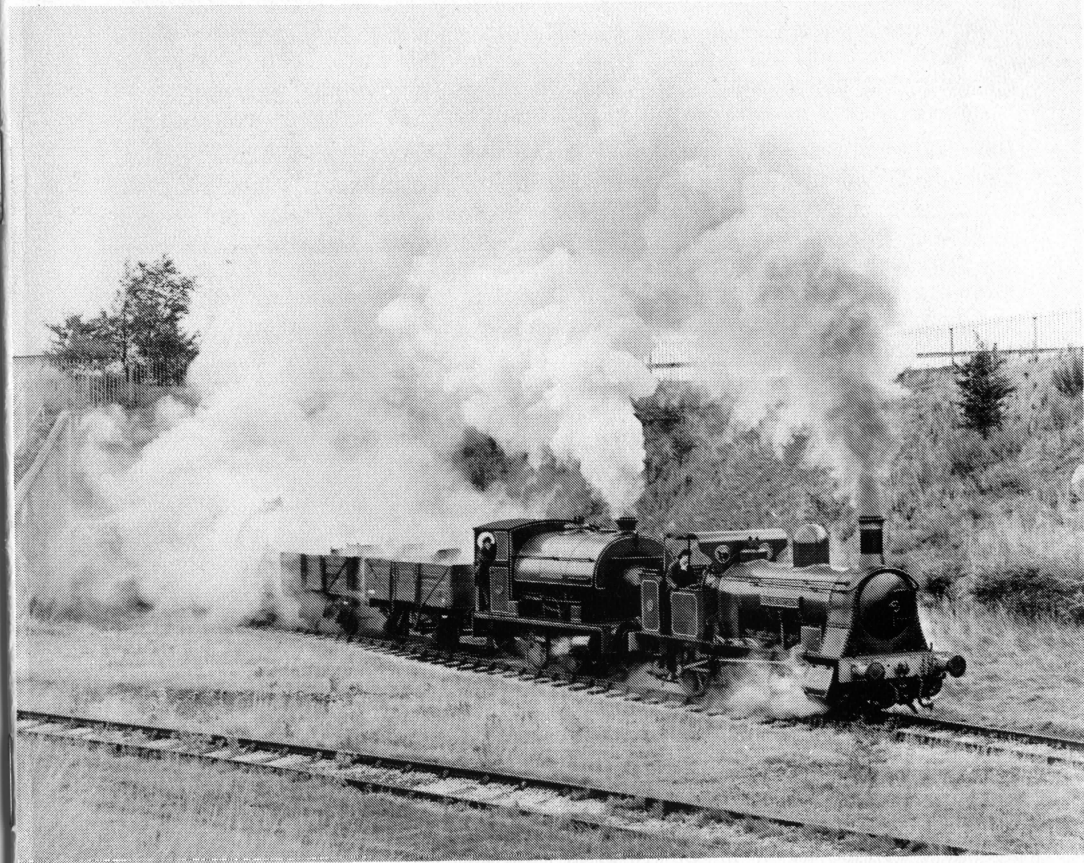


THE OLD RUN



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THE 1758 MIDDLETON RAILWAY
LEEDS

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THE OLD RUN

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Editorial Address: 15, Leylands Lane, Heaton, Bradford, Yorkshire, BD9 5PX.

The Editor invites **ALL** readers to contribute articles, news items, letters, photographs and drawings on subjects of interest! All contributions should include the reader's name and address. Opinions expressed in the magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Middleton Railway Trust Ltd., the Middleton Railway Association, or the Editor.

All articles for the next issue should reach the Editor by **15th December** at the latest.

EDITORIAL

Yes, it's late again! Perhaps we should leave those words set up permanently, but we have hopes yet of reforming our regular contributors - no names will be mentioned, but at the 30th September dead-line, the only material we had was of a historic nature; an article by Wilhelm Wunderlich and a short item by the Editor. On the other hand, perhaps we should all forgive them, since they at least do send contributions, unlike most other members. To make matters worse this time, just as the Editor was beginning to feel only a little less "yonderly" - to use the emotive Yorkshirism - after the loss of her left kidney, the Deputy Editor joined in a lunch-time game of soccer at school and broke his arm! Consequently, the typing up of material has been done by the Editor in short spasms, when possible. Maybe next issue

SHEILA BYE, EDITOR
JOHN J. BYE, DEPUTY EDITOR

Cover: **Bellerophon**, owned by the Vintage Carriage Trust, and **John Blenkinsop**, owned by the M.R.T. and *The Old Run* Editor, double-head out of the tunnel with a demonstration goods train on the 23rd September 1990. Photo: Keith Sanders.

**SOME INFORMATION ON THE BLENKINSOP PAPERS
KEPT IN THE WEST YORKSHIRE ARCHIVES AT LEEDS**

It was the late Mr. John Bushell who mentioned to me that various papers kept in the West Yorkshire Archives were connected with John O. Blenkinsop, the holder of patent No. 3431, dated 10th April 1811 and one of the men who made Middleton Railway known the world over. On my first visit to Leeds - described in Mr. Bushell's last article in *The Old Run* No. 125 - there was no time to go to the Archives. This was only possible later, with the aid of Dr. R.F. Youell. My third - and up to now last - visit was on the occasion of the great 30th anniversary steam gala with dinner, during 15th to 17th June this year.

In order to get some clarity into the huge amount of items, some method of classification is adopted in the archives to be able to get access to the documents one wants. An "Accession Number" is therefore allocated in the Leeds Archives to every item or group of items. Accession Number 1546 is the first one which is of interest to us. It contains:

- the Report Book of J. Blenkinsop
- the Letter Book of T.W. Embleton
- Part 1 (11th December 1830 to 3rd May 1833)
- Part 2 (13th May 1833 to 29th November 1833)

The second Accession Number, 1547, has information on Matthew Murray, and Number 1478 deals with Middleton Railway.

Naturally, my interest was concentrated on Blenkinsop, and I therefore now deal with his "Reports & Estimates". It is a volume of 164 pages, and could be divided into 3 parts. The first would consist of pages 1 to 12, and begins with general remarks on a colliery, followed by a description of coal seams and the method of sinking a pit. Pages 9 to 12 contain printed agreements between the mine management and the coal miners' union, the statements as to the earnings for mining "thick coal" and "thin coal", and, finally, the wages for drawing the coal. The second part gives particulars of the mines investigated as to the efficiency and method of mining in 34 collieries (pages 13 to 64). Finally, the third part contains "Papers relative to Travelling Engines", from pages 66 to 164.

In order to be able to work a bit more accurately, pages 1 to 12 have been copied and thus can be commented on in more detail. The first page - as mentioned - bears the heading "Reports & Estimates" and the date "Middleton Colliery 17 Sep 1829". It states that "on 14th Inst" he inspected the colliery and found two seams in operation, "named respectively the main Coal and the little Coal". Access to the coal was gained by tunnel, declined "at a rate of 1 in 40" with a bearing "South 5 degrees East", and by a vertical shaft "at the distance of 1356 yards from the entrance" to a depth of 96 yards, which was called the Gosforth Pit. Then follow details as to the thickness and quality of the coal, and the water level. On page 2, the general

appearance of the workings is dealt with, and it seems to him unnecessary to go into "details relative to the method pursued in working the Coal which is very efficient". He also mentions that pillars of sufficient size are left over for the safety of the men. By that way, a good compromise between the interests of the proprietor and the men is found, and not "more than 1/8 of the Coal is lost". He mentions lastly that the mine is "infested with fire damp", and says that sometimes naked candles are used instead of safety lamps as laid down by rule. "The Little Coal Seam", about 30 yards above the "Main Coal", is mentioned on page 3. Whilst the thickness of the coal in the main seam is 4ft 4in, the little seam varies from 2ft 8in to 3ft 3in, with an average not "more than 2ft 10in". This coal is much coarser, and "consists of three distinct parts or divisions each possessing a different quality". All "the concomitants of the Coal being favourable, nearly the whole of the Coal is got;" and the proportion left does not exceed 1/10. No firedamp is to be found in this coal. Then the next heading is "Sinking Pit", which extends to page 4. The pit "is situated near the west boundary of the Estate". When he inspected it, the shaft was "already 133 yards down", and "has passed through the little Coal and is calculated to be within 11 or 12 yards of the Main Coal". However, water "from a fissure in the stone" dissipated in the pit, and therefore he suggests "to let it stand a few weeks" or alternatively to increase the stroke of the pumps.

Then a new chapter follows, entitled "Measurement of Coal yet to be obtained by present Pits". These calculations fill the pages 4 to 6. There are 35 acres to be worked of the "Main Coal" and 70 of the "Little Coal". The contents of an acre, expressed in "Middleton-Waggons of 45 Cwt" is 2639 in the Main Coal. Deducting 1/8 for loss, leaves 2310 waggons to be raised from the mine. Deducting 1/10, for coal consumed on the premises and for waste, leaves 2079 waggons per acre, which can be obtained from the main seam. From the little seam, the figures are 1795 waggons gross, deducting 1/10 for loss in mine brings it to 1616, deducting 1/10 for consumption at the mine leaves 1455 waggons per acre from the little seam. Then a table follows, listing the average sales of various types of coal for the years 1824 to 1828, which total to 37,934 waggons average per year in that period. Therefore he suggests to calculate the sales at 35,000 waggons per year for the future. In continuing these calculations, he arrives at a total of 174,615 waggons which can be expected from the two seams, and thus in the next five years there can be worked about 10 acres "of each Seam in the year which makes the continuation of Mine a matter of easy calculation". Then follows the calculation if a "new Winning in the West part of the Estate" is opened, where 239 acres belong to Mr. Brandling's own property. There, a life expectancy of 28 years is obtained, so that in total it can be said that the mine could be worked for another 33 years. This report is sent to "the Rev. R.H. Brandling" and witnessed by "Geo: Hill".

Pages 7 and 8 are headed "Sinking Pit" and dated 13 Sep 1829. There, the calculations as to the depth of the pit, mentioned on page 3, are made, and particulars as to the construction of an enlarged pump system are given. These are supported by calculations as to the amount of water which can be pumped away. It also says that "it seems adviseable to suspend the sinking for a few weeks". The last sentence

reads: "The above paragraph formed part of the report to Mr. Brandling", and as witness appears again "Geo: Hill".

The next four pages are documents of some value, and it would probably be worthwhile to reproduce them - if possible - in one of the future issues of *The Old Run*, as they give an insight into the relations between workers and management at that time; Middleton Colliery being known for their humane working conditions. They all are printed on rather thick paper. On page 9, there is a copy of the "Rules unanimously agreed to by the Members of the Coal Miners' Union in Middleton and its Vicinity. On the First of July, 1819." There are 5 rules, the first one being that every member has to pay twopence in the case of death of any other member, and is requested to attend the funeral, "unless detained by work or sickness". Rule 2 lays down the same for the death of the wife of a member, where only one penny has to be paid, and the attendance at the funeral is not required. Rule 3 fixes the pay for learners, who shall pay one penny in the case of the death of a learner or member, and "all single Men" are required to attend the funeral, as laid down in Rule 1. Rule 4 deals with those persons who are "under the necessity of leaving the Business in Middleton and its Vicinity". If they continue to contribute to the fund, they will also be entitled to its benefits. Rule 5 lays down the penalties. "If any Member is found guilty of boasting of his Earnings" he shall pay Ten Shillings for every offence, and in the case of any quarrel or fight with "any of his Pitmates or Brothers in the Trade, he shall pay Two Shillings and Sixpence for every Offence". This money is to be used, "as his Pitmates may think proper", and in the case of a member refusing to pay, "he shall lose all claims to the benefits of these Rules".

Pages 10 and 11 give statements as to the payment of the workmen when working in "Thick Coal" or "Thin Coal" respectively. It is fixed so that in thick coal for "getting 24 two-load corves" the payment is 5s. 0d., whilst in thin coal this payment is made for "Getting 20 load-and-half corves, above 31 inches", or "Getting 18 load-and-half corves under 31 inches"; corf being a measure of capacity of c.20 cubic feet. Thus it seems that piece-work was commonly in operation at that time. The statements are dated "2 Dec 1819". A total of 18 and 21 individual descriptions, respectively, of work to be done and payment therefor are listed for thick and thin coal. Some of the works are:

- Subsist for Sinkers and Drifters 4s. 2d. per day each man
- Trap-door setting, materials brought to place 4s. 0d. per door
- Cross-gate making 1s. 0d. per bank
- Working double shift, for the second shift 0s. 6d. per day each man

The last three sentences on each statement are as follows:

Tools found and Picks sharpened at the expense of the Employer. Every Man to take his turn at all sorts of Work in the Pit, good or bad. Wages to be payed every Friday from Two to Four o'Clock in the Afternoon.

Page 12 is a "Statement for Drawing in Mr. Brandling's Colliery, Middleton." The drawing is to start from the shaft of the pit and there is different payment for the first 60 yards and then for every 20 yards, as far as the working extends. "Payment in both coal seams is the same - i.e. 9d. per score, but in thick coal 15 two-load corves

have to be worked per score, whilst in thin coal this is 20 load-and -half corves. Finally, it must be said that in all three statements it is fixed that when it is "not convenient to take coal" every employee gets 1s. a week; which is some sort of unemployment insurance.

W.M. WUNDERLICH

Wilhelm Wunderlich's description of this wealth of information on one of the most important periods of our history will be concluded in the next issue.

LOCO NOTES

With only two weeks of the operating season left, it is opportune to take stock of some of our achievements over the season. As befits this 30th anniversary year, we have managed to turn out a considerable number of operating locomotives, and swell the ranks of our own fleet with several visitors as well. Besides the usual stalwart performances from our own Nos. 2003, 1882, 385, 1823 and 54, we have been host to **Primrose No. 2** from the Yorkshire Dales Railway, **G.N.R. 1247** from the National Railway Museum, and **Bellerophon** from the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway. These guest locos have proved to be popular attractions, and an interesting diversion from our regulars. They are all larger than our own locos, and their appetite for coal has only served to emphasise the correctness of our small locomotive policy. Those amongst us who have campaigned for Hunslet Austerities and other large machines should now be convinced as to their unsuitability for Middleton's needs.

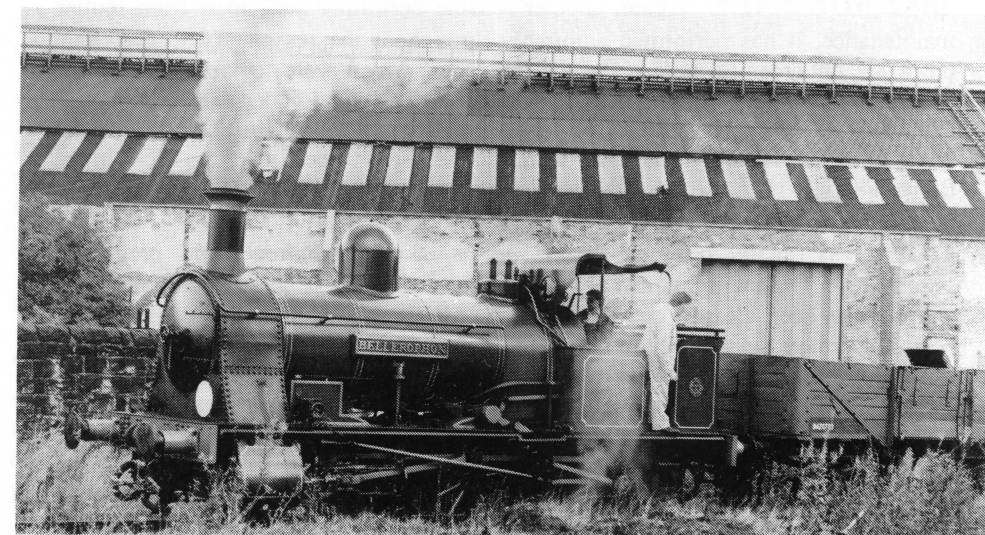
Not only have we borrowed locos from elsewhere, but we have loaned them out also. The Sentinel had a very successful stay on the Yorkshire Dales Railway where, despite critical scepticism from some of their staff, it proved its worth to such an extent that its stay was extended from an initial three weeks to five weeks. **Mirvale**, too, is going on holiday at the beginning of October, when it is returning to the North Yorkshire Moors Railway for just one weekend. Even the Peckett nearly managed a trip out and about on hire to the new steam centre at Padiham Power Station, but the imminent expiry of its boiler certificate put paid to that.

In detail, the loco situation is as follows:-

2003 JOHN BLENKINSOP has continued to give reliable service throughout the season, the only attention needed being the replacement of the pipe from the blowdown valve, and blanking off of the 'scum' cock which was blowing by quite badly. This latter valve is used to blow down suspended solids created by the use of boiler treatment, and has found little use with the good quality water we usually have. It is scheduled to make its last appearance in steam on the 23rd September, some five weeks later than originally planned. due to careful reading of the fine print in the Loco Boiler Regulations!



BELLEROPHON, near Middleton Park (Photo: David Monckton)



. and on the Balm Road branch-line. (Photo: Keith Sanders)

54 The Sentinel has performed virtually faultlessly during the season, two supposed failures being attributable to unfamiliarity on the part of the crews. Some repairs have been necessary to pipework which had been rubbing on the frames and become holed. A new chimney cover is on order to replace the corroded one presently fitted.

1823 HARRY With the aid of much minor attention and nursing, this loco has performed satisfactorily. However, it is obviously in need of a major overhaul. Replacement of the springs in the check-valves of the lubrication system effected a major improvement in the engine's rolling (freewheeling) qualities, and it no longer groans as it goes along! The groans may have gone, but the wheezes are still there, a symptom of the considerable steam leakage past valves and pistons.

Harry's future is currently in some doubt. Following a change of management at Crossley Brothers, the company no longer wish to retain ownership, and we are currently conducting negotiations which we hope will be favourable to the Railway.

385 has performed reliably, except for one occasion when a clack valve stuck open and refused to shut, despite various attempts by the crew to persuade it to do so. The problem with the fireman's side injector has at long last been traced to a bad joint on the water valve, and once this was rectified there have been no further problems.

The only work scheduled for the winter will be the beading over of the tubes in the firebox, and possibly some attention to the connecting rod brasses to take up some slight wear.

1882 MIRVALE Again, another reliable performer and, apart from routine maintenance, it has performed admirably throughout the season. Two new steam pipes are on order to replace the existing ones, which were temporarily repaired earlier on in the season. The loco has just passed its annual boiler examination and, following its short visit to the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, will be available for Santa Specials. The only scheduled work this winter is to bead over the tubes in the firebox.

1310 has, again, been the main subject of the workforce, and progresses satisfactorily. Following removal of all the tubes, access was possible into the barrel and this has been cleaned out and descaled. All appears well, and this has, in fact, been confirmed by the Boiler Inspector, who carried out a comprehensive visual inspection. The foundation ring rivets, which were thought to need replacing, have been declared to be satisfactory till the next major repair, provided there is no leakage under hydraulic and steam tests. With the O.K. to go ahead with the boiler, work on this has been very quick, almost embarrassingly so! The majority of the tubes are in and expanded in place, notwithstanding the fact that they have all had to be cut to length as they were too long. All the necessary studs have been renewed,

and blanking plates made and fitted in preparation for a hydraulic test. The new smokebox wrapper plate has been ordered, and is expected any day.

Work on the frames has not been as rapid as on the boiler, but progress has been maintained. The wheels have been to the Severn Valley Railway for tyre turning, and are now back on site. One of the main problems to be encountered has been that the left hand frameplate was badly distorted around the hornguides (where the axleboxes fit), to the extent that there was a half inch difference in alignment between the top and bottom of the rear hornguides. This has probably been caused by a derailment sometime in N.C.B. days. After much measuring up, headscratching, and the application of a lot of heat and brute force, the frames are now reasonably straight; at least the hornguides align up sufficiently for them to be ground true.

The loco had obviously been running in this condition for a long time, and this has had a disastrous effect on the left hand side axleboxes and hornguides. It has been necessary to build up some of the hornguides with weld, to prevent the axleboxes rubbing on the frames, and to restore the axleboxes to a satisfactory condition will need a lot of work and about a hundredweight of white metal! This is the next major task, with the aim of having the loco back on its wheels by Christmas.

The pistons and valves have been examined and appear to be satisfactory, and all that is required are new piston rings. The slide-bars have had to be ground true and, being unable to find a firm willing and able to do the job at reasonable cost, we have done them ourselves, utilising the recently acquired horizontal milling machine fitted up with a grinding wheel, a task made more complex because the slide bars were too long to fit the table.

The manufacture of the new tanks in the Midlands is progressing slowly, and it is hoped that these will be completed early in the New Year. Much work will still be required on them once they are delivered, to fit them to the various bits and pieces.

1610 ARTHUR No work has been done on this loco since its arrival, as all spare manpower has been deployed to other, more urgent jobs. However, it is planned to start on the completion of this machine early in the New Year, although it is too early even to consider a completion date.

138C has finally been completed and is due to be outshopped and returned to traffic imminently.

98 Work progresses on this diesel. The exhausters has now been fitted, but much work is still outstanding on the vacuum brake system. Some attention has been given to the cooling system, and the air system has been checked over. Repainting in original Steel Company of South Wales colours (the only livery it ever carried) progresses slowly.

ROWNTREE No. 3 has been the subject of much work, mainly on the complex air system. The loco has an air start system (whereby high pressure air is

introduced into the diesel engine cylinders to turn it over on starting), and this air is stored in a separate air receiver, which is charged up each time the engine is run. In order to ensure that air is available for starting, it is imperative that there is no leakage, even over a period of weeks, and curing the many leaks has been quite time consuming. Apart from these problems, the loco is serviceable, and has been used for shunting.

3900002 Our small Fowler diesel gets little mention in these pages, as it needs major attention and is too small for our needs. However, it did manage to sneak into the workshops after 138C, for completion of the repaint started some considerable time ago. This has been a purely preventative measure, aimed at ensuring its continued survival in the Hunslet atmosphere.

42200038, D577, D631, and 7401 JOHN ALCOCK are all serviceable, and used as required. All other locos remain stored, pending overhaul.

STEVE ROBERTS

THOMAS AND FRIENDS

Saturday and Sunday, 12th and 13th Oct, saw our most successful weekend ever. Our 'Friends of Thomas' event proved to be a winner, with just under 2,000 people carried over the two days. Saturday's total was 640 people - the most we have ever carried on a Saturday - by far! (our normal tally is around 80-100!). The Sunday was over twice as good, 1,313 people being carried (our theoretical maximum being 1,400). Sales of **Thomas** goods were very good indeed, and the whole weekend grossed over £3,000 - an excellent result.

Planning started in June, when Council agreed to stage the event, albeit with some reservations on the date, due to work required on the coaches. It was agreed to give a certificate and small gift to children, and the price was set at £1 per person over 2 years of age, in order to "catch" the market we were aiming for, the 2 - 6 year olds, who follow **Thomas**. The faces were painted by Eric Ambler, whilst Graham Parkin and Reg Walton, along with Chris Rogers, did the names for our locos and coaches. Peter Nettleton did a face and name for 138C, and gave footplate rides during the weekend, whilst Yours Truly was volunteered for the role of "Fat Controller" - after all, it was my idea, the excuse given for others to decline the role!

The whole event was made successful by members working together to give our visitors a very good day out, which was much appreciated by all who came.

Roll on the next one, next year!

IAN B. SMITH



Some scenes from the 'Thomas and Friends' event, with the **Sentinel**, **Windle**, the Norwegian coach and Ian Smith, "on stage" with some of their admirers.
Photos: British Telecom, Mid-Yorkshire District News.



VISITORS

As our worthy C.M.E. mentions previously, we have entertained visiting engines, and also loaned a couple out this year.

First arrival was **Primrose No. 2**, a 16" 0-6-0ST (HE1) from Embsay. As Steve writes, even this fairly small six-coupled loco has an immense firebox (and thus immense appetite for coal), compared to our own fleet. **No. 2** performed very well during her stay with us, taking 15 wagons up the bank on a wet rail, much to owner Charlie Adam's delight. Incidentally, this engine gained the reputation of being a prima-donna, due to the spectacle glass holders being gold-plated!

Second, and even more prestigious visitor, was **G.N.R. No. 1247**, ex B.R. 68846, from the National Railway Museum. This loco was offered to us in order to haul the 'Middleton Pioneer' trains on 23rd June. In the event, she was the only steam on that tour's itinerary, as **44871**, which should have pulled the train to Appleby, failed. **1247** was even bigger than **No. 2**, but proved immensely popular with both visitors and photographers, the latter donating £125 for a photo session on the Saturday evening. The only flaw we discovered on this machine was the *stuck on* lining - we do at least paint ours!

Our final visitor was **Bellerophon** from the Vintage Carriage Trust at Ingrow on the Keighley and Worth Valley line. She arrived from the Bluebell Railway, and it is sad to note that the loco had not been cleaned very well, since it took hours to bring her shine back. On steaming, the loco had one or two steam leaks, but she proved a popular machine with our crews, as well as with visiting enthusiasts/photographers. The general public, however, didn't really bother - to them she was "just another engine"! That said, **Bellerophon** was a most worthy visitor, and I can remember seeing the derelict hulk at Haworth in the early 1970's, never dreaming that she would steam again, let alone visit our line.

On the reverse side of arrangements, Steve also mentioned **54's** visit to Embsay, and referred to **Mirvale's** impending visit to the North Yorkshire Moors Railway. That visit has since taken place, and our Hudswell emerged as one of the stars of the show. She was featured on 'Look North' on the Monday after their gala (6th/7th October), and the shine on her paintwork was incredible. The loco was a credit to the Railway and those who looked after her. She has certainly won Middleton even more friends in the preservation world for workmanship and paint finish.

We certainly can say that Middleton's reputation has been much enhanced by these comings and goings, whilst the "goings", of course, can be commercially viable since we do charge a "hire fee" when our locos go one holiday.

One footnote - whilst Steve is correct in saying that large locos are unsuitable for our conditions. I, for one, am unrepentant in saying the Railway ought to have an "Austerity", even if it was only as a static exhibit. The reason is simple - the Middleton Railway is an industrial, colliery line, and the "Austerity" was perhaps the

most successful industrial loco in the country, if not the world. It is disgraceful that the city of Leeds, the "home" of the "Austerity", hasn't got an example within its boundaries, and I feel that, even if the loco is a static exhibit, an "Austerity" is the one loco Middleton *should* have an example of in its collection.

I do agree, though, that if we ever have a working example, we ought to wall off half the firebox before letting it run on our Railway!

IAN B. SMITH

Controversial thoughts from the Publicity Officer, but what do other members think? If you agree or disagree with any views put forward in *The Old Run*, let's have your own opinions for publication (as long as they're not libellous enough to get us sued!).

SANTA 1990

Santa comes to Middleton on Sunday 1st December, and will be there every Saturday and Sunday until 23rd December. Trains will run from 11a.m. to 3.30p.m., and there will be the usual arrangement of a gift for children and wine and mince pies for the grown-ups. Fares will be £2 per person, and, as with all such specials, there will be no free rides or discounts for members.

YULETIDE SPECIALS 1991

These will run on Tuesday, 1st January 1991, from 11a.m. to 3.30p.m. Fares will be £1.20p for adults, 60p for children. There will be free rides for members, but don't forget your current Membership Card!

The fares charged will be the new regular service ones for 1991, an increase made necessary by increasing costs. Rates for special events will also increase, full details being given in advance publicity.

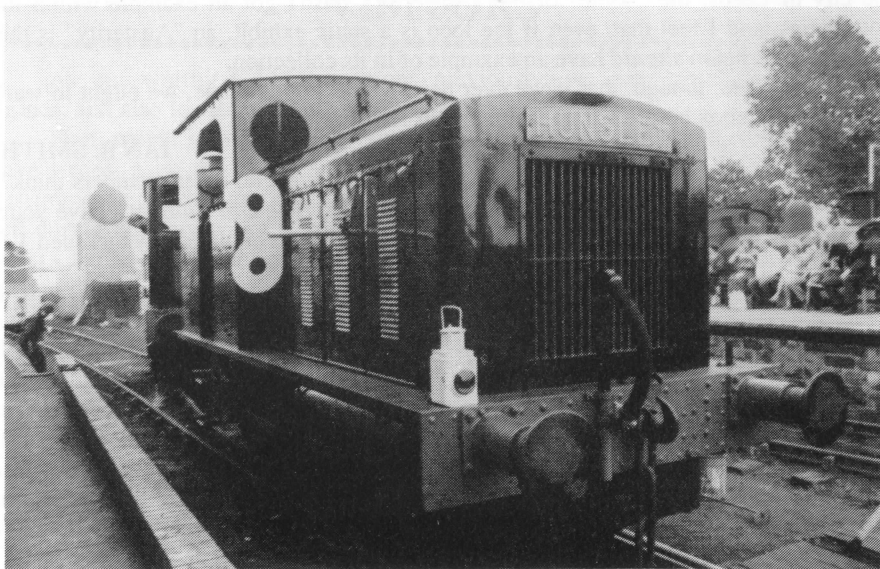
WELL BEHAVED CHILDREN

It is a pleasure to report impeccably good behaviour from two parties that came for a midweek visit in July. Leeds University children's nursery, and a party from near Robin Hood turned up. What quiet, well behaved children they were. No balloons went bang, no bottles of drink were upset, everything went to time, and the supervisors surprised us by laying on a special lunch for Driver, Fireman and Guard of the train. At the end, every child came up and said thank you.

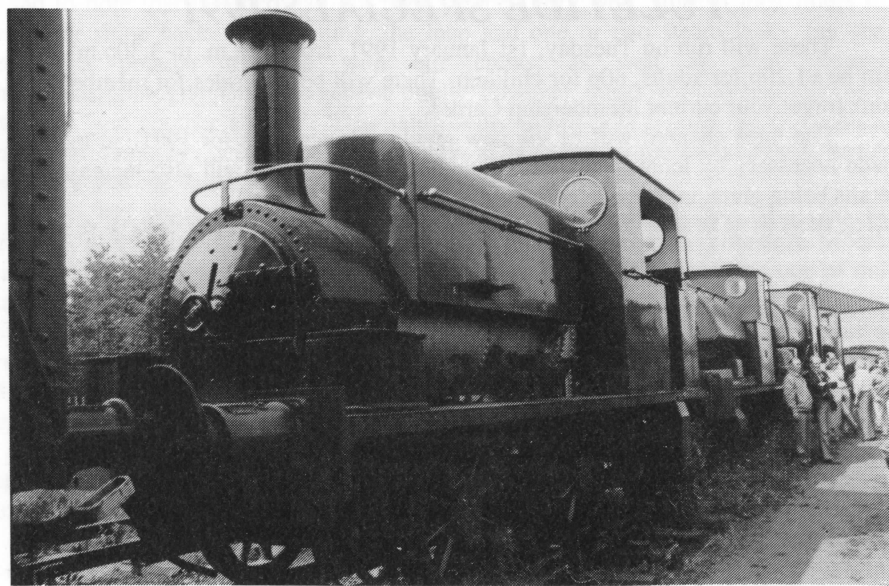
To see dozens of children playing happily on the lawns at Middleton basking in the sun made us very pleased, and also made the whole exercise worth while.

R.F.YOUELL

SOME MORE SCENES FROM THE ANNIVERSARY



Our first loco, **John Alcock**, waiting for duty. Note the new starting mechanism!



The backroad line-up, headed by **Arthur**, making his photo debut in *The Old Run*.

WEEKEND, 16TH/17TH JUNE 1990. Photos: Sheila Bye.



The Deputy Editor on board **John Blenkinsop**.



Karina Smith, on **Sentinel 54**, gives a lesson in clean firing to the gentlemen on **Harry** and **John Blenkinsop**!

ON THE BOX

Hopefully, members received their last issue in time to watch out for 'Fred The Steam Fugitive', which was screened by Channel 4 on Sunday 23rd September, as part of their 'Going Loco' season of railwayana.

As mentioned in the last issue, this was a "pilot" first episode of what was meant to be a series, but it was not taken up at that time. Briefly, for those who missed seeing the programme, **Fred Windle** appeared to be working at a yard and branch line which were part of a much larger system. **Fred** did not actually have a face, but he did have a broad Yorkshire voice. Bill Pertwee, as Mr. Jenkins - one of the "arch baddies", was intent on scrapping the antiquated **Fred** and replacing him with a diesel. He was obviously revelling in his character's thorough nastiness, just as he did in his more famous role as the Air Raid Warden in 'Dad's Army'! Having made arrangements for help from a friendly signalman, on the morning when he should have been taken to the scrapyards (played by Robinson & Birdsell's), **Fred's** driver and fireman took him off to the main-line, intending to hide him at a branch-line en route.

The film seemed to have been a hit with the younger generation at least, and the following weekend quite a large number of children came looking for **Fred Windle**. Sadly, this was the only bit of Middleton which I saw during the 'Going Loco' season. Though Tallyllyn did actually get a programme to themselves later in the week, Mike Read in 'Steam Sunday' - screened immediately before 'Fred' - made the mistake of declaring that the Bluebell Railway was the first railway to be preserved, ignoring both us *and* Tallyllyn! The season, according to the *T.V. Times*, purported to be "a special series to celebrate the wonders of the locomotive", and their accompanying article centred on the National Railway Enthusiasts Association - without a mention of the A.R.P.S. However, it was really good to see so many railway films and features.

During the preceding week, our appearance on 'How We Used To Live' was screened, earlier than initially expected, as part of the introductory programme for the series. The theme of the programme was the vast changes brought about in ordinary people's lives by the 19th century industrial and transport revolutions. In actual fact, the Middleton Railway's appearance on the programme lasted less than two minutes, but was a very nice piece of publicity all the same, even though - in a second reference to our line's antiquity - the "voice-over" said we were the very first railway to be built, rather than the more accurate oldest railway still working. A point worth noting, and perhaps smiling smugly over, was that the school group who appeared in that episode had been brought over from **Keighley** to appear! Yorkshire Television obviously deserve our esteem for patronising us smaller lines, rather than venturing no further than the big and famous, as Channel 4 did in the 'Going Loco' live broadcasts.

SHEILA BYE

This Anniversary nostalgia article was first printed in *The Old Run* Autumn 1969 issue, and reminds us that a railway without locos and rolling stock is downright uninteresting, but a railway without permanent way is no railway at all! The author's name is not printed in the original, but is strongly suspected to be R.F. Youell.

TRAINS RUN AGAIN TO PARKSIDE

Permanent Way maintenance is rather like Alice in Wonderland: it takes all the running you can do to stay in the same place. "Permanent" is a misnomer. The endless hours of patient hard work needed for the task are an eye-opener to those who have never tried to run a railway!

The Civil Engineering team had spent a very long time filling up paper with plans and diagrams, and chairs (wooden) with themselves. Finally they said "Let's stop talking and do some work". And off they went.

It was a Midsummer day almost exactly 9 years ago that the Middleton Railway was re-opened. We had no precedent for a take-over bid on a 4'8½" gauge line. Somehow we made the grade. Other lines with better scenery and passenger trains have had all the publicity - - - and all due credit to them. We are acclimatized to the fact that goods trains are neither news nor a public attraction. We have made do with the solid history of being the Oldest Firm in the Business.

There, in full view, was the Main Line to Parkside Junction - - disused since 1959 apart from an occasional inspection train - and then beyond it the line on to Broom Pit, closed since 1967, with the trackless G.N.R. Hunslet branch over both lines. When members have raised the purchase price, the M.R.T. will own the rest of its main line. Until that date, care and maintenance is both necessary and permissible.



A 1971 p.w. gang at work re-aligning R.&B.'s turnout. Photo: John Edwards.

The Engineers took stock. Half a mile of old track, some good, some not so good, mostly overlain by pit shale washed down from the "Alps" next to it. Few weeds grew here, because pit shale is so devoid of nutrition. To the South, half a mile of N.C.B. track, mostly standard L.N.E.R. type bullhead rails in 60 feet lengths on standard chairs and sleepers, overlain with a forest of green grass and weeds.

Between these two sections was a gap where the vandals had stolen nearly 100 yards of track, and the smaller gap where the 1958/9 reshaping had cut our line in two.

On Tuesday 17th June - almost 9 years to the day since first reopening - with University Examinations finished, the unanimous decision was that the Keying hammer is mightier than the pen, and car loads of students bent their minds to a far, far better thing!

Coach screws by the dozen went into loose chairs at Tram Crossing Junction. The daily working parties were led by Chief Civil Engineer Patrick McAskie, and New Works Engineer Chris Metcalfe (a Professional Civil Engineer now in charge of the Colliery extension). Weeds were dug up by the cubic yard to see whether there were any keys and chairs under them. The Hunslet diesel "Courage", from Alton Brewery, chugged energetically up and down from depot to working sites, its very light axle load being safe on the questionable track. Sleepers, rails and tools were loaded on an ex-Laporte Acid wagon adapted as a flat truck, and the brake van behind carried a warm fire to dry soaked overalls after the eccentricities of Midsummer weather.

Spot resleepering was carried out where the woodwork had departed this mortal life and felt not firewood but just dust. Constant gauge checking; packing under sleepers whose ballast had been washed away by deluges from the pit tip; solidly rusting fishplate bolts hacked off with cold chisels; new chairs for old; dangerous short length closure rails lifted, and then replaced by something better; a well thumbled Permanent Way Institution text book open at the right page; worn rails turned for better-riding and a new lease of life; the 100 feet measuring tape in constant use; spot checks on radius of curvature - - - with determination and hard work we progressed South.

In under 2 days the first gap was reached. Literally tons of rubble and mud were shovelled away to make room for inspection and replacement. The contractors demolishing the G.N.R. line for British Railways had blundered over the track with heavy lorries and crushed many sleepers, leaving ruts deep in the ballast. The whole lot had to come up for inspection and replacement.

In one afternoon a complete 45 feet length went in, then two 30 feet lengths the next day, and the first gap was closed. The gradients here were a bit like those of a helter skelter, the worst section being such that the 22 h.p. diesel could only just manage the 25 tons of brake van!

Then came a length of 45 feet rails on old type chairs - good enough to let well alone, but unfortunately standard keys would not fit. It appeared that the Middleton Fireclay Company engineer was not above putting 95 lbs rails in 85 lbs chairs. The

Chairman disappeared to the workshop, and emerged with a large box of hand-cut keys, which went in with an excellent fit. Another problem solved!

The next task was to realign the awkwardly shaped junction between the two sections. The 1958/9 relaying had left the two lines almost 2 feet out of alignment, and some slewing over was carried out. A local mechanical shovel driver, who was clearing up shale for a building firm, came to the rescue, and in one dig cleared a path of weeds and ballast down to the sleeper bottoms - - 60 feet long and 8'6" wide - - just right for a length of complete track.

Jobs that would have caused alarm and despondency in 1960 were now taken as a matter of course. No carelessness; no feet or fingers trapped under rails; the art of placing oneself such that if a hammer bounces it doesn't land on one's knee or leg; the right angle to hit a key to get it in first time; judging the expansion gap right without having to measure it every time; spotting the awkward bolts and nuts before they gave trouble - every man of the P.W. Gang has acquired these simple arts. Organisation rather than panic, and steady effort rather than frantic battering, were the order of the day. Having taken over a worse 4'8½" gauge track than any other Society, they have had to learn the job and do it properly.

We took the Saturday off, feeling that we had earned it. Then followed the slewing over and replacing of defective timbers and chairs, making a nice job of fishplates and other components. There were muttered comments about the Middleton Fireclay Railwaymen who had mixed up 4½"-5"-4½" and 5"-5"-5" fishplates on the same joint, and had apparently forgotten to oil the plates, bolts and nuts annually.

Plenty of oil and grease was put in the right places until the nuts could be tightened with the fingers instead of the 4 feet spanner plus grunting. Checks of gauge alignment and level, sleeper spacing, and inspection for cracked components - - - clearing away all tools and components nightly to avoid theft in the dark. A welcome police officer from Dewsbury Road came to see whether the gang of men armed with offensive weapons were Friend or Foe, and left without making any arrests!

The ex British Railway operated section of the line gave many headaches. Non-removeable fishplate bolts; wood keys stolen for firewood; collapsed trees, walls and pit shale had to be cleared away or dealt with. The worst trouble was the vegetation. On our first walk we simply couldn't see the rails. Rather like the famous Noble Duke of York, an army of Gangers marched up the hill and down again, with picks, shovels and scythes, hacking, scraping, chipping until they found two rusty bits of steel about 56½ inches apart.

We cleared right up to Middleton Park entrance, further progress being unwise because of Colliery demolition work. Even the M.R.T. Locomen came to watch us, and some even picked up shovels to lend a hand. Tim Leech, Courage loco. engineer, did a mammoth double act!

On Monday 30th June, the last keys, screws and bolts had been tightened, the last sleepers packed, and we made the trial run. We were the first train to run from Balm Road to Middleton Park Gates for nearly 11 years. Hunslet diesel 1786 (shining

in her coat of fresh paint) and her train set off. Steadily we climbed up the bank. The Traffic Manager and Chairman had gone ahead with a ceremonial red flag.

Putter-Putter-Putter roared the exhaust of a locomotive on full regulator, and Putter-Putter-Putter echoed back the roar from shale tips, then the G.N.R. viaducts and the Middleton Woods. Higher and higher over the track that had been our entire life for over a week.

A rumble under the G.N.R. bridge over new track that had bedded down to a firm and perfect running condition. Our memories went back to 9 years ago when, knowing so little about running a railway, our founder members had the courage to have a go. Putter-Putter-Putter, as we tackled the last climb, and our track once again followed the route that had been on that precise spot for 211 years. There to the right was Middleton Park, quiet and green in the Summer evening sunlight. On the left and ahead were the Broom Pit buildings that will be our depot and museum when the N.C.B. have gone and we have raised the money to buy them.

In under a fortnight before our University members went home for the Summer Vacation, we had turned a mile of bits and pieces into a safe running line.

The following nostalgia reprint, from *The Old Run* Winter 1968/9 issue, shows that the problem of the magazine having, perforce, to be dominated by two or three contributors, is nothing new.

Now it's .. YOUR TURN!

Over the years *The Old Run* has contained some interesting articles sent in by members. Recently, however, there has been an unfortunate trend to leave the writing to one or two people, with the result that variety has suffered.

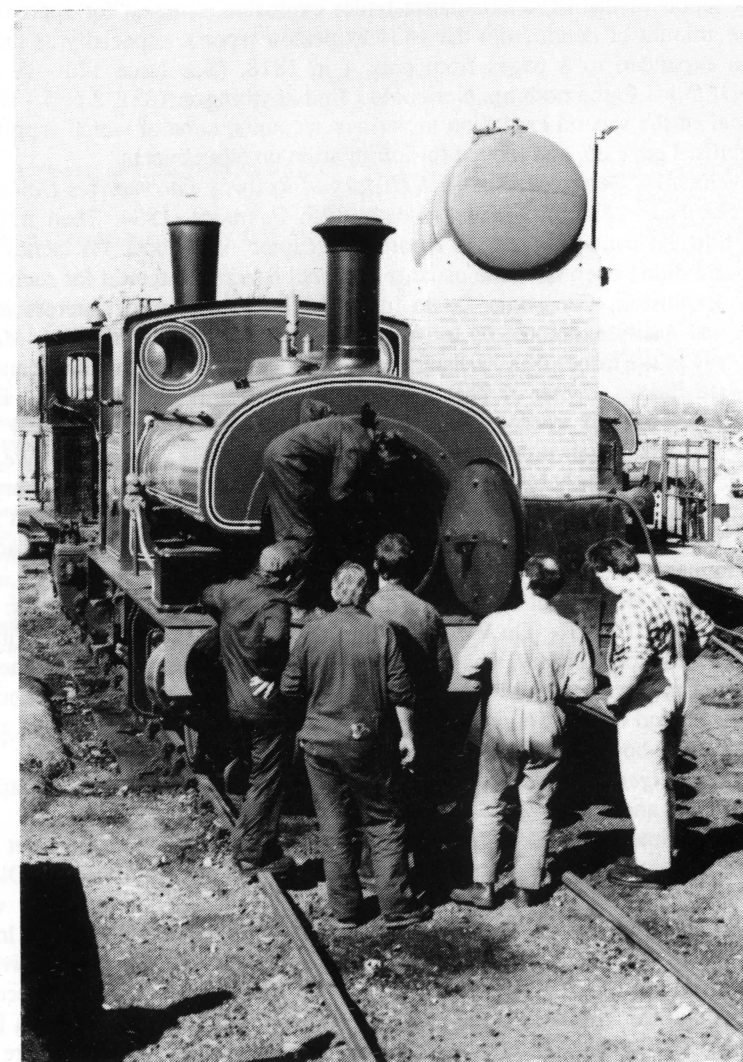
Every railway enthusiast has something to pass on, whether it is an account of his holiday, a history of his favourite line, reminiscences of outstanding trips, or speculation about the future of railways!

Why not set to now and write something which will enable others to share your pleasure or criticise your ideas? Articles concerning the Middleton line are, of course, particularly welcome.

Send it to the editor THIS WEEK. If you don't think you are any good at writing, still send it - it's amazing what we can do with it! But please, don't think "Yes, that's a good idea," and then forget it - DO IT NOW!

Get the idea? This year, it has to be admitted, there has usually been enough material to fill the magazine. Indeed, the format had to be changed to a slightly wider block of print and indents put at the beginning of paragraphs, instead of blank lines between them, in order to pack everything in. For the next issue, we have the conclusion to Wilhelm Wunderlich's article and a piece by our friend "The Bishop" about the Y7, which celebrates its centenary in 1991, but even then - and particularly after that issue - we need much more material from "casual contributors" so that *The Old Run* is not completely dominated by "Fred, Ian, Steve. and the Editor".

Exclusive! The Middleton squad in secret training for the Footplatemen of the Year competition, earlier this year.



..... if the chimney is up there, then you must put the coal in this little door - but we can't seem to find the regulator handle Photo (and caption!): David Monckton. Seriously, our squad came a very creditable 2nd in their own heat.

***** A MYTH REVIVED? *****

Having found such a wealth of information about the Railway in *The Leeds Mercury* report of the 1818 Salamanca boiler explosion, I hoped for approximately the same amount of detail from the 1834 explosion reports, especially as the paper had then expanded to 8 pages from only 4 in 1818. (See Issue 128 - A MYTH EXPLODED.) I found nothing. Nor could I find anything in 1831, 2 or 3 - all given as the year of the second explosion in various accounts, none of which supplied any other details. I gave up, and looked for information on other events.

Eventually, Dendy Marshall's *A History of Railway Locomotives Down to the End of the Year 1831* provided the date, 12th February, 1834. Then it became obvious how I'd come to miss the report: it occupied only about 1½ inches of one column, and didn't even have the usual sensational heading reserved for such items - Horrible Explosion, Gruesome Death, etc. This sudden loss of interest in local disasters was easily explained by looking at the other pages of *The Leeds Mercury*. The city was in the throes of a Parliamentary election, and one of the three candidates was Edward Baines, owner of *The Leeds Mercury*! Naturally, the Editor - Edward Baines junior, printed every word of father's speeches and every detail of his meetings and his lavish electioneering dinners. Predictably, their rival *The Leeds Intelligencer* was strongly backing one of Baines' opponents, and printing every word of his speeches, etc., etc. The election and its aftermath occupied both papers for the next few weeks, and - most frustratingly - no further details appeared of the accident or of the inquest which must have been held.

The Leeds Mercury of Saturday 15th February 1834 reported as follows:
FATAL ACCIDENT.- On Wednesday noon one of the loco-motive engines of the Middleton Colliery, was burst by the pressure of the steam. The shock produced by the explosion was so great that it was felt in almost every house in Hunslet and the unfortunate engine-man was literally blown to atoms, and his mutilated body scattered in all directions.

The Leeds Intelligencer added little information, except that the explosion happened at Hunslet Carr, and was so great the townsfolk thought it was an earthquake.

A most interesting detail is that the explosion occurred at Hunslet Carr, therefore, presumably, on the short stretch of track between the foot of the Old Run incline and our present Station site. Could *this* perhaps be the explosion which, according to legend, took place at the foot of the incline outside the Engine Inn? It would be quite feasible for this detail later to become linked with the driver "in liquor" legend, itself apocryphal to the 1818 explosion. It might seem to succeeding generations that the Engine Inn was the obvious place for him to have got in liquor, and so these two details were handed down as one legend. Of course, there is no actual proof as yet that outside the Engine Inn was the exact site of the 1834 explosion, but myths and legends usually have *some* basis of truth and this is the most likely one found so far.

SHEILA BYE

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