

MIDDLETON RAILWAY TRUST LIMITED

OFFICERS' REPORTS TO THE 1976 ANNUAL MEETING

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CHAIRMAN

May I take this opportunity to wish all members, friends, members of the Middleton Railway Association and the Leeds University Union Railway Society a Happy New Year with good health for 1976.

The past year has seen a substantial rise in the cost of living with an appreciable rise in the cost of fuel which resulted in an unforeseen increase in fares during the season.

Towards the end of the year a large quantity of permanent way was illegally removed from the site. Fortunately due to the presence of mind of junior members the thieves were traced and the property recovered. The members are to be congratulated for being on the right track (!) so quickly.

Mr Jim Lodge sustained a leg injury as a result of the incident but has now completely recovered.

Good wishes go to our friendly first-rate female, Shiela Young, on her recent marriage. We hope that Scottish steam attracts her interest in due course!

To return to the progress of the railway, the future now seems completely assured, with a guarantee for the railway to become an integral part of the proposed development of the Middleton Broom area. The proposition which has been agreed in principle involves a period of controlled tipping which will eventually be landscaped over providing a pleasant open space along the total length of the line.

Finally, it is hoped that the atmosphere of Middleton will lend itself to the enjoyment of the inhabitants of the city and visitors for years to come.

On behalf of the Council I sincerely thank all who have contributed in any way to the progress of the Middleton during 1975.

Thought for 1976 - "Many hands make light work"!

Joseph K. Lee. January 1976

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MEMBERSHIP SECRETARY

The main event of 1975 from the membership point of view was the separation of the Middleton Railway Association membership records, which are now maintained by the Association. During the year 17 new full members of the Middleton Railway Trust were made and a number of existing members included their families under the corporate membership scheme.

The total membership at December 31, 1975, was 226. Taking into account the separation of the MRA this is six higher than for the previous year. However if account is taken of this increase in family members (59), the number of full members is down by one. As last year there are four corporate members. There are 21 life and honorary members, four fewer than in 1974. No new honorary memberships are being made and the existing ones are kept under review.

We are very grateful to the numerous members who have added donations sometimes very generous ones, to their subscriptions. This has enabled us to hold the subscription at £1.50 for a further year. As the Trust has never made a big fuss about raising funds, it is gratifying that members have nevertheless realised the increasing need.

Once again the MRT has had a static membership. Although this is cause for some relief in the trying times of today, it is not sufficient to spread the work load. Every advantage must be taken of opportunities to introduce responsible people to the Middleton scene so that we can continue to operate and maintain the world's oldest railway.

Membership application forms and back numbers of the Old Run are always available from me for your recruiting efforts.

Brian Ashurst. January 1976

PUBLICITY OFFICER

Clive Hirst (the former publicity officer) has taken up a teaching post in Blackpool, as a result of which I came into the deep end of "telling folks about it all" towards the end of the year.

Every endeavour is being made to publicise the activities of the railway as often as possible.

The importance of informing the publicity officer of ANY aspect of matters relating to the railway cannot be over-stressed. My address is 71 Knightsway, Leeds LS15 7BL (phone 645424 - evenings please).

It is important that we retain good relations with the local press and they are interested in all events, especially those which are unusual in any way. Due to space restriction it is not always possible to publish all that is submitted.

We are appearing in several publications which cover the country, hopefully encouraging the visitor from afar to visit the line.

J. K. Lee. January 1976.

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SALES OFFICER

During 1975 our sales staff have been as far north as Shildon and south to Sheffield, attending 14 railway exhibitions and traction engine rallies - sometimes more than one each weekend. The profits have been very rewarding as well as the publicity gained.

Shop sales for the year were 40 per cent books/souvenirs and 60 per cent refreshments. We hope to increase sales even further when we get another container.

As can be seen from the sales account the profits are up by around 20 per cent. I would like to thank all members for their efforts and support and hope it will continue in 1976.

Chris Rogers. January 1976

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OLD RUN EDITOR

The most obvious development in The Old Run during the past year has been the re-adoption of a typewritten format, which was dictated by economic pressures. The cost of the magazine, along with everything else, had been increasing at a time when the subscription had not, and the Middleton Railway Association, in particular, was finding that its subscription covered the cost of The Old Run and very little else.

Something clearly had to be done, and do-it-yourself typesetting, instead of having it carried out professionally, was found to give the greatest saving with the smallest reduction in quality. Consequently, the Trust invested in suitable equipment (second-hand), the cost of which should have been recovered through reduced expenses well before the end of 1976. The change has the additional benefit of shortening the time between the receipt of the final material by the editor and production of the magazine by the printers.

With the present high cost of postage (it now costs nearly as much to post the Old Run as to print it!), it would be helpful if contributors of news items could send me their material without prompting, since reminder letters three times a year are getting to be expensive. It is surely possible for people to note in their diaries that The Old Run closes for press at the end of February, June and October.

Having said that, however, may I also add my thanks to those people who have contributed material to the magazine during the past year. Particular mention must be made of Sheila Young (as she then was). As well as supplying me with a constant stream of articles and photographs, she has recently been undertaking the unenviable task of addressing, packing and posting The Old Run, and producing a duplicated newsletter to go with it. She still hopes to do Old Run distribution on her visits to Leeds, and, like many others, I am extremely grateful for her help.

Mervyn Leah. January 1976