were for an order that was subsequently cancelled is not known. Pecketts had an arrangement with Listers and built a diesel locomotive for them under contract. There is speculation that this was allocated the works number 5013 but the locomotive was always badged as being of Lister manufacture, a not uncommon arrangement in the locomotive industry.

To complete the list, Nos. 5015 & 5016 were actually ordered in 1958 but this order was cancelled before any building work had been carried out. These were narrow gauge locos destined for a Spanish coal mine.

The astute ones among you will have realised that our 5003 has a 'build' date of 1961 but this is out of sequence with and much later than the other locos. Although the loco carried the date 1961 on its worksplate careful study shows that it was originally marked 1958 and this date seems to be more likely. In all probability the loco was built for stock in that year and was not finally sold until 1961 when Pecketts were winding up the business. It is likely that James Austin got the loco at a knocked down price. It was certainly far larger than they needed.

The Mystery

So, there we have it; a nice simple potted history of Pecketts excursion into diesel loco building. But, perhaps all is not as it seems. Some while ago, the author received a telephone call from Ian Young who has spent many years researching the history of Pecketts.

Indeed, such is his enthusiasm for the company, that he has bought the name and is now its Managing Director! He said that he believed that the loco we had was, in fact, 5001 and that 5001 and 5003 were actually the same loco but was unable to prove his theory from the evidence he had.

The Evidence

As mentioned earlier, there is conflicting evidence about the fate of 5001 and some authorities believe it returned to Pecketts works. Certainly ex Peckett employees remember a diesel loco stored in the works but this could have been 5003 which evidence suggests was unsold for three years. No ex employee interviewed can remember a diesel being cut up so if 5001 did return to the works what became of it? Conversely, none of these people can specifically remember 5001 coming back to the works or, indeed, being rebuilt as 5003.

Perhaps there might be some evidence on the loco itself. Whenever a loco is built it is usual to stamp the works number on the various items as a form of traceability and to avoid confusion. If our loco was indeed 5001, it would be inconceivable that Pecketts would have ground off all the old numbers and re-stamped all the individual components. However, a careful inspection of the loco has failed to reveal any identification numbers whatsoever; a very unusual state of affairs. Whilst this inspection did not reveal any concrete evidence it did uncover a few possible signs. There are indications that either the engine position has been moved or a different engine has been fitted, evidenced by a second set of holes for

holding down the engine to the frames. Not only that but one of the frame stretchers has had some substantial cut out holes filled in and in-situ modifications. There are only three likely reasons for this; a substantial mistake in manufacture (unlikely), an economy measure to use some old plate (even more unlikely) or, most probably, a major modification to the gearbox arrangement after build.

There is further intrigue in the paint finish. Above the running plate the loco is finished in the bright Post Office Red which the loco has, as far as is known, always carried. Below the running plate the livery is more of a brown colour, lined in yellow which was more in keeping with the standard Peckett paint scheme. Photos of 5001 appear to be virtually non existent and the livery in which it ran at Fords is not definitely known. It may have been Peckett's standard green with brown frames but it may also have been Fords standard blue livery. If it is 5001 and the loco was originally painted in one of these standard colours we would expect to find such paint under the existing red. However, it will have to await a major repaint to establish this.

Well, there you have it. Is it 5003 or is it really 5001, re-badged? Make your own conclusion. It doesn't matter, really, except for historical fact.

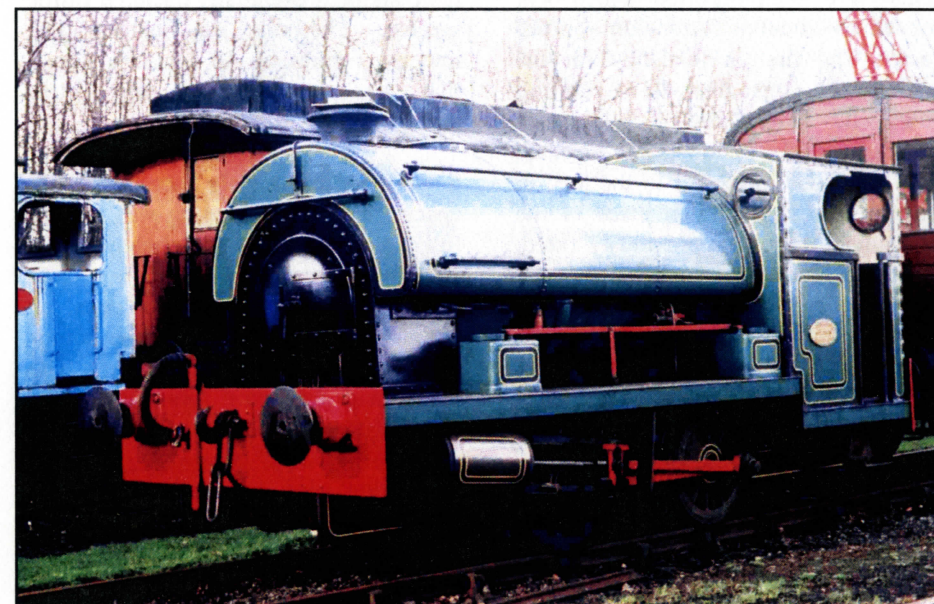
Unless you know better, that is! In which case we'd be very pleased to hear from you.

(The Authors thanks go to Ian Young, who provided much of the information on the history of the company)



ABOVE: 5001 or 5003? Whichever it is, it remains Austin No.1. Here the loco arrives at Middleton Park with a P W train on 2 March 2002.

BELOW: The other presently active Peckett on the Railway is steam loco, No.2103/1950. It is finished in the standard Peckett livery of Green upper parts and brown frames with yellow lining. This loco, too, carries an incorrect year of build on its plates - it was actually built in 1948, not 1950.



LOCO NOTES

The short closed season from January to March is a time of relaxation with no pressure to keep the wheels turning and supply locomotives to haul the trains. However, this is not a time for taking it easy. Far from it. The entry into service of our new crane has enabled us to make quite a lot of progress on a number of fronts and much has happened since the beginning of December when the last notes were written.

1601 Matthew Murray has generally performed satisfactorily since its entry into service although there have been some teething troubles. The bearings now all seem to be running satisfactorily and the earlier troubles seem to have been overcome. Train crews seem to be quite impressed with its steaming capabilities and it handles the passenger trains with ease. Two items have been reported which will hopefully receive attention before Easter. The first, a tendency for the cylinders to groan when running downhill, is caused by lack of lubrication to the cylinders. We elected to fit a Roscoe lubricator to the loco to lubricate the cylinders in place of the mechanical lubricator previously fitted. The loco started life with a Roscoe lubricator and, as we had a spare new one, it seemed a nice touch to replace it, especially as the mounting bracket still existed on the tank front. It looks as though we may have to re-consider this.

The second problem is a leaking regulator. At least, we think that the regulator is leaking. We are hoping that

the problem is not a leaking steam pipe joint as this might prove a major problem to rectify, possibly involving removing the cab to gain access to the firebox top to re-make the joint. The loco has been kept available for traffic since Christmas but is now being stripped for its annual boiler inspection. No problems are expected with this as the boiler is only twelve months old and it is anticipated that it will be merely an academic exercise. But you never know! A loose frame stretcher will receive attention at the same time.

No.67 Work had virtually ground to a halt on this loco as we could do no more until the boiler was back in the frames and this event was awaiting the entry into service of the new crane. We had hoped to be able to do the boiler replacement at the beginning of December but it was mid January before the crane was eventually declared fit for service. The boiler was finally craned into the frames on 18 January, a task that was accomplished with little problem.

Since then, things have been happening apace. The boiler lagging was rapidly fitted, followed by the already made cladding plates. Although these had been made using the old ones as templates they did need some minor modifications to fit correctly. The piston and valve rod lubricators have been fitted, complete with new pipework, and a new cylinder lubrication pipe has been made and fitted. These items hang off the smokebox so could not be done

previously. Following completion of these the boiler cladding has been finish painted in the 'battleship grey' it will now carry. The springs have been fitted and the chassis is now effectively complete. Again, these could not be fitted until the boiler was in position.

Progress was sufficiently rapid to enable the tanks and cab roof to be craned into position on the 9 February.

Other work carried out has included the fitting of the steam brake valve and new pipework, refitting the main manifold and boiler blowdown valve. A new blower pipe has also had to be provided.

There remains much to be done and it is often the smaller jobs that take up a lot of the time. However, the end is well and truly in sight and it is hoped that a steam test can be carried out within the next few weeks.

3860 Work continued on the stripdown of this loco throughout December. Not without some difficulty the boiler was eventually freed off at the smokebox in preparation for lifting from the frames. The loco was substantially dismantled on the 18 January when the cab was removed, followed by the tank and then the boiler. The boiler has been stripped of its lagging and quite corroded cladding. Some wastage of the firebox wrapper plate is evident but it is not thought that its condition is a cause for concern. Work has started on needle-gunning the barrel preparatory to the application of high temperature aluminium paint.

Removal of the boiler has uncovered quite a few problems with the frames

and footplate. The latter is virtually all scrap although fairly straightforward to replace. There is considerable wastage of the frames on the fireman's side in the area under the cab which will have to be repaired. The rear buffer beam is badly distorted and will certainly require replacement, straightening being well beyond our capability and likely to be the more expensive option. The amount of distortion is way beyond that likely to have been encountered in even heavy service and tends to suggest that it has been in a collision at some point.

Assessment of the cab has revealed that it will require a new roof and rear sheet. The coal bunkers are also quite badly wasted in the lower halves and will require substantial repairs in this area. In all, about 50% of the platingwork requires renewal. Some preliminary work has been done on cutting out the corroded plate but much remains to be done.

Work at present continues on cleaning down the frames, etc., in preparation for them coming into the shed. This is unlikely to happen until the LNER ballast brake is completed.

1210 Sir Berkeley Work started on stripping down the loco during December. The tank and cab side sheets were removed with the aid of the works lifting gantry as we still had no crane available. This exposed the boiler cladding sheets allowing these to be removed to expose the boiler. The sight greeting us was not the best but this was, to some extent, expected. There has been considerable corrosion of the firebox outer wrapper plate and there is evidence that some of the stays have been leaking.

The boiler fittings have all been removed and the boiler was freed off from the frames to enable it to be craned out, this being done on 19 January. Gordon Newton examined the boiler the same day and his report has been forwarded to the Vintage Carriage Trust for their consideration.

Removal of the regulator valve has revealed a circumferential crack in the regulator casting. Judging by the state of it, it is an old fracture. However, this presents a bit of a mystery as, with such a crack, priming ought to be a major symptom; yet this has not occurred. It is possible that it has been repaired externally in the past but this will not become apparent until the housing is removed.

As the boiler was being prepared for lifting it was noticed that an eccentric strap was fractured. Just why and how

it broke is a mystery. The fracture was new, although it emanated from an old crack, but the chassis had not been moved for several days prior to the discovery. A new strap will have to be cast and machined up, requiring the production of a wooden pattern first.

2103 The little Peckett underwent its annual boiler inspection during December and no problems were found. After Santa duties it came into the workshops during January to have the big and little ends overhauled, a job that has been outstanding for some time. The little end bushes were found to be loose in the connecting rod (they should be a tight fit) and therefore new bushes were made and pressed into place instead of the original plan to white metal line them. The big end brasses, which are in halves, were re-machined to take up the clearances. Hopefully, this will cure the knocks and bangs that



MW 1601 MATTHEW MURRAY leaves Moor Road for Middleton Park on 29 September 2002. (Photo by Sheila Bye)

have characterised the loco since it went into service. The rear spectacle plate glasses have been refitted after a long period without them. They were originally removed nearly two years ago to replace the broken glass.

It has been mentioned previously that the injectors waste water badly when working and it was planned to fit larger steam pipes. However, when tested during the Insurance inspection they worked perfectly so this scheme has been put on hold, for the time being, at least.

The loco will be available for services at the start of the 2002 season.

1310 The Y7 remained in service throughout December and it was planned that 23 December would be its last day in steam before withdrawal. It almost made it. Almost, but not quite for the loco failed at Middleton Park on its very last train! Inevitably, the cause was a holed boiler tube. It, unfortunately, suffered the ignominy of having to be towed back to Moor Road.

It was originally intended that 1310 would be put to one side to await its turn in the overhaul queue but, at the request of the Steam Power Trust, the locos owners, we have agreed to start its overhaul as soon as it can be slotted in. The Steam Power Trust would like the loco to be available for use during the North Eastern Railway 150th anniversary celebrations in 2004. Whether it makes it will depend on the amount of work found necessary. In order to accommodate the loco in the works it will take the previously

planned place of Peckett No.2003 although it is still intended to start work on this in the near future.

No.11 Some initial work has been done on this loco by its owner but it is planned to start work on its overhaul imminently. A tank and boiler lift was carried out on the 9 February since when a start has been made on needle-gunning the boiler.

Austin No.1 Continuing problems with the left trailing axlebox running hot meant that the loco was brought into the workshops during December so that it could be lifted to enable repairs could be carried out. This has now been completed and the loco was returned to traffic on 18 January. It has since been used for shunting as the re-worked bearing is bedded in and seems to be running satisfactorily.

54 The faithful Sentinel has sat forlornly at the back of the workshops since its repatriation from Quainton Road. With much work having already been carried out on the boiler, but with much still required, it seems a pity to leave it to deteriorate. A quote has been obtained for completion of the boiler and Council has approved expenditure on this. However, whether this is progressed is still being considered, mainly because of the manpower needed to complete the job and the amount of other work necessary on other fronts. What is needed is for a couple of volunteers to take this project on. Any offers?

D577, D631, 138C, 7401, 91 and 1786 are all serviceable and used as required. All other locos are stored pending overhaul or repair.

TIMES PAST: Re-Writing History - The German Disconnection

Sheila Bye

Thirty one years ago, the then Historian, John Bushell, wrote the first of a few pieces for *The Old Run* about the German descendants of John Blenkinsop, after having visited one these, Frau Irmgard Seith-Blenkinsop, at her home near Karlsruhe. He had drunk tea with her from the tea-service passed down from her great-grandfather John, and mused that perhaps when John Blenkinsop and Matthew Murray had met to discuss the new rack-rail locomotives they had drunk tea from that very pot (though I suspect that Murray might have demanded something a bit stronger than tea!).

The history of the German Blenkinsops – John Stanley who became technical superintendent of the Braunschweig-Wolfenbüttel railway, and Oswald who was engineer to the Kiel Canal – thus became part of our own history, and I've mentioned that particular Middleton-German connection on at least a few occasions in *The Old Run* and in the *Railway's History*.

In the light of new evidence, however, this German connection must now be very firmly disconnected. Information obtained by M.R.T. member Wilhelm Wunderlich from the Wermser family, relatives of the late Frau Seith-Blenkinsop, has helped to pin-point their family as descending from John Blenkinsop shipwright, later a 'staithman', and his wife Anne, née Oswell or Oswald, who unfortunately went to live at Low Felling, County

Durham, where the family of John Blenkinsop, colliery viewer, had previously lived for many years.

Someone researching long ago obviously thought these were the same continuing family, not realising that a whole plethora of John Blenkinsops lived in the Tyneside area at that time. Three of them were baptised in 1783 alone: the year in which 'our' John Blenkinsop was born. Two years earlier, another John Blenkinsop had been baptised at Whickham, a village lying at the opposite side of Gateshead from the village of Low Felling. From evidence in various documents – parish records, census records, his widow's death certificate, and the memoirs of a German descendant, it is almost 100% certain that he was the true ancestor of the German Blenkinsops. Strangely, his German-born great grandson, who went to live in South Africa, apparently believed that he was descended from John the inventor of the rack-rail. However, an English descendant, Mrs. Pat Machin, has recently contacted the Trust and confirmed that her research, together with family papers in her possession, has also proved that her ancestor was definitely John the staithman.

Andy Guy, formerly a research assistant at Beamish Open Air Museum, has now made a positive connection between the famous Middleton John Blenkinsop and his real family. (I stress 'famous' because an older John Blenkinsop was actually working at Middleton at the

same time as the inventor of the rack-rail.) The famous John B. was the son of a stone-mason, and his grandfather, uncle, and later his younger brother, were also stone-masons by trade. For some reason, the young John did not follow them. Perhaps it was realised that John was intelligent and capable of more lucrative and higher status employment. Perhaps he just did not wish to be a stone-mason, or perhaps he was considered not strong enough. The family seemingly did have some physical weakness: of his four siblings, John's two older sisters both died aged 15, one younger brother died aged 2, and the younger brother who became a stone-mason died aged 24. John himself died aged 47, and was said to have become 'consumptive' in his last few months of life. Whatever the reason for the departure from family tradition, when his father died in 1802, 19 years old John was said in his will to be "apprentice to Mr. John Straker of Felling Hall Heworth, colliery viewer". Colliery viewer was a highly respectable profession. A viewer could act as a hired consultant to colliery owners, examining how their property was being worked at present, and suggesting what improvements could be made, as well as estimating how much coal remained to be worked there. (Not long after moving to Middleton, Blenkinsop was hired as consultant viewer by the owner of the Denby Grange colliery which later included Caphouse Pit, now the National Mining Museum, effectively to run his colliery for him.)

Young John must have learnt the various aspects of viewing and of colliery management: probably at least

the rudiments of geology, the methods of sinking and working pits, organising transport, and how to keep the financial records. His apprenticeship probably ended in 1804, which means that he may still have been in Felling late in that year. This could well have been important for Blenkinsop since, in that year, a Trevithick style steam locomotive was being constructed in John Winfield's foundry only a mile or two away, in Gateshead. It was tried out there, but was not accepted by the colliery owner for whom it had been speculatively built. However, it is highly likely that other local colliery managers etc., including John Blenkinsop, might have seen the locomotive on trial.

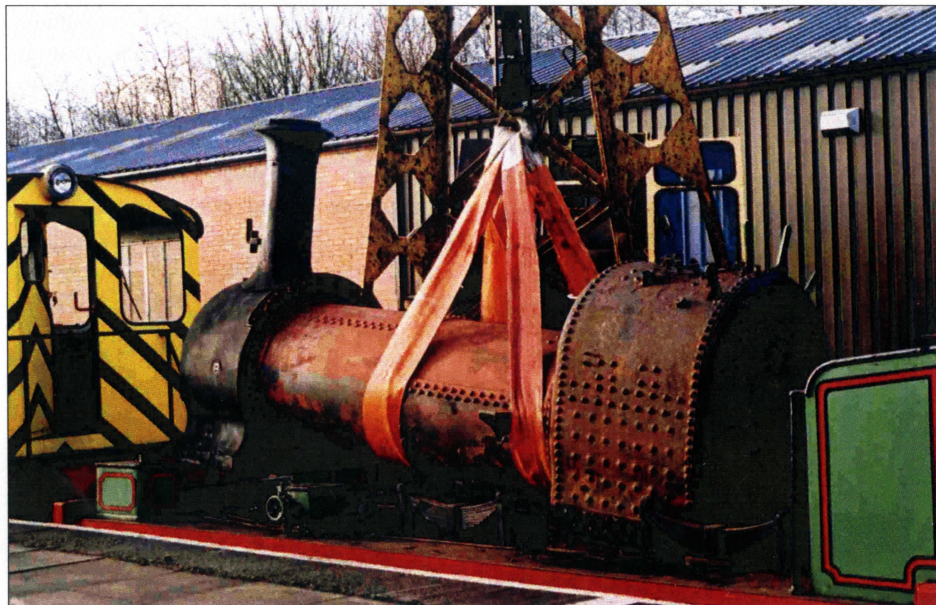
Blenkinsop's whereabouts for the next four years are not known, but in the autumn of 1808, at the age of 25, he arrived at Middleton to become the owner's 'agent' in charge of the colliery and the manorial estate. The owner, Charles John Brandling, had lived there at Middleton Lodge until his father's death in 1802, but since then the Middleton property had been a rather distant and not very lucrative 'economic asset' of its Tynesider owner. The Lodge was leased out, and the other parts of the estate, including the Lordship of the Manor, were periodically used as collateral for loans and mortgages. Earlier in 1808, two viewings had been made, apparently with the idea of selling the property, and the appointment of John Blenkinsop appears to have been the owner's last-chance attempt to make the estate worth keeping.

(Continued on page 18)



ABOVE You can tell by the smile on his face that Peter Nettleton is enjoying the luxury of a crane with a cab, seat and heater as he lifts the tank off No.6 on 18th January 2002. (Photo by Karl Fischer)

BELOW The boiler is lifted from the frames of 'SIR BERKELEY' on 19th January 2002. Our new 10 ton slings are very much in evidence!



CENTRES SPREAD



ABOVE Hope for the future. Two of our junior members (Kevin Lockley and Sarah Boot) have been removing the cladding and lagging from the boiler of No. 6. It's good to see that they're cleaning up after the job.

BELOW Almost a complete loco again. The cab is finally positioned onto No.67 on 9th February 2002. (Photo by Ian Dobson)



Charles John Brandling must have had some faith and confidence in the young Blenkinsop: he was going to pay him a £400 a year 'agency fee'. This was a very substantial salary for that time and, by comparison, the most skilled of the surface workers at the pit were earning no more than c.£80 a year. Blenkinsop probably arrived at Middleton during September, certainly in time to begin work on 1st October. He took up residence in the estate's older house, Middleton Hall, and purchased £15.12.6d worth of furniture from the Lodge, which was currently between tenancies.

One of the first actions taken in his new post was to make his own viewing of the colliery, suggesting the amalgamations of two or three of the pits, allowing them to be served by the same stationary engine for pumping and winding. He also made suggestions for the resiting of a planned new wagonway. The revitalisation of the colliery began, and during the next several years he was going to cost his master thousands of pounds for locomotives, specially cast track, new loading facilities, and the Gosforth Pit, the ambitious new underground pit-shaft and complex, described by the American traveller Zachariah Allen (see Issue 171). The colliery output and sales rose, though they probably did not rise substantially above the cost of the outlay on new technology. However, though this is pure speculation, it could be said that Blenkinsop did add considerably to the colliery's life-expectation: in January 1808, the viewers Thomas Fenwick and John Watson estimated that at the current rate of production and sales, the colliery

could continue for 66 years. It actually lasted for 160 years.

Of course, Blenkinsop's most famous improvement to the Middleton Colliery was the introduction of the world's first commercially viable steam locomotives, using the rack and pinion method of propulsion patented by him 2½ years after his arrival at Middleton. The rack and pinion enabled a light locomotive to haul an extremely large amount of payload without smashing too many of the brittle cast-iron rails as it bounced along. The patenting in 1819 of a method of making malleable iron rails removed the need for anything beyond 'adhesion', and rack and pinion propulsion was soon being dismissed as irrelevant, though it did eventually make a come-back for mountain railways.

John Blenkinsop died 171 years ago, on 22nd January 1831. Extensive searches have so far failed to find any mention of marriage or children, though we have been contacted in the past by a gentleman claiming descendancy, and early this year were contacted by Professor Bernard Knight C.B.E., eminent forensic pathologist, who believes he is a descendant of our Middleton John Blenkinsop via a daughter, Katherine.

John's Will certainly made no mention of wife or children, but the list of property disposed of to his friends and acquaintances gives some insight into his tastes and lifestyle: a large mahogany writing desk in the Study, a small mahogany writing desk in the Library, a mahogany paper and plan case, a large bookcase, books and maps,

china and glassware, pictures and prints, a gold watch and seals, a common case of instruments, a silver case of instruments, a silver pocket compass, a cane walking-stick with a small telescope within, a telescope and box, a silver snuff box, a Scotch snuff box with an extract from Burns Poems upon it, a snuff box with a greyhound painted thereon, a sword, a double-barrelled gun, an air gun, a brace of double-barrelled pistols, a brace of single-barrelled pistols, a horse pistol, and a brace of duelling pistols, which came up for auction some 20 years ago. The

residue of his property was to be sold to form a trust fund for Anne, the daughter of his late brother Thomas. She subsequently married a young glassmaker, James Hartley, who later became partner in one of Europe's largest glass manufactories, at Sunderland. She 'bucked' the family trend towards early death, and in the 1881 census was 70 years old and living in some luxury at Ashbrook Hall, Bishopwearmouth, County Durham.

John Blenkinsop lies buried alone, near the tower of Rothwell church.

67 - THE LIVERY QUESTION

There's nothing guaranteed to cause more disagreement and debate than the subject of livery, whether it is on a loco, wagon or a coach. When it was first suggested that Matthew Murray would be blue, many murmurings could be heard. "Why blue? Why not green? It was always green before." Well, the simple answer to this one was that it was the choice of one of the owners. Once it was complete everybody seemed to like it and the objections disappeared without trace!

Now similar murmurs are being heard about No.67 which is being turned out in a 'battleship grey' livery, edged in black and lined with white. How did this choice of livery come about? The original livery applied to Manchester Ship Canal locos was green, albeit of varying shades. After the First World War, the MSC adopted as standard a livery consisting of a dark grey colour, actually referred to as 'slate blue'. This was first applied to loco No.65 when new. This particular colour tended to become black when frequently cleaned with lamp oil and nobody seems certain of what this exact colour was! Many people actually thought that the MSC locos were painted black.

It is probable that this 'slate blue' was the livery actually carried by No.67 from new as it was delivered some two months after No.65. Traces of a double lining, as probably originally applied, were found when the cab was being sanded down but it was difficult to determine the livery.

Latterly, No.67 appears to have actually been painted plain black and this is the colour it carried when it arrived at Haworth. The lighter battleship grey presently being applied is a genuine Manchester Ship Canal Railway livery, used on locomotives repainted after the Second World War. There is no evidence to show that No.67 was ever painted this colour, though, although it is difficult to imagine that it ran for fifteen years without a repaint. The suggestion to use this livery originally came from Ian Smith and this was put to the owner who was happy with the proposal. We're sure that, like 'Matthew Murray' everybody will approve of the livery once it is complete and resplendently lined out.

NOTES & NEWS

A PROUD DAY

On Saturday 2nd February, the Annual General Meeting of our "trade organisation", the Heritage Railway Association, took place. For the Middleton Railway, this was a special day, as we received one of the HRA's prestigious Annual Awards.

The award is the "John Coiley award for Locomotive Restoration", which is awarded to the organisation which the awards committee feels has made a significant contribution to railway preservation. In our case, the award was made for the restoration of our Manning-Wardle 0-6-0 ST "MATTHEW MURRAY" to full working order, including the provision of a new boiler.

The committee was impressed by the fact that we had pressed on with the re-boiling despite being turned down for PRISM funding and also that we had taken the more expensive option of a riveted boiler instead of the cheaper welded one.

For interest, the other major contender for this award was LMS 6233 "DUCHESS OF SUTHERLAND" – a case of David v Goliath indeed!

The actual trophy was donated by the NRM and comprises a set of safety valves from an early LNWR locomotive, suitably "boxed" and labelled with the names of the winners, MRT being only the second society to win this award since its inception last year.

The presentation was made by Dame Margaret Weston, DBE and it fell to Douglas Lovely to receive this and the framed certificate. It is only right that Douglas should receive the trophy, since it was his generosity which enabled us to raise the funding for the boiler. Once Douglas had received the award, I made a short [honest!] speech thanking HRA for the award and telling the story of MW1601. During this speech, I took the liberty of dedicating the award to the memory of Nigel Crowther who did so much work on the engine before his untimely death. I feel sure that members will agree with this dedication, for Nigel did so much in such a short space of time with us and he is still sorely missed.

The award itself carries no financial reward, but the prestige is an important factor for us. We are about to look at Lottery funding for our loco collection and the fact that we have won such an award must weigh in our favour, whilst our prestige in the eyes of our fellow preservationists is also raised. Why is this important? Well, you never know WHAT might happen as a result of such an award – many useful contacts are usually gained through such things – watch this space!

The award is a great tribute to all who worked on the locomotive and I was very proud to be involved on the day – I hope all members will be as proud of their society and its achievement.

Ian Smith

CRANE NO. D12

Since its arrival on 28 November a considerable amount of work has been carried out on this crane. Although fundamentally in good order, its two years of open storage had taken some toll. Most of the controls, whilst operable, were stiff or sticking and had to be freed off, cleaned and lubricated before they operated reliably. The jib brake presented more of a problem as it was found impossible to adjust this so that it operated satisfactorily. The means of operation was by a flexible cable, similar to a bowden cable, as found on cycle brakes, but far more substantial. Unlike most such arrangements, this was designed to be operated by pushing and was not very satisfactory. We have modified the linkage so that the brake is now taken

off by pulling on the cable, a much better arrangement.

The derailing beams, which had to be removed for loading onto the low-loader, have been refitted. Other important jobs carried out have included repairing the drivers seat, getting the cab heater to work and sorting the windscreen wipers! Such luxuries that we have never known with our Booths crane!

The biggest problem that we had to overcome was with the 'Wylie' safe load indicator. This worked but it was obviously very much out of adjustment. Attempts to adjust it singularly failed and left us scratching our heads as to what was wrong. We were desperate to use the crane but couldn't do so until it was inspected and couldn't pursue this



Douglas Lovely (left) and Ian Smith are all smiles after presentation of the award by Dame Margaret Weston. Douglas proudly holds the framed certificate.

until the load indicator was operating satisfactorily. In an endeavour to solve the problem we paid a visit to look at the other crane which had found its way to the Elsecar Railway. Alas, it was found that this crane wasn't fitted with a safe load indicator at all! It would have been a retrograde step to remove it from our own crane, purely on safety grounds. In the end, we had to eat humble pie, pay money and bring in an expert to sort it out. It appears that the specially shaped cam, which forms the basis of the load indicator, had been modified whilst at Scunthorpe and was totally unsuitable for the job! No wonder we couldn't get it to work! A new cam was cut, this being individual as the cams are unique to any particular crane. It necessitated the use of various test weights being lifted at different jib radii to establish the shape of the cam. Eventually, the job was done and everything was satisfactory. A statutory inspection was carried out on the 15th January and all was found to be OK, enabling the crane to be put into service. It has found plenty of use in the short time since then!!

The lifting capacity of the crane is 10 tons which exceeded the capacity of all of our slings so we have purchased two new 10 ton flat belt webbing slings to match the increased lifting capacity. These are ideal for lifting boilers, the only load we are liable to lift that approaches this weight.

Carriage & Wagon Notes

We endeavour to paint one of the coaches each winter and this year is no exception. Coach No 1867 was shunted into the workshop on the 2nd February for minor

repairs and a full external repaint. Also in the workshops at the present time is the LNER Ballast Brake, work on which progresses apace. All the timber framing, together with side and end planking, has now been fitted and attention has turned to the roof which should be planked shortly. Once the planking is complete, a sheet steel cover will be screwed down to both waterproof it and protect it from any sparks thrown out by the steam locomotives. Completion of the roof will virtually complete the vehicle, other than for the seating and it will be time to get the paintbrushes out to finish the job.

Work has also started on the recently arrived 13T steel open wagon. The floor required a couple of new planks. Or so we thought! To fit these required virtually all of the planks to be removed as they can only be fitted at the extreme ends of the vehicle. In removing them it became apparent that the majority of the planks were not in the best of health and it has been decided to replace the whole floor. At least this has made access to the frames much easier and these have been needle gunned and painted with black bitumastic paint. The new floor has now been fitted, using tanalised, rather than creosoted, timbers. The wagon is already seeing service for Permanent Way work but will be taken in hand shortly to enable the remaining outstanding works to be completed.

Sports Centre Developments

Work is now well under way on the building of additional amenities at the South Leeds Sports Centre, which adjoins the Railway near Middleton Park. Whilst this has the benefit of removing the eyesore of the old tip, it is another bit of 'green' lost to buildings and development.

MUSINGS ON RAILWAY MUSIC

by Howard W Bishop

In my forays into serious music I have been interested to discover that a number of famous composers feature railways and trains in their works.

Heitor Villa-Lobos (1887-1959) is Brazil's leading composer and is best known today for a set of pieces which he called *Bachianas brasileiras*. There are nine, some for full orchestra, others for smaller instrumental groups. No 2 contains the delightful 'Little Train of the Caipira', a trip down the line in the Brazilian interior amid much squeaking, clanking and hissing.

The Neopolitan song *Funiculi Funicula* was written on 10 June 1880, the day of the opening of the funicular railway built on the slopes of the active volcano Mt Vesuvius. The words were written by journalist Peppino Turco and the music composed by Luigi Denza in a matter of minutes and later played and sung in a tavern at the foot of the mountain. It was immediately declared a success and popularised the area as a tourist attraction.

Darius Milhaud (1892-1974) was a member of the group of French composers known as 'Les Six'. For a time he was a diplomat in Rio de Janeiro and some of his music has a strong South American flavour; his piano music is lively and enjoyable, especially the suit *Scaramouche* (for four hands). Milhaud wrote a piece called *Le train bleu*.

Well known to most rail buffs will be the piece by Vivian Ellis, *Coronation Scot*, which for many years you may recall as the theme tune for the BBC Radio series 'Paul Temple' (yes, in the days of steam radio!). It

was the railway that brought international fame to the French composer Arthur Honegger (1892-1955); he wrote a short orchestral piece intended to describe the locomotive known as *Pacific 231*. It starts with much hissing and clanking, goes clickety-click along the track for a while, then pulls up at the next station amidst more steam and squealing of brakes. The public loved it, and still do. It's good fun.

Richard Rodney Bennett (born 1936) is a British composer who is also a fine pianist, with a penchant for jazz. His own music often reflects that interest, but his versatility is enormous: he was able to write a film score for *Murder on the Orient Express* (which has a wonderful 'popular' waltz tune) with the same skill and enthusiasm as *Spells*, a choral work in an advanced idiom which calls for great concentration from singers and audience alike.

If ever a living composer were able to reach out and communicate with a wide audience, it was Benjamin Britten (1913-1976). His output is legendary and will be remembered by the railway fraternity for his *Nightmail* to words by poet W H Auden and written for a Post Office documentary. Hans Christian Lumbye ((1810-1874) was known as 'the Scandinavian Strauss' because he entertained people with concerts in the Tivoli Gardens in Copenhagen. His most popular galop was inspired by the opening of a railway line into Copenhagen, *The Copenhagen Steam Railway Galop*, whilst Johann Strauss the younger (1825-1899), a member of the famous Viennese family, and responsible for many well-known waltzes such as *The Blue Danube*

and *Tales from the Vienna Woods*, has given us *Excursion Train*.

Finally, Antonin Dvorak (1841-1904), the famous Czech composer, was well known as a railway enthusiast - indeed, he must have been one of the first train spotters! He is reputed to have spent

many hours at the Prague railway station watching the trains, and knew the arrival and departure times of all the trains by heart. All the more remarkable then, that he never composed any music about railways! Unless you know different. Happy listening!



D631 'CARROLL' sits snug up against the workshop doors. As it's one of the few locos that can fit here, it is its usual resting place between duties.

FROM THE MARKETING OFFICER.....

Emmanuel Lanne Writes:

Another year has now gone by and before looking at 2002 let us review 2001:-

In terms of passengers, 2001 was an excellent year, the number having increased by 9% to reach 16,425. Many attractions would have been very happy to see the number of their visitors growing even by one percent. Our friends at the North Yorkshire Moors railway

reported a 6% drop over the same period. So why have our figures gone up? "The easy answer is: because it is a well-run railway." The true answer is slightly different: "Because of the way in which all the volunteers of this railway work together to ensure that it is a well-run railway." When you are at the railway during an open day, look around you and just ask yourself these questions: "If I were a visitor what would I

see?" and "Would I enjoy myself?" The answer to both questions would be a very positive "Yes". Is it professionally run? Are our trains on schedule? Are the staff friendly? Yes, yes and yes. So thank you to you all.

We can explain this 9% increase in slightly more detail. Notably, the bulk of the growth came from the Thomas event. In 2001 we had an extra "Day out with Thomas" event in August, which helped us a lot. In 2002 we will run this August event again, although it will be for 2 days rather than 4. The second reason for the growth, although less noticeable than Thomas, relates to School days. In this case, to be honest, we were helped by the terrible Foot & Mouth disease. Some schools were kept away from the countryside and chose us as an alternative school trip. A very important point is that the numbers of visitors for regular weekend traffic was similar to last year. This is a very encouraging sign, which means that people are enjoying coming to us. Of significance to our long-standing members, the regular traffic passengers represent now only 25% of all traffic. I would be very interested to know the proportion 20 years ago and even 10 years ago. Finally, 41% of last year's visitors were children. The Middleton railway is a family attraction.

In 2001 we carried out a survey of our passengers. This was done over Regular traffic weekends, and during a Thomas event. Below are the main findings:-

50% of them came from Leeds, 10% from Sheffield, another 10% from Wakefield and the remainder from various places. Linked to the survey, we asked how they heard of the railway / the event (if it was Thomas), and we were thus able to have some feed-back about the success of our advertising programs. Also, we were delighted to see that for a

considerable number of people it wasn't their first visit. Many visitors are coming to us on a regular basis.

A second series of questions tried to analyse how our customers rate the Railway. It gave us the great pleasure to see that, overall, we are well, if not very well rated, and showed us areas for improvement, such as more informative signs around the site. Visitors considered that we offered good value for money.

Finally we looked at possible development, and leaving the possible line extension to one side, the survey provided some useful information on what to work on. Access to a cab in the shed proved very popular, whereas train videos and displays of railway memorabilia didn't seem to attract much interest apart from amongst railway aficionados.

2002

The year is yet young, and we were very pleased to be awarded the HRA John Coiley Award for best steam engine restoration. The famous steam engine, 'Duchess of Sutherland' was awarded the second prize... see the separate article for more information.

WANTED

Wanted: Drawings or paintings of the Railway or of its Stock.

If you have good drawings or paintings, or if you know talented people who might have such things, please send us some artwork. They might be published in the Old Run and, with your permission, we may use them in future adverts, leaflets etc.

Contact the Marketing Officer, or send an email to:

info@middletonrailway.org.uk

DB998901 'OLIVE'

By Ian Dobson

As it is some time since an update on *Olive* appeared in The Old Run I thought you ought to know what has been going on. The faithful few (two?) members of the EM2 Locomotive Society have actually made significant progress in the last 12 months. Considering that the vehicle has been parked anything between one and three (long!) extension leads away from the shed it could be said that wonders have been achieved!

12 months ago *Olive* had no internal panelling or ceiling above window level and there were still some areas of flooring to fit and paint. 12 months on - working mostly on weeknight evenings - she now has a fully fitted painted ceiling and floor. She has been fitted with second hand bus seats obtained from Black Prince of Morley thanks to Middleton member Colin Turner. The interior panelling & painting is all but finished and there are only really some last bits of trim to fit. The floor requires a final coat of slip resistant paint but this will be the last job before she enters traffic.

From the bare bones above it may seem to the outside world that the vehicle is ready for traffic and I suppose that technically she is. Unfortunately these days there are three agencies we have to satisfy before this can happen. The cast in order of examinations are as follows - The Department of the Environment and Transport in the Regions (DETR now DTLR - don't ask!), Her Majesties Railway Inspectorate (HMRI) and Steve

Roberts (Middleton CME). How happily naive we were when the vehicle arrived in November 1997 - lick of paint and bung some seats in - ha!

The DTLR are involved because under the terms of the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (RVAR) which are a relation of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) *Olive* is classed as a conversion from Infrastructure Maintenance Vehicle to a vehicle to carry passengers. Difficult to argue against but this has probably added to my receding hairline more than anything else. As the conversion was carried out after the RVAR came into effect she needs to meet all the regulations or apply for an exemption from them. There are 24 regulations and whilst some of them are simply common sense - ensuring a space is available for wheelchairs for example, some are difficult to understand in an operation like Middleton, paint the external doors a contrasting colour to the rest of the vehicle exterior for example! These are quite rightly implemented by mainline operators but it was generally understood that we were not one of these! We were visited in June 2001 by John Adey and Helen Grech from the Mobility and Inclusion Unit of the DETR (as then was!) they went through the RVAR item by item and advised where an exemption would be required either due to the scale of the Middleton operation or the physical constraints of the vehicle. I must say that they were both very sympathetic to the operation (and our budget!) but rules

are rules. Within a matter of days I had submitted a draft exemption application and this was 'tweaked' by Helen before submitting the formal application and disappearing on holiday to Cornwall and the Isle of Wight on holiday (meeting fellow Middleton Council Members in both locations - you just can't get away from the place!)

The next stage of the process was to appear before a meeting of the Disabled Passenger Transport Advisory Committee (DPTAC) in London in September. I had to go through the exemption application with them using 'PowerPoint' slides provided by the DTLR (as they were by then!) I consider myself to be a confident public speaker but faced with an audience with varying levels of sight and hearing disabilities then you have to be very careful. A very humbling experience - count your blessings!

Following the meeting DTLR considered the comments of DPTAC and ourselves and then put together recommendations to go before the Secretary of State and Parliament which are then converted into a Statutory Exemption Order. At the time of writing I am still awaiting the Order but it has been promised for "around the end of February 2002" so once that it is received we can start using the vehicle for public passenger traffic? Er no...

In the best Flanders & Swann tradition The Railway Inspector was the next man to call. He came to see us in September just before the gala. Unfortunately the night before his visit the batteries chose to expire so it proved impossible to start the thing up for him.

We therefore had to hand push her into the platform and then out again after he had gone as no shunter drivers were around at the time!

He was generally satisfied with what he saw. We had deliberately left one or two jobs, not to trip him up, but because we were unsure as to how HMRI would want them done! Considering the amount of work that had been done we were pleasantly surprised that he only came up with one thing we had not spotted - she is not fitted with any life guards to remove small debris from the rail head before the wheels reach it. We have since fitted some temporary ones but these will be replaced with the correct pattern before she enters service. In addition to this he requested one 'rework' - that the batteries should be removed from the passenger area to an underframe location. This has now been done. He also left us a list of 11 relatively minor jobs to complete prior to issuing a Certificate of Completion to HMRI so that they could grant approval for the vehicle to be brought into public service.

The 11 jobs were completed by Christmas 2001 and following Council discussion it was agreed that Steve as Middleton CME should sign the Certificate of Completion and this was done and posted in early February 2002 so I await a response to that one! Permission from HMRI granted then away we go? Er no....

During Steve's inspection he expressed concern over the state of the drive chains. It was agreed that these would be looked at and either re-tensioned or replaced before she could be used. This

will probably wait until we get her up nearer the shed to check them over. Some running tests will also be required but based on past experience we do not anticipate any problems with these. So we are nearly through the last hoop!

I feel she has been restored in keeping with best Middleton tradition of 'don't buy it - recycle it!' I have already mentioned the bus seats but in addition all the interior glass is spare EM2 bodyside windows and one of the horns is from a BR class 76. The main interior grab rail is from a class 40. The back cab door handle from an EMU. The interior lights are also from a bus of unknown origin obtained by Middleton member Bob Cooper.

There are some jobs which require a period of time in the shed to complete. In January 2001 we had a new exterior door skin made for one of the doors and as this requires the door to be off the vehicle to fit we can't really do it outside! In addition she requires a top coat of BR brunswick green (rather than Shipley Paints mid-brunswick green which she presently carries!) and the fitting of British Railways crests and numbering. She has not been in the shed since December 1999 as she takes up a lot of room, but it must be our turn again sometime over the summer?

Whilst the she has been a resident of Moor Road since November 1997 she has seen very little use apart from the now traditional runs out after the EM2 Society AGMs which are held in Olive in June! In 2001 we managed several trips to Park Halt and back and gauging runs round Park Halt loop and down to the gates on the Dartmouth Branch. We

have our sights on the Balm Road branch for 2002 but we'll see what happens! She did manage some demonstration runs out at the 2000 gala but an appearance in 2001 was scuppered by the batteries expiring on the Wednesday before!

It is very likely that the interior work will be completed by Easter 2002 and there are then some minor mechanical jobs to attend to, along with a fault on the battery charging circuit to rectify. The intention was always to get the DTLR & HMRI paperwork completed in this close season so that anything else was in our hands rather than theirs. This looks likely to come to fruition so I believe that I can confidently predict the entry of a 19 seat railbus into Middleton Railway traffic in 2002!

Whilst the vast majority of the restoration and conversion work has been completed by EM2 Locomotive Society members (and at the sole expense of that body) it would be unfair not to mention the unfailing help from the stalwarts of Moor Road. Graham and Peter have been invaluable in terms of help, encouragement and heckling. Frankie has provided various bits of shaped metal - some of which we have paid for! Steve has poked around from time to time and others too numerous to mention have been cajoled (sometimes willingly!) into being another pair of hands or just offered moral support and encouragement.

Thanks to you all!

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Editor welcomes letters from members (and non-members!).

KEITH WEAR WRITES:

Having received the Winter 'OLD RUN' I write to compliment you upon the issue. Having 'covered' the role of Editor in addition to being Chairman really is a heavy commitment. Being away from the area means that my opportunities to come to the Middleton Railway are restricted so I appreciate all the more news within the OLD RUN. The winter issue contains some excellent photographs which have been reproduced to a high standard.

Glad to read about the 10 ton rail crane 24899. The piece about the technical report in the statutory inspection reports was well supplemented by Peter Nettletons factual and humorous 'In Search of an Answer'.

Having written letters over a period of years to Leeds City Council and received favourable responses to the proposal to extend the line in conjunction with redevelopment and rejuvenation of Middleton Park, I am delighted to read that this plan is still 'on the cards'. Action Plans have the nasty habit of taking years to put into action so let's hope the project may, in 2003, come to fruition.

Our friends from the Leeds and District Traction Engine Club have organised a meeting on Tuesday April 16th:

An Evening on the Darjeeling Himalayan Railway.

The 0-4-0T engines designed by Sharp Stewart in 1881 will be seen ...(or

What a splendid idea to include 'Meet the Team'; I am sure there are many who Stan and Carol Holdsworth would say should come before them because that is how they feel. Nevertheless, as a Treasurer with enthusiasm, one would go a long way to find a person better suited to that role at Middleton with Carol there having the same interest and commitment in the shop. The welcome they give visitors and members is important since they, together with all the others involved in booking and the shop are the first point of contact.

With best wishes for a successful and enjoyable operating season.

Thanks for all these kind words. As I have said in the editorial, we still have some gremlins to sort out but, hopefully, we're getting there.

As you rightly say, in praising Stan and Carol, we mustn't forget the others in the team; for that's what we are - a team. And a good team, too.

The extension is very frustrating. It is a slow process but there is progress. If only the City Council would move as fast as we would wish.....

almost).

Venue: Dewsbury Road Social Club.

Free entry. Tickets to be obtained on request to 01274 753 400 (day) 0113 257 0371 (evening and week ends.)

BOOK REVIEW

BROKEN RAILS - How privatisation wrecked Britain's railways

Be honest... how many readers predicted that Railtrack would be put into administration? *Broken Rails* is what one might call a damning indictment of railway privatisation and - published weeks before the announcement - author Christian Wolmar come close to predicting the final denouement.

Broken Rails tell the sorry tale of how and why a surprisingly small group of bright, but ideologically fanatical civil servants, and dim, self-serving politicians kidnapped one of the world's most efficient nationalised industries, reorganised it in the face of almost universal criticism (from former premier, Margaret Thatcher, amongst others) and left it in ruins.

British Rail was a massive, and at times, remote organisation, but it was safe, innovative, and relatively cost-effective. This monolith was to be replaced by hundreds of individual companies, linked by a tangled web of bureaucracy, and set free to become efficient and profitable. With the benefit of hindsight - a wonderful thing - it's hard to believe that anyone could possibly have believed these hideously distorted and entirely artificial 'market forces' could ever be made to work. But believe it they did, and after a shaky start, politicians of every shade flocked to endorse the scheme.

Centre stage is (or was) the truly frightful Railtrack - surely amongst the most poorly managed, badly structured and ill-thought through of organisations in capitalist history. Wolmar's premise is that Railtrack simple *couldn't* work, because the figures never did and never would add up. Rather more disturbingly, he makes the good case for the new structure being wholly and partially responsible for all three of the serious rail accidents that occurred after privatisation.

The real humdinger was the Hatfield crash, where a cracked rail had been spotted almost

two years before, but a chain of unbelievable failures and ditherings left the stretch unrepaired and unprotected by speed restrictions. Finally on 17 October 2000, it shattered into 300 pieces under a passing train, shattering as it did, the illusion that Railtrack-style ersatz capitalism was a viable mechanism for maintaining, let alone *improving* the nation's infrastructure.

The real lesson of *Broken Rails* is that privatisation - like national ownership 50 years before - was never going to be a cure-all for the railways or anything else. As Margaret Thatcher astutely observed, railway privatisation was a privatisation too far.

Like all good historians, Wolmar avoids speculation, leading the reader gently but inexorably towards a series of horrible truths, but allowing them to reach their own conclusions. For example, there is a possible extreme theory that railway privatisation was part of a larger conspiracy, including the new bus industry grantees, to weed out and destroy the weaker railway lines, leaving a rump of profitable intercity services. This plot only ground to a halt when the public, rather embarrassingly, expressed a distinct preference for trains, failing to patronise the replacements buses that were to be the shock troops of the new policy. We may never know the truth, but it is worth noting that in the month ended 7 December 2001 the numbers of passengers carried by Britain's railways was the highest since 1945!

For anyone with a private or professional interest in transport policy, this book looks set to join the classics.

Howard W Bishop

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Registered Office: The Station, Moor Road, Leeds LS10 2JQ
Registered Company No 1165589 Registered Charity No. 230387

Telephones: 0113 271 0320 (shop) 0113 270 6162 (shed)

E-mail: info@middlesetonrailway.org.uk

Internet address: <http://www.middlesetonrailway.org.uk>

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| R L Bailey | 15 Bryan Road, Elland, HX5 0QZ (Shop Manager) | 01422 372673 |
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