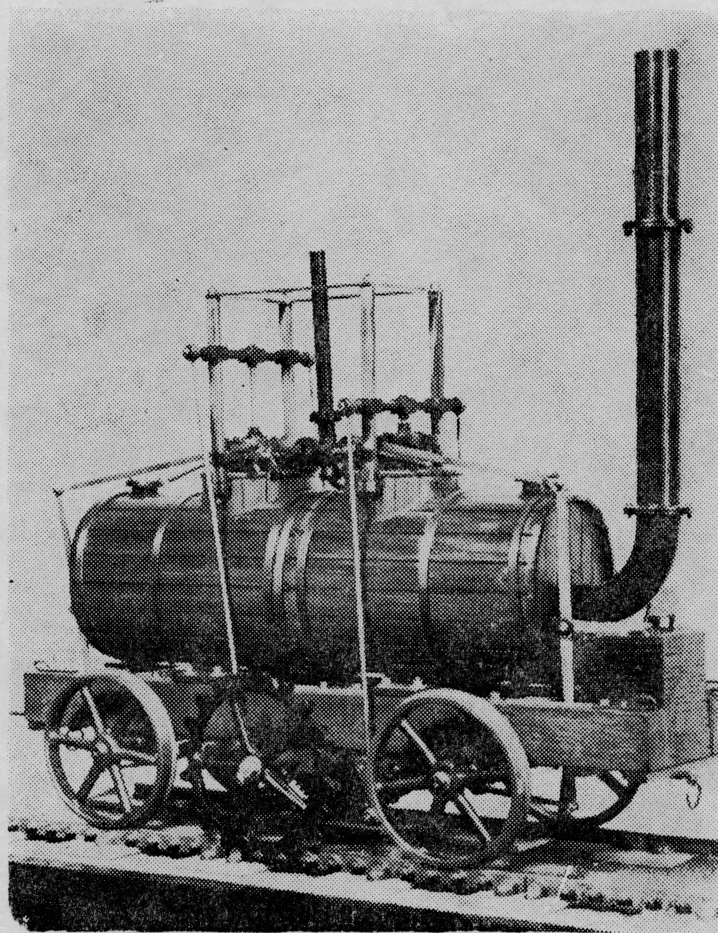


The Old Run

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1758 Middleton Railway, Leeds



First Steam Locomotive

SALAMANCA 1812

The Old Run

Journal of the 1758 Middleton Railway Trust

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37/38 July - August 1963

Rack rails found at Middleton

A number of historic rails, believed to have come from the original Middleton Railway, have been found this month. The rails came to light

when workmen were demolishing an old building opposite the site of the winding house at the top of the *I n c l i n e*, near Town Street, Middleton, to make way for council houses.

Rails "pouring out".

Mr. Mitchell, headmaster of the Middleton Church of England School, noticed that the rails, which had apparently been used to support door and window frames, were "pouring out in all directions". Since the building dates to 1830, and the rails were incorporated in the original structure, they must have been discarded about that time.

Dr. Youell, the Middleton Railway Trust chairman, located most of the rails at a scrap merchant's in Pontefract and rescued them. Further details of the rails will appear next month.

Beeching: It's time now to object

During the last few weeks the first formal steps have been taken to implement the closure of certain lines and stations recommended in the *B e e c h i n g* Report. Advertisements have appeared in local newspapers and at railway stations announcing the proposed closure of lines and stations and *i n v i t i n g* objections from interested parties.

It has been made clear that if any objections to a proposed closure are received the *c l o s u r e* will not take place until the Transport Users' Consultative Committee has reported to the Minister and he has given his consent. Notice of closure had been given for 50 lines and stations in the month ended July 5.

Will you please note that you have this opportunity to register objections. The time limit for objections to be made is given in local advertisements.

FARMERS' GLORY

Lincs. agricultural railways

The use of the railway as a source of transport on farms in the British Isles has to a great extent been confined to the county of Lincolnshire. Perhaps only in this county have the combinations of heavy crops and rich, loamy soil given the impetus to this kind of development.

These farm railways were at one time dotted over the county, from Brigg in the north down to Holbeach in the south. They were mostly quite small systems, such as the one at Bishopthorpe, near Tetney, with two miles of track connecting two farms and the nearest road.

Nocton Estate

Others were more extensive, such as those at Fleet and Littleworth, with the most highly developed of these larger examples at Nocton, near Lincoln. The Nocton Estate Railway was laid down in the early twenties by Messrs. Dennis, and eventually developed to a system with 25 miles of track covering the Nocton and Dunston fens.

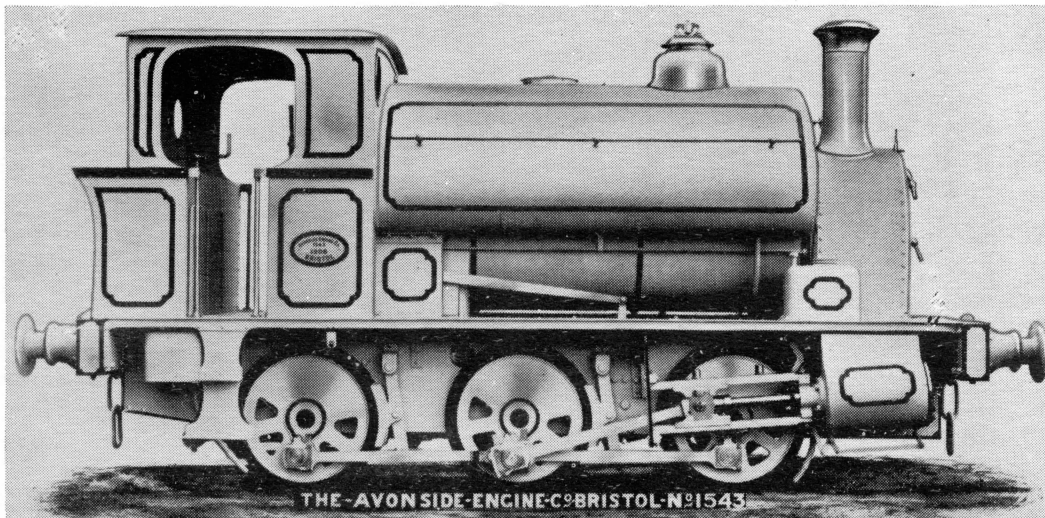
As a means of traction the horse was the mainstay of most of the lines, and only in the case of the larger systems did it give way to locomotives. Steam locomotives were used on the line at Fleet, and for a short time a Fowler tank locomotive was used at Nocton.

Otherwise diesel or petrol locomotives were used. Those built by Motor Rail were the most common, although for a time two Rustons were used at Nocton.

Sugar beet and potatoes were the most common loads carried on the smaller systems, but the Nocton line, with its fleet of covered and open bogie wagons, was able to cope with a much larger variety of farm produce, such as seed potatoes, corn in sacks, baled hay and straw and fertiliser. Water in tanks was also carried to outlying farmsteads in the days before piped water.

Last remnant

With the coming of the cheap agricultural tractor the farm railways were doomed, and started to fall into disuse in the mid-thirties. Now only the Nocton line with one diesel locomotive and a few wagons operating over a few hundred yards of track remains. This short section would not have been retained but for the standard gauge loading bank being unsuitable for lorries or tractors.



'Swansea' was popular class

This photograph of an Avonside O-6-OST is reproduced by kind permission of the Hunslet Engine Co. These locomotives, of which Swansea, now owned by the MRT, is an example, were built over the years 1899-1910.

About 25 of these locos were built for general industrial use. They are believed to have been popular and were widely used in South Wales.

Simple design

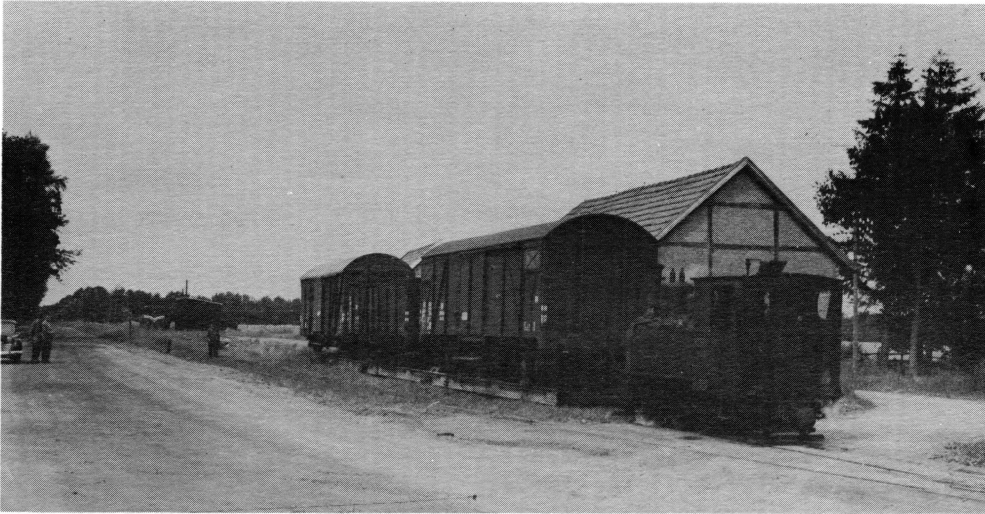
The design is s i m p l e and straightforward, with two outside cylinders, inside Stephenson valve gear, a short boiler with copper round-topped firebox, and a stout main plate frame.

The engines were normally fitted with steam brake, but in the case of Swansea automatic vacuum brakes were fitted to comply with the law on passenger train operation.

Since leaving the Swansea and Mumbles Railway, Swansea had been at the Bynea steel works in S o u t h Wales. It was there that the present chimney was fitted. It is hoped that a more ornamental variety will be fitted in due course.

Knaresborough exhibition

The MRT will be represented at this exhibition staged by the Britannia Railway Society, to be held in the Castle Girl's School (near r a i l w a y station) from Wednesday to Saturday, August 28-31, from 10am to 9pm. Many working layouts and society stands will be on view.



The interchange point between the gauges on the Hummlinger. To the left a standard gauge diesel is undergoing acceptance trials, while in the foreground Werlte leaves with a train of standard gauge wagons on narrow gauge transporters.

Other people's problems—

Engines with trees growing through their chimneys are rare. This specimen of the genre is at Lathen, on the Deutsche Bundesbahn main line north of Rheine, and is No. 7 of the Hummlinger Kreisbahn, which runs from this junction to Werlte.

The praises of this line have been splendidly sung already, in Morgan's The End of the Line, so this is only a requiem. For as well as prosperity in general in the land, there is oil along the course of the line, and increasing traffic demanded modernisation.

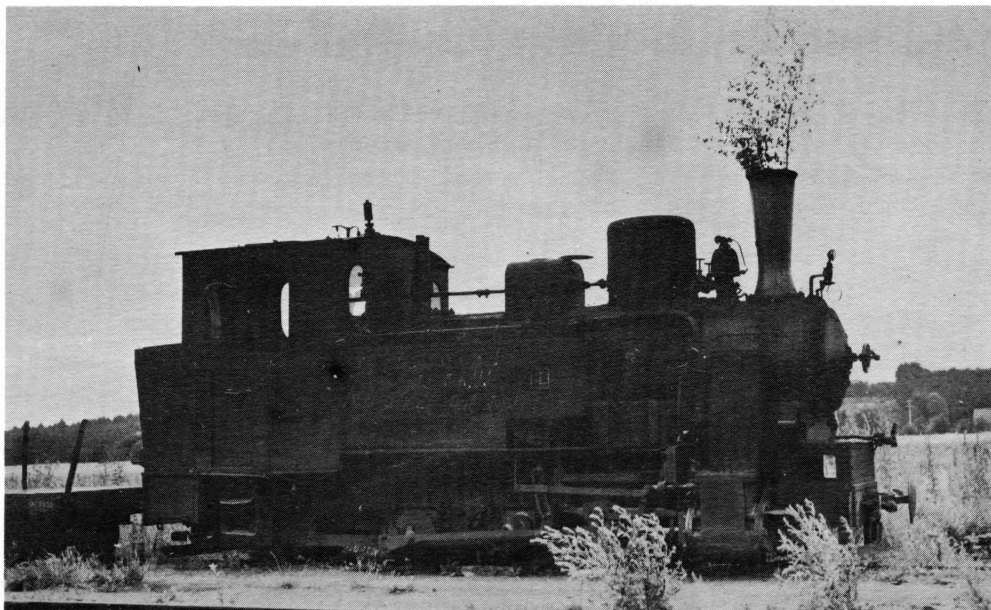
So when these photos were taken, in mid-1958, the 750mm. gauge

Winter freight was low

Freight traffic carried over the Middleton Railway in the first five months of 1963 was about 2,900 tons. Robinson and Birdsell provided 1,800 tons of this, and most of the rest came from Clayton's.

The peak month was April, in which 940 tons were moved, and the lowest was March, in which 430 tons were moved.

These low figures reflect both the bad winter and the slump in the steel industry. This has now passed its nadir, and it is anticipated that traffic will build up again with trade over the next few months.



the Hummlinger Kreisbahn

track was rusting over and the new standard-gauge line with its fine modern stations was almost finished. The passengers were going by bus u n t i l the new railcars were ready. Only about 5km. of the narrow gauge remained operative.

Character remains

But a r a i l w a y can't change its character just like that. Something was amiss with the new loco. I think it was an electrical connexion. At any rate, to continue work with the engine, somebody had to sit inside the bonnet, h o l d i n g two wires together as it trundled up and down.

**JOIN THE
MRT
NOW !**

Situations vacant

The University year ended on June 28, and took with it most of the M.R.T. drivers. Urgently r e q u i r e d are guards, shunters and trainee drivers to work evening and Saturday trains. Contact R. G. Mitchell.(address p.8)

Wantage Tramway loco may join MRT stock

The engine which featured prominently in John Betjeman's "The Wantage Tramway" is the object of a new fund opened by M. D. Crew. Mr Crew intends to purchase, restore and transport the loco (an 1874 Manning Wardle, built in Leeds) for use at Middleton.

The engine is mechanically sound and was in steam up till the end of April. Only £75 is needed to save this interesting and useful machine from inevitable destruction. All donations should be sent to Mr Crew, who will acknowledge.

Why MRT claims first steam loco

In the June, 1927 issue of the Railway Magazine is an article by R. E. Bleasdale on William Hedley and the Wylam Locomotives. Locomotives described in the article include "Puffing Billy" (1812), "Wylam Dilly" (1813) and "Black Billy". Mention is also made in the article of the Middleton Railway:

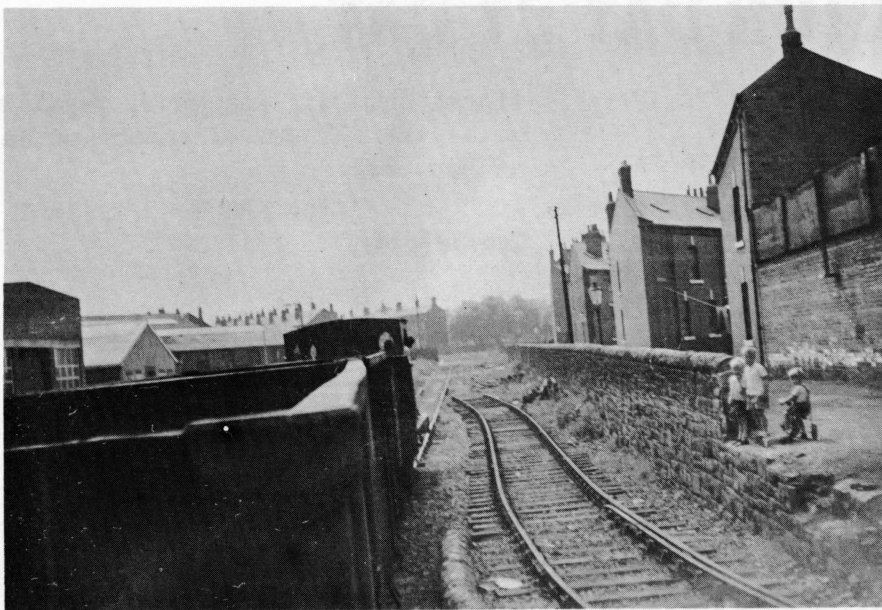
"The Wylam locomotives having proved a commercial success, in spite of pronounced hostility, by 1814 seven other locomotives were built. Blenkinsopp's (sic) rack rail engine, for which a patent was obtained in 1811, continued to work at Middleton colliery near Leeds, and two other engines of the same type were built for the Kenton, Fawdon and Cox Lodge collieries near Newcastle."

Not a 'blind alley'

Hence it would certainly appear that Blenkinsopp's idea was not leading into a "blind alley" - the Middleton locomotives alone gave many years of useful service.

A book continually referred to in the article is "Who invented the Locomotive Engine?" by O. D. Hedley (Ward and Lock, 1856). There was obviously doubt, even in 1927, as to the true answer to this question; nevertheless, we feel sure now that, by qualifying our proud claim that "the first steam locomotive ran on the Middleton Railway" with the words "commercially successful", we can dismiss all doubt.

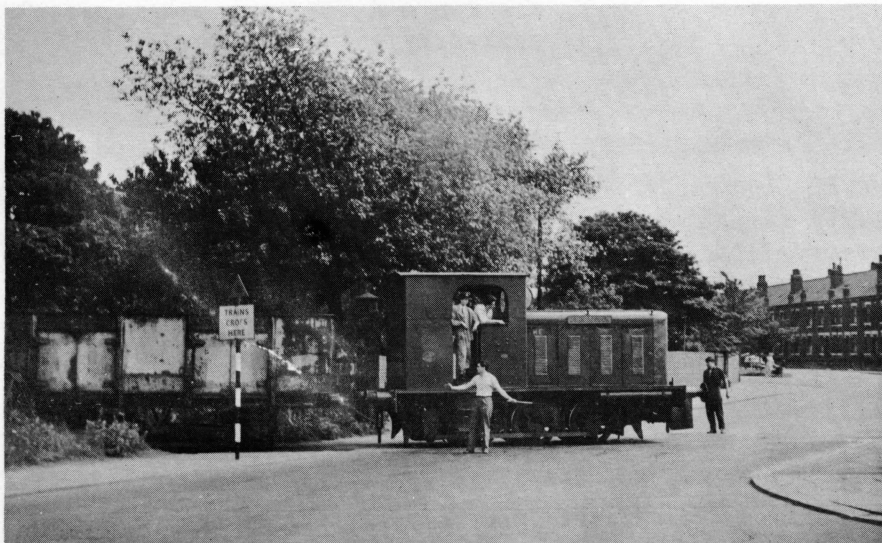
It's time now to **JOIN THE MRT !**



HUNSLET STORY

"They call her 'The Spirit of Hunslet' and she plies between Balm Road and Hunslet rugby ground....."

MRT diesel John Alcock heads a train of "gremlins" past the new siding into Moor End and (below) across Moor Road.



MIDDLETON DAY BY DAY

KEEP OUT!

NO ENTRY will in future be allowed in to Robinson & Birdsell's field, where the M.R.T. and other trams are stored. Action will be taken against anyone found trespassing.

Get your yard pass now

At a recent MRT committee meeting, yard passes were discussed. It was emphasized that members are allowed in to Clayton's and R.&B.'s yards as a privilege, not as a right.

Current passes are essential, and those not possessing them run the risk of not being allowed in the yards. Passes may be obtained from R. G. Mitchell, 26, Cliffestone Tce., East Morton, Keighley.

'Forum' will be extra

Forum, the quarterly magazine of the Railway Preservation Association, will no longer be sent free with The Old Run. Members may, however, still receive Forum at 1s. Od. per copy, or an addi-

tional 4s. Od. per year, payable with the MRT annual subscription of 21s. Od.

Colour slides

Colour slides of the Middleton Railway are available from Mr M. D. Crew (address below) price 2s. 9d. each, plus postage. List from Mr Crew.

Ilkley Association

In the May Old Run, the erroneous impression was given that the Ilkley Railway Supporters' Association intended to keep the line operating "at as small as possible a cost to ratepayers".

In fact, the Association intends to use all constitutional means other than a levy on rates.

We apologise to all concerned for any embarrassment caused by this mistake.

Tram track goes for scrap

104 yards of tramlines are to be sold for scrap by the MRT. The track has been lifted from "Clayton's Crossing", a notorious rail/tramway intersection on the Middleton Railway.

The MRT membership secretary is M. D. Crew, 214 Headley Way Headington, Oxford.