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A party of visitors from **Taiwan**, see page 12 to find out why they were here.
(Photo - Ian Smith)

The Old Run
No. 245
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The Editor welcomes contributions - photographs, articles, news items and letters - relating to the interests of the Trust and the operation of our and other Railways.

Items for publication, including images, are acceptable in any format and may be sent via email, post, CD or USB stick.

Cover Picture: This picture, showing a party of Taiwanese visitors, was taken by Ian Smith. To find out more about their interest in our railway, please see the article on page 12.

HAPPY NEW YEAR
to all our members

Your railway hopes you had a lovely, happy Christmas, with not too much of whichever good stuff turns you on, and therefore your scales haven't broken as a result.

So far as Santa was concerned, he had a good time too, and we sold lots of lovely tickets to the parents of children who wanted to meet him. Admittedly it was sometimes not clear who was coming to meet Santa - parents or children (8 adults, 1 six month old baby?) - but regardless of that, everyone seemed to enjoy themselves and all the carrots - sorry, mince pies - were eaten. It seems that nostalgia plays a big part in visiting Santa, but there's nothing wrong with that!

2020 is going to be a very big year for our railway, as we celebrate 60 years of running passenger trains. There are to be lots of special events which we know you will thoroughly enjoy. Elsewhere in this missive you will find a postcard on which you can jot your special memories of the time you have been with us; John Linkins will tell you what to do with them (in the nicest possible way of course), so we can celebrate what our railway has meant to its hard working members. Photographs will also be very welcome, so dig through your heaps and see what you can find. If required, we will return them to you afterwards, so please make sure your name and membership number are written on the back and that your address is up to date in our records.

There will also be two or three ways in which we can celebrate with food and drink, so look out for details of these.

We all hope this is going to be a fantastic year which will create many more happy memories of our railway.

Jenny Cowling, Editor

Our Chairman speaks

First, I wish all members of the Middleton Railway Trust and other readers of the 'Old Run' a rewarding and enjoyable 2020.

The year 2019 was a very successful year and ended on a high note with the most successful Santa Special season we have ever run and one which gave a lot of pleasure to a lot of children. This would not have been possible without the hard work of volunteers from the commercial team, the train crews and the mechanical engineering team who kept the trains running and of course without the help of Santa and the Elves. A huge amount of work goes on behind the scenes to prepare for this event – selecting presents, buying presents, wrapping presents, creating 'pick lists' for train crews to get the presents ready for the children etc.. What is seen on the day is just 'the tip of the iceberg'. Thanks go to all who gave up so much of their time to make the Santa Specials happen.

Apart from the very successful Santa Special season, 2019 was marked by the installation of a set of solar panels on the roof of the engine house which starts the process of reducing the environmental impact of the Railway. Minimising our environmental impact, where possible, will help safeguard our ability to use fossil fuels to power our trains in the future.

2019 was also marked by the bringing into use of the new Carriage Shed which is already proving its worth by protecting our coaching stock from the ravages of the winter weather. Whilst there are a couple of minor tasks to complete – which will be done in the closed season – the job is effectively complete. Thanks go to Mark Calvert and all members of the civil engineering team and other volunteers who put so much effort into getting the shed built at well under budget which means that we have money to invest in other projects in future years.

During 2019 particular efforts were made to reduce smoke, by using different fuels for lighting up and running and by the crews making an extra effort to keep down smoke. This appears to have resulted in a reduction in complaints – certainly from personal observation smoke release was lower in 2019 than in previous years. Keeping smoke release to a minimum will help the Railway meet what will be an increasingly important issue in the future - the attention being given to particulates as a health hazard by national and local government and by our neighbours.

Looking forward, 2020 will be a significant year in the railway's history; our Diamond Jubilee as a standard gauge preserved railway.

On 21st June 1960 a group of volunteers led by the redoubtable R. F. Youell ran a passenger train on the Middleton railway and ushered in its new life as one of Britain's heritage railways. The Middleton Railway was the very first standard gauge railway to run passenger trains – another first in our long history.

The volunteers who operated our first train did it because they enjoyed it and because they wanted to give a fun experience to their passengers – factors which motivate us today. They also did it because they

Our Chairman speaks

believed that the Middleton Railway was too important to be allowed to die.

At a recent Volunteer Forum our Company Secretary, Tony Cowling, alluded to this fact when he reminded us all of why the Middleton Railway was preserved and what makes this Railway so special.

In simple terms, history was made on our Railway. In 1812 it was proven, not merely demonstrated, on the Middleton Railway that the transport of goods on the surface of the land could be mechanised; that steam power could be used in place of animal power. From that moment the quantity of goods moved and the speed with which it could be moved no longer depended on the power of the horse or of the ox but on the ingenuity and skill of man. It was a 'tipping point' in history and led to what is sometimes termed the second phase of the industrial revolution. Our railway exists above all to commemorate this fact and the genius of John Blenkinsop and Matthew Murray who made it possible – two sometimes overlooked heroes of the Industrial revolution.

The development of steam power on the Middleton railway led directly to the establishment of the locomotive building industry in Leeds. As Tony also reminded us at the Volunteer Forum, this is the other reason why our Railway exists – to preserve artefacts and the history of this once important industry. More railway engines were built in Leeds than in any other town in England and almost certainly there was a greater variety of engines built in Leeds than anywhere else in the British Isles.

The Middleton Railway is far more than another preserved secondary main line or branch line where nothing much happened; it is a heritage railway which commemorates a very important moment in history and a once very important industry.

During 2020 work will continue on planning the Museum extension and one of the themes will be the pioneering work of Blenkinsop and Murray and the links to the Leeds locomotive building industry, so that visitors can gain a better understanding of the relevance of the large exhibits in the engine house to the story that we have to tell.

To celebrate our Diamond Jubilee we are planning a special Gala on the weekend of the 21st/22nd June which we hope will feature a visiting locomotive and carriage. We are also planning a food, music and ale festival under the heading 'A Taste of Yorkshire' to be held on the weekend of Yorkshire day (when else?) and a recital of Soprano arias and harpsichord and organ music ranging from the 16th to the 20th Century by Jenny Leadbeater (known to you as Jenny Cowling) and Simon Lindley, Leeds City Organist, is planned for the early evening of 27th June – Diamond Jubilee month. This will be held in the Engine House and should be a very special event.

Look out for other events which are in addition to our usual programme. We hope that as many of you as possible will visit your railway in 2020 and enjoy all that has been achieved in the last sixty years and all that we are planning for our special Diamond Jubilee Year.

Charles W Milner, Chairman

So Who Really Was First, Then?
Researched and Explained by Tony Cowling

Several representatives of the Middleton Railway were recently at a meeting organised by the Heritage Railway Association, in which somebody raised the issue of which had been the first standard-gauge heritage railway. Naturally, we all said “the Middleton Railway was!”, to which the reply from the speaker was “what about the Railway Preservation Society?” Since we were none of us sure what the answer to that question should have been, and anyway it was not really relevant to the topic of the meeting, we let the matter pass. But the question remains, and since 2020 is our diamond jubilee year it needs answering, to establish just which preserved railways were actually “the first”, and what it was that they did first.

It is well documented (in the book “Tal-y-Llyn Adventure” by Tom Rolt) that he arranged a meeting in Birmingham in 1950 which set up the Tal-y-Llyn RPS as the first railway preservation society, and that this railway was then the first to be operated as a preserved one, with the first trains running on 14th May 1951. Also in 1951, a meeting in Bristol started the attempt to preserve the Ffestiniog Railway, although it was not until 1954 that the Ffestiniog Railway Trust acquired a controlling interest in the original Ffestiniog Railway company, and it would be another year before they were able to operate their first trains on 23rd July 1955.

By contrast, the situation with standard gauge railways is more complicated, not least because it involves tramways as well as railways. Indeed, the Tramway Museum Society can trace its origins back to a farewell tour of the Southampton Tramways in 1948, when a group of enthusiasts decided to purchase one of the open top trams on which they had ridden (number 45, which is now part of the collection at Crich). As a society, though, it was not established formally until 1955, but even so that certainly makes it older than any of the societies that were attempting to preserve railways. Furthermore, the focus of the TMS was initially on the preservation of the trams themselves, and although it was not long before they started to look for a possible site where they could run them, it was not until 1959 that their attention was drawn to the site at Crich by members of the Tal-y-Llyn RPS who were recovering the track of the metre-gauge line that had originally served the quarry. After arranging to lease this site, the need to then re-lay the line with standard gauge track meant that it was not until 1963 that they were able to run trams to carry passengers, initially using horse power, with the operation of electric trams starting the following year.

By 1959 attempts were also being made to establish societies to preserve standard gauge railways. In particular, at a meeting in Ardingly (Sussex) on 15th March 1959 the Lewes and East Grinstead RPS was formed, originally with the aim of re-opening the part of this line between East Grinstead and Culver Junction that had been closed. It is not clear how long it took before this plan for the whole section of line had to be abandoned as unworkable,

and attention focused instead just on the section between Sheffield Park and Horsted Keynes, and the society changed its name to the Bluebell Railway Preservation Society. (One internet source suggests that this change of name actually took place at the initial meeting, but the version on the website of the Bluebell RPS implies that it was some time later, which seems more likely to be correct).

The Bluebell RPS was able to acquire a locomotive (the “Terrier” 0-6-0T 32655) and two coaches, and these were moved over the line to Sheffield Park on 17th May 1960. At this time, though, the society was not allowed to run into Horsted Keynes station, and so they had to acquire another locomotive ("P" Class 0-6-0T 31323) in order to run “top and tail” fashion to a halt just south of Horsted Keynes. Consequently, it was not until 7th August 1960 that the Bluebell Railway was able to start running trains for passengers.

The speaker at the meeting which triggered this article referred to the Railway Preservation Society, and the creation of this was another significant attempt at preserving standard gauge railways that was being made in 1959. The driving force behind this was D.Noel Draycott, and his concern was to avoid conflicting efforts, so that his very ambitious vision was for one organisation that would consist of a number of regional groups, and so could co-ordinate these activities on a national basis. In the event, though, only three such groups were actually established, of which the first was the one in the West Midlands that the speaker at our meeting had mentioned. The other two were one in Scotland (which in 1961 became the Scottish Railway Preservation Society) and one in London.

Noel Draycott did explore other possible groups, and in particular issue 6 of the Old Run (dated June 1960) records that he visited the Middleton Railway to discuss with Fred Youell the possibility of us becoming the basis of a West Riding group. By then, though, it was becoming clear that running our railway was likely to take so much effort that there would be little spare for wider initiatives, and so this idea does not seem to have been taken any further at that time. Eventually, though, the efforts to set up the RPS did lead indirectly to the formation of the Association of Railway Preservation Societies (the main predecessor of the HRA), and the Middleton Railway did make a significant contribution to this, particularly through the efforts of Susan Youell and Mike Crew.

The West Midlands group of the RPS was set up at a meeting in Stafford on 21st November 1959, with the aims of both preserving rolling stock, and creating a depot where it could be stored. By June 1960 they had succeeded in arranging siding space at Hednesford (on the line between Rugeley and Walsall), and in acquiring two 6-wheel coaches. There was, however, no possibility of operating trains at Hednesford, and eventually they settled on the site of what is now the Chasewater Railway, near Brownhills. They leased this from December 1964, but their first steam open day there was not until 29th June 1968, and it took until 1970 for them to move everything from Hednesford and close the depot there.

The London group was not set up formally until 1962, as the London Railway Preservation Society, although by 1961 efforts were already under way to acquire an ex-Metropolitan Railway tank engine. Initially these efforts were focused on L52 (an 0-6-2T), but when that turned out to have a cracked frame then L44 (an 0-4-4T) was acquired instead, once the Middleton Railway centenary celebrations had taken place in 1963. Initially the group arranged depots to accommodate rolling stock at government-owned sites at Bishop's Stortford and then at Luton, but again there was no possibility of operating trains at these sites. Eventually the Quainton Railway Society was formed in 1969, and the London RPS group amalgamated with it to form what is now the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre.

So, given all this history of other groups, how does the Middleton Railway fit with it? If you have read your copy of our history, then you will already know that the need to create a separate body from the Leeds University Union Railway Society meant that the Middleton RPS (as it was initially) was set up at a meeting in December 1959. During the next few months this society negotiated to acquire locomotives, a number of trams (mainly ex-Leeds City Tramways, but not all), and Swansea and Mumbles car number 2. Issue 5 of the Old Run (dated May 1960) records that the Hunslet Engine Company was willing to lend a locomotive "either diesel or steam", which actually turned out to be the highly appropriate choice of HE 1697. The first three trams arrived variously on 10th, 18th and 21st June, while the S&M car arrived in Leeds on 14th June 1960, was partly unloaded and moved onto Middleton track on 18th June, was re-assembled on 19th June, and (propelled up the hill towards Parkside by HE 1697) ran the first train for passengers on Monday 20th June, at the start of the University Rag Week.

This all means that there is no one answer to "which was the first standard gauge heritage railway?", because there are various aspects to "being a heritage railway". For the existence of a society to run a railway, then the first is clearly the Tramway Museum Society - and any argument that tramways are not the same as railways does not fit with the way in which the Middleton RPS was initially aiming as much at preserving trams as it was at preserving the railway. For the aspect of actually moving stock over the tracks of a railway then the Bluebell was clearly ahead of us, since their initial stock movement on 17th May 1960 was several weeks before the movement of any stock by the MRPS over Middleton tracks. On the other hand, we were certainly the first to run trains for the public, beating the Bluebell by about 6 weeks.

And what about the RPS, which was the question at the meeting that sparked off all this? It is clear that their West Midlands group was set up formally at least a week or two before the MRPS was, and we do not have precise information about the informal activities before that. On the other hand, both the TMS and the Bluebell RPS were established well before both them and us. The available sources do not give an exact date for when the RPS first moved stock into their depot at Hednesford, so it may or may not have been

before the Bluebell moved their first stock to Sheffield Park, or before we brought either the first tram or S&M car number 2 onto Middleton tracks. Thus, they may have been the first for this aspect, and so do need to be recognised as playing an important part in those early days.

What is clear, though, is that this does not affect our claim to being the first standard gauge preserved railway to run trains on which the public could travel, because their running of trains at Chasewater came much later. And running trains for the public is fundamentally what a preserved railway is there to do, while the other aspects are just things that are needed to support this. **Hence, we can certainly claim that we were the first, as there can be no dispute over the underlying facts and dates.**

Happy Diamond Jubilee!

The concluding section of David Hebden's Memoir - for now...

1977 saw the railway being used as a test track for a new design of battery locomotive being built by Greenwood and Batley of Leeds, especially for use on the building of the Hong Kong metro system. The locomotive was brought down to the line at Moor Road and tested to see if the performance was as expected. The engine, splendid in its yellow paint was run up and down the line to see how it performed before being shipped abroad.

With the starting of the passenger service, a new venture was to offer trips to schools. This was to supplement part of the curriculum. Children were able to view the engine, have a ride on the train and learn about the local history. I drove the first school special, arriving down at the line about 7 am, to find the engine (No 6) already in steam and blowing off. It transpired my fireman couldn't sleep, so decided to come down early! He told me he was coming out as his landlady was just coming in from her night shift!

While running these school specials, we had a "lunch break" scheduled but the time was taken having to run back to Claytons yard to refill the water tank as we had no means of "watering" the engines at Moor road. This procedure involved consultation with "Ben the Crane," and his assistants in Claytons yard to park their crane out of the way over lunch time to allow us a clear run back straight to the water point by the shed.

With the passenger service taking off, a means of replenishing the water in the engine tanks had to be sourced. Enter the old Laporte Acid tanker. This was fitted with a flexible hose and a control valve to enable the engine tanks to be filled. A full Acid tanker would half fill a saddle tank, but with Windle, and the Danish, the tank could be fully filled as the tank was low down between the frames.

Filling the engines with water was the easy part. With the regular passenger service we needed more coal to keep the engines going. As British Coal was still being mined, coal was ordered by the wagon load, to be delivered by rail to Balm road. From here the coal was taken to our coal pile in Clayton's yard where we built a wooden frame to hold the coal. Unloading was a technical job. If the coal was from a good old Yorkshire pit, the load would include many large lumps. These were first liberated from the wagon, heaved over the side

and used to build a retaining wall at the front of the stack. Once the wall was up to a suitable height, coal was then shovelled behind the wall to start the stack. As more coal was added, the front wall height was increased using more big blocks and followed by much more shovelling until, eventually, the wagon was emptied. Due to demurrage (hire) charges, the wagon had to be emptied in the day and be returned back to British Rail to prevent extra costs.

In 1969, one of our past chairmen was fortunate to be able to accept a locomotive on behalf of the railway from Kirkstall Forge works. Henry de Lacy 2 was redundant and we were asked if we would like it? The answer was yes. Transport was then discussed, and as the forge still had a rail connection, and the engine was in a fit state to be moved over British Rail track, it was decided to move it by rail. On the appointed day, Henry became a special train with a diesel locomotive in tow moving from Kirkstall to Middleton. We went down to meet it when it landed on our track at Balm Road. The engine was in steam, but there was a problem, the fire was out. Then reality hit home as Henry de Lacy 2 was oil fired, not coal. As we had no waste oil, a quick retreat was made to the yard for a diesel locomotive to tow the new arrival back to the yard. Kirkstall Forge had a plentiful supply of waste oil but we had none. To the rescue came our mechanical engineer. Waste oil from Healey Mills' compressors was obtained and used to fill the oil tank. The next problem was how to atomise the oil to enable it to burn in the firebox. Enter Sentinel 68153. As this was a quick steaming boiler, a steam feed was run to Henry to enable the oil burner to work. Due to the high consumption of oil, and the loss of members' eyebrows due to blowbacks, the decision was eventually taken to convert the fuel to coal to enable easier steaming without the need for a second engine and the associated extra costs.

Time marched on, and Claytons decided to cease use of the Garnet Road site. This meant a mass exodus to our present site at Moor Road. The site needed fencing and an engine shed was built to act as a secure storage. This was to become what is now referred to as the paint and woodwork shops. Fencing was obtained from a redundant NCB site and served us well until 2018 when, due to a high number of break-ins resulting from the fence showing its age and reluctance to resist attack by the locals, it was replaced by a new modern security fence to protect the perimeter.

A new brick built shop had replaced two old containers which were well past their sell by date. Well, Middleton does believe in getting value for money and maximum usage from our purchases! The Laporte tank was mounted on a plinth to act as a water tower for filling the engines. During this period I had married and we were bringing up our children, so time at the line was limited to mid-week school specials and the occasional Saturdays when time permitted. Sadly, I missed the week to week work building the Museum and the new workshop, but was able to attend the opening ceremony when the workshop building was named after our founder as "The Fred Youell building".

Concluding David Hebden's Memoir

In 1970, work started on the extension of the M1 motorway into south Leeds. One problem was it had to cross the railway. Not one to be put off by southerners, chairman "Fred" suggested to the Department of Transport that the motorway cross the line by means of a level crossing. His argument was that we had Acts of Parliament from 1758 and 1812 and so another act would be required to close the line. Result: a new tunnel and a diversion. Gone were Clayton's curve and the head shunt; in was a diverted line heading south to a new point south of the line of the motorway. Another big loss was Clayton's sports field and Hunslet Moor along with the North end of the line to the coal staithes.

Time continued to move and we had special days filming, plus Leeds hosted a conference about heritage railway safety. We had to simulate an accident where a shunter was crushed during shunting. This was filmed and a discussion on how to deal with the outcome formed the main part of the conference.

Leaping forward to 2009 and my retirement. 44 years at work starting with the GPO, then BT, time to pack in the day job, and join the Wednesday workers. What a change to the old ways of working.

Sir Berkley's boiler was sectioned to show what is in a steam engine boiler and a decision was made to display it in the museum. A local cabinet maker was approached about suitable display mounts and it was agreed that an oak plinth would be best. The hard part was moving the boiler into the museum. First, pull all the west road exhibits out, then crane the boiler onto a trolley. Push the trolley into the museum and lift the boiler off and turn it through 90 degrees! Easy when you say it, but a little more of an effort when a 5 ton boiler has to be jacked up and turned. Eventually it was in the correct position and the cabinet maker's workers fitted the display plinth.

Thinking back, there were many things that happened. Time plays tricks with memory. Was it so long ago that we ran the special enthusiast train with several borrowed brake vans? And it only seems like yesterday that the "Acme" engineering company had a building by our line next to Beza Road. All now gone and replaced by modern flats.

Time has progressed and so has the Railway. If someone had said to me in 1962 that we would have covered accommodation and a first class museum, I would have laughed them out of Clayton's Yard! Look what we have now.

David Hebden


68153
68153
© Ian Smith


© C Nicholson

"Just visiting"; friends from Taiwan

Visitors From Taiwan

We all know that the Middleton Railway is (or ought to be) famous, but it is not often that we discover that our fame has spread to the other side of the world. This happened early in October, however, when we were asked if we could host a visiting party from Taiwan (an island that is close to China, but very proud of its independent status). The request came from Prof. Mike Robinson, who is the director of the Ironbridge International Institute for Cultural Heritage, which is part of the University of Birmingham, and (as its name suggests) works closely with the Ironbridge Gorge Museum Trust.

The reason for this visit is that the government of Taiwan is developing a project to set up the former railway workshops in Taipei (the capital of Taiwan) as a railway museum. These workshops had been built originally in 1935, to replace the original workshops that had been created soon after railways had begun to be developed in Taiwan, in 1885. They, in their turn, had been replaced in 2012 by new workshops outside the capital city, and to save them from becoming derelict in 2015 they had been designated as a national historic site. The site included an erecting shop (168 meters long and 28 meters wide, and initially used for building steam locomotives), a forge, a diesel locomotive shop, a carriage shop (originally for wooden bodied coaches, including upholstery, etc), and various other buildings, such as a power station, an office block, an apprentice school and a bathhouse for employees. The site (which is roughly 600 metres by 300 metres) also includes features such as a "vehicle transfer platform" (ie traverser) and an open air crane and, as well as the site, they have various items of rolling stock, including diesel and electric units.

Given the scale of the project, they are being very thorough in their preparations for it, and so the visit to us (which was co-ordinated by the Ironbridge International Institute) was part of a full week. The programme for this included visits to the National Railway Museum (at both York and Shildon) to Tyseley, to the Midland Railway Centre at Butterley, to Barrow Hill, to Ecclesbourne and to Elsecar. On the day that they came to us, Thursday 21st November, they also visited the KWVR and the Vintage Carriages Trust in the morning, and travelled on to us in the afternoon.

The timing meant that it was not practical for us to offer them a train ride, but this did not matter, as they were more interested in finding out how we operated, and in visiting our workshops to see the kinds of preservation work that we need to be able to do. For this we had to split them into three groups, since there were just over 30 of them in the party, including interpreters, and even a group of 10 is stretching the capacity of our workshops.

They were very pleased with the input that we were able to make, and the comment subsequently from Mike Robinson was, "they were impressed by Middleton and in particular the enthusiasm of you and colleagues. The power and passion of volunteers is something they are struggling to comprehend as they have been working with assumptions that the State leads on everything!".

Tony Cowling

The Enclosed 'Birthday' Card

The 60th anniversary of the MRT is rapidly approaching and as part of the celebrations, the organising team would like to create a display to not only commemorate this special 'birthday' but also to collect memories, anecdotes and good wishes in this significant year. Included in this copy of the Old Run is a 'Birthday Card', kindly designed by Robert Taggart and John Linkins, which the team would very much appreciate receiving back. On the rear is a space for you to leave a good luck message, anecdote, memory or other note pertaining to the history of our preservation. These will be collected and displayed over the celebratory weekend in June and possibly beyond, as well as later being collated for our archives. If you would like to include other items for display, such as a photograph, then please do so, clearly marking if you would like it returned after the event. Cards can be posted to the railway at the usual address or left in the 'post boxes' which will be placed in both the shop and workshop areas, alongside spare cards if you would like to submit more than one! 350 have been printed so if we could get all of them completed it would make a superb display for the railway's significant celebration. If returning by post, please send it/them to:-

Middleton Railway Trust Ltd., The Station, Moor Road, Leeds LS10 2JQ, mark the back of your envelope "Birthday Card" and add your post code,

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As another part of the 60th anniversary celebrations the organising committee has agreed to host a celebration event for volunteers and their partners/families on Saturday 18th April 2020. Appropriately this will be held at the Midnight Bell Pub, overlooking the Round Foundry where over 200 years ago the story of successful steam began. We have the use of the upstairs room from 7pm and a buffet supper will be provided. One reason for choosing the venue is their excellent reputation for quality food. Thanks to the generosity of our sponsors the cost of the event has been kept to a minimum and will be £10 per head. Payment can be made by cash or cheque (payable to the Middleton Railway Trust Ltd), in a clearly marked envelope 'MRT Social Celebration' with your name and how many people in your party written upon it. **Please ensure these are passed directly to me or put in the 'Volunteer Liaison Officer' tray in the shop area**. Please DO NOT pass it to the treasurer, other members, leave it on the signing in book or incinerate it in the hope of it reaching me by smoke signal! I look forward to seeing as many of you there as possible, dress code smart casual, no boiler suits or dirty boots please.

Many thanks. John Linkins.

Salvage Hunting

During 2018, the railway received a request from Oli Barling, a researcher working for the programme “Salvage Hunters.” Could he come to the railway and see if we had suitable items that could be purchased by the programme’s star, Drew Pritchard? Of course we said “Yes” and Oli came to Moor Road for a recce. Malcolm Johnson and I hosted him as he looked around the Moor Road workshop and we identified a number of interesting items and there the matter rested for some considerable time.

Then, in early December 2019, I received a phone call from Oli – could they come and film on 18th December? After a number of phone calls between Traffic Manager Aaron Marsden, Malcolm and I, everything was quickly agreed. Fortunately, so far as the actual railway was concerned, the programme’s producers were only interested in getting a few shots of a loco running around the yard, and this was easily done.

Malcom was happy to be the “escort”, required just in case Drew saw something he wanted, but which we didn’t want to part with – I am not an engineer and would hate to sell off something that we needed!

An early start saw me opening up the Engine House at 7am, Jack Auckland coming down shortly afterwards to open the Workshops, with the TV crew arriving at 7.30. First order of business was a cup of tea for everyone, followed by a safety briefing for the cameramen – we didn’t want anyone falling down pits whilst filming……

The Producer interviewed me about the railway and its history before taking a film crew inside the Engine house to film the exhibits, which gave us our first problem. They didn’t want a Christmas theme and of course, we were decorated up for “Santa”. Commercial Manager Janet promised terrible retribution if those decorations weren’t in place at the end of the day, so the crew took down what they didn’t want and then returned everything back to its proper place afterwards!

The show’s star, Drew Pritchard and his fellow presenter, John Tee, arrived later in the morning and we then filmed introductions and farewells before moving to the Workshop for the “Hunt”. Interestingly, the items identified in 2018 weren’t as popular with Drew as first thought, mostly being rejected. However, Drew did purchase a number of items during the Hunt but I cannot reveal them, as the programme hasn’t yet been transmitted. Suffice to say that the railway has done very well financially from the day and of course “Salvage Hunters” shows both on Prime Time TV and continuously repeats on satellite, so we will be guaranteed lots of publicity over the next year or so.

Following the “Hunt”, Drew and I filmed an appraisal of the day’s events before the film crew departed for their next assignment. We expect this episode to be screened in February and they have told us they will let us know the screening date so we can inform the membership.

Ian Smith

Photo shows , from left to right, John Tee, me, and, Drew Pritchard

Early Middleton

This year, 2020, sees the 60th anniversary of the [then] Middleton Railway Preservation Society running passenger trains and it seems the right thing to celebrate those 60 years. This series of four photos comes from the collection of the Tramway Museum Society, to whom we are grateful for making them available to us. They were all taken by Keith Terry, who was a member of both the MRT and the TMS. In them, members will see the early beginnings of what we are today…

Photo 1 was taken on 18th June, when the Swansea & Mumbles car had just arrived. Along with many other older members, I had always assumed that it had arrived at Balm Road Down yard, when in fact, it actually arrived and was partly re-assembled in the Up Yard. This photo shows the lower body on its own wheels, with the top still on its flat wagon. Interestingly, HE1697 can be seen on the right of the photograph of this strange ensemble crossing over from the UP to the DOWN side of the railway. Exactly why 1697 should not only be at the wrong end of the yard, but also the wrong end of the train for haulage on to Middleton metals is quite unknown at the time of writing. It could quite easily have been left on the Middleton line itself to await arrival…

Photo 2 shows the two halves of the car being hauled up the line to Dartmouth Yard, where they were stored overnight prior to the assembly being completed.

Photo 3 was taken the following day and confirms that the top deck was indeed lifted up on the old GN branch bridge, to be lowered onto the lower deck. There had always been an “urban myth” that Fred Youell did a deal with the local signalman at the time, but no-one could prove it. Well, here is proof that the event happened, but it is more likely that BR themselves actually arranged the lift, since they couldn’t possibly do it on their tracks as they would be unable to move the thing once re-assembled. Also, we know that they had used exactly the same method in Swansea to separate the car into its two decks ready for travel to Leeds.

Photo 4 shows the re-assembled double deck coach (NOT a tram, as it ran on railway tracks, not tram tracks) being propelled up the line during Rag Week in 1960. These were the railway’s first ever public passenger trains, albeit for donations in aid of Rag Week. There is little doubt that HMRI would not now accept the methods of coupling in those early days!!

Ian Smith

1. Swansea and Mumbles car being moved to Balm Road Down yard.

2. 1697 hauling the two halves of the car - the lower deck on its bogies followed by the upper deck still on its wagon, at what we would now call the “Beza Road Level Crossing”. Complete with student ‘passengers’ standing on the top of the lower deck!

3. The top deck being lowered from the bridge onto the bottom deck.

4. The whole car re-assembled, running during the University Rag Week in 1960, complete with “real” passengers in its seats!

MOOR ROAD HAPPENINGS

LOCO NOTES

No. 6

January has arrived and there are no planned trains until April. Time for me to relax a little bit, I thought. Not so! An irate e-mail from our Old Run editor reminded me that I hadn't sent her my contribution for this Old Run. No rest for the wicked, or me. *(Huh! He should see me when I'm **really** annoyed! Ed.)*

Aside from spending hours on the computer, life at Moor Road has been fairly steady with just the odd crisis, well problem, to overcome. *(Well it would be boring without them! Ed.)*

1601 MATTHEW MURRAY

1601 continues in regular service and was used on some of the Santa trains and to start 2020 on New Years day. It has generally performed satisfactorily with just minor routine jobs to keep it in traffic. The main one of these has been attention to the fireman's side clack valve, which was passing badly. The clack valve, for those who don't know, is an old term for a non-return valve, which is still in general use when talking about boilers. This valve allows the injector to feed water into the boiler but prevents the boiler from emptying itself when the injector is turned off. Dismantling of the valve identified some damage to the valve itself and it was deemed impractical to rectify it so a new valve was made to replace it. This has largely solved the problem although it still leaks a bit when under pressure. At least it no longer allows the boiler to empty itself all over the shed floor. The associated injector steam valve was also passing steam when shut off. This too has received some attention.

Matthew Murray has now been drained for the winter and had its firebox and smokebox cleaned, along with the boiler tubes. No work is planned for it over the winter shutdown. It's boiler certificate runs until July after which the loco will come out of service. No decision has yet been made on any future overhaul.

The boiler continues to make progress at Northern Steam Engineering. All the stays are now fitted and, on a visit today, I was able to observe the washout plug hole screw threads being re-cut. Agreement has also been reached with Northern Steam as to the fitting of brick arch carriers in the firebox. The boiler never had a brick arch but it is considered that it would be advantageous to fit one as part of our measures to control smoke emission. There has been a minor problem with the supply of the new boiler tubes which is going to delay completion by a few weeks. The present target date is mid-February.

Back at Middleton, work has been progressing on various fronts. The cab has been sanded down (again) and various dints and areas of slight corrosion have all been filled and sanded smooth. The first coat of green undercoat has now been applied..

The new tank has now been completed apart from the handrails, which it was decided we would do ourselves. The necessary 1¼" dia tube has been obtained and a start has been made on bending it to the required shape. This is actually quite a tricky operation to perform to get it to look right. Those with long memories will know that the front handrail that the loco arrived with was rather bent and misshaped. Hopefully we can make a vast improvement on this. The two footsteps which give access for filling the tank have both been needle-gunned and painted. The old tank has now been cut up and despatched to Robinson & Birdsell.

Work has also been progressing on the cleaning and overhaul of the various valves and fittings. A new rodding plug has been made for one of the gauge glass cocks.

A new pattern for the firebars has been made. We did have a pattern for these but a prolonged search has failed to turn it up. Another item on the 'missing' list is the Firehole doors, which we have failed

to find. A sure way of finding these is to make a new set, which is almost certainly what we will have to do.

1210 SIR BERKELEY

The Boiler inspector examined the boiler during December and expressed his satisfaction at the overall condition. The only work required, other than re-tubing, is the replacement of the fusible plug pads, the screw threads of which are corroded. This work will have to be carried out by a contractor as we do not have the in-house skills to undertake this.

The outside of the frames have now all been sanded down and a coat of grey undercoat applied. Work continues on a similar exercise on the inside of the frames. This is always much more difficult than the outside due to all the additional bits and pieces that get in the way and make cleaning that much harder. The brake pull rods have also been cleaned and sanded down and painted up to a gloss black finish. The bunker has also been receiving attention and has been needle-gunned where necessary and sanded down prior to being painted.

The Salter safety valves have both been stripped and examined. One of the adjusting screws has always been too short due to it having the end broken off, possibly dating back to its time at Cranford ironstone mine. Whilst not affecting the operation of the valve it did make it difficult to assemble after being dismantled. A new screwed rod has been made to replace this and bring it back to the correct length.

No.11

Still nothing to report.

No.1310 (NER H)

The loco returned from Elsecar during June. It was given a steam test to check it over and then drained and put on display in the Engine House. At the moment it is being stripped and prepared for its annual boiler inspection.

1544 SLOUGH ESTATES No.3

1544 has largely been the loco of choice for much of the season, especially whilst Brookes No.1 was away on hire. During August crews started to report a problem with the steam brake, which was not releasing when the brake was moved to the off position. Initial investigation showed that the brake piston was coming out of the cylinder by a significant amount and tending to become jammed, even though the brake shoes and handbrake were correctly set. The initial cause of this was thought to be the incorrect set up of the steam brake linkage, The linkage between the piston and the brake lever has three holes and it was set up on the shortest position. Moving the lever to the middle hole soon solved this particular problem. However, it was also noted that, with the steam brake valve in the off position, it was still allowing a significant amount of steam to get to the brake cylinder. The valve was dismantled and the valve faces lapped in. Testing the valve with compressed air showed no improvement and further checks ascertained that the valve spindle was actually bent, causing the valve to not seat properly. The spindle was carefully straightened and this solved the problem, enabling the loco to be put back into service. It has generally performed satisfactorily and was pencilled in to do most of the Santa specials, along with Matthew Murray. In the end, an increasingly heavy ‘knock’ on the left hand side was deemed too severe to allow it to continue to the end of the season. The knock was due to excessive clearance between the crosshead and the slidebars. This was overcome by adjusting the shims on the top slidebar to take up the clearance. The loco is now much quieter. This should have been the end of 1544’s problems but, on the last Santa train on Christmas Eve, the brakes again stuck on. Subsequent investigation revealed that the brake valve spindle was yet again bent and re-creating the problem. The spindle has, once more, been straightened but just why this is occurring we have not been able to ascertain. Carefully checking the movement of the valve has not shown up

any sideways forces that could bend the spindle.

The loco's boiler has now been stripped and is being prepared for a boiler inspection. It is hoped that the Boiler inspector will look favourably on a year's extension to its boiler ticket to take it to the end of 2020. We will just have to wait and see.

SENTINEL No.54

The initial test steamings of the Sentinel have not been without their problems and the fire had to be dropped on two occasions before we actually got to the magic 275 psi and the safety valves lifted. This should have been a time for celebration but it just highlighted a problem with the valves. These 'popped' perfectly at the desired pressure but then didn't seat again until it had dropped to about 230 psi. After discussion with the Boiler Inspector it was agreed that he would formally examine the boiler under steam to check on the suitability of the boiler but would require further work on the safety valves. By agreeing to this, it meant that we could then start to clad the boiler and get on with all the other jobs which couldn't be done until the boiler was lagged. (The Inspector initially requires to see the boiler in steam in an unlagged state to check for any problems that might be hidden underneath the lagging.) Work is presently progressing on this task which is proving to be a much harder task than expected.

Back to the safety valves. Our original safety valve column was quite badly corroded and deemed to be not fit for further use. A spare safety valve column was eventually provided by Mike Hart (who owns two other Sentinel locos) but the column was without the actual valves. As our valves were in decent condition the two were married together and all seemed satisfactory, except that, as noted above, the valves did not re-seat once opened. The Sentinel Drivers Club fortunately own the Sentinel drawing archive and, with their help, we were able to obtain various drawings of safety valves. It seems that there are quite a few different designs of safety valve arrangement and, although similar, there are subtle differences. After some deliberation it was decided to remove the stainless steel valve seats and re-machine them to match the valves themselves. This has now been done but we still need to test them to ascertain whether or not we have been successful.

HE 2387 BROOKES No.1

As mentioned in the last Old Run, Brookes finished off its summer holidays with a visit to the Ribble Steam Railway in September. On its return it was put into steam to check it over before putting it back into service. During this steam test steam was observed to be coming out from the cylinder block between the block and its cover plate. The initial cause of this was thought to be a hole in the top of the cylinder block due to corrosion, as it has suffered from this in the past and been repaired. With much effort, the concrete in the smokebox was dug out and the steel cover plate removed. This enabled us to uncover the top of the block, which did not reveal any obvious problem. The loco was once more steamed and tested. This did not reveal any major problem but it was noticed that the casting was slightly porous, allowing a small amount of steam to escape, but not enough to cause the problem. However, it was noticed that a large amount of water congregated in the well of the casting as the loco was put into steam, this largely being due to condensation. The present thought is that it was this water that was boiling off that was causing the significant amount of steam that was originally observed.

It was decided that it would be beneficial to repair the porosity in the block and, following discussions with Belzona, it was agreed that one of their products would be suitable for the job. This has now been applied and the loco is in the process of being re-assembled ready for another test. Fingers crossed.

K 5469 CONWAY

A locomotive that has not featured in the

Old Run for some time, Conway, has been at the NRM Shildon outpost for the last few years where it was slowly undergoing a cosmetic restoration by a volunteer team there. However, a change of management and policy meant that the NRM required the locomotive to be returned to Middleton. This duly happened during December and the locomotive is presently tucked up in the Engine House. Although some restoration was done at Shildon, much still requires doing, principally with regard to the cab, running plate and front buffer beam. A plan for this has yet to be agreed.

Fowler 42200033 HARRY

No progress with the repairs to the various gauges, and the loco is currently on display in the Engine House.

Peckett 5003 AUSTIN'S No.1

Still awaiting workshop space for repairs and a re-paint but, pending this, it remains in service and is used as required, although it has spent most of the last two months on display in the Engine House.

D2999

As mentioned in the last Old Run there have been intermittent problems with the loco failing to start when required. After various tests it was decided that three of the six batteries were failing and these have now been replaced. Hopefully, this will solve the problem. The air receivers have been inspected by the Boiler Inspector.

D577 MARY

The loco is available for traffic and sees occasional use.

HE 6981

The main 2" pipework for the vacuum system has now been completed, along with the fitting of the driver's brake valve and slave control. A mounting plate has been fabricated for the vacuum exhauster and this has been fitted on the left hand side of the loco at the front. The end of the crankshaft drive has been modified to allow the fitting of a drive pulley to power the exhauster. This has also required the manufacture and fitting of a spacer to move the fan slightly further towards the front of the loco to create the necessary space for the exhauster drive. A few words that don't really do justice to the amount of work necessary to achieve all this. The exhauster has now been fitted and new drive belts provided. New drive belts have also been provided for the fan, water pump and dynamo.

Work has also continued on the endless task of cleaning years of oil and dirt and removing corrosion, mostly with the aid of a needle-gun. The wheels and coupling rods have now been done and painted and recent work has been concentrated on the rear buffer beam, which is now in yellow primer. Attention has also been given to the radiator cover, which has required some repairs to the platework due to corrosion. The inside of this is now finished in light grey and its re-fitting to the loco is imminent.

The cab roof has also been cleaned down and needle-gunned, with the old badly corroded gutters being removed. New gutters are in stock but have yet to be fitted.

D631 CARROLL

Available if required but generally on display in the Engine House. The loco recently had its annual inspection of the air receivers.

L.M.S. 7051

Available if required but generally on display in the Engine House.

D1373 MD&HB No.45

Available for traffic and in use as required. The fuel level was finally reduced sufficiently to allow the gauge to be removed for inspection. It was found that all that was needed was a good clean of the moving parts.

HE1786 COURAGE

Available if required but generally on display in the Engine House.

All other locos are stored, either on display in the Engine House or awaiting overhaul.

CARRIAGE & WAGON NOTES

Coaches

At long last we are able to stable our coaches in the carriage shed when not being used and this is already proving beneficial. All three coaches are presently available for service and all have seen some service over the last three months. We did have a minor problem with the electrics on coach No. 1867 when it was coupled to the north end of coach No. 1074, which is something that has never happened before. When the lights were switched on in No.1074 whilst it was coupled to the other coach, the fuse blew, although this did not happen every time. However, this did not happen if the electrical cables were uncoupled. The problem was eventually traced to a damaged cable causing a short and has now been rectified.

Battery charging of our coaches is achieved by plugging them into individual battery chargers when not in use. The battery isolation switches and sockets on two of the coaches were on the west side to suit the old battery charging points. It has been decided that it would be easier to have the battery charging points in the carriage shed on the east side and the two coaches concerned have now had their electrical installations modified to achieve this.

A little bit of Middleton history was made on the 5th December when coach No. 2084 was not used. As far as we can ascertain, this was the first day on which the coach has not been used on passenger services since it first entered traffic in 1985. Taking advantage of its short spell of not being required, two brake blocks have been changed on it and the brakes adjusted.

LMS Brake Van No.158760.

Progress on the vehicle has slowed somewhat in recent times as one of the team of three who were working on it has moved away and a second member has been quite ill. However work has continued and a roof canvas has been obtained for the van and has now been fitted, although final finishing off and painting remains to be done. Work should shortly start on planking of the sides and ends and it is hoped that this will make a big impact as it will start to take on a more finished look.

Palvan

The restoration is all but complete with only finish painting to do. It was planned that the vehicle should return to Moor Road on the day that these notes were being written but, unfortunately the low loader going to collect it broke down and the move had to be abandoned. It should now be completed within the next few days. Once back at Moor Road it will be moved under cover to allow the paint to be finished. It will then require fitting out internally to enable it to return to its former use as the PW tool van.

Ballast Brake Van

The roof of this van had a few places where water was finding its way through to the inside, generally where screw fixings had come loose or corroded. The van sees little use during the year but is an essential part of the Santa operation as it is used to carry the day's presents, not to mention Santa's helpers. During October and prior to the Santa season the van was brought into the workshop and the steel roof sheets re-fixed where necessary and the whole given a coat of sealant. A new oil fired heater was also installed to keep Santa's helpers nice and warm while they worked.

Hunslet Flat No.2

This has now been reduced to many pieces of scrap and is effectively no more. The wheelsets and axleboxes have been retained as spares along with some bits of brakegear.

LMS Van No.M85133

The door planks on this van have become quite badly warped, making it virtually impossible to open them. The prime reason for this was that, when first re-

building the vehicle some ten years ago, we had little experience on wagon construction and failed to screw the inner and outer cross planked skins together and also failed to paint the timber internally. This has led to water getting into the timber, causing it to warp very badly. The only solution is to make new doors and work on this project has just started. The van is essentially used for storage of low value items, such as nuts and bolts and firebars.

CARRIAGE SHED

It is pleasing to report that the Richard Holland Building, as the carriage shed is officially known, is now in regular use following lifting, levelling and ballastng of the track.

The work necessary to bring the building into use involved much more than the track. Because of the ground layout the bottoms of many of the portal stanchion would be below ground level and these have been given long term protection by wrapping them in Densotape. Lights have been installed on both sides and four battery charging points provided on the east side, one for each coach and one for the ballast brake, which it is intended will live in there when not in use.

We know from bitter experience that it is relatively easy to cut your way into a steel clad building if you have the right equipment. Whilst there is nothing of value to anyone else within the building we do have concerns about the possibility of vandalism and have tried to make it as difficult to access as possible. As part of these defences the steel side sheets have been lined with oriented strand board, which should make it much harder to gain access. Finally, a burglar alarm has been installed.

One remaining job is outstanding and that is the provision of a buffer stop at the south end of the building. The necessary parts for this are currently being made. Because space is at a premium, the buffer stop will essentially consist of four pieces of rail, set upright in a deep bed of concrete and tied together by a timber buffer beam. Four large gusset plates will also connect these uprights to the track.

MOOR ROAD YARD

Space, or lack of it, is the railways biggest problem. Lack of space also tends to result in an untidy site. We are presently putting quite a bit of effort into tidying things up and, more importantly, getting rid of the many bits of scrap and redundant materials. The area adjacent to the Picton shelter has been cleared of redundant sleepers and other bits of detritus and is to be given a top layer of ballast. It is planned to lay a short section of track to store the several spare wagon wheels that we have. This area will also provide some extra staff car parking on busy days. The old green container, which is in poor condition, has been emptied of everything and will shortly be taken away for scrap. This will be replaced by the ‘new’ container, which was obtained as a temporary replacement for the tool van, which in turn will also release the ‘Hunslet’ flat wagon for general use.

As part of the tidying up, the stocks of useable timber sleepers have been moved to the cleared area behind the carriage shed. These will be joined by the stock of concrete fencing posts and other strategic low value materials presently stored at the south end of the yard by Keyline.

Finally, we are having a major scrap drive. As already mentioned, the old Hunslet flat wagon has been cut up, as has the old Booths crane (No.5820) which has been out of use since 2007 and needed major and extensive repairs to put it back into satisfactory condition. The Perkins diesel engine and Brockhouse transmission, which are identical to that on Smiths crane No. 20054, have been kept as strategic spares. Next on the agenda will be to cut up the many odd and scrap lengths of rail that are scattered at various points in the yard.

Stephen Roberts, Mechanical Engineer

January 2020 Update on Youth Activities

Having cast my eye over the previous Youth Team update from around 6 months ago, we've seemingly been quite busy doing not a lot. Well, that's not really fair as the team have been involved in a small way in a number of projects, it's just that we don't have anything to quite call our own yet! We are now entering the 4th year of the programme and how time flies; my new year's resolution is to offer some real opportunities for our team to build their skills. Maybe you could help?

One item with which we did make tangible progress (although it still needs a little finishing off) is the re-paint of the solebars and buffer beams on the ballast brake van. While this was inside for roof repairs, I set the lads on needle gunning the parts of the frames most visible and bringing them up to gloss black. We didn't quite get this finished before the van was pressed into service for Santas so we will certainly get the job completed over the winter period. I think it's made a real difference to the overall appearance of the vehicle and I'd like to get the body re-painted at some point too.

Aside from this the team have continued to clean down the frames of Sir B ready for painting and I am pleased to say the long and laborious process is now almost complete. I'd like us to have a go at painting inside the frames, a good place to practice, as the temperature becomes more conducive to painting. On No 6 they have also helped by sanding down the various areas of filler that were required on the cab and valances. I haven't yet succeeded in keeping the loco clear of junk so it still looks a bit like a building site!

Routine jobs have very much been the order of the day on the engineering side, Joel and I spent a happy day removing various bits from Brookes' smokebox after it developed (what turned out to be) a perforated cylinder block. We've also supported the team completing the carriage shed with various groundworks and electrical installations. Finally, we've been trying to help the museum team keep the engine house clean and tidy, a seemingly never-ending job.

The Santa season has obviously been a major feature of the latter part of the year and I am pleased to report that Kenny, Alex, Joel, Mads, Finlay and our latest recruit, Harry, all proved very helpful over this period. On the footplate, train or in the shop they are really demonstrating their maturity and developing skills they will use in various walks of life. Added to this, there are the considerable number of young members who help out as Elves and indeed, those who have been doing it for a decade now are training the next generation. I think the total number of young people I counted supporting the Santa trains at one go was around 6 which is fantastic and almost half the number of core volunteers required for that one day. If we count the loco crew who always seem to look very youthful then we really have a very bright future ahead of us. Happy New Year to you all and please, where possible, do support me in my venture. Even if that is just offering to take on a Youth Team member for a day, then all help is greatly appreciated. I have had a number of volunteers do this already and report back that they have seen a real positive change in some of our younger members. Clearly what we are doing is very

worthwhile so long may it continue!

William needle-gunning the frames of the NE Brakevan in preparation for painting

Joel and William after a hard days work on 1310

SOME SERIOUS WORK BEING DONE HERE

Joel working on Brookes No1 (under supervision) to remove some corroded steel from the smokebox.

Matthew Murray was born in 1865 near Newcastle upon Tyne, later to be home to many of steams early pioneers. Once he had completed his apprenticeship, probably to a millwright, he decided to seek work in the newly developing town of Leeds. He walked the 60 miles or so to the parish of Adel, around 5 miles outside the town, where he found work in a flax mill belonging to a Mr Marshall. The company later moved to larger premises at Hollbeck Mill where he filed the first of many patents. This was in 1790 (patent No1752) for 'a machine for spinning flax, cotton, silk etc'. It seems that like so many men in the north of England at this time, Murray was to begin his technical ascent in the mills.

His first significant patent of 1793 (No 1971) was for a spinning machine which utilised 'sponge weights' and the process of wet spinning was thus born. This invention revolutionised the spinning of cotton and other materials for the dampness helped to avoid breakages in the thread. Murray had worked in the spinning industry for around 12 years when he decided to make a move to the firm of Fenton, Wood and Lister sometime before the turn of the century. Here he began work in the engine department and soon proved himself not only a capable engineer, but prolific inventor of new machinery and processes. His first major development was a system for regulating the draught at the chimney of a boiler via a damper. This was controlled by a small cylinder regulated by the pressure in the boiler, thus Murray had developed the first self-regulating boiler of sorts.

He soon moved into a house nearby the works (on the well known site of the Round Foundry, Water Lane) which he constructed himself and which was entirely steam heated. The steam probably came from boilers at the works and thus this house became known as 'Steam Hall'. Incidentally it was also one of the first houses in Leeds to be gas lit and Murray was instrumental in helping the municipal authority to install gas street lamps across Leeds. There is another interesting story relating to Murray's house which does not involve the great man at all. In the early years of the 19th century the Luddites were at work in Leeds and the following quote establishes Mrs Murray as quite a character in herself *"Mr Murray being from home, his wife, after refusing to parley with the leaders (of the Luddites) presented a pistol at them and fired...they immediately de-camped and did not trouble the place any more".*

It is about this time that the rivalry between the Round Foundry and Boulton and Watt (B+W) developed. B+W sent one of their men, a Mr William Murdock, to Leeds to visit Murray and he was openly welcomed to look around the works. But no sooner had he returned to Birmingham (B+W's works were there) than they almost immediately filed a lawsuit against Murray! This was not the last time that B+W would bother our intrepid inventor and Murdock was soon again in Leeds *"with a view to seeing if we could purchase anything under their very nose that might materially annoy them and eventually benefit ourselves".* This they did, purchasing land directly across the road from the Round Foundry and also approached employees of Murray's to try and lure them away to Birmingham. In this

second act they were also successful and left one of their new employees to spy on Murray's works for quite some months before he 'formally' left the Round Foundry. Who said industrial espionage was a new concept!?

Correspondence between B+W confirms that they stole a number of methods from the Leeds works including casting in Green Sand of which Murdock commented *"I must acknowledge it was the most beautiful and perfect piece of work I ever beheld".* They also took ideas for *"Some other tools, partly in imitation of Murray".* Both these comments appear in a letter dated February 1st 1799.

On the up side, none of this deterred Murray who almost immediately sent engines abroad to Sweden and Russia. For these he was sent a *"valuable diamond ring from the emperor of Russia and a gold snuff box from the King of Sweden".* In 1812 he was instrumental in fitting a steam engine to a boat, a captured French vessel called *L'Actif* which was sailed up the canal and then driven down to Yarmouth after fitting out. Here it *"often ran at a speed of 10-12 mph and proved a great success"* and then went on to ferry between Sheerness and Chatham from 1814. Thus it became the first sea going steamship in this country. It is also known that Murray's designs were applied to the famous Mississippi River steam paddlers from 1816.

Of other famous names which began their engineering careers at the Round Foundry under Murray there is David Joy, inventor of the now famous Joy valve gear (as fitted to 1310). Richard Peacock who would later go on to establish Beyer Peacock, Manchester; builder of, among other things, famous articulated locomotives. Also John Chester Craven, the first loco superintendant of the Brighton (later LBSCR) Railway. Finally the Butlers who built Kirkstall Forge and Benjamin Hick who moved to Bolton and began a firm which later supplied most of the boilers to the Lancashire cotton mills.

Murray died on 26th February 1826 at the age of 61. The Leeds Mercury *reported "A man whose mechanical abilities were, perhaps, inferior to none, his great improvements in the steam engine...will be a lasting testimony of his unceasing labour"*.

The trouble is; I'm not sure there is a 'lasting testimony' to Murray as his name is eclipsed by those such as Boulton, Watt and Stephenson. Lesser men, well known for their 'acquisition' of others' ideas. Murray lived at a time when there were few ideas to acquire, he relied upon wit, ingenuity and raw talent to make the strides in engineering which he did.

Reprinted from the June 2013 edition of the Old Run

Stockton and Darlington? We beat them by a mile!

Dear Editor,

One of our young volunteers, Edward Chapman, has won a scholarship to help with fees at Sheffield University. The “Quest” scheme award came through the Institution of Civil Engineers following interviews at their Westminster headquarters with major Civil Engineering companies. As well as financial assistance, Ed will work with the company Morgan Sindall in his summer vacations and (all being well) will continue with them after graduation.

Middleton Railway played a big role in Ed’s award. Mark Calvert told him about the scheme, encouraged him to apply and helped him with a mock interview. During the real interviews, Ed was asked about his voluntary work at the railway and four participating companies expressed interest in him. Ed wants to thank the railway, and Mark in particular, for helping him on his way, and also John Linkins who organises the young volunteers. Ed is away now but will keep contact with the railway during vacations. His parents have made a contribution to the “After the Fire” fund in appreciation of the railway’s help.

Sent in by Ed’s father, Tim Chapman.

Your Editor replied:

Dear Tim,

Many thanks for this item. It is heartening to hear of success stories like this and I’m sure everyone at the railway will be very pleased to learn of it. I hope Edward enjoys his time at the University of Sheffield, it’s a very good institution, and that he finds his chosen career rewarding and fulfilling. We hope, too, that he will keep up his connections with the railway - many of our current members joined when they were students at 18 (some even younger) and are still volunteering with us 50 or more years later. This gives us an enormous amount of knowledge and experience which is invaluable. Many thanks for your donation to our appeal, that is much appreciated.

John Linkins commented as follows:-

“I am delighted to hear of this achievement and consider it makes all our efforts with the young people worthwhile. Well done Edward."

Overheard at Christmas ...

Santa: "Well, who's this? What's your name young man?"

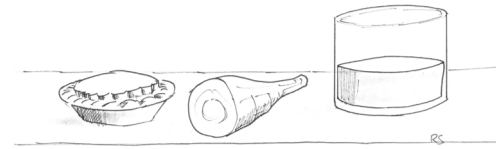
Parent: "Don't tell him, Henry "

and

Santa: "So, I will be coming to yours on Christmas Eve when you're asleep. Can you do me a favour please? Can you leave me out a nice mince pie?"

Parent: "… and a carrot for the reindeer"

Other Parent "…. and a shot of Scotch."



Some of our busy Elves, welcoming the children and making sure Santa has everything he needs for his important work!

The Middleton Railway Trust Limited

(Limited by Guarantee and not having a share capital)

Registered Office: The Station, Moor Road, Leeds LS10 2JQ

Registered Company No. 1165589 Registered Charity No. 230387

Accredited Museum No RD2114

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Membership Subscription Rates from 1st January 2020

Adult Membership (FT)……£23.00

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TOP AND TAILING - last and first trains!

Here is the last train of 2019 - looking just a bit tired after its hard work with Santa (although Slough Estates No. 3 did more), and, of course, Santa himself did more than anyone. *He* needs 11 months of sleep now. Zzzzzzz

And here is the first train of 2020, looking refreshed and ready for anything.

It's amazing what a mince pie and a nap can do for Matthew Murray.