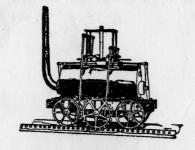


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Foot of Old Run Road

THE OLD RUN

News of the 1758 Middleton Railway at Leeds

Vol. 9

No. 67

Winter 1969/70

MRT WILL START AREA GROUPS

Most preserved lines enjoy the support of Area groups. Up to now, the MRT has been unable to launch any of these, for the simple reason that there have not been enough members in other parts of the country.

Now, however, it is hoped that nuclei of Area Groups can be formed in several key areas with the aim of winning more members and support for such activities as they think appropriate. If you would like to help the MRT grow strong, and you are too far away to help on the line regularly, this is YOUR responsibility. Contact the membership secretary and he will let you know how you can help and what sort of support can be offerred to you by the committee.

The Chairman has already arranged with Mr. Warner, of 65, Ravensbourne Gardens, Clayhall Ilford Essex to act as a focal point for London Area members. There will be a Middleton Railway lecture in March at City and Guilds College to which our members will be welcome.

DON'T FORGET TO RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP

Membership renewals are due on January 1st or July 1st each year (depending on which half of the year you were enrolled). Please send your remittance promptly to the membership secretary, 12 Trelawn Crescent, Leeds 6.

Although MRT membership has been creeping up, the committee is concerned that a large percentage of members forget to renew. Of course they also forget to tell us WHY they fail to renew, and the committee can only guess whether they are simply forgetful, impecunious, or whether they have any complaints! Remember the MRT very urgently needs more members, especially active ones. Please don't let us down - we value your support and hope to meet you personally at some of the events we are planning, if not at the railway itself.

My First Job

The Old Run

It wasn't exactly plain sailing

IAN SMITH

On Tuesday, July 22nd, I walked down the line to help Chris Metcalfe work on the line. It was the first time I had worked on the railway. I arrived at 1.10 pm and helped a short while, until John Sugden said they had to get ready for a visiting party, and asked me to be down at the Junction at 2 pm to help. I stayed behind while Chris gave me a lesson on the parts which make up the track.

At 2 o'clock I went to the Junction and saw the Alton engine and brake van ready to leave. The party arrived and Bill Barraclough went with the first group to Parkside Bridge. From there they went up the line and back, then into the Yard.

Then it was my turn! I was on level crossing duty while the visitors train went to Balm Road and back, so I stopped the traffic with the red flag and the train rolled over the crossing. I then boarded the brake van and took charge of the party, showing them all the items of interest as we went up the line, including a section of newly laid track. When the train stopped, we exchanged passengers with Bill's group and then started on the return journey. The trouble was I only joined in May and my knowledge wasn't too deep, so I told the story to the visitors from the History which I had bought specially for the occasion.

I proceeded up the line with the party until we were in sight of the Broom Pit buildings, and told them about the Museum prospects. I couldn't let the visitors (who were from Beckett's Park) go any further as it was strictly VERBOTEN because of demolition work.

After a little talk we went back down the line only to meet the third and final group half way up. I had to get the party back quickly to avoid holding up the party later, so we hurried back and on to the brake van, and back to the starting point and unloaded them. The locomotive started back for the last group. The wheels moved round and round magnificently, but not the train's wheels! The driver advised me that the train had some chance of starting if I got all brakes off in the guard's van!

Eventually we ran back and got into the yard. I showed the visitors all the locos and returned the visitors to the starting point at Burton Road where all the groups met. The teacher said, "Let's have a vote of thanks for this young man." There was silence! We left it at that!

We told the visitors they could buy souvenirs on the train if they wished. My group had bought theirs already and I had made about 12s 6d. Bill only took 1s 6d for three badges! Bill John and I then put away the locomotive and I was given a lift home in Bill's car. So ended my first job with the Middleton Railway.

(Let's hope we get lots more of you, Ian. - Ed.)

Important Notice (Found in York BR Offices)

It has come to the notice of the Management, that employees have been dying on the job, and either refusing or neglecting to fall over. This practice must cease forthwith, and employees found dead in an upright position, will be dropped from the payroll.

In future, if the foreman or inspector notices one employee has made no movement for a period of one hour, it will be his duty to investigate as to the cause, as it is almost impossible to distinguish between death and the natural movements of some employees. Foremen and inspectors are cautioned to make very careful investigation by holding a pay packet in front of the suspected corpse, as this test is considered to be most reliable.

There have been cases, however, where the natural instinct has been so deeply ingrained that the hand of the corpse has made a spasmodic clutch after "Rigor Mortis" has set in. A most successful test has been to whisper "Sunday work". This test has been known to restore animation to the corpse that has been motionless all week.

The foregoing test should not be applied to the foreman, chargehand, or inspector, as in all these cases movement of any kind is totally unnecessary.

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Iron Horse narrow gauge gets new lease of life

Fiftieth year was memorable

MERVYN LEAH

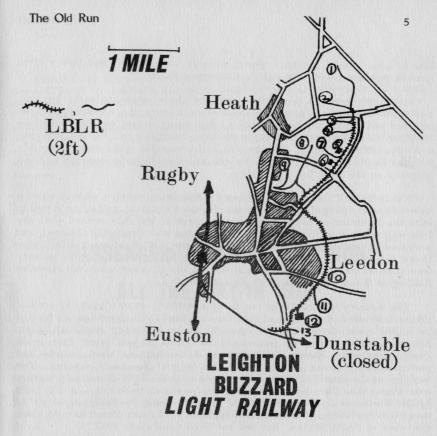
For most of its fifty years' existence, the Leighton Buzzard Light Railway, in north Bedfordshire, has carried little but sand. The operating company, owned jointly by Joseph Arnold & Sons and George Garside Ltd, two local quarry companies, began running trains over its two-ft. gauge line on 20th November 1919, and the important but unglamorous task of transporting sand from quarry to washing-plant to railhead has continued ever since.

The "main line" of the railway is approximately four miles in length, starting at Double Arches quarries, between Watling Street and the village of Heath and Reach, and running southwards alongside a country lane for about two miles. A number of quarry branches leave the line along this section, including the lengthy Chamberlain's Barn branch, extended in recent years to serve New Trees quarry, and there are also connections serving the Stonehenge brickworks and Driroof tileworks.

After the Chamberlain's Barn branch has swept away past a housing estate at Vandyke Junction, the "main line" turns through a right angle, crosses the road on the level, and disappears between some high hedges alongside a school, emerging shortly to cross a girder bridge over a brook, and curving across the middle of a field to meet the A 412 road at Leedon Crossing. Beyond the loop at this point, there are a couple of sharp curves, followed by a steep climb past the works of Marley Tiles, once served by many sand trains every day, but now the traffic goes by road, and only a passing loop remains.

Beyond Stanbridge Road level crossing is a rusty siding leading into a disused concrete works, and the line continues with fields on one side and semi-detached back gardens on the other, dropping sharply past Pages Park recreation ground and the Iron Horse Preservation Society depot to Billington Road where the narrow gauge ends at a tipping dock over the BR sidings. Also here are the head office of Joseph Arnold and Sons, the LBLR works and engine shed (used mainly for storing spare engines) and disused washing plants, recently sold for redevelopment.

Although the original motive power stock consisted of a pair of Hudswell Clarke 0-6-0WTs, these were soon replaced by Simplex petrol locomotives of the armour - plated type still to be seen at a Leeds sewage works. These were gradually superseded after the last was by more modern diesels of the well-known Simplex design, and the last of the earlier machines was cut up in 1959. In addition, both Arnolds and Garsides maintained a fleet of diesels for shunting and working their own quarry branches. From the start the rolling stock was made up of standard Hudson four - wheel tippers, supplemented by eight woodensided bogie wagons for transporting dried sand in bags.



- 1 Double Arches quarry (Garside)
- 2 Double Arches quarry (Arnold)
- 3 Washing plant (Garside)
- 4 Mundays Hill quarry (Garside)
- 5 Stonehenge brickworks
- 6 Driroof tileworks
- 7 Nine Acre quarry (Arnold)
- 8 New Trees quarry (Arnold)
- 9 Chamberlain's Barn quarry (Arnold)
- 10 Marley Tiles
- 11 Concrete works (disused)
- 12 I H P S Pages Park depot (now L B N G R P S depot)
- 13 Billington Road quarry (Arnold)

Both firms originally had their washing plants at Billington Road adjacent to the BR sidings, and so all the sand had to be brought all the way down the line to be washed, irrespective of destination. As less was in fact going away by rail, and more and more by road, it made sense to remove the washing plant to a point nearer the main quarries. This was carried out in 1964, when both firms transferred their washing operations to new sites at Double Arches, Garsides constructing a new branch

line to give access to their plant. Shortly afterwards, the latter firm ceased running trains through to Billington Road.

Arnolds, however, continued to send their products away by rail, and continued running trains of washed sand from the washing plant at one end of the line to the railhead at the other, using the 40 hp diesels they had inherited when the Light Railway company had ceased independent operation in 1959. Trains from the various quarries to Double Arches continued to be hauled by the smaller 20 hp locomotives, used in pairs on the New Trees service.

Early in 1967, a group of railway enthusiasts, with a plan to build a new narrow - gauge railway in the Home Counties, called on Arnolds with the intention of negotiating for materials, but discovered that the line was not scheduled for closure. The plan was promptly changed, and permission obtained to run trains over the LBLR at weekends, when there would be no sand traffic. The Iron Horse Preservation Society was formed for the purpose, and one of the disused washing-sheds at Billington Road was taken over as a depot.

The Society's first train ran in March 1968, when a party of enthusiasts travelled the length of the line in Arnold's bogie wagons, hauled by a pre - war Simplex diesel bought from a quarry company at St. Albans. Regular Sunday passenger services began later that year, running between Pages Park, where a new engine shed, works and platform were being erected, and the loop at Leedon Crossing. The Simplex again provided the motive power until the first steam locomotive was available. This was 'Chaloner', a vertical boilered 0-4-0T built by De Winton of Caernarvon in 1877, and the only working survivor of this bizarre design. It had been bought in 1960 from Penyrorsedd slate quarries in North Wales, but had not been used since 1952.

The end of 1968 saw the arrival of "Pixie" built by Kerr Stuart in 1922, and one of the last remaining examples of that firm's once prolific "Wren" class 0-4-0ST. She had been taken out of service by Devon County Council in 1957 and acquired by the Industrial locomotive Society, who had stored her until her arrival at Leighton Buzzard, "Pixie" was brought into passenger service in June 1969, taking over from "Chaloner" as the regular working locomotive.

JOIN THE MIDDLETON RAILWAY

We need you more than ever today!

WRITE TO: JOHN BUSHELL, 12 Trelawn Crescent, Leeds 6

Finally, in August 1969 came the arrival of "The Doll", a large 0-6-0T built by Andrew Barclay in 1919 for use at Sydenham ironstone quarries in Oxfordshire. After withdrawal from Bilston steelworks, "The Doll" spent some years in an enthusiast's garden near Coventry, before being taken to Bressingham Hall in Norfolk, where her effect on the newly laid permanent way was little short of disastrous. She was not in the best of condition by the time she got to Leighton Buzzard, but the society hopes to have her in working order for the 1970

Because of difficulties with the unsprung "Chaloner" on one of the curves near Leedon, passenger services during the 1969 season ran

PASSENGER SERVICES WILL RUN **ALL THE WAY IN 1970**

only as far as Stanbridge Road, but with modifications to the track alignment, it is intended to run through to Leedon again in 1970. A number of bogie wagons from various sources have been converted into open coaches, and others are awaiting rebuilding. It is hoped that all the stock will soon be fitted with roofs, for protection against the British climate and priming steam engines! Extensions to the engine shed are planned for the near future, as is the erection of a small ex-LNWR signal box, formerly in use at the BR Billington Road level crossing, to house the lever frame and telephone terminal at Pages

Sand trains ceased to run through to the BR sidings in May 1969, and the society subsequently took over exclusive running rights on the section from Vandyke Junction to Billington Road -- about half the total length of the "main line". The line from Vandyke Junction to Double Arches, however, is still the scene of great activity on weekdays, and at least ten Simplex diesels are likely to be found working at various points at any one time. On Sundays, at least one steam locomotive is in action on the preserved section, providing the only regular narrowgauge passenger service in the south of England.

If you are interested in industrial railways, narrow-gauge railways or simply in steam engines, the place is well worth a visit. Fifty years may not be a long existence by Middleton standards, but the Leighton Buzzard railway has already outlived many similar lines, and is probably the longest remaining narrow gauge system in England. With enthusiastic support, and with human as well as mineral cargo, the sixth decade may well prove the most interesting so far.

N.B. since this article was prepared for press, the Iron Horse Preservation Society has changed its name to the Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge R.P.S. Pity.

JIMMY TAKES OVER



Yorkshire Post photos





Though by now the MRT should be accustomed to making radio and television appearances, the experience of Saturday, August 30th was surely a unique one. It was at lunchtime on that day that the celebrated James Savile arrived to record interviews with MRT members (human and mechanical) for his Radio One programme "Savile's Travels".

Henry de Lacy II, with an assortment of train crew and other members, was ready and waiting at the Burton Road crossing when Jimmy & Co. arrived. Actually, it is quite surprising how many people it takes to do a few minutes tape recording - two gentlemen with portable recorders, associated Public Relations men, secretaries, and secretaries' secretaries, and Jimmy himself - two car-loads in all.

After everyone had been introduced to everyone else, and Jimmy had kissed the hands of all the ladies present, the recording began with our worthy chairman giving a concise lecture on the history of the line in half a minute flat. Then, Henry having been persuaded to record a few comments for posterity, it was all aboard for the Park Gates with Jimmy at the controls (hopefully under careful supervision!), and his entourage in the entourage van (brake van to you). The chairman wisely stayed behind.

Park Gates having been reached without a derailment, boiler explosion, or other mishap, Jimmy dismounted for a look at the end of the line and a listen to the MRT's future plans. He also chatted up Diane Quigley (our lady guard) for the programme.

The return journey having been accomplished as safely as the outward one (with Jimmy hanging off the footplate most of the way) there was further chat and interviewing at Burton Road (I think I won first prize for the most "ums" and "errs" in one sentence).

Goodbyes followed, more hand - kissing for the ladies, and Jimmy and Co. tore off to another appointment.

He was there for only 45 minutes, but they were certainly amusing and eventful minutes and we hope the resultant programme brought the Railway to the notice of many people more than knew us before.

Meanwhile, Henry de Lacy II uttered a long, steamy sigh and puffed back to Dartmouth Yard to recuperate. SHEILA YOUNG

HUNGRY? THIRSTY? THE GENERAL STORES

1 Gasholder Terrace
ONE MINUTE FROM TRACKS!

The Great Midland HOLE

A DEEP MYSTERY

No it's not a report of another hole at Middleton but one caused by the Midland railway at Dewsbury. One day in mid March '69 a pothole mysteriously appeared in the middle of the main Barnsley Road in Dewsbury. This caused the corporation hastily to erect traffic barriers and so single line traffic was the order of the day. Immediately workmen arrived complete with drills and a mechanical digger. The whole (hole?) mystery deepened when the hole became larger and larger, but still no reason could be found for its appearance in the first place.

However the council seemed to have forgotten that an old Midland Railway tunnel passed under the road at that point. This line was once part of the direct line projected between Sheffield, Rotherham and Bradford, which reached Savile Town Goods yard but proceeded no further. An embankment planned to carry the line to a viaduct over the River Calder is still clearly visible to the workmen exploring the hole. The tunnel portals were also visible (if they knew where to look).

Back at the hole the workmen were interrupted by heavy snow so work stopped and the hole caught the headlines of the local paper. The following week's paper still could not solve the problem, even though the men had by now uncovered a stone wall at the bottom of the hole. The paper didn't know how near to the truth they were when they reported "The precise nature of the tunnel under the road still has to be established. "They stumbled on the correct explanation in the following weeks excavations, and found that clay surrounding the tunnel wall had become waterlogged during the very wet weather, and so a simple solution of removing the clay and filling the hole with hardcore was decided upon. So the saga of the Midland Hole ended after three thrilling weeks and now road traffic is back to normal again.

VISITORS ARE WELCOME

Have you seen the Middleton Railway yet? Most members will, of course, be able to answer yes to that question, for the great majority of MRT members live within easy reach of Leeds or attend the University. But there are a few members (would there were more!) who live in isolated areas of the country or as far away as London and cannot easily get up to Leeds for a weekend or longer to see the line and help out in the many urgent jobs that need doing.

Any member in this position can be provided with free accommodation for a weekend, or for a week (paying for food only). Those interested should contact the Editor giving the date or dates they would like to visit the line and arrangements will be made for the member to stay in or near Leeds. Please allow at least two weeks notice of your visit.



FLOREAT OMNIBUS

BRIAN ASHURST

"A paradox of technological obsolescence in the midst of a rapidly evolving technology". Such is the bus, according to the OECD Transport Research Group. Worried by falling speeds and disappearing passengers, the Group has been looking at five ways to Save the Bus.

The first way is to give the bus priority over other traffic - to adjust the street network to give priority to people rather than vehicles. Exclusive bus lanes have been tried in various cities, including Leeds for

Transport experts meet to discuss future of buses

a time. In Paris and Marseilles where considerable experimentation has gone on savings in journey time of 20-60% have been achieved.

Of course this systen has only limited application. It would be too expensive and physically impossible to have the lanes everywhere. So another approach is to discriminate between buses and other traffic at traffic signals. The Dutch have found that it is possible to design traffic lights which give buses priority, and that this can speed up public transport in cities. Work is continuing on this project.

We are all familiar with the phenomenon of "bunching" (or "pushing" as the bus crews see it) in which a row of buses, the first full, the other four empty, come crawling down the road.

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Beza Road, Hunslet, Leeds 10 PROMPT SERVICE Tel: 73434-5-6 Traffic conditions, accidents, special events can put buses behind schedule. Once a bus is late, it gets even later, because it has more people to pick up at each stop. The buses behind, of course, then travel empty and catch up with the leader.

The answer lies in what is called "real time bus control" which means accurate knowledge of the whereabouts of all buses and the relating of information by radio to position them at the correct headways.

Another possibility looked at by the OECD Group is "demand-responsive bus systems" in which buses run according to demand rather than by route and timetable. This could provide a paying service. Research in the USA and Sweden indicates that such a system can be developed to give door-to-door service at prices near to those of conventional buses.

A person would phone the central dispatcher who would put the request into a computer which would relate this to where the vehicles were located, how many passengers were on them, and where they were going.

The computer would tell the dispatcher the most economical method of picking up, balanced with the convenience of passengers already being carried.

All the factors needed to operate this system already exist, but noone has yet put them all together into a unified service.

Making the bus itself more attractive is another problem. Noise, exhause, and offensive shape must be minimised. Interiors must be made more attractive, better weather protection laid on at bus stops, and a better information service provided.

The Group's piece de resistance, however, is the "dual-mode-bus", or in plain English, the resuscitated 1935 LMS idea of a road rail bus with rail wheels tucked away under its belly. This would make better use of the exclusive railway right-of-way and reduce road congestion.

"To build a private bus right of way is an extremely expensive undertaking," says the Group of experts. "Indeed, the costs would be so high that one might as well consider building a rail system which would offer higher capacity and lower operating costs." Swansea and Mumbles, thou shouldst be living at this hour!

A rail-bus would pick up passengers from various points in Town A, travel quickly along the railway to Town B, and get back on the road if the station is too far from the passenger's destination.

The biggest obstacle to any improvement is the small size of most bus undertakings, the Group concludes. Bigger groupings should be aimed at, and there should be more international co—operation and sharing of ideas and results.

Let us see your photos!

Thanks to improvements on the technical side of the Old Run, it is now possible to reproduce a limited number of photographs within our budget. The editor would be delighted to receive photos. from readers, particularly if they reflect on the Middleton scene.

Photos. should be black and white prints not more than six inches wide (or trimmable to that size), and good contrasty prints reproduce best. Please write your name and address and details of the picture on the back of each print in soft pencil. Photos. which are not used will be returned, but it is regretted that this is not possible if the photos. are processed for the Old Run. A piece of card in the envelope saves the prints from damage in the post.

If you had a good holiday (and we hope you did) you will have been looking out for trains, no doubt. Why not write to us about it? It's nice to know where our members spend their holidays, and if you can tell us enough to make an article for the Old Run, so much the better.

US train keeps going-just

The Del Monte Express, running between San Francisco and Monterey, California, 125 miles, has figured once before in our pages - in 1962, when it was derailed. Now member Robin Craviotto, of Carmel Valley, California, has sent us a cutting from the Monteray Herald of September 12 which shows that the old train is still running - in spite of the Southern Pacific! The cutting will make amusing reading to anyone who thinks British Railways ought to get it in the neck for not catering enough for passengers, and is reproduced here in full:

The GREAT one in ENGINEERING

MURRAY

* 4

For Automobile Engineering

RONALD S MURRAY

West End Garage, Hyde Park. Leeds 54266

"On April 28 of this year, without fanfare or any kind of notice from the Southern Pacific, the Del Monte left Monterey on her 80th birthday run. It should have been a gala occasion.

But in all those years the company has only managed to shave five minutes off the schedule northbound and 10 minutes southbound.

It started out on an SP timetable in 1889 as the Del Monte Express, later was changed to Limited, and then reduced simply to the Del Monte, the oldest name train in the West.

A little questioning revealed that this has been a good summer for the famous old train. We know that we could not have gotten this report from officials of the company, but with a little sleuthing we discovered that there has been an overflow load in the parlor car all summer, and that the company sorrowfully had to add an additional coach.

The parlor car holds 20 people, so we know that there have been that many, not counting the two coaches. And knowing how the friendly Southern Pacific hates to do anything helpful in this regard we know they would not have put on the extra car unless absolutely forced to by customers.

Things have slacked off a bit now that school has started, and they have removed the extra coach, but the lesson to be learned by the beautiful summer is that quite a few people still like to ride trains.

This lesson is even more striking when one realises that this overflow crowd had been riding the train in spite of almost everything the company could do to discourage it.

Our informant says the parlor car has been on the run for 20 years and that the company hasn't added any new rolling stock since 1948.

The coaches have been covered with stainless steel, however, and look pretty good. Inside they are comfortable. And parlor car steward E. Eddie Elkins keeps the passengers in a good humor in spite of everything.

But the company's continual complaints about passenger business are sad.

We know that the Southern Pacific is engaged in a massive campaign to discontinue passenger service. But a year ago a spokesman for the company said that the company is willing to continue service so long as there are places where it is used and needed.

Great! With the use the Del Monte got this summer think what it would have been with a little promotion. We love the wonderful old train. Ride it once in a while and keep it running."

3E 3E 3E 3E

MRT sales effort needs a boost

-FROM YOU!

John Edwards, the MRT sales manager, is always on the look-out for more outlets! If you know of any societies, events, trips, shops, or individuals who you think would be interested in buying or selling any Middleton sales items, write to John at 11 Drummond Court, Leeds 16. If you can "soften them up" first and get them to try a few samples, it would be a great help.

There are still copies of the excellent (though I say it as shouldn't) Middleton locomotive stock book, with addenda up to date, price 2s 6d post free. Fully illustrated, a real bargain. Hurry up and buy them - we want an excuse to produce a more lavish edition!

The souvenir set of eight photographs (5" x $3\frac{1}{2}$ ") showing the completion of the line up to the colliery and the first train from Hunslet Moor to Middleton Park for ten years is proving a popular item. Price 6s post free.

The extremely interesting and informative magazine "Forum" the quarterly journal of the Association of Railway Preservation Societies, is available for 2s. post free to members only (2s 6d if obtained from the publisher). Notes about Middleton in most issues.

We can run off extra copies of the Old Run for very little. Let us know if you can sell them - it's good publicity as well as useful income.

Then there are many smaller items - Middleton badges at 6d, pens at 9d or 1s 3d, key fobs at 2s (with a picture of a locomotive), to name but a few. These are ideal for stalls at local railway exhibitions if you can persuade another society to give a little space to sell them(we've helped out other societies on our stand on occasions).

Every item sold not only brings in income but spreads our name, so look about you and make contacts if you possibly can!

Be on the right lines! Have a top-link haircut at

JOHN

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