

THE OLD RUN



*Holy Trinity, Abthorpe
Burial place of John Pennington.*

**JOURNAL OF
THE 1758 MIDDLETON RAILWAY
LEEDS**

SUMMER 1982

THE OLD RUN

NUMBER 103

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EDITOR: Ian B. Smith, 8 Manor Farm Drive, Leeds LS10 3RW.

The Editor invites all readers to contribute articles, news items, letters, photographs and drawings on subjects of interest! All contributions should include the reader's name and address. Opinions expressed in the magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Middleton Railway Trust Ltd, The Middleton Railway Association, or the Editor.

The next issue of The Old Run will appear in October, and all contributions should reach the Editor by the end of August.

Details of rates and conditions for advertisements in The Old Run may be obtained from the Editor.

EDITORIAL

Once again, problems have arisen with the production schedule of 'Old Run', this time being mainly of a military nature. Due to the Falklands Crisis your Editor's spare time has of necessity been somewhat more restricted than normal (known as life in a blue suit in Naval jargon!) thus causing the production of this issue to be more protracted than usual. I hope members will appreciate the reasons for the slight delay, and will bear with me for a little while longer. I promise to get the next issue out on time.

Whilst on the subject of the Falklands, may I ask members to spare a thought for all those directly involved with the Task Force? Many of us have friends or relations serving either with the armed forces, or on the merchantmen involved. So let us all hope that they all arrive home safely.

It is this magazine's sad duty to note the death of Bill Stocks, a member of some standing whose articles and drawings have regularly appeared in these pages. John Bushell's "Obituary" appears inside, and as a tribute to Bill, the front cover is devoted to one of his sketches sent to me last year.

On a more cheerful note another John Bushell article appears inside, this time about the newly refurbished "Engine Inn". With our "own" bar the Engine is certainly well worth a visit - I can't think of a better way to wash down the coal dust after a day's firing than by sinking a pint in the MRT's own bar! I hope that all members will at least go and have a look at the finished job. On a lighter note our friends from Gosport were entertained at the new look pub in May and conceded that it was a big improvement - but they still can't understand that a Yorkshire Pint isn't a pint unless the head stays right to the bottom of the glass!

Ian Smith

FREIGHT TRAIN, FREIGHT TRAIN II

The last article under this title was about freight train operations generally. Most of these are relatively uneventful and soon fade from the memory. Some, however, earn themselves a niche in your mind and the events remain a clear memory. One of these concerned a train I helped operate in the late sixties - I forget the exact date. It was during my University vacation and I had come down to the line 'on spec'. I was greeted by a well known Middleton personality who I will not mention by name but will refer to simply as the 'Boss'.

The Boss was very pleased to see me as there was some urgent traffic to be worked and he needed help with it. This urgent traffic was four loaded 16 ton mineral wagons from Robinson & Birdsell's and these had already been coupled up to 'Pea' which was gently ticking over ready for off. 'Pea', for those who don't know, is the name by which HE 1786 'Courage' is called by the regulars on the line.

"You drive, I'll shunt", said the Boss so I duly climbed into Pea's cab, if you can call it that, and we set off on our journey down to B.R. This was in the days before the arrival of the Motorway and thus it was downhill or level all the way.

The journey to B.R. was uneventful and we had soon arrived in the loop with our wagons. The Boss went off to the B.R. supervisor's office to report our arrival whilst I stayed with the loco. A short while later, he returned accompanied by two B.R. shunters.

"There are some empties in the yard for us and B.R. want us to push these wagons round for them and pick up the empties", the Boss informed me. This was something that B.R. occasionally asked us to do as a favour for them, as the Middleton connection trails into the neck of the yard and B.R. thus have to run round any wagons they put on or take off our line. However, the bottom of the loop is in a dip and it is a fairly steep if short uphill grade from our line onto B.R. Pea's 22 hp. and weight of less than seven tons, had been sufficient for the downhill journey from Robinson & Birdsell's, but trying to push some 85 tons round a sharp steeply graded curve into B.R. was a different matter. "Pea will never manage this lot into B.R." I said to the Boss.

"Of course it will!" he replied. Well, the one thing you couldn't do was argue with the Boss and, as one of the B.R. men was patiently waiting, holding over the catch-points, I put Pea into gear and let in the clutch. Round and round went Pea's wheels, but that was about all. The four wagons stayed obstinately where they were. "It's no use, it won't do it." I shouted.

"Of course it will." came back the reply. "Go back and take a run at it!"

As I said before, you couldn't argue with the Boss, so it was into reverse and back up the loop. I didn't get very far before the grade and the curve brought me to a stand in this direction as well. Back into forward gear and off I went for a second trip, accelerating slightly into the bottom of the dip, and rapidly grinding to a halt as I came out of it. This mighty effort by Pea had succeeded in pushing the wagons a couple of yards further on, but we were still a long way from the top of the bank.

"Try again" the Boss said so I repeated the manoeuvre and came to rest in about the same place as last time. My protests that it was no use trying any more landed on deaf ears. "Leave two wagons where they are and try again." I was told as the Boss uncoupled the leading two wagons. As I set off backwards with the two remaining wagons in tow, I looked at the B.R. shunters who were by now sat on the embankment with broad grins on their faces, obviously enjoying the entertainment! One of them shook his head in disbelief!

With only two wagons in tow, Pea struggled up the loop. I stopped when I had gone far enough and once more set off towards B.R., bracing myself for the impending collision with the two wagons that we had left behind. The impact was enough to move the wagons another couple of yards further before our progress once more came to an inevitable halt. "I can't manage it." I said, and more in desperation than anything else, "You have a go!" "Damn it, keep trying!" was the reply. "One last go", I thought, and, with the engine revving at full speed, let the clutch in. Again, Pea's wheels went round but the wagons refused to move. The Boss tried putting some sand on the rails to improve the adhesion. I was just about to give up when slowly but surely we started to move.

"Keep going, don't stop!" shouted the Boss. Sure enough, we were on the move and gaining speed all the time. "We've done it", I thought, as we got to the top of the bank and started to go faster. I eased back the throttle to control the speed but there was no response from the train. Pea's wheels were slowing down but the train wasn't.

Panic stations! We were running away, although I couldn't understand why as the B.R. sidings were level track. My attempts to control the train were having no effect. As I was on the left hand side of the loco and we were going round a right hand curve, I could not see where I was going so I decided to cross over to the other side of the cab. If I was going to run into something the sooner I knew the better! It was then that everything became clear, for I could see that up front was nothing less than a B.R. Class 25 Diesel! No wonder I couldn't stop it! The B.R. shunters had obviously got fed up of waiting and had decided to

do something about it without telling us.

The rest of the trip was uneventful. We picked up our empties and headed for home, helped on our way by various sarcastic comments from the B.R. staff. It was a long time before B.R. asked us to do them a favour again and even then they came to see which loco we'd brought first!

Steve Roberts

Letters

Sir,

In reply to the Editorial of the "special issue" I would like to say that I thought the Editor's choice of articles was a good one.

To a fairly new member such as myself, these articles gave a balanced account of some of the major events in Middleton's 21 year history. John Bushell's account of the beginning of the Preservation Era gave any new member a good insight into the railway's early days, whilst the freight article was a real eye-opener, particularly as many visitors don't realise exactly what is entailed.

The cream on the cake for me, though, had to be the "Singed Eyebrows Saga" as it gave me a lot of laughs and made me realise exactly why I joined the railway in the first place. Jaundiced it may have been, but it was this generally friendly, frolicky atmosphere which endeared the Trust to me. The whole railway gives me the impression of being non-conformist and non-commercial, a complete contrast to other, larger set-ups nearer home, such as the Mid-Hants and Bluebell. These latter may be closer and easier to get to, but they cannot compare with the atmosphere at Middleton.

Colin Billinghamurst, Gosport

Dear Sir,

Re: Old Run - The Future

As requested in the recent newsletter, herein are some thoughts on the topic mentioned - the thoughts of a member who is precluded by distance (and, it must be confessed, by commitments to other organisations) from making a direct contribution to the running of M.R.T. I pay my subscription, plus a small donation, and I read with interest the various documents sent during the year. In addition, I usually see at some time in the year, during one of his visits to the Ilford area, Tony Cowling, and I hope at least to mention Middleton during our resulting chat. (I might add parenthetically that it was not he but another Ilford man formerly much associated with M.R.T., viz. Fred Youell, who first recruited me in the Middleton cause.)

To return to the main point in issue, of course everyone likes to receive a regular quarterly magazine, but my conclusion from the evidence of the last few years (both from the accounts and as betokened by the comments in the Annual Reports and other news items) is that we should not jeopardise the Trust's finances for the sake of an additional issue of "Old Run". Indeed, I would go farther along this road and say that I wonder whether it would not be more prudent to have a six-monthly magazine supplemented by a plurality of newsletters. The magazine at present is in part a record of events that could be achieved (and, I assume, achieved at lower cost) through the medium of newsletters.

Yours sincerely,

P.D. Warner, Essex

NOTES & NEWS

THEFTS

Thefts, both large and small, are something that we have, unfortunately, always suffered from. However, of late, we have been having more than our fair share. Some crossing timbers were recently stolen from the Tunstall Road site but the culprits were spotted by a passer-by and, although charges are being made, we have not yet managed to recover the timbers. A more serious loss was during the night of 16th May when there was another break-in at the shop. Fortunately most of the stock is now kept in two strong locked metal cupboards and this was not touched.

Thefts of wooden keys for firewood used to be a problem several years ago but the removal of large numbers of metal keys on the line down to B.R. is something that we have not had before. A few chairs have also gone missing from the same stretch of track. These thefts are more of an inconvenience than anything else as the items can easily be replaced, albeit dwindling our stocks at the same time.

Our coal stocks have been reducing at an unusually high rate and our suspicions are that somebody has been helping themselves. On the basis of previous years usage it appears that about a ton has gone missing.

Whilst we are doing all we can to prevent these unfortunate incidents you can help by immediately reporting any suspicious happenings to the Police. Vigilance is our best ally.

S.J.R.

RAGS

We are still in dire need of rags for loco cleaning purposes. If you have any, please bring them to the line so we can keep our locos looking smart at all times.

S.J.R.

The Right "ENGINE"

For many years, the historic "ENGINE INN" (which dates back to the earliest days of the Middleton Railway) has had a pub sign depicting a "Standard Locomotive" with little to suggest the links with the oldest railway in the World. Before the days of licensing, in 1818 a loco exploded outside the Inn, killing the driver and scalding a number of children. George Stephenson reported of the accident "Had not the driver been much in liquor, this accident need never have happened". At that time, locos were removed in favour of rope haulage over the Old Run Incline and the Inn just happened to be adjacent to the removal point.....

A major refurbishing programme by the pub's owners, Joshua Tetley, has suddenly made its links with the Middleton Railway very plain indeed.

The Trust's Archivist was consulted and the loan of MRT archive material has resulted in a much improved image. All three rooms of the pub have been refurbished. The main room has been filled with general railwayana, including block instruments, tail lamps and locomotive drawings, whilst the dominoes room now contains the photographs which used to adorn the main room. It is the television and darts room which is the main interest of this article however, as this has been entirely devoted to the Middleton Railway.

The brewers have purchased the fibreglass "HUNSLET" nameplate (ex-HEI697) which is now fixed above the inner door, plus two brass nameplates from "MATTHEW MURRAY" and "JOHN BLENKINSOP" (The pub has the Blenkinsop plate displayed before the loco!). Photographs from the colliery era hang alongside those from the preservation era, making an effective display, whilst various MRT facsimiles are also displayed.

Denis Caton's framed line drawing of 1970 showing the pre-motorway layout plus the 1812 rack loco and "HENRY DE LACY II" is displayed by the bar, whilst a nice touch is provided by the engraved "SALAMANCA" on all the glass door panels on entry to the bar. The final touch is provided by the fine new sign showing a fairly accurate 1812 loco (The wheel arrangement is odd to say the least - Ed).

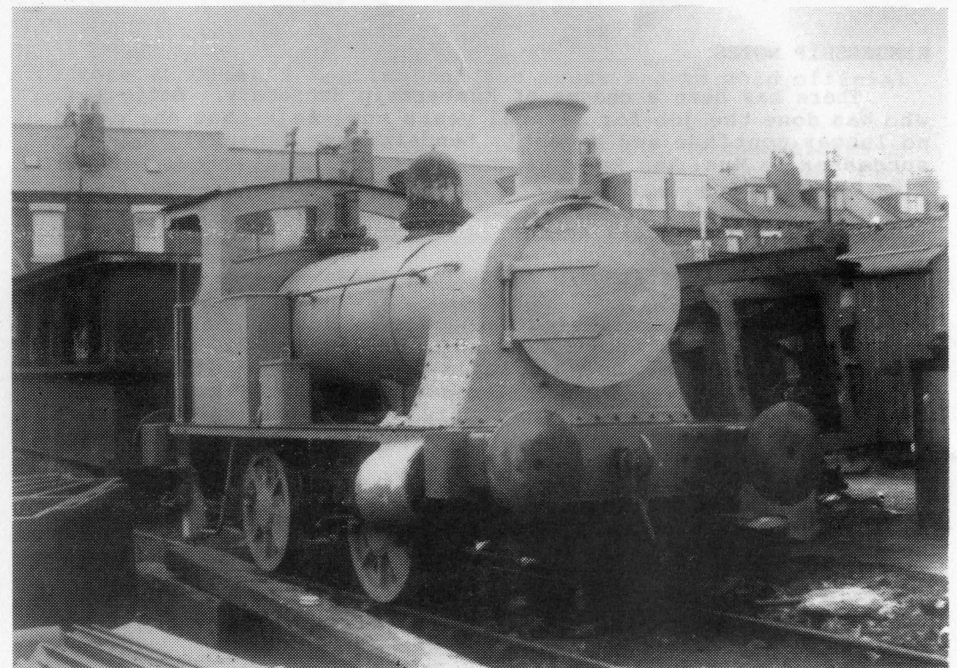
It is encouraging to be able to see so much MRT material on display and without a museum, this is undoubtedly a very good "second best" as a local display of archive material - open within licensing hours!

John Bushell

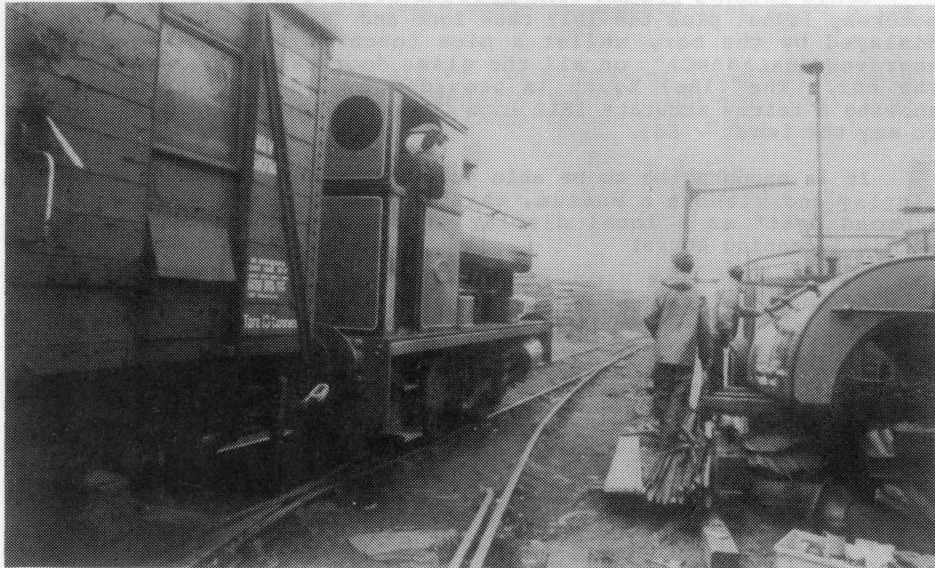
EASTER 1982

Four scenes taken over the Bank Holiday week-end showing various aspects of the Railways activities.

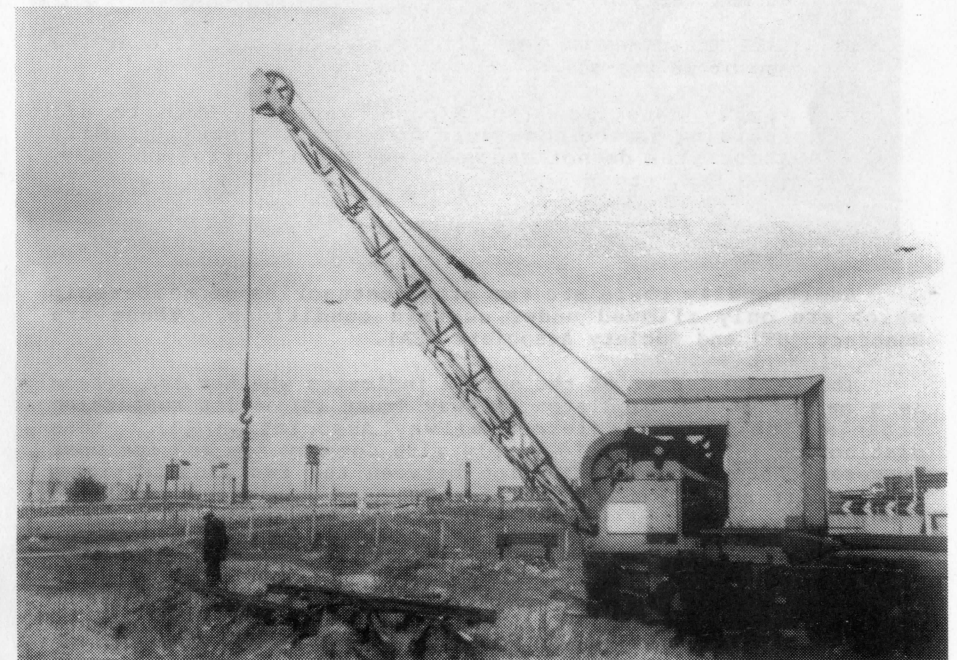
LEFT Pete Nettleton and Andrew Alston coal up Peckett No. 2003 on the first day of the new season. In the background can be seen the framework of the P.M.V. being converted to a passenger vehicle.



ABOVE Windle looks quite smart in grey undercoat during its recent repaint and minor overhaul.



ABOVE Joyce & Tony Bell pause in their task of painting the tank of Peckett No. 2103 as No. 2003 passes by.



ABOVE The 5 ton crane is seen here being used to sort out the turnouts obtained from Parkhill Colliery.

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

There has been a change of Membership Secretary. Betty Lee, who has done the job for several years now, felt that she could no longer continue and recently tendered her resignation. Her successor is Mrs. Ann Roberts and she can be contacted, for the time being at:-

37, Whitehouse Avenue,
Great Preston,
Leeds LS26 8BN

Tel: Leeds 861092

All membership renewals, changes of address, etc. should be sent direct to the above address. Whilst on the subject of renewals, if your membership falls due at the end of June, you should find a renewal form included with this 'Old Run'. Please help the Railway by renewing promptly and, if you pay by Bankers Order, check that the amount paid is correct for the category of membership.

A new broom sweeps clean, so they say, and in order to simplify membership records and accounting, minor modifications to the membership system are being instituted. The most noticeable change for members will be in their membership number, which will now be followed by two letters, depending on the category of membership. There are currently five categories of membership available to the public, as follows:-

- FT Full Trust member (£3.00/Annum). Open to all over the age of 18 years.
- OT O.A.P. Trust Member (£1.50/annum). Open to all over normal retiring age.
- LT Life Trust Member (£50 Lump Sum). Open to all over the age of 18 years.
- FA Family Associate (£0.50/person/annum). Open to all residing in the household of a Trust Member. Family associates do not receive individual correspondence. (Old Run, etc.)
- JA Junior Associate (£1.50/annum). Open to all under the age of 18 years.

Additionally there are two other categories of membership which are only allowed under certain conditions. These are Honorary (HT) and Society Associate (SA).

The second letter of the suffix indicates whether the person is a member of the Middleton Railway Trust (T) or its supporting organisation, the Middleton Railway Association (A). This distinction is necessary to comply with Company Law and for most purposes there is no distinction between the two organisations. However, it should be noted that only Trust members are allowed

to vote at General Meetings of the Trust and to hold official posts.

Family Associate members, whose membership is conditional on there being a Trust member in the household, will find that they have an altogether new membership number, related to that of the Trust member. There will also be a minor renumbering of the junior membership in order to bring it into line with the new system.

Ann Roberts

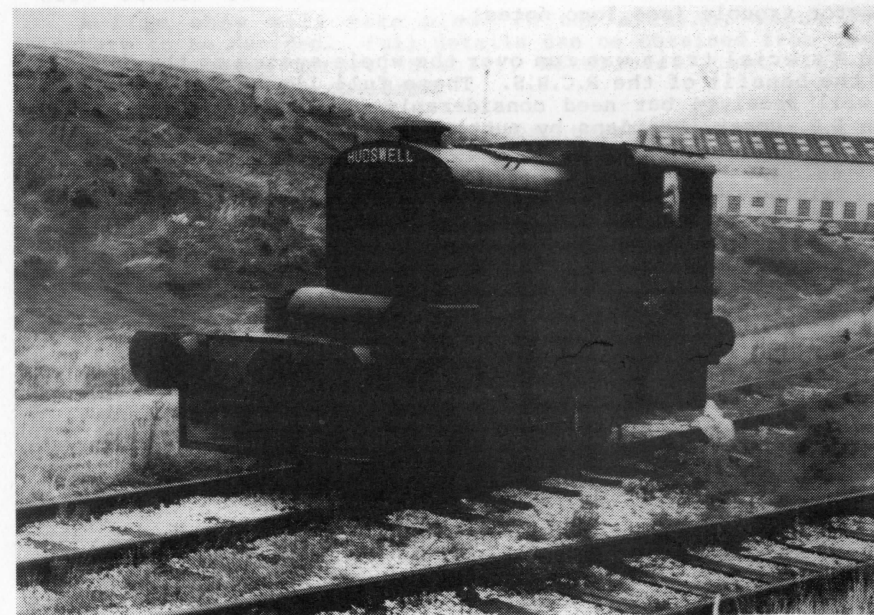


Photo: A. P. Bell.

Celebrating its fiftieth anniversary this year is our Hudswell, Clarke diesel, 'Mary'. The photograph above shows the locomotive shortly after its arrival from the Severn Valley Railway. After much work on the engine, it has now been returned to working order and a complete repaint is being carried out. (See page 15.)

OPERATING

As usual the Steam service recommenced on Easter Saturday. Traffic levels over the Easter period were quite good and although no records were broken, one or two extra trains had to be run. We are running on Saturdays again this year, mainly as a result of the outcry that came from certain quarters following last year's abandonment of Saturday operations. However, Saturday loadings still leave a lot to be desired and it is a good Saturday that runs at an operating profit. Loadings on Sundays, however, have been generally acceptable, although as always, there is considerable scope for improvement.

On a less happy note, diesels have had to be substituted for a steam loco on two Saturdays. The first occasion was due to the theft of coal stocks preventing the use of a steam loco. The second occasion was due to the failure of Windle with injector trouble (see loco notes).

A special train was run over the whole system on the 8th May for the benefit of the R.C.H.S. These full line tours appear to be well received but need considerable organisation, especially when B.R. upset the plans by putting goods traffic into the loop at Balm Road.

Talking of goods traffic, this is still running, although it tends to be a bit spasmodic. The current traffic is all ex-B.R. scrap, usually old brake blocks. This contract is due to expire in June. Hopefully, any future contracts will provide more traffic as the wagon loads we are presently getting are not very remunerative to operate.

S.J.R.

Distinguished visitors

It was our pleasure to welcome the Railway and Canal Historical Society to the line on Saturday 8th May. Their visit coincided with the AGM held at Armley Mills Museum.

The railway provided a comprehensive guided tour by John Bushell and Dr. Arthur Barnett which included various points of interest including the Round Foundry memorial, Murray's Memorial, Jack Lane loco building area, and of course a full tour of the Middleton Railway. The highspots of the rail tour occurred when gypsies blocked the Balm Road branch and much whistling from P2003 caused much pushing of caravans out of the locomotive's way, then at the end of the tour, the train blasting its way to Clayton's Yard with the crane plus other vehicles in tow, banked by "CARROLL". The tour was enjoyed by the society and was a pleasant opportunity to tell, in depth, the story of the birth of the locomotive.

Fifty Years of the Diesel

After some discussion, this event has now been finalised, and will now take place on Saturday, 11th September. The day's events will start with a tour of Hunslet Engine Company, and then the main events will switch to the Middleton Railway.

Hudswell Clarke 0-4-ODM "MARY" (D577/32) will be renamed at a special ceremony by Mr. R.N.Redman and a representative from Mirrlees Diesels Ltd (who built the power plant), followed by the loco working a special train to the park and back. The loco will enter public service from 14.00 and it is hoped that she will work most of the passenger service that afternoon, though this is dependant on the driver's hearing as "MARY" is to say the least a rather noisy beast!

A film show will take place in the evening, venue and itinerary to be decided. Full details can be obtained from Tony Bell at 2,Beaumont Street, Stanley, Wakefield. Cost will be £1.50 Adults and £1.00 children.

A number of societies will be present selling various wares. These will include the Deltic Preservation Society and the Class 40 Preservation Society. It is hoped that other examples of Middleton's diesel power will be running demonstration freight trains during the day, as well as possibly deputising for "MARY" to provide the opportunity for visitors to sample rides behind our other diesels. It should be quite a day out so book now as places will be limited for the Hunslet visit.

I.B.S.

OBITUARY

It is with the deepest regret that we record the death of Mr. W.B. Stocks at the age of 68. He was an honorary member of the Trust from the earliest days. Bill was educated at St. Michael's School, Headingley, and acquired an interest in transport from his early days. He used to tell how, as a small boy, he watched an attempt to re-rail a derailed tramcar at the 'Oak', when he should have been in afternoon school. His ultimate, late arrival was met by a stern, disapproving Headmaster, who ordered a late detention, when he would write an essay on the mishap.

"The Head's idea of punishment was my idea of pleasure - sheer bliss", said Bill, with that characteristic chuckle.

His literary abilities were to remain an important part of his life. His book "Pennine Journey" recorded the development of transportation in his home town, Huddersfield. To the end, he wrote a weekly column in the Huddersfield Examiner, called 'Railway Enthusiast's Diary'. As you might expect, the Middleton Railway featured frequently and prominently in the articles, often illustrated by his own pen. His interest in old machinery resulted in an old stationary engine being preserved in the grounds of Huddersfield's Tolson Museum.

Bill's last visit to the Middleton Railway in an active role was last May, when he acted as guide on the barge section of our Rail, Road, River Tour. He thoroughly enjoyed sharing his knowledge of riverside industrial archaeology with our passengers.

"You must let me know when I can help in this way again", said Bill, " - and come and visit the Heatherfield Light Railway!" This was Bill's garden railway. It was September before the visit came to fruition, the last operations of the season - as we thought. What a railway! No wonder it has featured in many model railway books. Motive power? Clockwork, electric (battery, overhead, third rail) and live steam traction. Lineside features included a barge (in dock), a cable car - working of course, but more than that. It was a life's work, with entirely hand built models, and every item seemed to have a story, a memory attached. "This reminds me of the 1920s, when we travelled to Blaenau Festiniog via the LNWR Conway Valley, on to Portmadoc by Festiniog Rly, back via the Welsh Highland Rly and Beddgelert. Of course, we must have a lineside Middleton hoarding!"

So, the conversation ranged widely, as we examined maps of Middleton, newspaper cuttings, sketch books, etc.

"This sketch was prepared as a cover for a parish magazine. I often wonder why so many railway enthusiasts are involved in the Church. You know, I have a theory - the Christian is someone who is prepared to sacrifice a degree of "sideways" movement for a "straight and narrow" road to an assured destination." Bill's arrival in the Heavenly terminus' is our great loss. We salute the memory of a keen supporter, both in publicity and in finance.

LOCO NEWS

HC D631 Continues in use as our regular diesel loco.

P2103 Work continues on repainting this loco. A preliminary boiler examination has confirmed the boiler's excellent condition and work will begin on restoration to working order in the near future.

2003 'John Blenkinsop' is currently serviceable and performing satisfactorily. At long last we have got around to painting the cab interior - a job that some people said would never happen! New fusible plugs were made and fitted prior to the start of the season and some welding was carried out to correct some wastage around the rear mud hole door. A slight 'blow' at the chimney has been apparent for some time now so we will have to think in terms of a full piston and valve examination in the not too distant future.

53 Windle has successfully passed its hydraulic and steam tests and the loco is now resplendent in Navy blue with red lining and black edging. Generally, people appear pleased with the new colour scheme though some adverse comments have been heard. At least it makes a change from China blue!

The big and little ends and coupling rod bearings have been re-worked to take up the fairly excessive play and the loco is now considerably quieter than it used to be. The bearings on Windle have never been adjusted whilst at Middleton and their removal revealed some peculiarly shaped driving crankpins. These pins are relatively new and it appears that they have been machined this way as they would be unlikely to have worn in such a way.

It had been hoped that Windle would be in regular traffic by now but, after a successful steam trial, persistent injector troubles have caused it to be failed on two occasions when it has been tried on the passenger service. Until these problems can be sorted out, Windle will have to remain out of traffic.

385 Work on putting Windle back into traffic has meant that 385 has had to take a back seat lately but, at long last, the new stays have been fitted and work has recommenced on its return to service.

HDC577 Work continues on this pioneer loco, to prepare her for "50 Years of the Diesel". The air-start system is now functioning although further work is needed to ensure a really efficient start. Painting continues and most of the loco has now been painted maroon. The loco is out of service awaiting a new piston sealing ring.

HE 1786 This loco's repaint continues sporadically. The wheels have now been painted and only small amounts of paintwork require completion.

HL3860 After some time, work is due to start painting the cab of our largest loco, to make her presentable.

All other locos are stored awaiting repairs.

S.J.Roberts

USEFUL ADDRESSES - 1982

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