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40th Anniversary Edition 1960 - 2000

THE OLD RUN

Journal of the Middleton Railway Trust



THE OLD RUN

No. 169

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Opinions expressed in the magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Middleton Railway Trust Ltd, Middleton Railway Association or the Editor. Many Thanks indeed to the members who provided articles, reports and photos for this issue.

Issue No 169

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Front Cover : 'King George' at
Moor Road on 17th June 2000.
Photo : Ian Dobson

EDITORIAL

ALAN GILCHRIST

Yet again, another late edition of 'The old Run', I can only apologise for the delay in publication of this edition and hope that it reaches you before Christmas. I have been trying to fit the editorship of the magazine in between my own job, but free time is becoming hard to find as the company expands.

Hopefully this 40th Anniversary edition will bring you some colour on the front and back cover pages and if it is succesful we are looking at doing this again in the near future.

On the last edition of the magazine we discovered, once it was too late, that the scanned images of the pictures were not high resolution, which should have given a decent reproduction, so this time we have increased the resolution to ensure that we produce the best quality.

I try to use all the material that I have been sent by volunteers and members so if you have an article in mind, please send it to me. I can't promise the next edition but it definitely will be published.

Thanks to all those who have contributed to this edition.

Alan

TIMES PAST

The 1980's

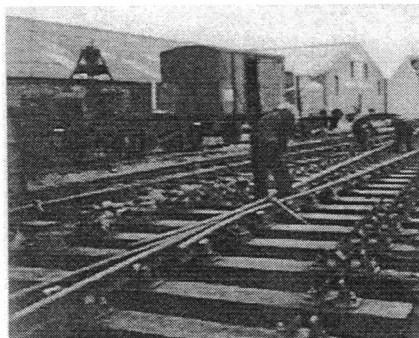
Steve Roberts

The Middleton Railway entered the 1980's and it's twentieth year of operation in a somewhat similar situation to its entry into the 1970's. Weekend steam hauled passenger trains were the norm, together with the ever decreasing freight service, run on an 'as required' basis for Robinson & Birdsell. Our fleet of operational steam locomotives consisted of Henry de Lacy, Matthew Murray and Windle with John Blenkinsop in process of having a re-tube. These locos routinely propelled our van and wagon passenger train up to Middleton Park

It seemed that this scenario would carry on with little change. We had ambitions to build a new depot and expand but our financial situation precluded anything other than pipe dreams. As 1980 became 1981 and then 1982 things were not really going the way we would like. First Henry de Lacy, then Matthew Murray and finally Windle succumbed to boiler problems and had to be taken out of traffic. As 1983 dawned we had only one serviceable steam loco, the ever faithful John Blenkinsop.

Then two things happened that were to cause the Middleton Railway to change forever. The

first was the closure and subsequent sale of Clayton's Dartmouth Yard, our headquarters and depot for twenty three years. The second important happening was the award of an Inner City grant to the value of £20,000, Middleton's first (and so far, only) significant grant award. The notice to quit Dartmouth Yard within six weeks came as a disaster, the grant as a Godsend. Quit Dartmouth, we must, but where to go was the big question. At the time there was only one answer and no that was to move everything into what is now Moor Road Depot but at the time consisted simply of wasteland isolated from the outside world by the relatively new M1 motorway. It was a greenfield site, other than the single track running line.



Trackwork at Moor Road as the move to the new site begins
Photo : Steve Roberts

Our actions were immediate. We had been fortunate to obtain a job creation scheme in connection with the grant award and work had already started on a new station building. The scheme was reassessed and the fencing of the whole site brought into it. This became the priority. A track layout was hurriedly drawn up and working parties commenced on clearing the site and laying the track. Every Saturday, Sunday and Monday Wednesday and Friday evenings that summer of 1983 saw a faithful but small volunteer workforce hard at it. Dedication has never been greater.

But not only had we to lay the track; the weekend passenger service had to be operated as well and we also had to pack up all our many assets scattered around Dartmouth Yard. Locos lifted off their wheels for overhaul had to be made moveable, Thousands of tools and pieces of equipment had to be packed into containers for the move yet many had to remain accessible to allow us to continue to operate. We were indeed fortunate that John Blenkinsop performed faultlessly that season and required no maintenance.

Gradually, and by superhuman effort and dedication, things came together. The loop was laid, together with two sidings just sufficiently long to accommodate all our stock. In the end, we didn't

make the six week deadline but fortunately there was no pressure to move out. The last train of the season ran at the end of September and the great move was planned for the weekend after. The wooden hut that had been our headquarters, workshop and mess room had been cleared and dismantled.

Wagons were piled high with materials, as were loco cabs and running plates; in fact anywhere where we could put something.

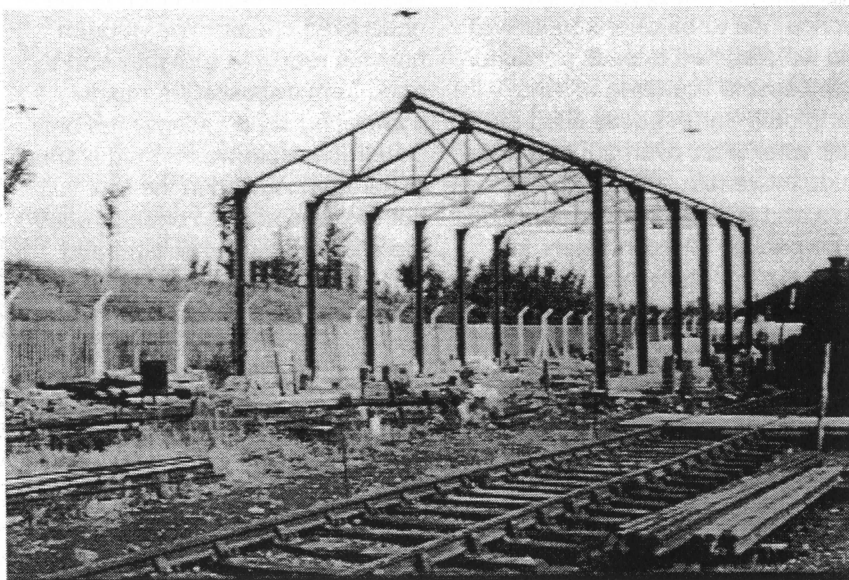
On the appointed day the movement of stock started early and was soon completed. The first task now was to restore some semblance of organisation to the undoubted chaos. The wooden hut was rebuilt in a slightly shortened form opposite the rapidly completing shop. Initially the only power available was from the small generator installed in the tool van but this was soon to change once the shop was weather tight and secure. We had electricity; we had water; and for the first time, we had toilet and washing facilities of our own. Such luxury for those who had toiled for so many years in the primitive surroundings of Dartmouth Yard.

I said earlier that, at the time, the only place we could go was Moor Road. An event happened in 1985 that, if it had occurred some twelve months earlier may well have led to a totally different Middleton Railway to that we have today.

This was the closure and eventual demolition of the works premises of Acme Engineering. Many years earlier these had been the workshops of Wagon Repairs Ltd and had been rail connected from the Balm Road branch. This site offered significant under cover accommodation, sufficient to meet all our needs and could have made

an ideal headquarters for the Railway. As it was, it happened too late; we were too committed to Moor Road and the Acme site eventually became a housing development. Such is life.

However, back to reality and Middleton in the eighties. Moving to Moor Road may have been a significant event but, for the time being things were very much as before. The visitors service still consisted of a loco pushing its train of open wagon and van up the hill to Middleton Park.



Work begins on the 'new shed' at Moor Road in the early 80's. This was the only undercover accomodation for nearly 15 years until the new shed structure in the late 90's Photo : Steve Roberts

The faithful Peckett 'John Blenkinsop' was the only working steam loco but things were soon to change. Repairs were carried out to Windle to enable it to join the active fleet and work commenced on the restoration of the Danish loco, 385. Work was still in the open but, with the aid of the remaining monies from the Inner City Grant and an extended /man-power Services scheme, a loco shed was beginning to take shape; our first covered accommodation for rolling stock.

385 was available for traffic in 1985 and things were starting to look a bit healthier with our operational steam fleet. Progress was also being made on other fronts and the first of our coaches entered service at this time. This event also heralded the bringing into operation of the vacuum brake system on our passenger train but in that first season trains were still propelled up to Middleton Park. The system of operation we have today had to wait another year and the installation of a new platform and run round loop at Middleton Park in 1986.

The three years from 1983 to 1986 had seen Middleton change out of all recognition and the scene had been set for the future. The remainder of the decade was one of consolidation and catching up on the previous years of mortgaging and make do and mend. The

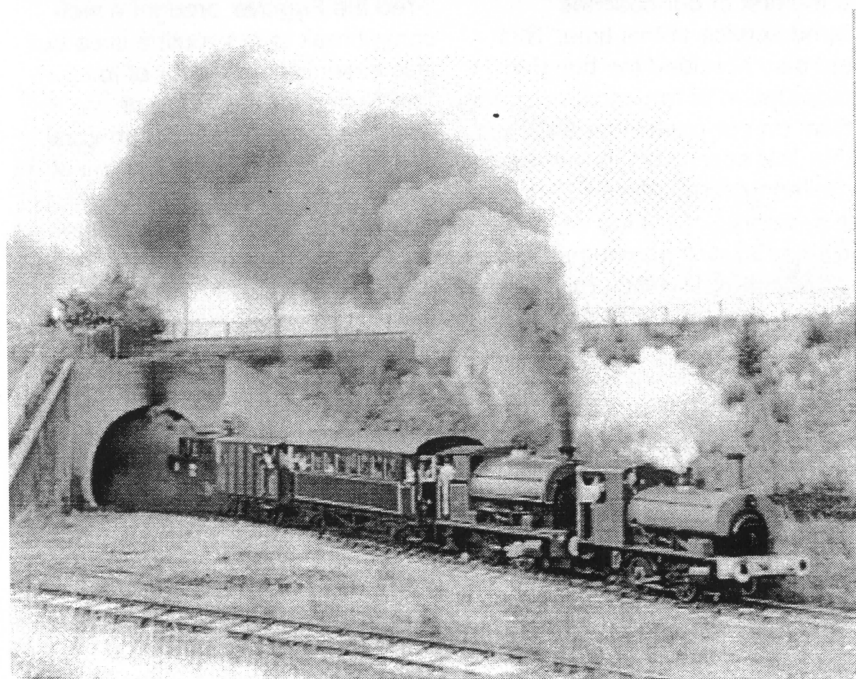
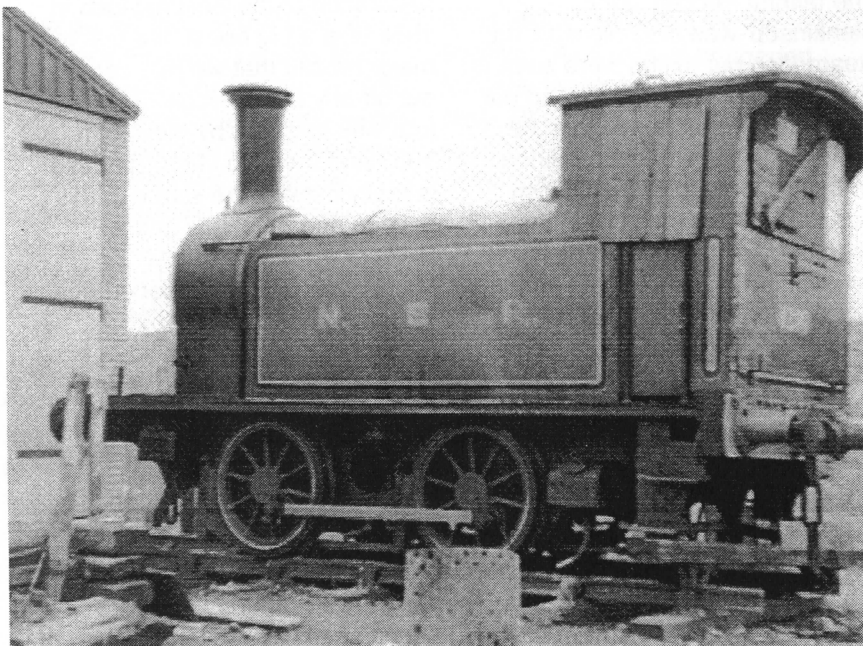
restoration of the Sentinel loco in 1988 was a big boost, the first real major rebuild that we had carried out on any of our locos. This, in turn was followed by Mirvale in 1989 and then No. 1310 (but this is really outside the scope of this decade and thus, this article).

Many other things happened during the eighties, too many to recount in significant detail. Locos came and locos went. The last freight traffic was operated for Robinson & Birdsell and thus the founding Middleton Railway Preservation Society's raison d'etre was more.

We were now purely a leisure attraction for the visitor. Filming of 'Fred the Fugitive' brought a welcome break to our routine lives but was essentially a labour of love.. The filming for the 'Edge of Darkness' was purely commercial and brought significant income at a crucial time. For perhaps the first time money was coming in faster than we needed to spend it. The days of make do and mend had gone. The way forward was full of optimism. We could plan for the future.

Top : NER1310 stands outside the back doors of the old shed during 1986. Photo : unknown

Bottom: The 1989 Gala sunday, a dry day for once. Mirvale, JohnBlenkinsop and No 54 blast through the tunnel at Moor Road. Photo : Mike Taylor



40 YEARS at MIDDLETON

Ian Smith

In 1960, a small boy went for a walk up to the slag heaps in search of adventure. He went to the "Cuckoo Steps" to see some different steam engines - these had a "6" in front, not the "4" which those near his house had!

Imagine his surprise, then, when, as he approached the area he saw, not a steam train, but a huge tram! Not only that, but the tram was in two halves, the top one actually hanging off the railway bridge! There were people everywhere, but one man stood out - a huge person who seemed to be directing things.

Our hero watched all this with great fascination - nothing like this had EVER happened before!

A few weeks later [or was it the following week?] the same tram was being pushed up the rusty old railway by a green diesel, driven by the same huge man seen before.

This, of course, was the opening of the Middleton Railway and as a 6 year old, I was privileged to witness these momentous events.

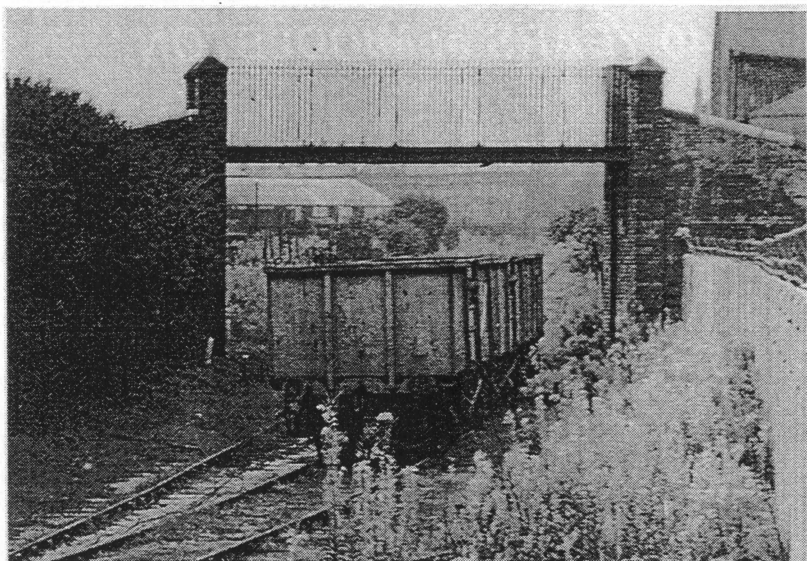
Shortly after this, I was walking down the bottom of my street when

I came across the large man I'd seen before, Fred Youell. He was working on the Balm Road Branch - on his own as usual, and I ended up inviting him home to wash his hands. Quite what Mother thought of all this is lost in the mists of time, but she made him welcome and until her death last year always remembered "Professor Fred" - and blamed him for my mis-spent time as a railway enthusiast!

Fred introduced me to the ways of railway preservation - instruction in the use of important pw equipment such as "Twidding Stick", "Big Hammer" and "Biggest hammer!" soon followed.

I was told about those folks down south who thought they had started the first "standard gauge" preservation society and how they were totally wrong, because FRED did! I was also warned about those "Broad Gauge buggers" whose engines were useless and their preservation schemes even less use!

They were happy days, spent with Fred, whose fount of all knowledge was readily opened up to me.



Above : Freight Wagons waiting for the daily Middleton Freight service to pick them up Photo : Middleton Railway Archive

In time, I moved away, but could still see the MRT locos chugging up and down, operating freight trains on their daily basis.

In 1969, I actually joined the railway at a steam gala and have been here ever since.

The Middleton Railway of 1969 was a different affair to the one we see now. In those days, the Lord and Master was one Jim Lodge, the CME. As far as many of us were concerned, "Jim was King" and what he said, went. He rode a scooter which was legendary in that, each year, Jim bought a new one. From the day he bought it to the day he sold it, he did absolutely nothing to the thing, which got dirt-

er as the year wore on. He would then clean it up & sell it on!

Things were done differently in those days. As a young 15 year old, I remember coming into Dartmouth Yard and being accosted by the driver of "HENRY DE LACY II".

"Have you ever fired a steam engine before?", this great man asked. "No" says I. "Right, here's some paper. Get on with it and I'll show you what to do!" Now, I was 15 and my driver was probably about 17 - Mick Jackson!!

A couple of years later, Mick & I were repainting the inside of the Sentinel's cab before it re-entered

service. We couldn't afford new paint, so we mixed come from various odds & ends left over from previous jobs. The resultant, purple type colour, was immediately christened "Vilaac" and applied to the engine on the assumption that once in service, the soot would obscure the colour anyway!

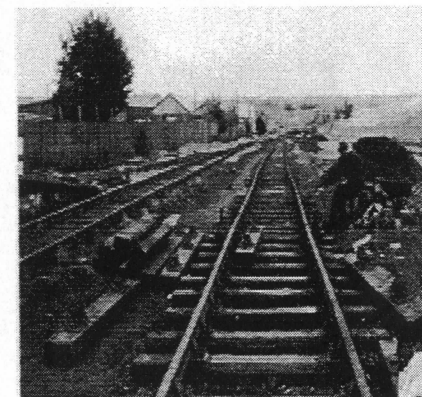
On another famous occasion, HENRY was in traffic and had been experiencing trouble with a side rod bearing. The driver decided to "have a feel" on his return to Moor Road [Burton Road in those days] only to discover it had fallen out! Fireman was despatched up the line to search for the offending article, which was brought back in three pieces, inserted back in and the engine ran like that for the rest of the day!

This was how Middleton had to operate in its early passenger years. The experience was good for us, though, and many other more famous railways didn't do things much differently either - it was very much a learning curve which we all undertook.

Over the years, Middleton has improved at a steady rate. We pioneered an air brake system for our stock before deciding upon vacuum brakes. We obtained two PMV's for our passenger train and then we improved our workshop facilities once we moved to Moor Road.

As members know, Middleton has improved beyond measure since those early days but we still retain a unique atmosphere, which is lacking at many of our rivals.

Middleton doesn't take itself too seriously as a railway - we are an industrial outfit with no pretensions towards main line locos at all. We are noted for having excellent gala operations with interesting visitors. This latter item has come in for criticism from one or two people on cost grounds. It isn't cheap to import locomotives for our events, but the amount of coverage we received from all the railway mags plus the local press more than justified the expenditure.



Laying the track for the passing loop at Moor Road. Further track work during the 1980's Photo : Steve Roberts

FROM THE DESK OF THE MARKETING OFFICER

Howard W Bishop

Highlight of the year so far has been the 40th Anniversary Gala weekend celebrations held on 17th and 18th June 2000 [Ed: More information to follow in next Old Run]. As well as the usual crowd of railway enthusiast visitors, which in numbers were around the usual for a Gala weekend generally, over 50 invited guests attended the event.

local media were all present on what turned out to be a very happy occasion blessed by superb weather. Thanks are due to all those who took part, from the Responsible Officers and train crews to the crossing keepers, shop helpers, and the many unsung and unseen people behind the scenes, and all of whom did a magnificent job.



A local couple bring their Teddy's to Moor Road station to the Teddy Bears picnic event. Photo : Keith Hartley

Heading the list of distinguished guests was the Lord Mayor of Leeds, Councillor Bernard Atha. Representatives of national railway journals, local business people and

The Anniversary was also marked by our staging a major exhibition of the Railway at the Armley Mills Industrial Museum, courtesy of

Leeds City Council. During the month it was on display there the presentation was visited by 1,200 people.

Continuing the trend of increased visitor numbers to special events, again this year, the Teddy Bears' Picnic on 6th August 2000 saw a 28.71% increase in visitors over the previous year.

So now we have to do the Gala all over again! At the time of writing, plans are well advanced for the Annual Gala on September 23rd and 24th, 2000. This date celebrates the inception of the Railway by the Act of Parliament of 1758. This year the Middleton Railway is 242 years old! There will be a new-look timetable format for this Gala, with different train working arrangements through each day and Day Rover tickets instead of all line tour trains. A cavalcade of vintage steam and diesel road vehicles is planned.

The 40th Anniversary Exhibition staged at Armley Mills will be on display in the Old Shed. Visiting locomotive is RSH No 7409/48 Sir Cecil A Cochrane, and EM2 Locomotive Society Drewry Car DB9988901 OLIVE, and Hunslet 4-wheel diesel Courage will also be featured. A scale working model of Moor Road in the days of electric trams to Middleton has also been booked.

So please come along and support the Annual Gala, not only by your presence, but by your active involvement, bearing in mind that "many hands make light work"!

The final two major events of the year are Day Out with Thomas in November and the Santa Specials in December, leaflets and booking forms for the latter being now available.



Left : Postman Pat and his Black and white cat entertain delighted children on a very warm spring day this year at the Postman Pat event.

Photo : Keith Hartley

Vintage Carriages Trust News

Paul Holroyd

INTERNET CARRIAGE DATABASE ONE YEAR OLD

The Carriage Database has now been available on the World Wide Web for one year, during which time it has received over 46,000 visits. There are now over 2,000 colour photographs and an impressive 3,294 entries in total.

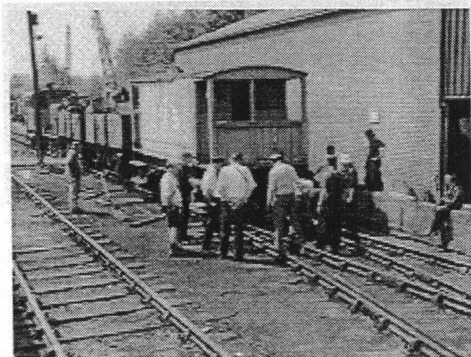
The database is far more than just a listing - 2,050 of the carriages have been surveyed and assessed with regards to their condition, authenticity and degree of originality.

The database has been of great practical help both to film and television companies requiring railway carriages and to enthusiasts involved in restoration work, who have been able to make contact with other groups to facilitate the manufacture of new upholstery and other components.

The Carriage Survey Project has been made possible by the generous financial support of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, and can be accessed on the World Wide Web at <http://www.neotek.demon.co.uk/vct/>

Right : Oops ! A crowd look onto the derailed brake van on the loop line at Moor Road. Thanks to all the volunteers at the event, this did not spoil the day and was rerailed at speeds which make Railtrack look slow.

Photo : anonymous



BOOK REVIEWS

Shila Bye & Henry Gunston

A TASTE OF LEEDS:

Peter Brears

"A few years earlier, in 1812, the Leeds engineer Matthew Murray had produced a new machine which would eventually revolutionise food supplies not only for Leeds, but for all the developed world. Working at his famous Round Foundry in Holbeck, he transformed the prototype steam locomotives, which were little better than mechanical curiosities, into very practical and economical carriers of heavy goods. His 1812 engines, the world's first successful steam locomotives, were used on the lines which carried coal from the Middleton Collieries down to the Hunslet coal staithes, but over the next 40 years more powerful locomotives had enabled a nationwide railway system to slowly emerge."

A cookery book is probably the very last place you might expect to find a mention of our Railway and its pioneer locomotives. However, this particular cookery book was written by Peter Brears who, besides being a food historian, is also a well-respected local, general, and industrial historian. As

Director of Leeds Museums from 1979 to 1994, he supervised the opening of the Leeds Industrial Museum, and he has written and/or compiled numerous books on Leeds history.

This, therefore, is as much a local history book as a collection of traditional local recipes. Arranged in chronological order, covering the 18th and 19th centuries, it deals with the typical diet of the various social classes at various periods, the production and transportation of foodstuffs, cooking methods and cooking 'machinery', and is interspersed with chapters on special items, such as Feasts (the local annual fair day of which each separate village around Leeds had its own), Chapel Teas (the chance for the ladies to show off their baking expertise), and Great Banquets (like the sumptuous affair provided for the opening of Leeds Town Hall in 1868).

Each section is dotted with appropriate recipes, and if you don't know how to make Clapcake, Lambswool, Hodge-Podge, or Pork Griskins, this is definitely the place to find out. Fascinating and delicious though the recipes are, the

book serves at least equally well as a local history of Leeds's food, cooking and eating habits, and the influences which dictated them at various times - including our own Railway.

A Taste of Leeds, by Peter Brears. ISBN 1 85983 140 0. Published in 1998 by The Breedon Books Publishing Co. Ltd., Derby. 72 pp, many illustrations. Found in 'Just Books', Bradford (branches in other W. Yorkshire towns) priced £1.99p (remaindered price!).

Sheila Bye

The Hunslet Engine Works - Over a century and a half of locomotive building by Don Townsley

The Plateway Press, 1998, 305 pages, over 300 photographs and 16 maps and plans. Hardback with dustcover. Price £25.00 ISBN 1 871980 38 0

There have been links between the histories of the Hunslet Engine Works and the Middleton Railway from the era of Matthew Murray to current days of the pioneer diesel "John Alcock". Local geography plays a major part, of course. My own preferred route to and from Moor Road takes me along Jack Lane so that I can pass the still-surviving doorway marked "The Hunslet Engine Co., 1864". Don Townsley was superbly qualified to

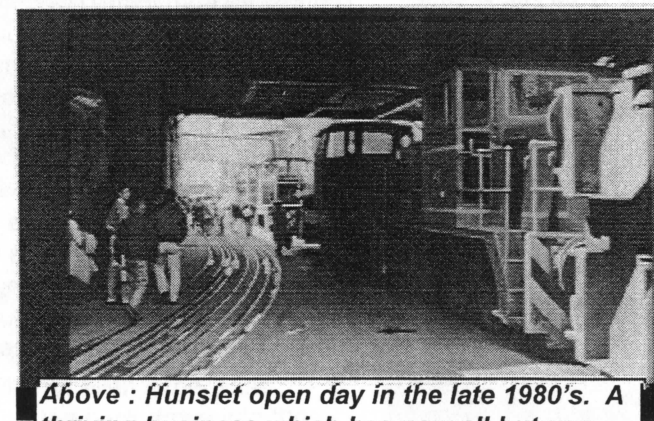
prepare this book, as he worked for Hunslet for 40 years, and we must be grateful to himself and the Plateway Press for making such a good job of it. The book is divided into two parts. "History" (150 pages) takes us from the days of Matthew Murray and the Round Foundry to the late 1940s. The second part, "In Living Memory" (146 pages), takes us from 1949, when the author started work at Hunslet, until 1998, when the book was published. It is interesting to compare this historical balance with that of the book's predecessor, L T C Rolt's "A Hunslet Hundred", published by David & Charles in 1964. Of his 153 pages of company history, Rolt devoted 96 to developments at the Hunslet works up to 1945 and then 26 to the period onward to 1964. He also included 31 pages of separate histories of Avonside and Kerr Stuart, which Hunslet took over between the Wars.

Don Townsley's book benefits from a large page format and the use of art paper, both of which allow plentiful use of photographs. Many of these occupy half a page or more. As in Rolt's book, good use is made of site plans which show the extent of the Hunslet Works itself, and of maps which show the concentration of railway engineering works within the Hunslet area. A map of the late 1920s (just before the Depression fully took effect), shows the whole range of Kitson,

Fowler, McLaren, Manning Wardle, Hunslet and Hudswell Clarke. There are also two sections of 1846 Ordnance Survey mapping showing the original sites of the Round Foundry on Water Lane in Holbeck and of the Railway Foundry on Pearson Street in Hunslet. For many, the appeal of this book will be the extensive coverage of steam locomotives. As noted in my earlier review of a book on the Manchester Ship Canal tanks, it is the sheer variety of Hunslet designs which is amazing. On one hand there are the strange double-boilered Listowel and Ballybunion monorail locomotives of 1887 and a two foot gauge geared 0-4-4-0 of Avonside design built for Sezela Sugar Estates in South Africa in 1939. On the other are the hard working no-nonsense standard gauge 0-6-0 saddle tanks, leading through to the famous "Austerity" design and the 1960s developments with under-

feed stoking. A particular strength of this book, however, is Don Townsley's informed "insider's view" of more recent years at Hunslet, focusing on the development of diesel designs, and on what he calls "Diversions", where Hunslet moved into production areas away from railway locomotives. Of particular interest to me were details of the "47" class 0-8-0 shunters produced in 1979 for Kenya Railways, which were very active in that country when I last worked there in the 1980s. Hunslet subcontracted some construction on this order to BREL workshops. There were no doubt those in Leeds (and elsewhere) who had a quiet chuckle that the last locomotives to be built at Swindon Works went out the door with a "Hunslet" plate firmly attached! A thoroughly recommended book.

Henry Gunston, 21 August 2000



Above : Hunslet open day in the late 1980's. A thriving business which has now all but vanished from its origins. Photo : Martin Plumb

...And then two come along at once.

Peter Nettleton

For some time we have been on the lookout for a replacement for the ancient Ford tractor used for coal and ballast loading. The tractor is barely up to the job and on a good day, needs two hours of maintenance for every hour of use.

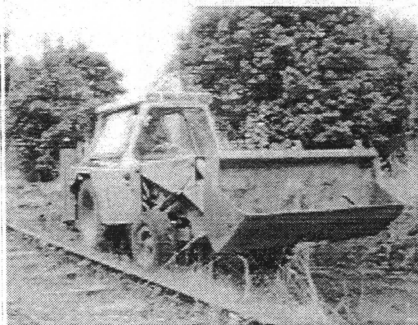
A JCB would be the thing to have as it would also be able to dig holes and trenches, but none were to be found at the sort of price we wanted to pay until volunteer Michael Garbutt announced that a work colleague had one for sale cheaply. This was followed up and a 'test drive' arranged. Well, it was a JCB and it did go but it had been the victim of a major attack of tin worm and worse, the engine oil was full of water. We carefully examined everything but refrained from kicking the tyres just in case. As we were walking away shaking our heads the owner dropped the

asking price some more and, unable to resist a 'bargain' we struck a deal. Transport was then arranged and bingo, we have a JCB.

At the same time, David Wraith was driving along in Colton and, seeing a JCB parked in a garden, stopped and knocked on the house door. He learned that it was surplus to requirements and that the owner was willing to sell it to us at a very low price. Another test drive was arranged, a deal done, transport arranged, and bingo, we have another one, complete with spare back actor, bucket and numerous bits and pieces. This one is in much better condition than the first and only 28 years old.

There is no truth in the rumour that Middleton is to become the north's leading museum for civil engineering plant as we are planning to dismantle one of them, saving some parts and selling the rest.

If anyone has a radio cassette player, furry dice, alloy wheels etc and would consider exchanging them for a Ford tractor please contact the Plant Bodging Engineer at the yard.



The forklift is dead - long live the forklift

It was reported in the last Old Run that the trusty fork lift was back in traffic after an extensive period 'in the works'. And so it was until it read a copy of the Old Run and decided to make a fool of the editor by refusing to work again. This particular forklift has always had periods of attitude, refusing to work at the most inconvenient times or stopping halfway into the workshop ten minutes before home time, so that the doors will not close. The fault has always eluded us and its previous owners, which is why we got it in the first place.



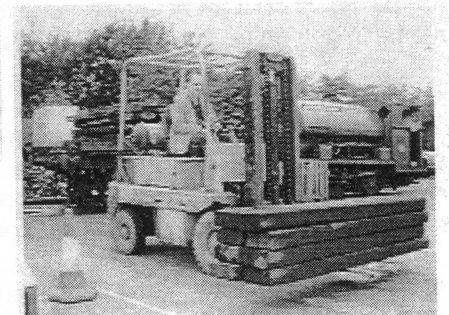
Just as we were in the trough of despondency and wondering what to do next, an exceedingly large lorry with an even larger Hiab crane on the back drove into the car park and proceeded to unload -

would you believe it - a fork lift truck. The driver explained everything with a helpful 'where do you want it, mate?', lowered it to the ground and was gone leaving everyone thinking that the tooth fairy existed after all.

It was discovered later that a local fork truck dealer had heard of our plight and had an old model he was going to scrap anyway. He very kindly decided to give it to us.

The new one is a Komatsu with a 2300 Kg capacity (Two and a quarter tons in old money) and is powered by bottled gas instead of a battery. Following some maintenance and minor repairs it has been inspected by our insurers and is now in traffic.

The old forklift has now been scrapped, its scrap value being rather more than we paid for it several years ago!



Obituary - Handel Kardas (1952 - 2000)

Ian Smith

Handel sadly died on Friday 18th August after a long battle with cancer.

Born in Manchester on 15th August, 1952 and became a teacher at Selhurst, Croydon and became a volunteer on the Bluebell Railway, working in the S&T dept for close on 16 years. Whilst there, he edited the staff magazine, *'The Flying Pig'*, which led to the then Railway World Editor, Mike Harris, choosing him as a guest editor. Handel's success led to his appointment as Editor between December 1987 and May 1996, when he was diagnosed as having Cancer of the bowel, with secondaries in the Liver. He was effectively given only months to live but in his typical style he growled that he wasn't going to lie down and die quietly!

Handel was a great supporter of preservation and supported ARPS and its successors in their efforts. Perhaps Handel's most enduring legacy, however, is his involvement with young people. This interest in young people was displayed in a number of articles Handel wrote for Railway World and it was these which brought he and I together on a project to persuade more railways to use youngsters in a practical fashion.

Handel and I met with John Poyntz in London, and from that meeting came the "Young Volunteers" paper which we see today. Progress was slow at first, but Handel was always there to encourage, comment upon and it will probably not surprise you to learn that he usually got his way when amendments had to be made - he was a master of common sense solutions.

Handel was also a great supporter of the Middleton Railway, being instrumental in getting us our ARPS Certificate, which is on display in the shop.

He first turned up at Middleton in 1989 and I will always remember my first meeting with him, when he turned up in very scruffy gear, with two big dogs on bits of string! He officiated at the relaunch of our Sentinel and was always a very approachable guy. On one trip, he took the car down Balm Road to acquire a load of slate he'd seen dumped down there!

He was amused at the name Middleton members gave him - "Bottlegas!" - and always had a soft spot for the place. We, and preservation, have lost a good friend.

Farewell, Handel, Rest in Peace.

LOCO NOTES

Steve Roberts, John Wilkinson

At the time of writing, the season is well over the half way point and things are pretty much going to plan. Plan, did I say? Well, yes, there is a plan, for without one we would not know whether things were going well or otherwise. In simple terms, the plan is to maintain sufficient locomotives, both steam and diesel, to meet the operating departments needs when they need them; i.e. one locomotive on most weekend days with the occasional requirement for several locos to meet the gala events, etc.

As is the usual format now, here are the details of what has been happening.

2103 is performing relatively satisfactorily in this, its first year of service. The injectors tend to waste water and we have not really managed to establish the reason for this (and therefore effect a cure). However, they do work reliably and do not present a problem, other than waste of water. Various minor routine repairs, such as gland packing, have been carried out to keep the loco available. It is intended to re-work the big and little end brasses on both sides to take up excessive wear as soon as

a suitable quiet period can be utilised but, with the absence of 1310 the need to keep 2103 in traffic has been paramount.



Above: 1310 at the Tanfield railway during 2000
Photo: unknown

1310 The Y7 successfully passed its annual boiler inspection recently and has been available for traffic and regularly used. During his inspection, the Inspector expressed concern at the deteriorating condition of some of the rivet heads in the foundation ring and firebox lap seams. Whilst not of immediate concern these will have to be tackled at the next thorough overhaul.

The Tanfield Railway asked to borrow this loco for an extended period and the Y7 left for the North East at the beginning of July. It is not expected to return until the end of September. The loco appears to be acquitting itself satisfactorily but there have been one or two minor hiccups requiring the attention of the Tanfield fitters.

1625 has been a bit of a devil, this year! Earlier in the season it disgraced itself by dropping its fire-bars, necessitating a diesel substitution for the last train of the day. It has also become a somewhat shy steamer, causing a few embarrassing moments. Recently, its injector has been the source of much trouble. It has been stripped down on several occasions but no real fault has been found to establish the true cause of the problem but, until now, with little success.

In addition to the above problems, we have, of course, been carrying out the various routine jobs, as necessary. Recent work has involved re-packing piston glands, water pump glands, re-shimming the little end pins, replacing oil trimmings and fitting of an additional lamp bracket.

A quotation has been obtained for a professional re-tube of the boiler but, at some £4,500 plus the cost of tubes, it is unlikely that we will be able to justify this expenditure

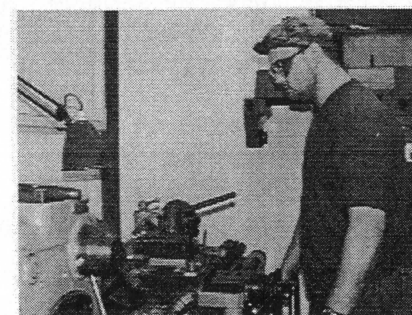
in the short term and we will have to resort to doing the work, ourselves.

1601 The main focus of work continues to be the construction of the replacement boiler at Israel Newtons works, Bradford. A party of Middleton Volunteers were able to visit the works during June and witness, at first hand, the work so far carried out. The opinion was generally universal that a first class job of work is being carried out. As at the 18 August the outer firebox is complete, as is the boiler barrel which has now been fully rivetted together. The tubeplate angle ring has been rolled and awaits fitting to the barrel, following which the smokebox tubeplate can be cut and fitted. To enable the tubeplate to be accurately formed the smokebox was despatched to Newtons works during July. Whilst not 'new' it still has several years life remaining and is expected to last until the next boiler overhaul in 10 years time. It will be a relatively easy task to replace it if this becomes necessary at some time before then. Whilst progress with the boiler has been reasonable the latest information forthcoming from Newtons is that it is somewhat behind schedule and unlikely to be ready by October, as intended. A final completion date is not yet known.

Meanwhile, back at Moor Road, some progress can be reported on

other fronts. Painting between the frames is now complete and they present a much healthier site than the patchwork previously present. A pattern has been made for the gunmetal flanges for the boiler water level gauges and these four items have been machined up ready for fitting to the boiler.

67 Work has continued on various tasks associated with this locomotive but much cannot now be done until the boiler is re-united with the frames. A specialist Contractor visited Moor Road during June and carried out the various welding repairs required by the Boiler Inspector. These included building up the small areas of wastage in the firebox and cutting out and replacing the firebox crown sheets around the fusible plug holes. As new plug holes were being provided, the opportunity has been taken to fit 'Nabic' fusible



Work underway on No 67
Photo : Peter Nettleton

plugs, enabling us to standardise these with some other locos in our

fleet. The boiler has now been needle gunned and painted externally with high temperature aluminium paint. The tubeplate tube holes have all now been cleaned and fettled ready to receive the boiler tubes. The six broken studs in the foundation ring that hold the ashpan in position have been drilled out and replaced, this being the first task undertaken with our new magnet drill. The four foundation ring rivets removed to enable the welding to be done require to be replaced. Once this has been done the boiler can be rolled back over into its upright position and the tubes can then be fitted.

On the chassis, the work previously mentioned regarding the modifications to the steam brake cylinder have now been carried out and this has been refitted. The axlebox tops have been overhauled and refitted following the decision not to modify the lubrication system. Various dents in the footplate valance have been straightened and these, together with the cab side sheets, have received the first coats of brushing filler, followed by sanding down. The cab bunker has been finish painted internally and the bunker back and lockers have also been finish painted. New pins have been made for the drain cock linkage and sand operating gear. This is all now fitted up as far as is possible until the tanks can be fitted, a task that cannot be done until the boiler is in place.

1210 Sir Berkeley has seen regular service throughout the season although the nature of our agreement with the Vintage Carriage Trust means that we can only use it occasionally, except in an emergency. A leak on the fireman's side injector delivery pipe was found to be from a drain connection. Upon investigation it was found that the screw threads on this fitting had all but corroded away and a new one has had to be made and fitted. Inspection of the similar connection on the driver's side injector showed this to be OK. These drain connections are fitted to enable the pipes to be drained in winter to lessen the risk of frost damage. The front buffer beam, which is a timber and steel 'sandwich', is starting to show signs of its age and a new one will be necessary when the loco is overhauled, probably next year. Meanwhile the proverbial 'eye' is being kept on it.

2387 'Thomas' continues to lead a life as a rover, appearing at various events throughout the country. It was crewed by Middleton Volunteers when it visited the Doncaster Open Day in June and the writer recently spent half an hour watching it whilst waiting to catch the ferry at Dartmouth. I can't even get away from Middleton when on holiday! The loco is due back at Moor Road later on in the year for annual boiler inspection and winter maintenance. It will also be appearing at

our own Thomas event.

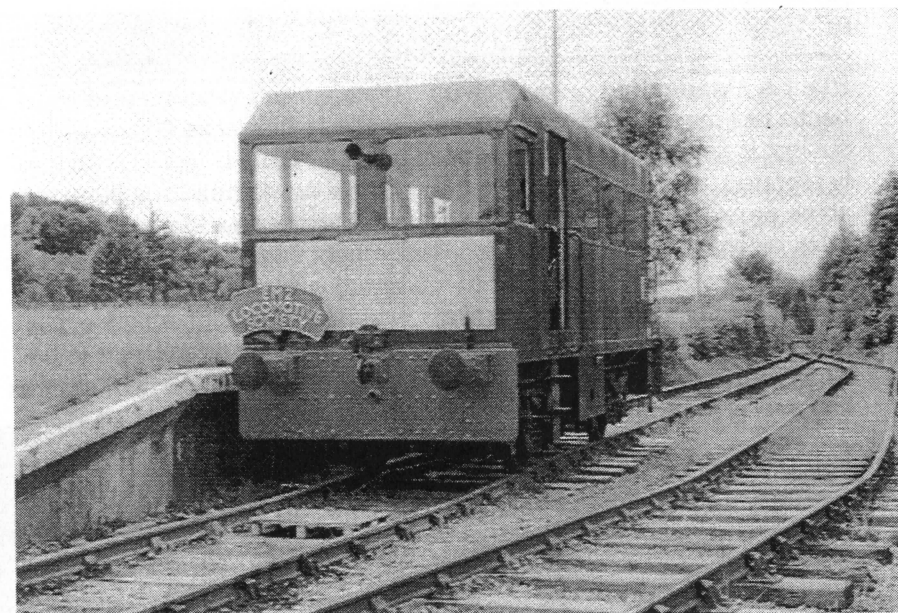
Rowntree No.3 continues to receive the attentions of Graham Parkin and others whilst in the workshops. Most repairs have now been done and the paintwork is all but ready.

Brush 91 disgraced itself by breaking an engine oil lubrication pipe and covering the engine compartment in oil. Fortunately no damage was done and the repairs were fairly easy and straightforward.

1786 For, as far as we know, the first time ever, this little Hunslet worked a passenger train during the 40th Anniversary Gala, special dispensation was given by H M Railway Inspectorate for this following fitting of a vacuum brake application valve. This loco also has gained the distinction of being one of the very few diesels ever to be given a photograph and mention in *Steam Railway* magazine. A rare honour indeed!

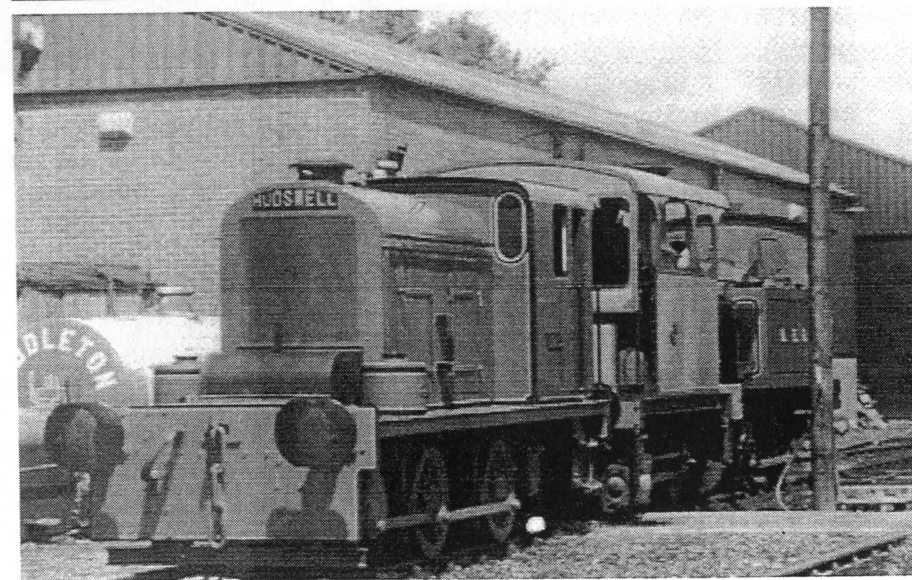
D631 Carroll is presently in the works for attention to a leaking exhaust manifold. The repair, though successful, can only be regarded as a short term one as the manifold generally is becoming rather thin and will require replacement before much longer.

D577, 7401 & 138C are all serviceable and used as required.



Above : The first test run on 'OLIVE' DB998901 at Middleton Halt on 8th July 2000 Photo : Ian Dobson

Below : 'Mary' shunts 1625 and 1310 on May 27th at Moor Road in preparation for 1310's departure to Tanfield Photo : Keith Hartley



NOTES & NEWS

Plant & Machinery Its been a hectic few months as far as this subject is concerned! As previously reported, we have been having some problems with our forklift truck recently.

During the summer months thanks to various donations and purchases we have acquired a fork truck and a JCB [See page 17]

The arrival of these machines inevitably means that our tractor is surplus to requirements and it is planned to sell it off. It is unlikely to be scrapped as we think that there are many enthusiasts out there who would be interested in acquiring it for preservation.

Our 5 ton diesel crane recently received its annual Insurance Inspection, passed with no real problem. The load/radius indicator was becoming somewhat corroded and this has now been repaired and awaits refitting. This crane has now been at Middleton for 20 years, arriving in 1980. In that time it has served us very well and been of little problem. It is, however, becoming rather tatty and worn, the cab roof, in particular, is very corroded and in need of replacement. We are going to have to schedule some repairs to this very useful piece of equipment but finding a suitable slot when we can take it out of service is going to be

quite difficult. (We will also need a crane to dismantle it!)

In the Workshop In a flurry of activity, the new tool cupboard was brought into use in July. This cupboard is where we store all our valuable pieces of equipment, especially those reckoned to be vulnerable in the event of a break in into the building. Thus it has to be very secure. To this end, it is fitted with a steel door, complete with a locking mechanism of our own design, arranged to make a forced entry as difficult as possible.

The breeze block walls are also lined with steel shelving to make access through the wall very difficult. Completion of the new tool cupboard has released the old tool cupboard situated in the museum building and this has been cleared ready for demolition.

A rivetting hearth is presently being made. This is a small, portable forge which we can use for heating steel rivets prior to hammering home. With heavy duty rivetting it is very important to get the rivets



as hot as possible and into position and rivetted as quickly as can be done. To this end it is necessary to have the forge as close to the job as possible and this hearth will enable this to be accomplished. Its first task will be to heat the rivets for No. 67's boiler repairs, a job that we need to progress as quickly as possible.

New Chief Mechanical Engineer

At its first meeting after the AGM the Trust Council decided to appoint a new Chief Mechanical

Engineer. Andy McKenna has done the job for a number of years now but it was felt that, with his present personal circumstances, he could not devote the time and effort necessary to carry out the job to the standard required by Council. Steve Roberts was asked to take on this role, one that he had previously held from 1978 to 1992 but gave up when he became shop manager.

.....and Finally

The picture below is a working member at the railway, does anybody recognise the face? To give you a clue, the photograph was taken in the summer of 1978 by Paddy Smith at Craggy bank stationanswer in the next 'Old Run'



Deadline for contributions for next 'Old Run' has been changed to 20th January

The Middleton Railway Trust Limited

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