

THE OLD RUN

JOURNAL OF THE MIDDLETON RAILWAY TRUST



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WINTER 1998/9

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PLEASE NOTE the e-mail address is a new one, and should be used from now on. **ALSO** please note changes to the Trust's official e-mail and web-site addresses on Page 24.

DEADLINE DATES FOR CONTRIBUTIONS ARE THE FIRST DAYS OF MARCH, JUNE, SEPTEMBER, AND DECEMBER.

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.

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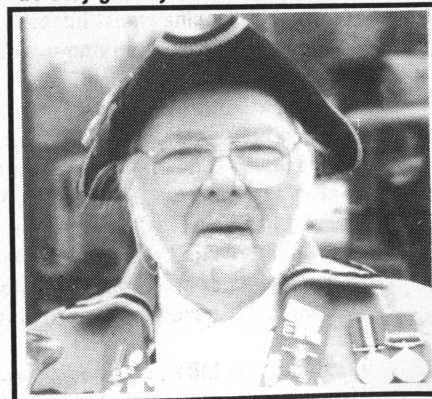
Cover picture: Fred Youell as many longterm members will remember him.
 Photo: courtesy of Mrs. Susan Youell

The last two months have been sad ones for the Middleton Railway Trust, as we have lost three good friends and indefatigable workers.

Fred Youell, our Founder, first Chairman, and Vice-President, died on 6th December after a long and steady decline of health. This issue begins with a collection of memories of Fred.

Within a day or so of us losing Fred, Stanley Haigh, Leeds' official Town Cryer, and for several years a good reliable worker and friend at the Middleton Railway, also died. Then, early in January, Sheila Smalley, a frequent and popular helper in the shop, died suddenly from a stroke. Though it was so very sad to lose Fred and Stanley, it could be said that both had lived out their ordained 'three score years and ten' to the very full, and had achieved much in that time, but Sheila was only 45 years of age, and she should have had many more years of life to enjoy with her family.

I'm sure that all members would wish to join in expressing the very deepest sympathy to the families of Fred, Stanley, and Sheila. They will all be very greatly missed at Middleton.



Stanley Haigh in full Town Cryer regalia.
 Photo: Keith Hartley

MEMORIES OF FRED

FROM IAN SMITH

The recent death of Fred Youell, whilst not entirely unexpected, was nevertheless a great shock. Fred was a great influence in my life, and was instrumental in my becoming involved with the Middleton Railway. It all began in 1960 when I was just six years old

In those far off days, I lived in Gasholder Street, at the bottom of which the Balm Road branch of the Middleton Railway ran. I used to walk down to the rusty railway tracks quite regularly, and one day I found this enormous man there, muttering strange words about "Chairs, Coach Screws" and other incomprehensible objects. He also came out with rude words, which I as a six year old could not use!

I quickly made friends with this chap, and helped him with his tape measure, picked up various bits and pieces for him, and kept him company. I eventually invited him home to wash his hands, which he gratefully accepted. What my mother thought of Fred just then I will never know, but she has always retained a soft spot for him since those early days.

I remember the Swansea & Mumbles Coach being put back together and the very first trains, which Fred presided over.

Then I left the area, not to return until 1969 when I actually joined the MRT as a youth of fifteen [membership number 551J!]. I renewed my acquaintance with Fred, assisting with the many projects he had going at that time. This included working freight traffic the Fred way - with only HIM on the footplate! Of course, such things would be frowned upon today, but in the 1960's things were, to say the least, rather different!

I well remember one day when Fred was driving 'Sweet Pea' (HE1786!) and one of members attempted to get on the footplate to assist. "Young man - get off this locomotive!" was Fred's response, at which young member did so, followed by Fred, who left ME on the engine whilst himself and volunteer flagged Moor Road!

Fred stood down as Chairman in 1970, but he continued to have an interest in the line and came down from time to time.

He became more active again in the 1980's, as a regular Guard. Fred was a popular Guard as he would regale our passengers with his tales of derring-do in the railway's early years. Many a passenger had a good laugh at Fred's tales. Unfortunately, as Fred became more infirm, he was unable to cope with the task of Guard and he finally retired from active duty. We saw him from time to time, though, brought down to the line by Susan and Matthew.

Fred's last major appearance at Middleton was in 1994, when we named the Fred Youell Building. I'll never forget his face when he realised it was HIS name on the plaque!

Of course, the MRT owes its very existence to Fred's drive and tenacity. We will be putting a special memorial plaque on the building, so that visitors will always know just who Fred was and what he achieved.

FROM SHEILA BYE

Early one bleak Sunday morning in the late 1960's, Fred arrived at our door, wanting to know if I would help him measure how far away from our running line the newly announced motorway was going to be. He had obtained a draft plan of the route, and wanted to make sure that it would not be built too near his Railway. However, there was going to be no-one else at the line until later, and he'd thought of me, as we lived in the Longroyds, only a few hundred yards from the Railway. It was the first time I'd really met Fred, apart from at Middleton meetings and functions.

We did the measuring, he made notes on the plan, and then ran me home again. It really was cold, and when we arrived back at our house I offered him a cup of tea. Whilst I attended to the brew, he chatted to my parents, especially Dad, who had almost fifty years of railway service. The conversation turned to the 'diddle-dum records' (how many members remember those?!). Fred knew them by heart. Somehow, we ended up with him pacing up and down our hearthrug, giving us a full recital of the entertaining sound pictures of a railway at work (including the difficult-to-imitate bit where the train came to a large network of crossings outside a big station). In short, Fred was a master and an enthusiast of anything connected with railways, from railway law and working procedures to the diddle-dum records! The motorway, incidentally, was built a bit further away from our track than it seemed to appear on those very early plans - did that have anything to do with Fred's influence?

A few years later, Fred agreed to do a class on Railway History at a Community Centre at Middleton, and as a member of the WEA committee which provided the class, I went along to take the fees at the first meeting. Fred's inaugural lecture was so interesting and amusing that I enrolled myself for the course. Unusually, student numbers kept more or less as they started - a miracle in this case, as the centre had only just been started, in a former infants' school. The new furniture had yet to arrive, and the fact that a dozen or so adults were prepared to spend a dozen or so evenings squatting on chairs designed for five year olds, is a testimony to the interest and entertainment value of Fred's lectures! The caretaker, however, was not impressed. Fred had so many railway anecdotes to pass on that he was well-nigh unstoppable, even to enable someone to go put the kettle on for a cuppa. The nine o'clock finishing time invariably stretched to half past nine or even later, with the unfortunate caretaker rattling keys in meaningful fashion outside the classroom door.

Many years after that, as Editor of *The Old Run*, I became one of several recipients of what was irreverently known as 'Fred letters'. He typed them just like he spoke, swiftly and spontaneously, with sharp changes of tack. The spelling was often quite bad too, and I seem to remember that he later mentioned that he suffered from dyslexia, so they must have taken a lot of effort to put together. They were obviously typed and dispatched as soon as their subject occurred to him, and however difficult it might be sometimes to follow Fred's mercurial trail of thoughts, they were full of information and/or novel ideas to be pondered over. They sometimes ended up as articles in this magazine, though perhaps not as many of them as in his younger days back in the 1960's, when each *Old Run* was rumoured to contain several Fred writings printed under a variety of pseudonyms. One day, several years ago, a short note and a textcard arrived. "The enclosed slip I found in the bookstall whilst going through York

Minster." wrote Fred, "I suppose in a way this had been my guiding light of 40 years of railway preservation."

The text on the card read "GOD grant me the Serenity to accept the things I cannot change . . . Courage to change the things I can and Wisdom to know the difference."

Anyone who knew Fred would have to admit that he had an abundance of Courage to change the things he could. However, to the eternal gratitude of anyone who uses our railway, as a member or as a visitor, Fred was famously short of the Serenity of acceptance of things somebody else said he couldn't change, as well as what a less courageous soul might consider to be the 'Wisdom' of knowing the difference.

There are many reminders of Fred Youell, and a magnificent memorial in the continuing growth of the standard gauge railway preservation movement which he helped to pioneer, both as our Founder and as a co-Founder of the ARPS. However, the man himself has been missed already during his last few years, when he was only rarely able to visit his Railway, and life at Middleton will never seem the same without him.

FROM BRIAN ASHURST

I first met Dr. Youell in 1958 when I joined the Leeds University Railway Society, of which he was president. Under his benevolent patronage we enjoyed many outings, both local and far-flung, and had interesting visitors and social occasions, all before the Middleton Railway was anything but an interesting local oddity. Fred had a real heart for students, and even though he was a Physics lecturer and I was an English undergrad, we became good friends. He certainly helped me adjust to life away from home. Later I decided to take up bellringing and joined the Campanology Society, and guess who the president was? Yes, Fred again. Always ready to give his official backing to any worthwhile group, he helped the society become established and, though not a ringer, enjoyed its social gatherings. Again, his encouragement helped me acquire a skill that stuck with me through the years. I think he had a soft spot for bells because of Lord Peter Wimsey's adventures in *The Nine Tailors*, set in his beloved East Anglia.

The story of how the Middleton Railway was rejuvenated has been told many times, so I will not repeat it here. I will add that the remarkable achievements of the early years were in large part due to his tenacity, leadership, and his physical strength - I'll swear he could have lifted one end of a tramcar by himself if necessary. Those who were around then will never forget the bitter cold foggy nights when the track had to be repaired at 3a.m. so the morning goods could get through from Robbie's, or the long evenings spent jacking up another wagon that bit the dust. Fred was the organiser, chief repair man and much else. Probably only Susan knows the real cost of those days.

When the Middleton was about to get going, in between bringing the Swansea and Mumbles car up from South Wales and re-assembling it, negotiating with Hunslet Engine Co. for the *John Alcock*, and carrying out his full time teaching obligations, Fred and Susan were expecting their first baby, Harriet. The baby and the Swansea car arrived on the same day, causing amusing misunderstandings when excited questions were asked: "Has it arrived yet?" "How much does it weigh?"

Later when I was married, we moved to Leeds for work, and occupied a flat just round the corner from the Youells. My wife did not know anyone in Leeds, and both

Fred and Susan were truly gracious in befriending us and making sure she felt welcome in a ferocious Leeds winter (quite a change from California!). After a few months we were able to buy a house in Otley, and we will never forget the moving process, which took place exclusively in Fred's old Austin 7, with kitchen stove strapped on the roof. He even remembered our first anniversary, and came out in the same car to drive us to a restaurant. (He didn't stay for the meal!)

Of course by this time I was thoroughly involved in the Middleton Railway, serving as *Old Run* editor, membership secretary, and various odd jobs on the line as time permitted. My office was within walking distance of the railway so I often went down at lunchtime, occasionally bumping into Fred on some critical mission. Fred's continuing resourcefulness in the face of the many crises faced by the line were an inspiration to the rest of the committee, as well as his more far-sighted ideas for the future.

What would be a fitting memorial for Dr Youell? Well, just go down to the railway and look around. Just as he took care to observe the centenary of the death of Matthew Murray with a service at the Murray family church and a peal of bells, I think those of us who have faith should pause in our busy lives to remember with gratitude another, later, pioneer, who continues to enrich all our lives.

My deepest sympathy to his family, and greetings to old friends at the Middleton.



Fred and Susan Youell, seen at the opening ceremony of the Fred Youell Building, November 1994.
Photo: Keith Hartley

CHAIRMAN'S NOTES

Steve Roberts

A significant era in the long life of the Middleton Railway came to an end with the recent sad passing of Fred Youell. I, along with quite a few other people at Middleton, have known Fred throughout a large part of our lives. Latterly, he himself may not have been a daily part of these lives, but his legacy in Middleton certainly has been and continues to be so. Looking around, there are so many reminders of him and so many anecdotes to tell that it will be many a year before his memory fades, if ever. Just a few of those memories are shared elsewhere in this *Old Run*. The 'Fred Youell' building will continue to bear his name and the Middleton Railway will, forever, I am sure, continue to be 'Fred's Railway'.

In the last *Old Run* I put pen to paper on three of the many things that I would like to see happen. Some definite progress has been made towards the conversion of the old workshop into a museum and I am hopeful that, by the time we open our doors again at Easter, there will be something for our visitors to see other than just a collection of stock stored in sidings. Tidying up of the yard has yet to make any real progress but we must get this part of our house in order. The third aspiration, to see an increase in visitor numbers on ordinary days, cannot be judged at this time but, if the visitor numbers at our Santa and New Year Thomas events are a guide, there is every hope that my wishes will be fulfilled. Certainly the 1999 leaflet produced by Howard Bishop has got to be one of the best in the Heritage Railway world and should

do a lot towards bringing the visitors in. Is there not a competition we can enter it in? [I understand that it has already been entered for one.-Ed.]

Having started the ball rolling with the above, what else can we do to improve our lot? Little things can go a long way to improving our image. Generally our train crews look fairly smart, but I am sure that there is room for improvement. Footplate crews should have clean overalls (at least at the start of the day!) and I would like to see guards in uniform and shop staff perhaps wearing smart Middleton sweatshirts. We cannot expect staff to provide such things and, although I am sure many of our volunteers will put their hands in their pockets, we will have to look at the costs involved in providing suitable attire.

Slightly leading on from the above, I have a personal dislike for hi-visibility vests and do not like to see operating staff, especially guards, wearing them. No doubt these words will ruffle a few feathers! They look scruffy, and I have yet to hear any argument that will convince me that they have a place at Middleton. I suspect that I am not alone in this opinion, and there does seem to be a growing backlash against wearing them on the Heritage Railways. It is a fallacy to say that they make you any safer and, in our environment, the need to pick out people at distances approaching half a mile so that you can blow a warning whistle as you bear down on them at 100 miles an hour is non-existent. They also seem to have been adopted by many 'gricers' who tend to think that wearing them gives pseudo official status to wander about the tracks as they like.

LOCO & YARD NOTES

Steve Roberts

There's quite a lot to report this time. Having had six steam locomotives operating at our Gala in September, it's amazing how things can change and on one occasion just after the start of the Santa Specials, we actually had no steam loco available for traffic! This situation was very short lived, but it does show what a knife edge we sometimes live on.

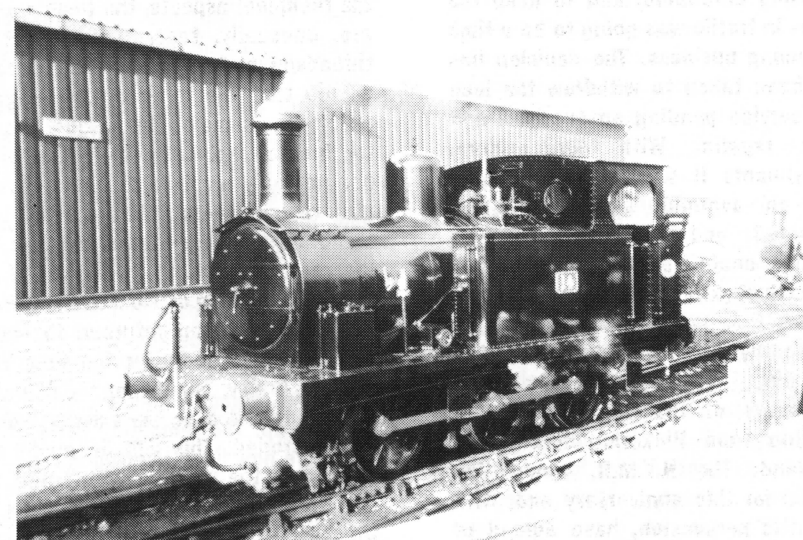
1882 *Mirvale* Our faithful Hudswell Clarke worked throughout the season. Its annual boiler inspection became due in September, and a smoke tube was found to be leaking just prior to this. This was changed and the Boiler Inspector approved its further use until May 1999, when its ten year period of boiler use expires. However, after appearing at the Steam Gala, *Mirvale* has subsequently suffered further tube leakage, and it is obvious that it was becoming unreliable, and to keep the engine in traffic was going to be a time consuming business. The decision has thus been taken to withdraw the loco from service pending an overhaul and boiler repairs. With our existing commitments it was considered that such an overhaul would be quite protracted, and may be some time before it could be commenced. Enter the North York Moors Railway! *Mirvale* was the first steam locomotive to be operated by the then fledgling N.Y.M.R. in 1969. Thus, 1999 is the 30th anniversary of that first triumphant steaming from Pickering through to Goathland. The N.Y.M.R. would like *Mirvale* for this anniversary and, with very little persuasion, have agreed to provide help and facilities to carry out

the required boiler overhaul so that the loco can be a star attraction at their celebrations. Plans are for the loco to leave Middleton during the first week of the New Year. Once at the N.Y.M.R., a boiler lift will be carried out. The tubes will have to be removed together with the front tubeplate, which is known to require replacement. Any further work will be dependent on what is found once access to the inside of the boiler is possible. Boilers do have a habit of springing surprises once you start to look in earnest!

385 The Steam Power Trust's Danish Hs class has continued to give reliable and satisfactory service. Like *Mirvale*, 385 will become due for a ten year boiler overhaul in 1999, but in this case its 'ticket' does not expire until November. On preparing the boiler for its annual inspection it was found that the two fusible plugs warranted renewal, together with one of the mudhole doors. For those interested in the technical aspects, the fusible plugs are, unusually, taper threaded at 10 threads/inch. As it is very important to ensure that the taper of the plugs is exactly the same as the mating holes in the firebox, replacement of these plugs has not only involved the manufacture of replacements but also the manufacture of a suitable tap to re-cut the screw threads in the crown of the firebox. Following on from these repairs, the loco has been returned to traffic and is being used over the New Year period. A new smokebox door baffle plate is required as the existing one is very corroded. This will be made and fitted over the winter. 385's tubes are getting rather thin at the ends, and we will keep our fingers crossed that they survive through next year!



Above: removing *Oliver's* hydraulic platform, July 1998. Photo: C. Nicholson Below: No.14 *St. John*, (alias *The Lady Armaghdale* and *Thomas*) HEC686/1898, at its Nov. 1998 centenary celebrations, hosted at Moor Road by Yorkshire Switchgear, new owners of the Hunslet works site. Photo: H. Bishop



1310 As prophesied in the last *Old Run*, we ended up machining the new cylinder cover casting ourselves. This sort of work presents no problem to us these days, and was accomplished in a couple of evenings. The Y7 has been the main choice for the Santa Specials this year. It did cause surprise by unexpectedly suffering from a leaking tube which we had to change rather urgently. The Y7 has only been in traffic for six years since its last overhaul and we certainly wouldn't have expected such a problem to occur at this stage in its life. The offending tube is quite badly corroded on the water side, something that we don't normally suffer from, and if this is indicative of the remaining tubes, we are unlikely to get anything like ten years before another boiler overhaul. During the last two years 1310 has been to the Foxfield Railway and the Great Central Railway at Nottingham. Both places have a reputation for adverse water and this may be a contributory reason. After its Santa duties, the loco has been brought into the shed for various minor jobs, including attention to the injectors, which tend to waste water, and the mechanical lubricator check valves, which are allowing steam to pass by, so filling the lubricator with water. The recurring problem with the fireman's side injector, whereby the pivot pin on the overflow flap keeps failing has been hopefully identified as a design-manufacturing fault. It has been found that the two injectors, although identical externally, are subtly different internally, and the flap pivot pin is subjected to unnecessary forces on the troublesome injector. Slight attention with a file will, we hope, now have cured the problem. The injector cones

have also been descaled with an acid treatment.

1625 After seeing general service throughout the latter part of the season, the Cockerill was withdrawn for its annual internal boiler inspection during November. This was passed with no problems and the loco has been reassembled and steam tested for the Boiler Inspector. It has been 'standby' for the Santa Specials, but was not required. A new vacuum brake application valve has been made and fitted. 1625 is presently drained and stored for the winter.

67 Work progresses satisfactorily on the overhaul of the Ship Canal long tank. The chassis is now all but complete, awaiting the fitting of two springs and various minor items, such as drain cock operating linkage. Quotations have been obtained for new springs at a total cost of £750 and an order will be placed in the New Year. The original springs were stolen in 1996. The righthand tank has been brought into the workshop for patch repairs to be carried out. It seems that the outer plates have been previously renewed, but the inner plates are a bit rough in places. A replacement brake cylinder has been obtained from the now closed Southport Steam Centre. Apart from being slightly smaller in diameter, this replacement brake cylinder is almost identical to the original, which was also stolen in 1996. Following fitting of this, the cab floor has been replaced and the brake gear coupled up. The remaining parts of the cab have now been rivetted up and it is ready for fitting to the chassis when it is convenient, i.e. when we next have a major shunt in the shed. Attention will

soon be turned to the boiler which requires little work, other than retubing. As a prelude to this some 100 tubes have been obtained from the Worth Valley Railway at a good price. These tubes were originally purchased for this loco a number of years ago. There was then a complete set, but something approaching 50% appear to have disappeared over the years. These will have to be purchased from a tube supplier at commercial rates. It's probably a bit premature to talk about a first steaming yet, but we (or at least the writer!) are optimistic that it will be this year.

1601 After languishing in the back of the workshops for the last twelve months, we have some good and exciting news to report. Thanks to the extreme generosity of one of our members in particular, we are almost certainly in a position to finance the purchase of a new boiler. To this end, a specification has been drawn up for the work, and tenders have been invited. The preferred choice is for a replacement rivetted boiler, but finance may dictate that we have to go for an all welded version. We are also pursuing further grant aid as, even with the promised financial assistance, the purchase of a new boiler will be a drain on our finances. If the proposed plans come to fruition, the order for the boiler should be placed during February with a preferred delivery towards the end of September. However, it may be that no supplier can make this delivery requirement. We would like the loco to be available for service in 1999, but it should certainly take its (belated) place on the roster in 2000.

2387 Brookes No.1 Following its

movement to the back of the workshop, the chassis of *Brookes* was lifted off its wheels for examination and painting. The examination has revealed little in the way of major work being required. The eccentric straps have been reworked to remove excessive play, and the axlebox and big end brasses have been fettled up, as necessary. Many hours have been spent in degreasing, needlegunning and sanding down the various bits and pieces that make up the 'chassis' and these have now received several layers of paint - red, black or green, as appropriate. Brunswick green now seems to be the likely finished colour, although there is still a slight chance that there may be a change of mind. Following on from the above work, the frames were re-wheeled over the Christmas break, and we now have a rolling chassis, once more. This was a target that the loco's owner had set and it does seem possible that, if progress is maintained, a return to steam will be possible this year.

2103 After several months of discussion, an agreement between the loco owner and the Railway was eventually signed in October. Immediately following this, the loco was shunted into the workshops for work to commence on its return to steam. For the record, the loco was returned to steam several years ago, whilst on the Derwent Valley Railway at York. However, several fittings had been loaned from other locos and its return to steam was short lived. The loco has stood out of use ever since. With a slowly expiring boiler ticket, our intention is to get the loco back into service as soon as possible but an examination has revealed that quite a

bit of work does need doing before this can happen. The right hand side cab front plate had been previously replaced but was never properly fitted to the rest of the cab. This has now been rivetted into position. In order to carry out this work, it was necessary to remove the righthand rear sandbox. This revealed that several studs required replacement. The righthand front sandpipe was found to be cracked almost completely through, and a new length has been cut and welded in. New injector water valves have been fitted to the water tank, not without some frustration, essentially caused by lack of drawings or originals to copy. The operating handles had to be made twice, as what seemed a simple job turned into a complex marathon! The new injectors have been temporarily bolted in place and a start made on fitting new copper pipework (the original was not to a suitable specification for use with high pressure steam and has all been removed). The cab and tank have been sanded down, and a start has been made on applying undercoat. Various missing or broken split pins and taper pins have been renewed on the spring hanger pins and valve gear. New trimmings have been made and fitted as found necessary, and some attention is being given to the mechanical lubricator. One minor hiccup in the loco's return to service remains to be overcome, and that is provision of acceptable boiler certification to cover the thorough internal inspection. The owner's copies were lodged with the previous railway, and appear to have gone missing. Although the boiler was originally examined by Plant Safety, who are also our insurance company, they do not

have any record of having done so, as it is now their policy to destroy dormant records after five years. We are presently discussing this with our Boiler Inspector, and it may be necessary to remove the tank and cladding for a further examination. A hydraulic test will be necessary, whatever the outcome of the discussions.

54 The cryptic comment in the last *Old Run*, that the loco may be returned to steam 'off site', has become fact. Agreement has been reached for the loco to be returned to steam at the Quainton base of the Buckinghamshire Railway Society, and the loco left for there during October. The intention is that they will retube the boiler and carry out various other jobs in return for a period of use, the exact time being subject to negotiation and dependent upon the amount of work required.

1210 Sir Berkeley This much-travelled Manning Wardle made it back to Keighley following its holiday at Foxfield but, unfortunately, was unable to take up its planned duties due to the discovery of a fractured front coupling rod. The rod was repaired in time for it to be returned to Middleton for our Gala, but it was a last minute affair, the repaired rod being fitted on the eve of the event. *Sir Berkeley* made it through the two days, but does need some further work on setting up the coupling rods as it is not quite right. A broken steam valve spindle also needs to be repaired before the loco is fit for traffic once more. Just a couple of extra jobs for the winter!

91 This Brush diesel returned to traffic during September, on completion of the various minor repairs mentioned in the last *Old Run*.

The last single sentence just about covers everything that has happened to the diesel fleet since *D631 Carroll* returned to traffic. Yet, with the exception of our small Fowler diesel, 3900002, all our diesels are serviceable and used as required. This is gratifying to know. Our diesel fleet is generally in good condition and we must be well up the league table when it comes to diesel loco availability. Those few volunteers that keep it that way deserve a pat on the back.

Those of you that sit back and analyse the above will realise that 1999 could be a bit touch and go with regard to steam loco availability. In theory, 1310, *Sir Berkeley*, 385 and 1625 will be available but of those, *Sir Berkeley* and 385 are in their last year of a boiler ticket and their continued use without problem will require fingers crossed. Add to this the fact that 1310's tubes have suddenly become suspect, and it will be seen that we are indeed living on the proverbial knife edge. With luck, we should have 2103, 67 and *Brookes* at some point during the year and, if plans with *Mirvale* and 1601 come to fruition they, too, may take their place on the roster before the millenium. 1999 will certainly prove to be an interesting year!

SANTA 1998 Now that the grand old man with a white beard and red costume has been and gone for another year, it is time to take stock. Generally, the 1998 Santa season was successful. Perhaps not our best year, we nevertheless saw the total income from Santa operations increase by some £1900 on 1997. A few more sums will have to be done before we can assess the overall 'profit' and, thus, its contribution to the future of the

Railway. We operated on seven weekend days, plus one midweek day especially for school parties. The timetable was changed to give a 50 minute service instead of the 40 minute service used for the last few years. This has both advantages and disadvantages. When traffic is light, it ensures that there are more people on each train. At the other extreme, when traffic is heavy, trains become overcrowded, creating nightmare problems for poor Santa and his helpers. The other downside of a 50 minute service is that, quite often, intending visitors that just miss a train do not wish to wait for the next one. With the introduction of pre-booking, passengers are allocated to a particular train, and we cannot vary the timetable to suit the conditions of the day. Some thought needs to be put in to optimise our operations for 1999.

VANDALISM This is becoming all too regular of late. We had yet another recurrence of rail chairs being deliberately smashed during December. This caused some delays to the Schoolday Santa whilst repairs were effected. We do also seem to be suffering fairly regularly from a gang of youths who take delight in trying to disrupt the service. They (for it is almost certainly the same group) have taken the guard's stock of tickets and casually taunted the crew with them, they regularly try to steal the tail lamp and jump onto the rear of the train as it leaves Middleton Park and hang about the track, refusing to move, safe in the knowledge that we will stop and not try to run them down.

MUSEUM Good progress has been made on clearing out the old workshop

which has now had all the machine tools and equipment removed. One casualty of this has been the stove. This has been a focal point virtually ever since the shed was built. On many a cold and wet day it has provided most welcome warmth. True, we now have the oil fired heater in the new workshop, but this is no substitute for the old stove's ability to provide a concentrated heat source to thaw and dry out bodies that have braved the worst of Middleton's weather. The next step will be to tidy up the walls and other areas, to make it more presentable to the public. We can then look to providing some permanent displays of Middleton, and Leeds loco building history. On a slightly different front, we have once more started to progress our application for Museums and Galleries registration. This is seen as a way forward and will, hopefully, give us access to further funding. It is not, however, merely a case of filling in forms. Much will have to be done in order to qualify. One first step is to catalogue and classify all our possessions. This takes on a lot more significance when you think that we have many small artifacts, ranging from hand tools to rail chairs lettered L&NWR, GWR, LMS, etc. which are all, in essence, part of the collection. We may still use them, but like the locos, they have historical significance.

Is there anybody with Curatorial qualification or experience out there?

PERMANENT WAY As part of our winter relaying programme, 250 concrete sleepers were delivered during October. These have come from a new source and are considerably cheaper than we have paid in the last couple of years, making a significant saving. We

still have a vast backlog of old sleepers from previous relays to clear. This is slowly been done, but it is a time consuming business involving sorting, removing chairs, and restacking. We do not have a ready disposal route for those sleepers that are fit for absolutely nothing but firewood, other than burning them in loco fireboxes, but the sleepers have to be sawn up and chopped into suitable sized pieces. Anybody who wants some firewood and is able to take away whole sleepers should get in touch with any Council member.

IN THE WORKSHOP Acquisitions of machine tools are still being made. We have recently acquired, at very favourable rates, a Huron milling machine, pedestal grinder, cut off saw, and a set of hand operated plate and wire rolls. Installation of these machines has made even more inroads into the space available in the workshop and we really do need to take a step back and assess just what we have and what we are likely to have a use for. Already we have decided to scrap the machine hacksaw and belt-driven shaping machine, relics from earlier days when we first started to acquire such things. The hacksaw has, despite much attention in the past, never cut true and square. It came from Peckfield Colliery nearly 20 years ago for the princely sum of £5. The shaping machine has served us well, but was quite worn and has effectively been displaced by a much more modern one of similar size acquired some time ago. Again in an effort to create effective space, we are endeavouring to create some sort of order with all our small tools. Spanners have for years been kept in a large wooden box. Great when

there are only a few but when you have as many as we do, it becomes rather chaotic! The small ones always end up at the bottom and you can never find the one you want. This leads to people leaving spanners out on benches, locos etc., as they know where they last used them, but not very good for the next person, who has to go hunting around. We now have a spanner rack to keep them all in one place and easily accessible. A rack has also been provided for all our stocks and tap wrenches, which until recently used to be kept in several places. Progress is also being made on allocating storage areas for drills, and lathe tools. Once every tool has an identifiable home, it should be much easier to instil the necessary discipline to put them back after use. We do still have a quantity of racking that is dismantled and would be of great benefit for storage if it could be put to use. The big problem we have is that, when the new workshops were built, no consideration was given to the best use of wall space and all the power supplies, lights and power points were run along the wall in the most convenient position. Great from this point, but effectively sterilising most of the wall space and precluding its efficient use.

MIDDLETON PARK EXTENSION It would be great to be able to report really positive progress. Alas this is not so. Having said that, much behind the scenes work is continuing, and we are hopeful that a positive announcement will be forthcoming during 1999. In the meantime, discussions are continuing with Leeds City Council over the definitive route (there are several minor options, each with their own set of advantages and disadvantages).

Sponsorship has got to be the key to a successful outcome, and we are endeavouring to find this. We do have positive offers of sponsorship but not nearly enough to make the project a starter - yet!

TELEPHONES Some while ago, a second telephone line was put in, but its planned use never came to fruition. Increasing commercial activities on the Railway have made the existing telephone line quite busy. It is also connected to the answerphone, and it does cause problems when people phone the Railway wanting to talk to specific people, especially in the workshop.

It has therefore been decided to use the second telephone line as a private number, exclusively as a means of contacting members who are working in the workshops. The telephone number is 0113 270 6162. This number should be used only if you are wanting to contact specific people, in the workshop.

It should not be used for general enquiries or to contact people in the shop, which purposes continue to be best provided for by the old number - 0113 271 0320.

THE GOOD OLD DAYS!?

Sheila Bye

The comments about comparative visitors' service earnings, made in the last issue, needed some clarification for which there was no room then.

Basically, one cannot multiply our current fares by the mid-1970's passenger numbers and achieve a *real* comparison of profits. The fares at that

time were very low. Even a quarter of a century ago, 20p/10p for return tickets was *extremely* cheap! About that time, indeed, our single fare was slightly less than the 'bus fare from Moor Road/Balm Road to Belle Isle, and some people used the train regularly instead of the 'bus. Cheap fares also meant that local people were much more likely to visit us more frequently and casually. Our modern fares reflect the far greater degree of comfort provided for visitors and workers, disproportionately rises in fuel costs following widescale pit closures, and better workshop facilities (which partly pay for themselves by allowing more ambitious in-house restoration projects). In 1974, neither visitors nor workers had much comfort, no toilets let alone telephones. Our sole water supply was a standpipe in Clayton's yard, there was no electricity supply at Moor Road, etc., etc.

These primitive conditions were reflected in our fares, and in the fact that our Railway was a no-frills local transport service, a cheap trip home or to the park, and an adventure for local children, easily affordable from their pocket money. This drew more visitors perhaps, but the modern Railway may well hold its own in actual profits, even without considering higher prices for greater visitor comfort, higher fuel costs, etc. Try multiplying 1974 *takings* by the amount of inflation since then, not 1974 visitor numbers by 1998 fares, for a truly accurate comparison.

Steve mentioned that his figures were for Easter, and in 1974 there would have been an Easter Egg given to each accompanied child, which always boosted Easter weekend figures considerably. We sometimes only took c.£1 in fares on a normal Saturday!

FROM THE DESK OF THE MARKETING OFFICER

Howard Bishop

In the last issue, the Chairman indicated that present passenger numbers were down on those in 1974. It certainly gave food for thought that 25 years ago our passenger load was higher than today. However, in what is arguably a more affluent age, our Railway now has to compete with multifarious counter-attractions such as seven day shopping, and the new religion of "let's visit the garden centre/car boot sale", not to mention wall-to-wall football and other sporting events, now almost invariably held on Sundays, all in direct competition with ourselves and other traditional attractions. The modern family really is spoiled for choice, with many more venues and special events to seduce, excite and titillate the leisure buds.

Today's family expects more excitement and sophistication to satisfy their needs and help them perceive that they have had a good time, even though they often cost much more than a visit to the Middleton Railway. Compare the following prices for a family of two adults and two children: Elland Road (Leeds United) £45; Royal Armouries Museum £23.95; Thackray Medical Museum £12.50; Brewery Wharf £14; Showcase Cinemas £12; Armley Mills Industrial Museum £5; Middleton Railway £5. On this basis, we sure offer value for money, but conversely there is a school of thought which says if it's too cheap, people will not value what is on offer and will go elsewhere!

What should we be offering the modern family? We may not be as

'grand' as some other heritage railways, with their miles of trackage and several famous and romantic engines. We may not have a string of holiday resorts to tempt customers, or literary associations and stunning countryside. But what we do offer is unique! A ride behind a steam (or diesel) locomotive is an attraction in itself, of course. Many young children have never seen a steam engine, let alone looked into a glowing firebox or handled a piece of real coal. But what else do we or should we offer? Small is beautiful! What we cannot offer in size we should provide in quality. We provide a friendly, personal welcome and show interest in our visitors - as exemplified by the ability of adults and particularly children to talk freely with engine and train crews, and to have explained to them what goes on around them, and what there is to see and touch.

We can and do offer a significant, unique historic heritage - no other railway can deny us that. Our association with the Leeds locomotive building empire grew from these small beginnings. We are a recognised part of the South Leeds Heritage Trail, we are recognised and promoted by the City of Leeds through its literature and its Web Site. We have easy access, in the centre of the Leeds conurbation, with direct links with the motorway system and excellent public transport connections. In the fastest growing city in Britain, we are at the centre of a population of nearly three quarters of a million in the City of Leeds, and no less than two millions in West Yorkshire!

We must give added value, however, by providing added attractions: indoor exhibits, interactive games and videos, competitions,

visiting attractions such as vintage buses, kiddies' rides, magicians, and the like. If we are going to attract people and get their repeat business, it may appear that we have to get into the entertainment business. If this seems peripheral to our core task of restoring, preserving and running trains, I am reminded that many heritage railways are heavily subsidised by their 'peripheral' or ancillary businesses of static and on-board catering, shop sales, and footplate experience courses, such that income from these activities exceeds income from sales of train tickets - which makes these not so peripheral after all! The establishment of a Museum and the extension of the running line to Middleton Park are on the horizon. The facilities in our workshops for the restoration and repair of engines and rolling stock to a high professional standard are excellent. All those projects will be aided the more by increased numbers of visitors and subsequent increased income.

These are the imponderables with which the Marketing Committee constantly grapple. Rather than grovelling at the foot of the inverted pedestal, we should be proud of our achievements thus far, and keen to publicise what we have to offer.

Which leads me to mention that in February and March we have to send out 100,000 leaflets! 1998 saw us taking responsibility for our own distribution which saved the Railway 60% of the cost of employing a professional company. This year, John Blackburn Ltd., Printers, have very kindly sponsored the cost of printing by a considerable amount, for which we are grateful. So that this saving is not

wasted, we need help in packing and labelling! All the materials will be provided - the work can even be done in the comfort of your own home!

If you can spare a few hours for this vital task, please contact the Marketing Officer (01977 620585) as soon as possible after 14th February.

Many thanks in anticipation. Who knows, you may be the essential added ingredient to help get our passenger numbers back up to 1974 levels!

Publicity P.S. In February and March there will be a new series on BBC2 TV featuring Fred Dibnah, which will include shots of the Middleton Railway.

WANTED URGENTLY!!

Colour photographs of Middleton Railway Leeds-built locos, steam and diesel, for inclusion in next year's publicity literature. Acknowledgement will be given for any photos used. Can be gloss prints, transparencies or loaded on JPEG disks.

Please send to the Marketing Officer (address on Page 24) without delay!
Many thanks in anticipation.



385 and 1310 pictured during the Santa Specials on 19th December 1998. Photos: Ian Dobson

MEMORIES OF 7051

John Whelan

The 7051 was the first Diesel to be shown in the L.M.S. Allocation Book. It was placed at Chester for working in the Lightfoot Street Warehouse Yard. The drivers were all 'Clause 8' men. The only one I can remember by name is Driver Knott, who was a notable pigeon fancier and would enthral me with accounts of races at any time I was lucky enough to be sent to Lightfoot Street.

The two fitters, trained locally by young Jack Alcock, were Bill Challinor and George Crowe. Bill Challinor later became Mechanical Foreman at Upperby. The Mechanical Inspector was, I think, a gentleman named Sparrow who had been the Foreman Fitter at Stoke. Jack Alcock of Hunslet spent a great deal of time at Chester and became very friendly with my father and would spend two or three evenings a week at my home. I worked on the loco with Mr. Challinor (in those days an apprentice was expected to use formal address).

On a couple of occasions I was lucky enough to accompany Mr. Challinor to Hunslet where I met Jack Alcock Senior, who was boss of the Erecting Shop. All the managers at Hunslet were very keen supporters of Hunslet Rugby League Club, and after lunch it was practice to re-enact various moves of the last match and plan the 'slaughter' for the next, the salt and pepper pots being used as players. We found this most confusing as neither Mr. Challinor or myself had ever heard of Rugby League.

The 7051 was fitted with a 150H.P. MAN six cylinder, four stroke engine. It was absolutely simple with a single exhaust and inlet valve to each cylinder. Bosch atomisers set at 150 atmospheres fed from a Bosch fuel pump were used. In 1935, the part description 'injector' was not used. Some of the features of this early engine I note in the present day MAN engines.

The starting engine was a JAP 2CV, which drove through a flat clutch plate to the main engine. The JAP was a terror to start, despite the combined efforts and threats of Mr. Alcock and Mr. Challinor to retard it sufficiently to cut out the kickback. To get to the starting handle, two floorboards had to be lifted to give sufficient leg room. Even so, the unfortunate person starting the engine was at a great disadvantage as a sitting or kneeling position had to be adopted, making any evasive action difficult. It was well said by all that when kneeling, they were praying for the 'b . . . y' thing to start. During the normal working hours, if the drivers could not start the JAP they would invariably call for attention on some other pretence, and then get the 'fall guy' to risk their thumb or wrist. The practice was always referred to as the 'Lightfoot Street Shunt whistling for a Banker'.

The gearbox was of Hunslet design, and had four pre-selective gears. It was a good box, the only trouble was the P41 oil which leaked past the seals in the selector cylinders. The drive from the engine was through a multi plate friction clutch with the clutch pedal fitted at a convenient position to act as a footrest for the driver. This resulted in the clutch requiring adjustment practically every day, and the plates being renewed every six weeks to two months. Adjusting the clutch was a simple job, and consisted of slackening a lock nut and screwing in a set bolt to give the actuating fingers the correct clearance. This job was usually undertaken with the loco in traffic.

It was much enjoyed by the fitters as it meant a period away from the shed, a true breath of fresh air.

Everything about shed life was primitive and one can only ponder how we existed. The smoke, the water lying in the bottom of the pits, the filth and the lack of amenities is beyond conception in the modern world of industry. '728' men were not welcome in the Driver's Cabin, (the title of Engineman had not yet become practice), so took their meal time either on the footplate or clustered around the sand furnace. There was only one cold water tap situated in a corner over a zinc lined wooden trough. This had to provide for the needs of the whole staff of the shed. A tin of soft soap was put out daily for washing purposes and one sponge cloth per week was the issue for towelling. The lavatories were just as primitive, and if you were unfortunate enough to have to use them you would be accommodated in a lean-to shed with the choice of one of four of a line of holes, and an old Weekly Notice to use as toilet paper. The urinal trough was behind a cast iron screen sited in front of the 'bogs' and offered some privacy to the two middle holes.

There was no issue of uniform to artisan staff, and bump helmets had not been invented. The general practice was to fold a newspaper and wear it inside a flat cap to offer the head some protection. It was thought that the *Times* was the best paper to use, not because of its news value, but on the supposition that the paper was tougher. There was many a witty exchange between the staff of different political persuasions regarding the use of this newspaper. Cuts to the head were very common as it was difficult to avoid the legs of taper pins in the bottom links of the motion. I think that 'Crabs', which were rarely seen, were the only locos without inside motion. These were only occasionally shedded at Chester, so head bumping was always present, especially with the Mold Junction 'Super Ds', which came in for No.4 and No.6 examinations.

There is little to look back on with pleasure, only interest, and marvel that it could have happened. It certainly didn't happen from choice, but was a case of tradition passing from father to son in what was considered a secure job for life.

Back to 7051. The loco was, perhaps, the first to be left out, stabled away from the depot; it being left M-F on the spur at the Cattle Dock. This proved very advantageous on more than one occasion when the radiator elements started leaking and a supply of dung was readily available. In those early days, there was little or no thought given to treated water or cavitation. The load was, I think, about seven to nine vans or wagons, which was less than the shunters would have liked as it meant that most roads had to be drawn twice. I always thought that this was balanced with the improved braking compared with its predecessors, the L.N.W. Saddlebacks No.2790 and 2793. The Saddleback braking was so poor it was practice to stop by reversing and applying the handbrake. A most difficult task when working into a warehouse!

Lightfoot Street was at that time quite a heavy yard, and due to the loading of 7051 some traffic was missing its booked service, causing heavy loading of the 01.10a.m. Crewe, which was booked to clear the yard. The specially selected 'Super C' working this train could be heard for miles around as it gasped its way up the bank to Christleton Tunnel.

I was surprised at the way the drivers accepted 7051. There were complaints regarding the noise, but the clean enclosed cab and good braking more than

compensated. The loco was, in the main, light on repairs and showed up well on the Analysis.

One turn it did lose was on a Monday, and was caused by a fireman named Jones, (which of the many I can't recall - they were so numerous they were referred to as Jones One, Jones Two, etc.). This particular Jones, whose job was to help with the preparation, then ride with the loco down to the yard, mistook the engine lubricating oil filler, which protruded into the cab, for a sand box. An unfortunate mistake as the filler was a three inch pipe surmounted with a screwed brass cap. Jones realised something was amiss when he had difficulty in replacing the cap. Mr. Crowe was sent for from home, and proceeded to remove the sump and wash the lot out with paraffin. He replaced the pieces, filled up with lub. oil and started the engine. To everyone's surprise and delight it ran without a hitch and the loco was able to take up its afternoon working. Good for George Crowe and MAN. This was a marvellous piece of work considering the lighting comprised of an occasional two mantle gas lamp in the shed roof. The dreaded thick yellow smoke which would be at its thickest on Monday morning would obliterate any chance of illumination from this source. The taste of this sulphurous smoke still lingers with every chest cold sixty years down the line. The other illumination was from a duck lamp.

Of course, all this was before the age of socket spanners and the like. The tool kit in those days was near enough, using shed jargon, a hammer, chisel, a couple of set pins and a 108. The 108 was the most important piece of L.N.W. equipment and no self respecting driver would be without one in his basket as well as the one in the bucket. I wonder how many of us remember the 'one-ought-eight', its role and its importance?

When it was decided that the 7051 was under powered for Lightfoot Street, it was transferred to the Sleeper Yard at Ditton Junction. Mr. Crowe travelled with it early on a Sunday morning, and thought his last day had arrived when he looked over the panel whilst crossing Frodsham Viaduct. He stayed for two weeks giving instruction to fitters at Speke. As it was deemed necessary to get the feel of the clutch after the plates had been changed, both Mr. Challinor and Mr. Crowe were authorised to move the loco within shed limits, and became the only drivers outside the line of promotion. It was later agreed with the L.D.C. that they would be accompanied by a Driver or Passed Fireman, and that they should not pass over points. 7051 was followed at Chester by 7054, 7052 and one other, I think it was the 7055. One of these locos was powered by a Ricardo engine, but it would be bigger than 132HP. I recollect that one, I think 7054, had a Harland and Wolfe engine which was very interesting as it had exhaust pistons in the heads driven by eccentrics on the main shaft. Another had a Two Stroke engine. The Diesels were followed by a Sentinel, which I considered to be the only true locomotive development since the *Rocket*. It was the only steam loco that didn't 'progress' by being made bigger, and of course it didn't need a fireman. It had a water tube flash boiler with a working pressure of, I think, 220lbs.p.s.i. The condenser was so efficient it was only necessary to top up with three or four pints of water each week. When one of the outer coils in the boiler required changing and Mr. Crowe and myself pulled and strained at the union, which was well hidden, it was a couple of days before we realised it was a left hand thread. It was subsequently withdrawn because of the difficulty encountered with the steam leaking past the glands into the oil casing.

Jack Alcock remained a family friend, and would visit our home whenever he was near or was passing through Chester. Many years later, after I had been 'adopted' by 'God's Wonderful Railway' and I came into contact with 'Castles', some numbered 70XX, especially 7051 - which was in my allocation, my mind would invariably flit back to that other 7051.

[Mr. Whelan would very much like to know if any members know what a '728 man' was, and what was the vitally necessary '108'. Answers to the Editorial Address! Solutions in the next issue, together with a review of Don Townsley's excellent *History of the Hunslet Engine Company*, builders of 7051. The book is now on sale, price £25.]

TIMES PAST - Winter 1960

From *The Old Run*, November 1960

Off the Road.

Even the best of railways have derailments and Middleton is no exception.

It happened late one Wednesday afternoon. The daily train was trundling happily across Acme's along from Balm Road, and approaching Moor Road level crossing at a slow walking pace. There was a lurch, bumping and scraping and finally our old cliché, the sickening thud. We seemed to fall several feet. The complete silence which followed (the diesel engine having stalled) was rather eerie.

A rather shaken crew clambered out and surveyed the mess: all six wheels off and 21½ tons of loco 'on the deck'. Chairs were cracked and sleepers scored. Fortunately we were still upright and only leaning at a slight angle. Putting a jack under the tilt, as a stop-gap, we took stock. Any railway can run if it stays on the rails - the real test is getting back on when you have strayed from the straight and narrow! Prospects were none too bright and the autumn evening was closing in. We wasted no time. Key men were rung up, each of them brought down any members they could lay their hands on. Within an hour nearly 20 pairs of willing but inexperienced hands were on the job.

A lorry kindly lent by Robinson and Birdsell's brought all our four tram jacks and cross girders to the site, and Hunslet Engine Company, with characteristic generosity, contributed some traverser jacks. By 6.00 p.m. we were able to start the hard work in the yellow glare kindly provided by Leeds City Lighting Department!

Down went the sleeper packing on the soft ground, and two jacks and a girder were packed under each end of the locomotive. Extra support was given by pinchbar jacks and the slow alternation of jack-and-pack was begun. The Chairman, returning at midnight from a lecture to the Huddersfield Railway Circle, found 'John Alcock' already up to rail level. Another half hour saw 'daylight' between flanges and rails.

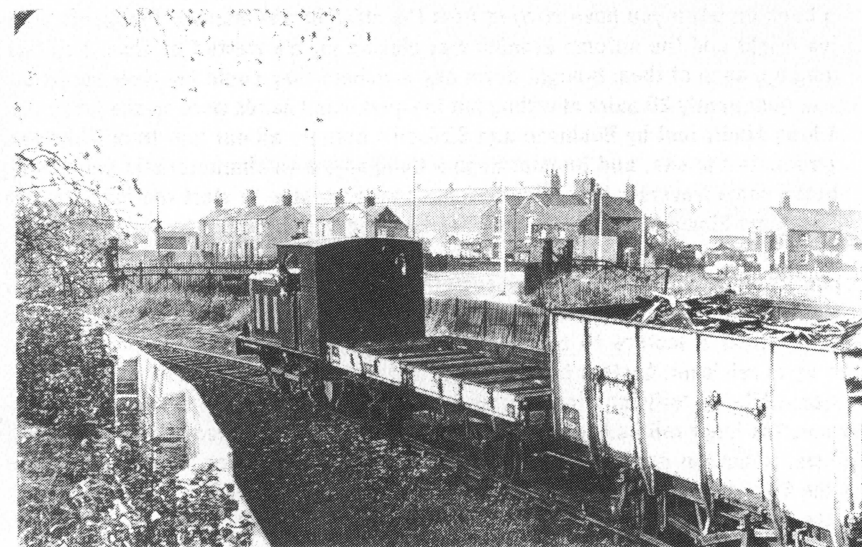
Meanwhile an 'official enquiry' was looking into the cause of this unrailwaylike behaviour. The inner rail had sunk eight inches under the locomotive and the outer rail six inches, about an engine length further on. Both subsidences were at the point where the Electricity Board had buried their 132KV cable in December, 1959. A jack put under the rail at this point disappeared downwards out of sight, and a spade went in nearly up to the handle. The trouble was revealed as a hole in the cable trench thinly covered with a crust of clay. Wet weather and the weight of the train had done the rest.

One rail had been bent and cracked by the derailment and about 20 feet of track in all had to be pulled up, broken chairs replaced and re-aligned. A squad piled ash and earth into the cavity and packed it down as hard as possible. The cracked rail had to be cut through, drilled and fishplated up again.

We glanced at our watches. 2 a.m. Cold? Not a bit of it with plenty of Physical Jerks to warm us up! The loco moves crabwise inch by inch as the traversers take over. Safety chains stop the loco from rolling or sliding down the gradient. A recumbent engineer peers underneath with an oil lamp, lining up flanges and rails. 'She'll do now! Let 'er down'. Clank, bump, twiddle go the jacks. At half past three all six wheels are down. Half an hour's hard work follows as tools, sleepers and jacks are hoisted onto a wagon. At a quarter past four we break for home, tired but satisfied. Two members take the train back to the depot for unloading. The starter whirrs, the six cylinders roar into syncopated thunder. The flagman holds up the non-existent traffic and off we go. The red tail lamp (yes, the Middleton IS a proper railway) disappears round the bend as the train goes to bed twelve hours late.

Next day goods traffic was run to time. we hadn't let our customers down. So we have had our baptism of fire and survived it. But we still drive slowly round 'Cable Corner'.
RFY.

[This issue's 'Times Past' had to be one of Fred Youell's many writings for this magazine. Incidentally, I seem to remember that more than two decades later, when new houses were being built on and near the old Acme Works site alongside the Balm Road branchline, and an electricity supply was being put in, Fred was tickled pink at being able to advise the electricity company as to where the old cable actually was - they apparently had no record of it being there!]



HEC 1697 *John Alcock* (7051) seen moving goods on the Balm Road branch in the early 1960's

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