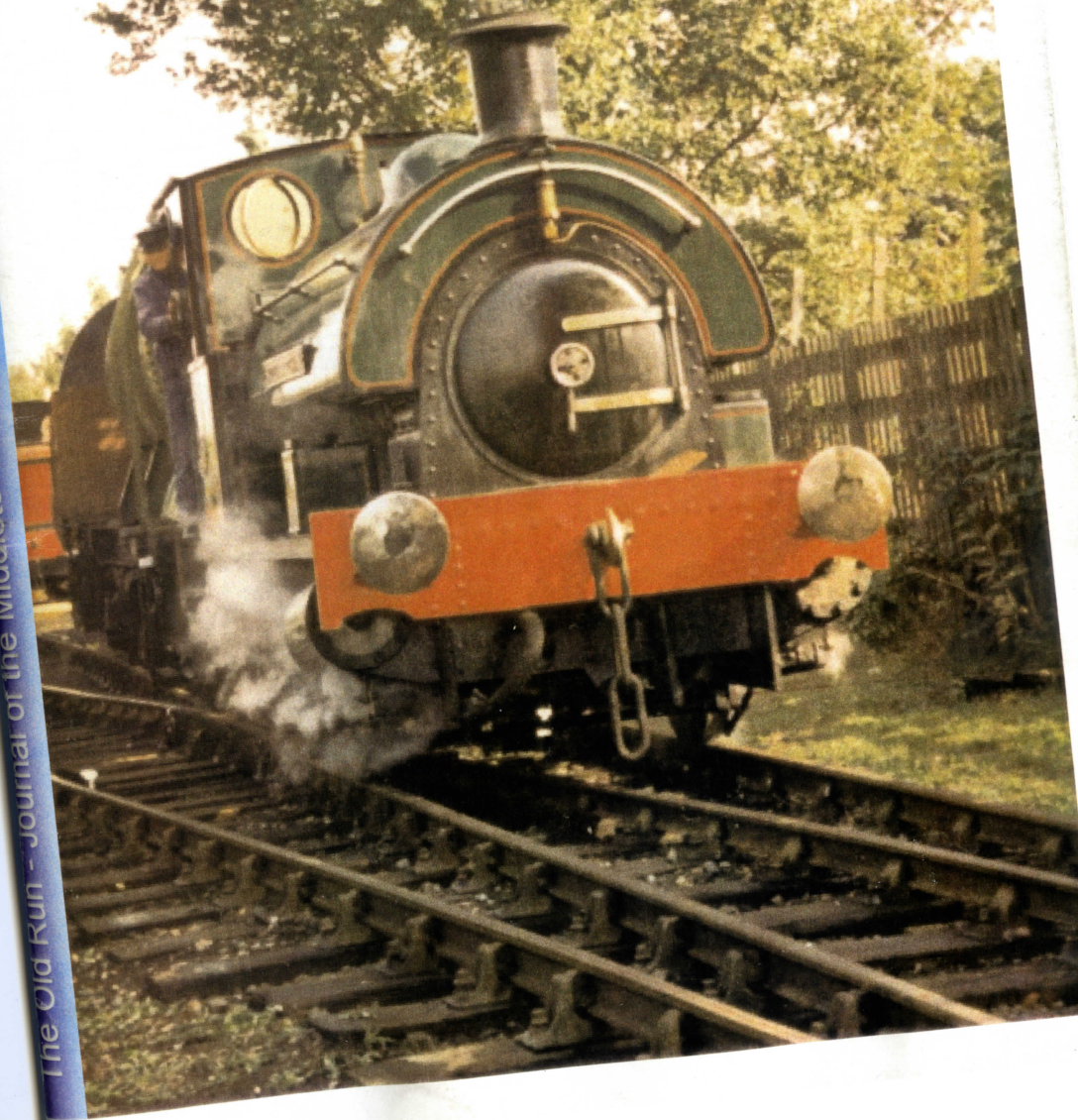


THE OLD RUN

Journal of the Middleton
Railway Trust



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The Old Run - Journal of the Middleton Railway

THE OLD RUN

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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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Front Cover : 'Sir Cecil A
Cochrane' at Moor Road on 23rd
Sep 2000. Photo : Ian Dobson

EDITORIAL

ALAN GILCHRIST

At last the 'Old Run' finally appear to be getting back onto schedule. Hopefully you enjoyed the colour cover of the last edition, thanks to Mike Scargill who arranged printing through his contacts at the university.

We have tried to maintain the costs at the same level for the magazine but to add colour, this gives us a few little problems but at the end of the day the printing process will improve and we should be able to get a good quality magazine out to you.

I realise you will have just received the last edition, some people have commented about the blank pages, this was necessary otherwise the colour bleeding would have meant you would have had difficulty in reading the magazine, we are looking at printing on thicker paper for the outside cover but for this edition we are keeping the same format. Contributions to the magazine are welcome from all members, working and armchair so please send me your articles and pictures. I will try to include everything in each edition.

Hope you enjoy this issue, the information is more up to date and you should just receive it before the start of the season.

Alan

Moor Road Development

Steve Roberts

Up till now the layout and buildings at Moor Road have evolved very much on an ad hoc basis, largely due to the necessity of the enforced move of our headquarters from Dartmouth Yard in 1983 limiting the reality of forward planning. Future development of the site has been a regular topic at Trust Council meetings and armed with the wonderful gift of hindsight we have realised that we have not made the best use of the very limited available space. For example, the existing platform is incapable of being lengthened and the shop is considered to be poorly designed and badly situated. Mains drainage is also a problem, being too shallow to allow drains to be laid from anywhere except in the immediate vicinity of the shop. To ensure that any future development was part of an overall scheme a sub-committee has for some time been looking at how we should develop the Moor Road Site.

Essential to any future development were various aims:

- a longer platform to enable longer trains to be operated
- additional covered accommodation for our rolling stock
- much more for visitors to see and do during their visit
- safe segregation of visitor from moving trains
- improved shop accommodation, together with the ability to serve hot meals/snacks when required
- additional storage space
- ease of operation in terms of shunting, etc.

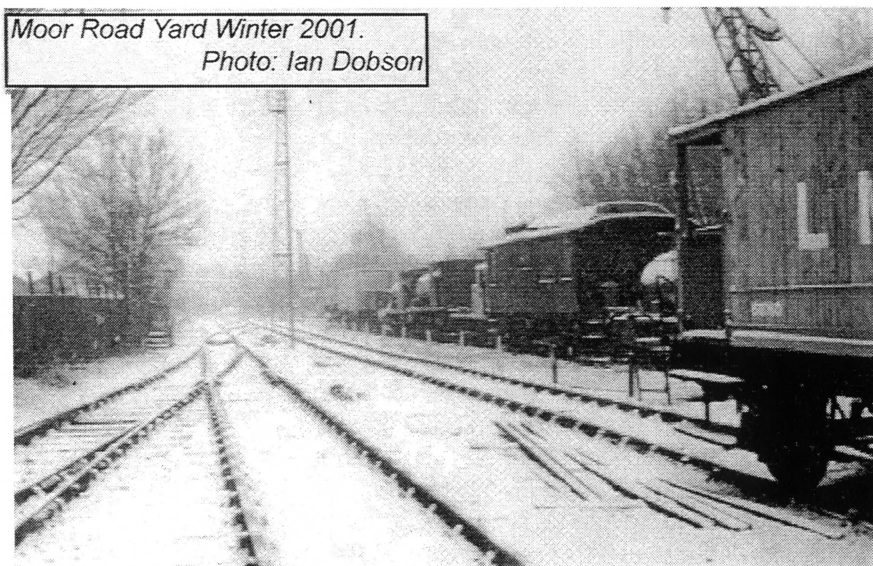
Over the last year or so, various schemes have been looked at. One thing became fairly obvious straight away and that was that the site of the present platform meant that it could not be extended in any way and maintain a run round loop or the line to Balm Road. Various different locations were considered but by far the best position was to move it towards the south end of the site. This also had the advantage that it would enable trains to run own to Balm Road if at any time in the future we were in a position to operate passenger trains along this branch. By slewing the running line and making alterations to the pointwork it was possible to accommodate a platform some 45 metres in length (excluding ramps), sufficient for a train of four of our coaches. The crossover at the south end of the yard has been reversed to accommodate the platform and this has the added advantage of enabling shunts to be carried out

without the limitation of headshunt length, albeit by utilising the running line for the purpose. The accompanying drawing shows the existing and proposed layouts.

Initial thoughts on covered accommodation centred around a large display hall at the north end of the site, spanning the area between the new workshop and the shop. This would have given us a wide, spacious building with sufficient room to house a majority of our locomotive stock under cover. It also allowed integration with the shop facilities. However, whilst this did have the foregoing advantages it did have one major drawback and that was that the site was effectively cut in half, all operations being at the south end and road access only being available at the north end. Thus, all coal, ballast, track materials, etc., would have had to pass through the shed to take it to its intended location. This could only be achieved by offloading everything onto wagons and shunting through the building to offload where required. Besides the inconvenience it would be something that could not be done whilst the public were present in the building. We looked at the possibility of delivering along the track of the Balm Road branch and from the south end of the yard but both were impossible in reality and practicality. The layout eventually agreed upon involved keeping an open track through into the car park, this effectively forming part of the run round loop. It also runs to a planned coal dock which it is intended will be accessible to articulated road vehicles and

Moor Road Yard Winter 2001.

Photo: Ian Dobson



thus enable coal deliveries to be made to the final place of use and not need to be double handled, as at present. Another advantage of the layout is that it will enable shunting moves to take place around the site without conflicting with passenger train operation.

Covered accommodation for locomotives is provided for with a two track display hall some 50 metres in length. A final part of the jigsaw will be the eventual provision of a loco shed which will accommodate up to five operational locomotives. It is intended that both these buildings will be accessible to the public and these buildings also provide the pedestrian route from the shop to the trains. Because the loco shed will be an operational building with work being carried out when necessary, a segregated walkway is to be provided to enable visitors to look but at a safe distance.

It has proved impossible to provide a visitor access route to the trains without the need to cross some tracks (a footbridge would not provide disable access) and a gated crossing is to be provided across the run round loop. This will be controlled by train crews or a dedicated crossing keeper at busy times. Because the new platform is remote from covered accommodation a simple waiting shelter will be provided.

This leaves the final element of the jigsaw - the shop. The scheme as presently presented shows the existing shop in a much enlarged arrangement. However, the limitations of the building are such that we are actively looking at demolishing it and building a completely new two story building on the same site and utilising as much of the available space as we can. This is the preferred option.

The overall cost of this scheme is considerable and has been estimated at £230,000 in total. However, it is being planned as a development over a number of years. The major cost will be to build the new shop building, professionally costed at £100,000. We are unlikely to get outside funding for a commercial outlet but, as we intend to have an archive store and small exhibits museum incorporated, we are hopeful of some funding towards the cost. Of the other works, we are very optimistic of getting grant aid for the display hall. This can be built totally independently of the rest of the scheme and will not require any track alterations, other than local alignment of sidings. At its December meeting, the Trust council gave its backing to the overall scheme and the new display hall will be the first stage of the plan and one we hope to start towards the end of 2001.

The German Connections Again !!

Sheila Bye

The Middleton Railway appears these days on a variety of web-sites: our own, Leeds City Council's, etc., etc., but now also has the distinction of appearing on a German website.

Our 'German Connections' have been mentioned many times in the pages of The Old Run, regarding German visitors to the railway in its early days, the fact that John Blenkinsop's son drove the first train to run on the first German state railway (the Braunschweig to Wolfenbüttel), and the building of Germany's first steam locomotives to the design of our Murray-Blenkinsop rack and pinion locomotives.

Helping to trace information on John Blenkinsop's ancestry via the Internet some months ago, my husband tried typing 'Blenkinsop' as a search word, and there promptly appeared a site (<http://www.spartacus.schoolnet.co.uk/RABlenkinsop.html>), with a nice colour picture of the good old 'Middleton Collier', and some reasonably accurate text. The same site had pages on Matthew Murray also, with 'murray' in the address instead of 'blenkinsop'. Unfortunately the 'murray' pages are heavily based on the often inaccurate E. Kilburn Scott biography of Murray.

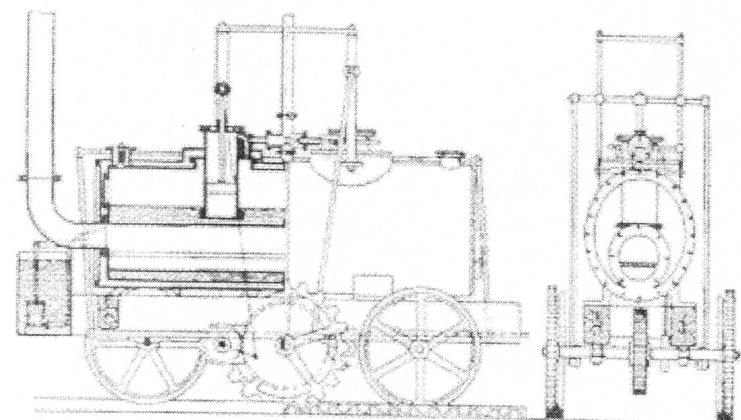


Fig. 713 und 714. Blenkinsops Zahnradlokomotive 1811.
(Nach Severin, Beiträge, Berlin 1826.)

The next site to appear was German:

<http://www.merte.de/eisenbahn/lokbau/berlin.html>

This is an extensive site devoted to German locomotive building firms. The site builder is Jens Merte, and one of his aims in life is to prove to his fellow countrymen that they had built locomotives much earlier than the usually lauded 1835 Der Adler (a kit of parts sent out from England), or the 1839 Saxonia (which was at least designed and built in Germany). Two decades earlier than that, they had indeed constructed the first locomotives built in mainland Europe. To this end, his German loco builders site begins with the Königliche Eisengiesserei Berlin (the Prussian Royal Iron Foundry), where the two Murray-Blenkinsop type locos were built.

The first of these, constructed in 1816, was featured in The Old Run of Summer 1999, but more information has since come to light in an extensive collection of old railway books in the Landesbibliothek in Stuttgart. As mentioned in 1999, the loco ran across the foundry yard, and the public paid 4 Groschen each to go see it. The money was donated to the relief fund for victims of mine and iron-works accidents. After its 'proving', the loco was transported to Oberschlesien, now part of Poland, to be used at a mine in the

Gleiwitz (now Gliwice) area. The track had been built to a wider gauge than ordered, and the loco (with cylinder diameter of 130mm and 314mm stroke!) proved to be too weak to be of use. According to Conrad Matschoss's book *Die Entwicklung der Dampfmaschine*, the works at Gleiwitz seems to have started to build a new loco, with 262mm diameter cylinders but, in the meantime, Berlin pushed for further experiments with the loco they had supplied, on a shorter track of correct gauge. However, it was reported that "everyone was afraid to manoeuvre with it, this fear is also however not unfounded". Due to the workers' passive resistance, timidity and dislike, the administration was forced to discontinue all further efforts. The Berlin-built engine appears to have been set to work powering a mill, and Conrad Matschoss wrote that the engine begun in Gleiwitz was converted into a portable water drainage engine.

During the tests with the Gleiwitz loco, Berlin had been building a second, larger, locomotive for the Saarbrücken area of western Prussia, where it was intended to improve coal transport. If I am translating Matschoss correctly [!] the Head Mines Office in Bonn was not keen to take delivery from Berlin until the loco had gone through thorough testing there, in order to avoid the problems experi-

enced by their counterparts in east Prussian Gleiwitz. However, before Bonn's demand for thorough testing in Berlin arrived at its destination, the 'steamwagon' was already on its way. Despatched in pieces, like the east Prussian loco, it had a much longer journey than its predecessor. It travelled by riverboat to Hamburg, and from there sailed around the Danish peninsular and southwards to Amsterdam (a part of the journey which would be curtailed many years later by the building of the Kiel Canal, on which project John Blenkinsop's grandson Oswald was the engineer). From Amsterdam it probably was transferred on to the Rhine, journeying as far as the Mosel, and from there passing on to the Saar. It had left Berlin on the 22nd September 1818, and did not arrive at its destination, Geislauren on the Saar, until the 4th February the following year. It was due to be built up and tested at the ironworks at Geislauren and, according to Jens Merte's information, was intended for use on a waggonway from the Grube Bauernwald, a mine in the Luisenthal, a valley lying between Saarbrücken and Völklingen.

Matschoss writes that the loco's cylindrical cast iron boiler was 2.5m long, and 1m diameter, with wall thickness of 33mm. It had been cast in three sections. The cylinders were 261mm diameter. Though these were larger than the

first Berlin built loco, the machine incorporating it was also larger, and despite longstanding experiments the best the west Prussians could achieve with the second Berlin loco was for it to move a waggon "20 to 30 feet forwards and backwards", and that was only done with frequent pushing by the workers. The design was intended for using at a steam pressure of 1.5 atmospheres, and this was increased by over 3 atmospheres, but to no avail. Dendy Marshall, supposedly quoting Matschoss at that point, wrote that attempts were also made "with mixtures of oil and meal, vinegar and starch, and ox blood mixed with curds". At Stuttgart, I consulted a c.1975 reprint of the Matschoss book, thinking this would avoid wear & tear on their 1908 original when I was photocopying, but these culinary items are missing from the reprint, so no clue there as to what they were for. Had the local workers decided to brew a sausage mix in the boiler as it seemed to be no good for anything else? or was a witches' potion being prepared as a last resort? (Seriously, I'd be interested to hear if any member knows what their purpose really was!)

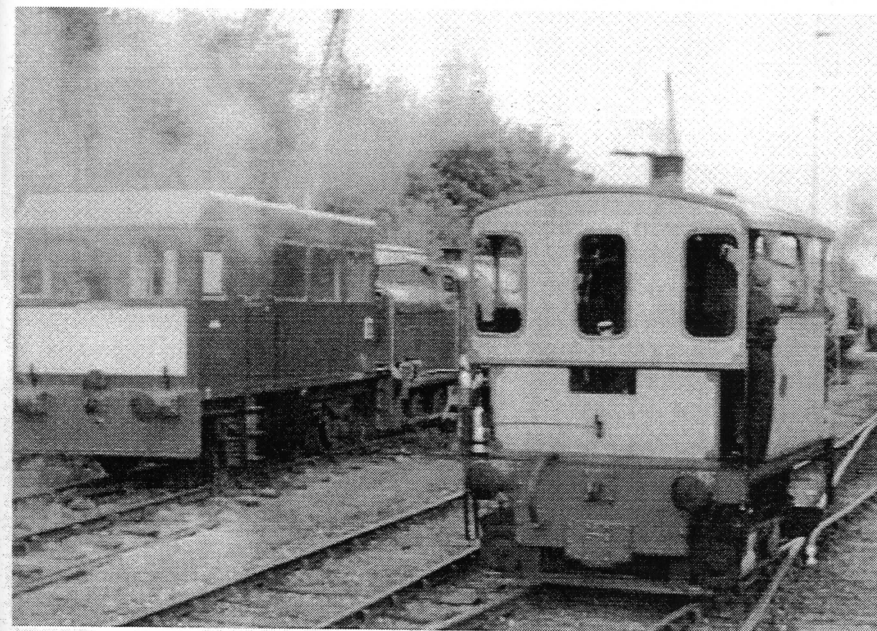
Altogether over 1500 Taler (a substantial amount of money) was spent on various adaptations in a vain effort to make the locomotive work efficiently. Eventually, experiments were abandoned and an

acrimonious dispute broke out between Berlin and the local administration as to who should pay the substantial costs. Despite heavy resistance, the Bonn administration finally had to pay. In 1835, it was decided that the 'steamwagon' should be sold as old iron, and according to C.F. Dendy Marshall's *A History of Railway Locomotives Down to the End of the Year 1831*, that was the end of the second Berlin locomotive.

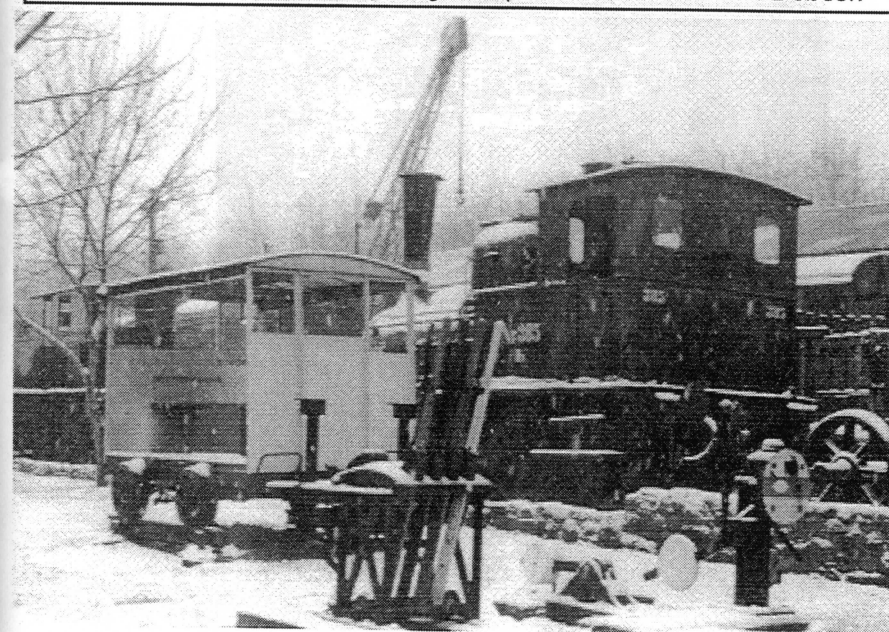
However, Conrad Matschoss had a further chapter to add to the story. No-one actually made an offer that year for the loco, which appears to have been itemised for sale as 16000 pounds of cast iron, 7040 pounds of wrought iron, and 121 pounds of brass. It was not until 1836 that the loco was sold to a farmer, for 334 Taler, 6 Groschen and 7 Pfennige - a real knockdown price considering the 1500 Taler expended on just trying to make it work! Even then, the locomotive was not scrapped. Why the farmer purchased it is not at all clear: spare parts for his farm implements? an early attempt to mechanise some piece of farm machinery? perhaps even as a curiosity with a small charge made for viewing by passing travellers? Whatever his aim was, the locomotive lived on for at least another 40 years, albeit perhaps in pieces, and Matschoss, writing in 1908, only c.30 years later, stated that the farmer was "still in the 70's

able to produce a great many parts as mementos of the first locomotive", making it the longest surviving example of its type. Which naturally leads to the thought that, despite wartime scrap iron collections, somewhere in the Saarland countryside there might be an old farmstead with some peculiar bits of cast iron in a dark corner of its barn

Thanks firstly to Dendy Marshall's book, then to former MRT member Rabbi Rothschild who sent pages last year from an old German railway magazine, and thirdly to the Stuttgart Landesbibliothek's collection, I seemed to have a lot more information about these early German locomotives than Jens Merte had, so of course he was sent photocopies of all the material. Jens, in return, is trying to locate further information from sources not available at Stuttgart, and also to discover some information on German Blenkinsop descendants. In September, he was also sent a copy of our railway's history, and brief extracts from this are now included in his new webpage: <http://www.werkbahn.de> - hopefully exciting some 21st century German interest in our railway.



Top : Gala 2000 The Cockerill locomotive crossing to the station for its next train (Photo : P. Nettleton) **Bottom :** The picnic area in winter time, January 2001 and everything look peaceful Photo : Ian Dobson



FROM THE DESK OF THE MARKETING OFFICER

Howard W Bishop

It is satisfying to be able to report that the 2000 operating year again showed excellent results. In 2000 passenger numbers increased by 11.32% over the previous year and passenger traffic revenue increased by 18.03% in the same period.

In the three operating years 1998, 1999 and 2000, passenger numbers have increased by 31.47% and passenger traffic revenue has increased by 32.73%. Detailed figures for the past three years are contained in the accompanying Table.

When I took up office a Marketing Strategy was established, identifying goals to be achieved over a three years period, and I am happy to report that over 90% of those goals have been achieved. We have set up a comprehensive data base for leaflet distribution, and public relations, and established an ever-widening network of contacts throughout the Yorkshire region. As well as general increases in visitor numbers, we are now seeing a increase in enquiries from travel agents and travel companies wishing to include the Railway in their itineraries.



Santa on the School Day train to Middleton Park Photo : H Bishop

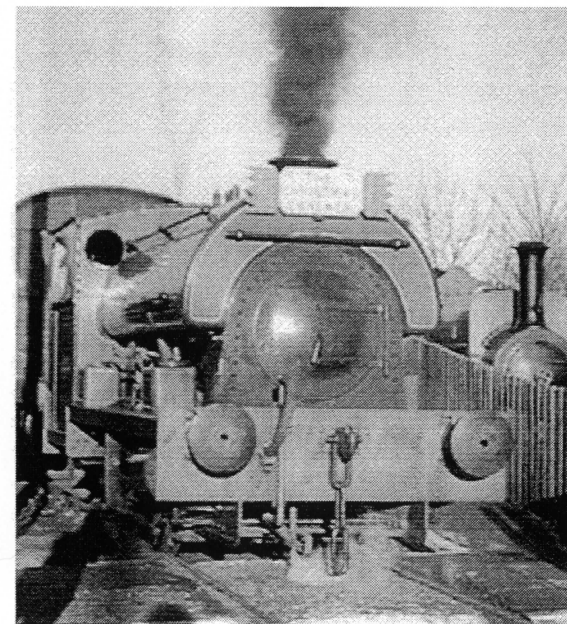
I would like to pay tribute to the members of the Marketing Committee for their ideas, support and practical help. It is especially appropriate to mention our Schools Liaison Officer, Cedric Wood, who single-handedly again manned the Santa Trains Hotline in November and December and did an absolutely superb job. The number of advance bookings for Santa Trains was much higher than previously and helps us to plan ahead as well as helping with cash flow.

We now look forward to our 2001 operating season. Train services start on Sunday, March 25. If anyone would like to get up early on that day and be at Moor Road for 9.00 a.m. they may get a pleasant surprise - I'm saying no more! Then follows our Day Out with Thomas event on March 31, April 1, 7, and 8 rapidly followed over the Easter weekend with the Easter Bunnies promotion. So the coming season should get off to a somewhat hectic but hopefully

Right : The pecket awaits the departure of the next school day Santa Train complete with Xmas Craker above the smokebox
Photo: H.Bishop

profitable start!

Of special note is the Vintage Day and European Steam festival on Sunday, June 3. At the time of writing, this event is still being firmed up. It will include the normal train services with trains decorated with flags to remind folk that we are part of the general wider European steam movement. In addition, and certain to create widespread interest, is the staging of a Vintage Trains & Boats & Buses event, with opportunity to travel on the historic world's oldest working railway, the Middleton Railway, a boat trip taking in the Leeds-Liverpool Canal Basin and the Aire & Calder Navigation on a canal boat with full bar and catering facilities, linked by Vintage Bus



transport. Our friends of the Leeds & District Traction Engine Club are also planning to be involved with us, and this may include not only static displays but live steam street running as well! It will be possible, indeed, essential to pre-book places for the Trains & Boats & Buses event, as seats will be strictly limited, and leaflets and booking forms will be available in due course. Watch this space, our Website, and the local press for more details!

Finally, mention of our Website leads me to highlight, and to thank two of our backroom boys, Martin Plumb and Andrew Plumb. Martin is the Middleton Railway's web-

master, and as such has designed and been responsible for maintaining our excellent Website on the Information Super Highway for several years, enabling a world wide audience to see at first hand what we are about. He is ably assisted by Andrew. Sometimes overlooked, they are an integral part of our Marketing team and have recently spent considerable time updating and redesigning the Website. If you haven't logged on recently do have a look.

Below: *Gala Day and the Goods Train accompanied by period vehicles await their departure from Balm Road* Photo : K.Hartley



PASSENGER NUMBERS ANALYSIS, 1998, 1999, 2000

	1998	1999	2000	3yr trend
SPECIAL EVENTS:				
April "Thomas"	1475	2102(+42.51%)	2776 (+32.06%)	+88.2%
Postman Pat	477	391 (-18.03%)	607 (+55.1%)	+25.25%
40th Anniversary Gala	n/a	n/a	501 (+100%)	+100%
Teddy Bears' Picnic	233	152 (-34.76%)	203 (+28.7%)	+28.71%
September Annual Gala	516	584 (+13.18%)	469 (-19.69%)	-9.11%
November "Thomas"	1715	2265 (+32.07%)	2102 (-7.2%)	+22.57%
Santa's Specials	2501(7d)	2809 (+12.37%)(6d)	3064 (+9.08%)	+22.63%
TOTAL SPECIAL EVENTS	6917	8303 (+20.04%)	9722 (+17.09%)	+40.55%
NORMAL OPERATING DAYS				
SCHOOL DAYS	3560	3961 (+11.26%)	4092 (+3.31%)	+14.94%
BIRTHDAY PARTIES	548	834 (+52.19%)	746 (-10.55%)	+36.13%
CHARTER TRAINS	305	350 (+14.75%)	339 (-3.14%)	+11.15%
	109	90 (-17.43%)	171 (+90%)	+56.88%
GRAND TOTAL:	11,439	13,538 (+18.35%)	15,070 (+11.32%)	+31.74%

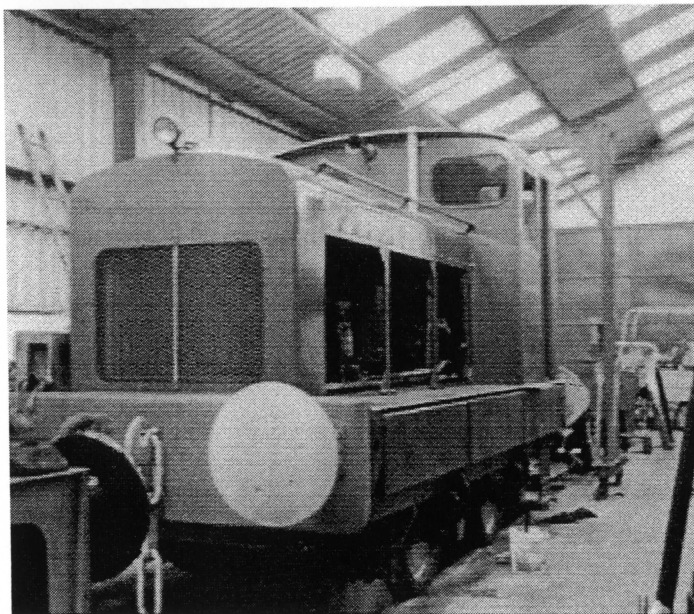
PASSENGER TRAFFIC REVENUE ANALYSIS, 1998, 1999, 2000

	1998	1999	2000	3 yr trend
SPECIAL EVENTS:				
April "Thomas"	£6551	£7003 (+6.9%)	£9196 (+31.30%)	+40.38%
Postman Pat	£1244	£1106 (-11.09%)	£1736 (+57%)	+39.55%
40th Anniversary Gala	n/a	n/a	£2159 (+100%)	+100%
Teddy Bears' Picnic	£802	£418 (-47.88%)	£538 (+33.55%)	-32.92%
September Annual Gala	£2273	£2408 (+5.94%)	£2060 (-14.85%)	-9.37%
November "Thomas"	£5719	£7431 (+29.94%)	£6893 (-7.24%)	+20.53%
Santa's Specials	£8577	£10012 (+16.8%)	£12013 (+19.99%)	+40.14%
TOTAL SPECIAL EVENTS	£25,161	£36,941 (+12.46%)	£43,602 (+18.03%)	+37.49%
NORMAL OPERATING DAYS				
SCHOOL DAYS	£5692	£6327 (+11.16%)	£6383 (+0.89%)	+12.14%
BIRTHDAY PARTIES	£593	£1016 (+71.33%)	£1416 (+39%)	+138.79%
CHARTER TRAINS	£655	£795 (+21.37%)	£803 (+1.01%)	+22.60%
	£748	£425 (-43.18%)	£406 (-4.47%)	-45.77%
GRAND TOTAL:	£32,849	£36,941 (+12.46%)	£43,602 (+18.03%)	+32.73%

Editors Note : The above figures have been supplied by the Marketing Officer, some of the analysis of Adults & Children has been removed to make it fit onto the page, should you wish to know this information please speak to the Marketing Officer.

2001 EVENTS

Mar 31, Apr 1,7,8	A Day Out with Thomas
Apr 14,15,16,17	Easter Bunnies weekend
May 12,13	Postman Pat's Special
June 3	European Steam Festival and Vintage Trains & Boats & Buses event
Aug 10,11,12,13	A Day Out with Thomas
Sep 8,9	Civic Trust Heritage and Volunteers' Open Days
Sep 29,30	Annual Gala weekend
Nov 3,4,10,11	A Day Out with Thomas
Dec 2,8,9,15,16,22,23	Santa's Special Trains



Left:
*Loco No3 in
the shed at
Moor Road
following a
repaint.
Photo :
I.Dobson*

LOCO NOTES

It's been a few months of ups and downs on the loco front. Having gone through most of the season with no real problems, we were hit quite badly during October/November and for the November Thomas event had just two serviceable steam locos. However, this low point was not to last and we managed to end the Santa season with a theoretical fleet of five working steam locos. For the details, read on.

Arthur It's new boiler is progressing well, if somewhat slowly. The outer shell is complete, together with all the longitudinal stays and smokebox tubeplate. The firebox had been completely welded up and all the tube holes machined and girder stays fitted. The foundation ring has now been made and, on my last visit the whole had been accurately bolted together to allow the foundation ring and stay holes to be drilled. These various items require to be rivetted together and the stays and tubes await fitting. Then, all that will remain are the ancillaries, such as tank supports, ashpan studs, etc. A hydraulic test will be carried out at Israel Newtons works before transportation to Middleton for a steam test. It presently looks as if it will now be completed by the end of January/early February. This is considerably later than had been

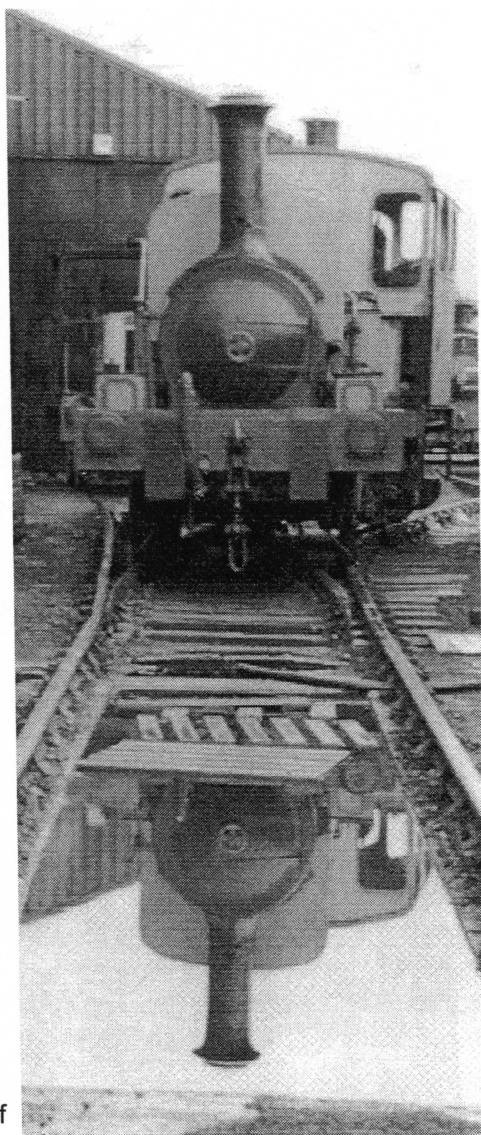
hoped for but it's very much out of our hands. Once at Middleton, the work of fitting it into the frames and to the other bits and pieces will start and that is no mean task. New cladding sheets are to be made and there may be a few pipework alterations. At the request of Douglas Lovely, the loco is going into a dark blue livery, edged black and lined out in white. The first coats of this blue paint have been applied to the sandboxes and running plate valances and the general opinion is that the choice of colour is excellent. We desperately need to get this loco into traffic as soon as possible and, once the boiler arrives, this has got to become the main priority

67 A start was made on the boiler cladding during September with the intention of cleaning and painting. However, examination of the various cladding sheets showed that all needed repair and only a few were really fit for re-use. The scrap sheets have been measured up and new steel will be ordered immediately after the New Year break. As previously mentioned, the smokebox door is beyond repair and quotations have been obtained for a replacement. An order for this will be placed imminently.

As previously reported contractors carried out the required welding repairs to the boiler during June and following on from this, we replaced the corroded rivets in the foundation ring around the front left hand corner. Completion of this work allowed the boiler to be rolled the right way up once again. The mudhole doors and washout plugs have all been cleaned down and refitted. We have had to make three new plugs to replace missing ones. These have been turned up from old worn and unserviceable plugs removed from Peckett No. 2003 many years ago (we rarely throw anything away that might have a future use!) The Pecketts plugs are slightly larger than 67's and thus could be machined down to suit.

The steam fountain has been stripped for inspection and repair, as necessary. (The fountain is the fitting from which the steam is taken for the various auxiliaries, such as whistle, steam brake, etc). The various castings were subjected to dye penetrant flaw detection and one of these was found to be cracked in the root of its screw thread and will have to be repaired. Fortunately the design of this is such that a repair can be fairly easily effected. The safety valves have been stripped and examined. A new spindle has been made for one of the valves.

The majority of the outstanding



work cannot be carried out until the boiler is refitted to the frames and this cannot be done until a satisfactory steam test has been carried out. A major hold up has been the lack of progress with the re-tubing. We had obtained a part set

of tubes from the Worth Valley Railway last year and these were fitted during September/October. The remaining tubes were ordered in September on a quoted seven days delivery but did not actually materialise until 5 December, a fact that has frustrated the restoration team. These new tubes are 48.3 mm diameter which is marginally larger than the 1 7/8" tubes originally fitted but we could not locate a supplier of tubes of the original size. The slight increase in diameter has made the tubes harder to fit and they have generally had to be hammered into place. The closer fit has made expanding them much easier, though. Re-tubing was completed by the 20 December and the boiler was filled with water on 23 December for the first time in many years. As expected, the boiler was not totally leak free and some time will now be spent expanding tubes and caulking seams and rivets, etc to get it sufficiently tight to pass a hydraulic test. With a fair wind, and lots of luck, this should be achieved early in January, enabling a steam test to follow shortly after.

Once the boiler is back in the frames, work can progress at a much more positive rate but there is still much to do.

2103 This little Peckett has performed reliably throughout the season and underwent its annual boiler inspection in October.

Unfortunately the Boiler Inspector found several broken stays in the throatplate. Whilst this was an unexpected setback, the broken stays were at least accessible without recourse to any dismantling (just!) In the event we replaced nine stays, having found others that were cracked. We were perhaps fortunate in that we had some spare stays in stock of a suitable size - part of a stock of spares that came with No.6 way back in 1971. Following replacement a hydraulic test was necessary, followed by a steam test. This was successfully passed on 5 December but one stay needed some minor caulking then it could go back into traffic, something that was very desperately needed. It is now in traffic and has been used on some of the Santa Specials. Planned work for the coming winter includes overhaul of the big and little ends but this may have to be shelved to get Arthur & 67 into traffic.

Earlier problems with the injectors wasting when delivering water to the boiler seem to have disappeared with regular use and both injectors now pick up cleanly with no wastage when properly adjusted.

1310 The Y7 went to the Tanfield Railway during July, as intended. Its holiday 'up North' lasted longer than originally planned and it did not return to



Left : Diesel 'John Alcock' affectionately known as 'Ballcock' stands at Moor Road shed doors on a bleak January day in 2001

Opposite Bottom: Gala Day 2000, Sir B and Sir C both stand at Moor Road station awaiting the departure whilst the Chairman checks his watch to see how 'late' we are running now
Photos : Ian Dobson

Middleton metals until the end of October. Alas, whilst away several tubes started to leak in the firebox and upon its return an examination revealed that there had been considerable wastage of these tube ends, caused by this leakage. It has proved possible to re-expand most of the tubes in question to overcome the leakage but two tubes were considered to be too badly corroded for further use and have been replaced. However, the ends of many tubes are quite bad and further tube replacement may well be necessary to keep the loco in traffic next year.

We have recently been given a general arrangement drawing and a frame drawing for Y7 locos.

Unfortunately, it is for the LNER version of the loco and differs in several respects from our own 1310. Perusal of the drawings has revealed one interesting aspect, though, in that it shows the firegrate to slope up towards the front of the firebox which is not the case with our own loco, which has a level firegrate. The clearance between the bottom of the firebars and the ashpan is very small on 1310 and this does lead to problems with choking of the firegrate and difficulty in clearing ash from the front of the ashpan. Whether this was a modification applied to the LNER built batch or 1310 was originally like this and the present arrangement is an error introduced during colliery days is not known

but it will be a worthwhile alteration to make to it when it is overhauled.

1625 This diminutive locomotive has generally been working satisfactorily but it has to come out of service at the end of December and, having already been drained for the winter, has effectively steamed for the last time. It may not be a popular loco, but it has been a godsend this year, being the only available loco on one disastrous weekend. As noted in the last Old run, the injector started to become unreliable in operation and at first the reason for this could not be ascertained despite dismantling and cleaning of the cones. It is imperative that the lifting flap on

the combining cone of the injector is at the top and care was taken to ensure that it was assembled in this way. However, it was realised that, although inserted in the correct position, the combining cone was turning slightly during re-assembly of the rest of the injector and, once this problem had been overcome, it has returned to its normally reliable state.

As previously mentioned, there has been some discussion on having the boiler overhauled by contract to return it to service in the shortest time but, following a tender exercise, the cost of doing this has dampened the enthusiasm for this approach.



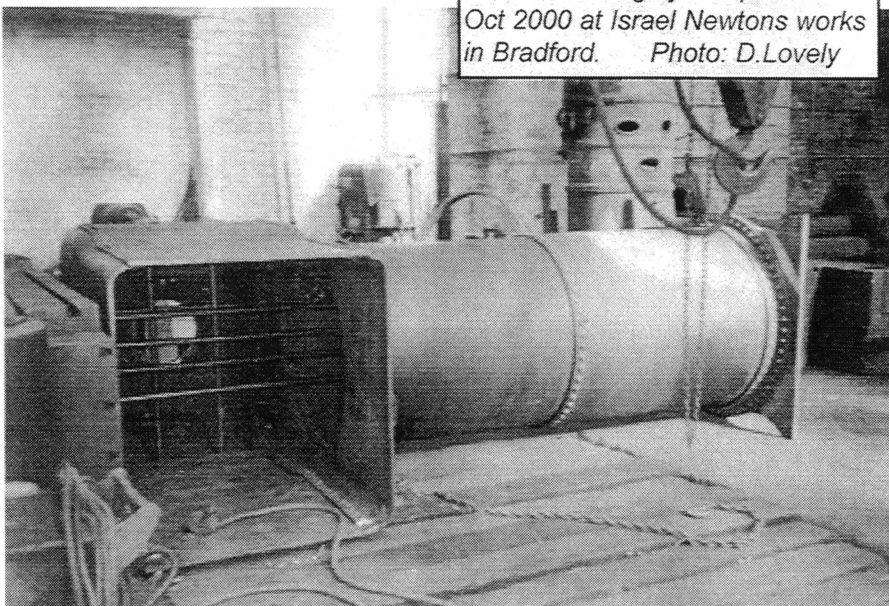
1210 is in working order but we are only allowed to use it to a limited extent and has now been drained for the winter. It should be available for the beginning of next season, all being well, but comes out of traffic in May at the completion of its ten year boiler ticket. Apart from the pressure gauge causing problems during October when it began to stick it has been operating satisfactorily.

The Railway has reached formal agreement with the Vintage Carriages Trust (the locos owner) for Sir Berkeley to become a Middleton based loco and we have agreed to carry out the mechanical overhaul as part of this. As part of this agreement the loco will 'jump

the queue' in the overall programme and a start will be made as soon as reasonably possible. New wheel tyres are almost certain to be required and it may be that new coupling rods are found to be necessary. The boiler will be overhauled away from the Railway by outside contractors. A full examination has yet to be carried out but a new boiler is a possibility if the repairs required are considerable.

2387 arrived back at Middleton in time for our Thomas weekend and performed satisfactorily. Since its return to service last year it has regularly suffered from blowing piston and valve glands and it is intended to investigate this during

New Firebox and boiler for 1601, outer shell largely complete. 5th Oct 2000 at Israel Newtons works in Bradford. Photo: D.Lovely



the winter to try and rectify the problem. This will entail splitting the crossheads from the piston rods and we will have to make some purpose built 'splitters' to effect this, not having anything suitable in our stock of tools. Piston rods are fitted into the crossheads by means of a stick taper and, once driven home, require a considerable force to separate.

54 Anybody taking a wander around Moor Road yard will see that the dear old Sentinel has slipped back onto Middleton metals. It arrived back on 1/12/00, care of John Antell haulage. The poor thing is in a bit of a sorry looking state but it's not that bad when you look at the reality!. The firebox has been re-tubed and re-studded so this bit is all but complete. The outer shell has had some work done to it but it needs finishing off - principally some welding and re-studding. Once this is done it can sort of go back together but there'll be a lot of other jobs to do along the way. As much work has already been done on the boiler overhaul it is planned to progress this as a fill in job over the coming summer. The Sentinel may not be a popular loco with train crews but it is regarded as a celebrity loco, being ex 'main line', and will give us an additional working loco at a time when we will need it.

Rowntree No.3

Repairs to this loco are now complete and repainting is progressing well. The loco remains in green livery but the shade of green adopted is much darker than that applied at its last repaint. We have had some problems with the paint mix as two tins varied quite considerably in shade despite both being supposedly mixed to BS4800 12C39 colour, much akin to GWR Middle Chrome Green.

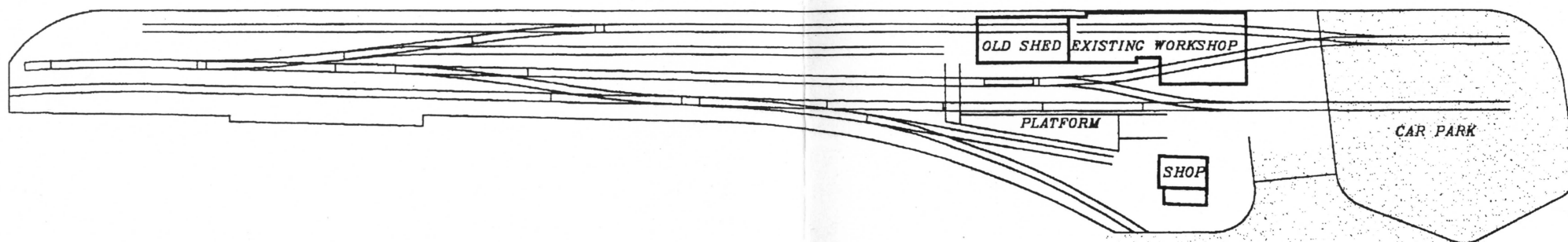
138C

Following an attack of vandalism in which one of the cab side windows was smashed, this Sentinel diesel came into the workshops for repairs to be carried out. At the same time the owner has decided to fit an alternator in place of the generator, the aim being to improve battery charging. This simple statement covers a fair amount of work that has been necessary to effect this change.

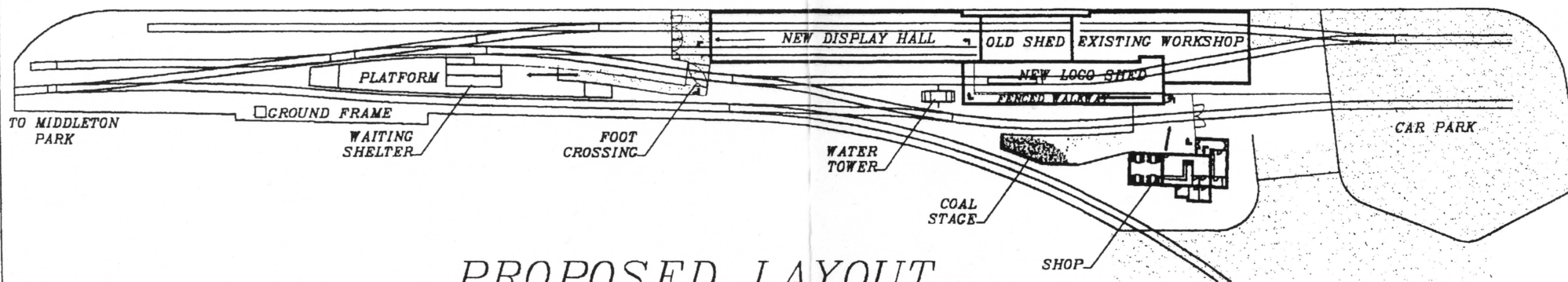
D631

Returned to traffic following repairs to its exhaust manifold and has been in use, as necessary.

D577, 7401 & 1786 are all serviceable and used as required. All other locos remain stored awaiting overhaul.



EXISTING LAYOUT



PROPOSED LAYOUT

**MIDDLETON
RAILWAY**

**MIDDLETON
RAILWAY
TRUST LTD**

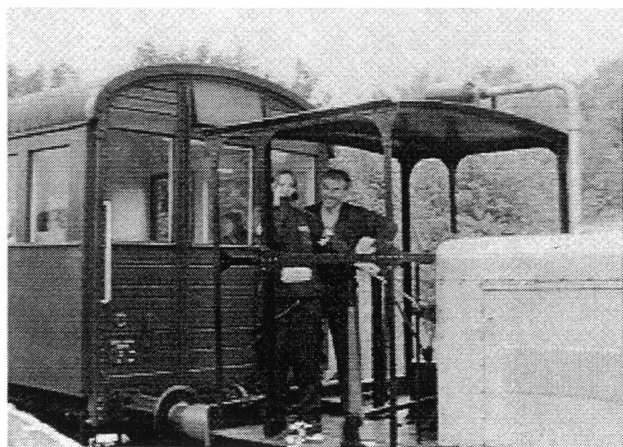
**THE STATION
MOOR ROAD
LEEDS
LS10 2JQ
TEL: [0113] 271 0320**

MOOR ROAD SITE
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OF SITE

Loco Restoration Policy

One of my earliest tasks upon taking up the mantle of Mechanical Engineer was to formulate a policy for loco restoration and allocation of workshop space. I often receive comment from individuals as to which locos should be overhauled next. Generally these suggestions relate to the particular persons favourite loco and give good reason as to why it should be the next in line. I recently reported to Council at some length and stated my intentions for the next round of overhauls. In deciding upon the 'pecking order' I have generally considered that the longer a loco has been out of service the more it qualifies for overhaul. Hence No.6 is my first priority for entry into the works once the present encumbrances are finished. However, No.6 is a long term restoration and we do need something that will not take as long to complete. Mirvale and the Y7 are not in too bad a condition but I have resisted suggestions to put them through the works on a fast track overhaul as I feel that if we follow this approach we will eventually end up with total fleet of worn out locos. Thus the second candidate for overhaul is going to be Peckett 2003. These two locos, along with Sir Berkeley, will become the occupants of the workshop during the second half of 2001. The need to bring serviceable locos and rolling stock in for various routine and non-routine jobs has also to be considered and space has to be kept available for this.

Having said all the above, things can and do change and Council or other circumstances may dictate an alteration to these plans. Our priority is always to keep a suitable and reliable working fleet of both steam and diesel locomotives.



'Sweetpea' or 'Courage' makes it to Park Halt on its first passenger duty, the engine come complete with human horn.

Photo : P.Nettleton

NOTES AND NEWS Carriage & Wagon

The LNER ballast brake has now been completely stripped of all timber and the steelwork is being needle-gunned and painted, as time and labour permit. It had been hoped to save the roof timbers for re-use but this proved impossible to do and now every piece of timber is being renewed at a cost of about £1500. As has previously been mentioned the cantrails were badly split and damaged and all the main joints were loose. Removal of the timbers has revealed that the original design was very poor, there being no bracing to provide rigidity and prevent the roof from moving back and forth whilst in motion. At some time in its life some attempt has been made to rectify this problem by the addition of a pair of bracing timbers on each side but these were only screwed to the side planking and not attached to the main frame timbers in any way. The various split timbers have had bolts fitted to them in an attempt to clamp the timbers together and return some strength to the body but with little real success. It is intended to return the van body as nearly as possible to its 'as built' condition but also endeavour to overcome the design failings of the original without it being obvious.

The 16t mineral wagon is now all but complete and has been moved out of the workshop to allow the west side drop door to be replated - it was not considered to be a safe option to cut and weld this inside the workshop due to the proximity of tools and stores in the area where the rest of the restoration has been carried out. However, since movement outside there have been few dry days in which to progress this work. It is all but finish painted and only requires lettering and the painting of the west side door once this is completed.

Plant & Machinery

Since its arrival, the JCB (the second one, that is) has seen quite a bit of use. Besides regular use keeping the coal stage topped up it has been used on vegetation clearance on the section of line below Moor Road down towards Balm Road. Some work has been found necessary, principally to the front axle. The stub axles have been welded up and re-machined to take up considerable wear and the track rods have been straightened. One of the wheels was found to be cracked and this has been repaired by welding and fitting of a strengthening plate.

The new fork lift truck has seen regular service since its arrival. It was inspected by our Insurance company and various minor repairs have been carried out as a consequence of this inspection. It is larger than our previous battery forklift truck and is capable of operating outside in the car park, something beyond the capacity of the old one. One problem that remains to be resolved, however, is a propensity for it to drop a considerable quantity of hydraulic oil when the engine is turned off. This oil pours out of breather hole in the transmission and its original source has not yet been ascertained. It doesn't happen every time the engine is switched off and is completely unpredictable.

We have recently purchased a new 9" angle grinder and three inspection lamps for use in the workshop. Consideration is being given to obtaining a MIG welder to aid the welding of thin sheet metal.

Winter Work

We are planning a few outside jobs this winter, mainly at the top end of the line. Here, we intend to lift the track in the platform and lay in a drain to take the water away that has been a continuing nuisance whenever it is wet (quite a bit, this year). The track between the end of the concrete sleepers and the platform will have some spot resleepering carried out. The top

loop turnout will also receive some attention as part of these works. Also pencilled in is attention to the odd rail joint and dropping some more ballast where it is a bit on the short side. We will be doing this work on Saturdays in January and February and, as usual, we need lots of willing hands for this.

A new soakaway is also planned for Moor Road and will be situated in the car park. The existing soakaway which serves the workshops is not up to the task and when we get anything like a steady downpour the drains soon overflow. With the recent very wet weather this has become an increasing problem.

Extension

It would be pleasing to have some good news about this but we are meeting opposition from certain quarters in the City Council. The project is far from dead but it is heavy going. A meeting with the Council has been requested in order that the various views can be aired and hopefully a positive way forward identified.

Rule Books

New editions of both the Company rule book and the Operating rule book have just been printed, incorporating various amendments made over recent years. These should, by now, have been sent

out to all operating staff. If you are involved with train operations in any way and have not received your copy will you please get in touch with our Membership Secretary - Mike Scargill - so that a copy can be forwarded to you

Appointments and Authorisations

It's a fact that modern Health & Safety legislation requires everybody to be authorised in writing for many of the things that we do. Besides the obvious ones of driver and guard, people need authorising to use machine tools, drive the fork lift and many other tasks. (Fortunately, we still haven't reached the stage of needing authorisation to sweep the floor but I'm sure somebody will soon be organising safety training in this - dust hazards, etc!) We have recently produced a new 'Form of Appointment' and will shortly be authorising everybody to carry out the various tasks that they are able to do.

Gaining the Knowledge

Hand in hand with the push to get people authorised is the need to properly train people for the things they do. Traditionally, train crew operations (drivers, firemen & guards) have been on the job training but we feel that there is now a need for more organised training. The traditional railway way was by

means of what were known as 'Mutual Improvement Classes' (MIC's for short). These were meetings and lectures given by more senior and experienced colleagues for the benefit of less experienced staff. With help from various members we intend running a series of MIC's over the forthcoming months, starting in January. It's still at the planning stage but the first few meetings have now been organised. They will initially run on Saturday evenings, starting at 7.00pm. Subjects to be covered are:

January 13th 2001	Boilers
February 3rd 2001	Lubrication
February 17th 2001	Injectors
March 3rd 2001	Signalling
March 24th 2001	Operating

Everybody will be welcome to attend and it is hoped that people will make the effort to get along to them. It is intended that they will be a bit of a social evening, too, and not just 1½ hours lecturing!

Situations Vacant

Some while ago now Howard Bishop gave notice that he would be resigning as Marketing Officer in June 2001 to enable him to go on an extended round the world trip. Time flies by and this date is rapidly approaching. Howard has done such a good job that he will be hard to follow; but follow with someone, we must. We are look-

ing for a volunteer now, someone who can shadow Howard for a few months and learn the ropes. Any willing men or women out there? We desperately hope so.

More Knowledge

Dr Lee Towers has offered to run a short course on aspects of the steam locomotive. Entitled 'The Science of Railways' it's contents will be

- Fuel air & Water
- The firebox & Boiler
- The Smokebox & draught
- Superheater, regulator, safety valves and general properties of steam
- Signalling: The Signalbox.
- Some unusual locomotives

The course fee will be £15. It will be held at the Railway and it is primarily intended for Middleton members. It's being organised by Emmanuel Lanne and all enquiries should be directed to Emmanuel.

Please give it your support.

It's In the Bank!

In the earliest days of the Middleton Railway money was always in short supply and the continued survival was only possible due to generous loans from those determined to make this happen. Since those days we have always been very careful with how we spend our money and have always maintained a bottom line that was 'in the black'. In recent years our bank balance has become quite healthy and earlier this year we achieved £40,000 in the bank for the first time. Since then things have improved even more and the Treasurers face had an even broader beam on it when he reported a cash in hand of just short of £50,000 at the beginning of December. There was even some speculation that we might reach £60,000 by the end of the year, depending on how successful the Santa season proved to be. A significant proportion of this money is earmarked for the new boiler for 1601 and will become due for payment shortly but, even so, we do have about £30,000 available for capital expenditure on projects and we are now actively looking at the important task of erecting further covered accommodation for our stock.



Left: Returning to Moor Road on 'Gala Day 2000' Drivers Mike and Brian with cleaner Hayley await their next departure.
Photo : P.Nettleton

Below : The twinning ceremony took place on Gala Saturday. Railway President, Geral Egan (centre) holds Matthew Murray nameplate
Photo : K Hartley



Book Review

'Chaldron Country'

Reviewed by Henry Gunston

I recently bought an interesting new book "Carrying Coals to Dunston - Coal and the Railway" by Ernest Manns (Oakwood Press Locomotion Paper no 216, 2000). This covers the waggonways and later railway systems which developed south of the Tyne to carry coal to staiths along the river at Dunston and at other sites on the south bank westwards from Gateshead. The chapters on waggonways are of particular interest, especially one which covers "The War of the Waggonways" which took place during the first half of the 18th century. Wayleaves, vital to those routing waggonways from pit head to river, were rigorously guarded by landowners, who often had stakes in rival ways and pits. Lady Bowes personally led a group of Bowes workmen in destroying part of a rival waggonway. Although the Brandling family was not heavily involved in the area covered in the book, the style of the waggonways as described was obviously one with which they (and also Blenkinsop and Murray) would have been familiar.

In December 1999 Ron Fitzgerald, industrial historian and the former Curator of the Industrial Museum at Armley Mills, gave an excellent presentation on "The Middleton

Railway and its Collieries". The meeting was organised by the Industrial History Section of the Yorkshire Archaeological Society and amongst those in the audience were Sheila and Colin Bye, Bob Cooper and myself. Ron concentrated on the early days at Middleton and he also described an archaeological excavation that he had been involved with on the site of the MR coal staith at Kidacre Street. When discussing transport from collieries during the 18th century, Ron contrasted crude, inland, local systems where waggons (often simple "box" tubs) were loaded and unloaded at ground level with the more sophisticated way of handling of coal which was exported by sea, especially in the north east.

The loading points for ships were often on reaches of rivers with high banks. This led to the development of the staith structure, built above the level of ship's decks. Bottom discharging "chaldron" waggons, brought from the collieries along waggonways, could be unloaded at the staith directly into the holds of ships. This would have been the style of original MR staith/s on the Aire east of Hunslet. For land sales of coal (as at Kidacre Street), the obvious method was to build a

raised staith structure where the waggonway ran up to the higher level and the waggons discharged directly into the road carts below. Whether the staith was on a river bank or at an inland landsale site, the waggons were loaded from above at raised banks close to the pit heads at the collieries.

The distinctive "chaldron" waggon, with bottom discharging door, unsprung axles and dumb buffers, was the direct ancestor of modern high-capacity hopper vehicles which are used to transport ballast and minerals on railways all over the world. John Elliott's book "Private Owner Wagons of the North-East, Volume 1, The Chaldrons" (Chilton Ironworks, 1994) provides an excellent descriptive and photographic introduction to these waggons. Chaldrons must have been in use on the Middleton in the early days. John Elliott considers that standardisation of a 4 ton chaldron design with vertical upper sides above the tapering lower hopper section took place in the early 1860s. Similar standard designs were produced by the Londonderry system and by the North Eastern Railway, which classified them as the P1 type. When, in later years, the NER sold off its fleet of P1 chaldrons, many were purchased for use on private colliery railways, where they no doubt displaced even older chaldrons. Presumably the Middleton kept itself stocked up with hand-me-

down waggons in much the same way as the collieries did in the north east.

Ernest Mann's book features preservation activity on the Tanfield Railway, which claims ancestry for parts of its route back the Tanfield Way of 1725. Another new book "A Guide to the Bowes Railway - 175 Years of Railway History", also by John Elliott (Chilton Ironworks, 2000) features the nearby Bowes Railway. In addition to the restored working inclines, the Bowes has an impressive collection of waggons, including a couple of ex -Londonderry chaldrons which ended their days around Seaham. Other chaldrons survive at Beamish Museum and a wooden-wheeled replica has been sited near to the recently restored Causey Arch (close to the current Tanfield route) which was built to carry a waggonway in 1727.

Another link to the days of the waggonways was the discovery in 1996 of sections of wooden track during reclamation on the site of the disused Lambton Cokeworks. I understand that some of the results of the excavations at the Kidacre Street staith site may be published. If so, the work there will cast further light on the earlier days on the Middleton.

[Henry Gunston, 7 February 2001]

NYMR Supremo Wreaks Havoc at Middleton Gala

Despite meticulous planning, North Yorkshire Moors supremo, Jackie (turbo) Maples brought chaos and destruction to the Middleton Railway on Saturday 23rd September at the Railway's annual Autumn Gala.

Following a briefing from the Chief Constable of Watford Constabulary, Middleton event planners rostered Jackie as second 'man' on the line's smallest, slowest locomotive, 'Sweet Pea', a diminutive Hunslet diesel with a maximum speed of only 8 mph downhill with a following wind. The Traffic Manager commented 'lets see here get into trouble with this one'. Unfortunately, this loco has only a hand brake and this was to prove her downfall, as it is part of the second man's duties to apply it to the instruction of the driver.

Saturday dawned bright and clear and the event got off to a good start with no problems other than a bacon, egg and tomato sandwich being left off the breakfast order. All was well until 'Sweet Pea' was required to buffer up to a steam locomotive of comparatively infinite mass.

An understanding of events can best be gleaned from a transcription of the cab voice recorder which was recovered later from the other side of the M621 motorway.

'Right Jackie, we have to run through the crossover and buffer up to 2103'

'OK'

Chugging noises from engine and crunch from gearbox

'Sod it'

More crunching noises from gearbox

'That's got it'

Engine noise increases then dies away to idle speed

'Put the brake on please'

'PUT THE BRAKE ON'

(In a small voice) 'whichway is on?'

(In a hysterical voice) 'Put the !!! brake on you stupid

.....Arghhhhh'

CARASHHHHHH

'Well I didn't think that was the way to put it on'

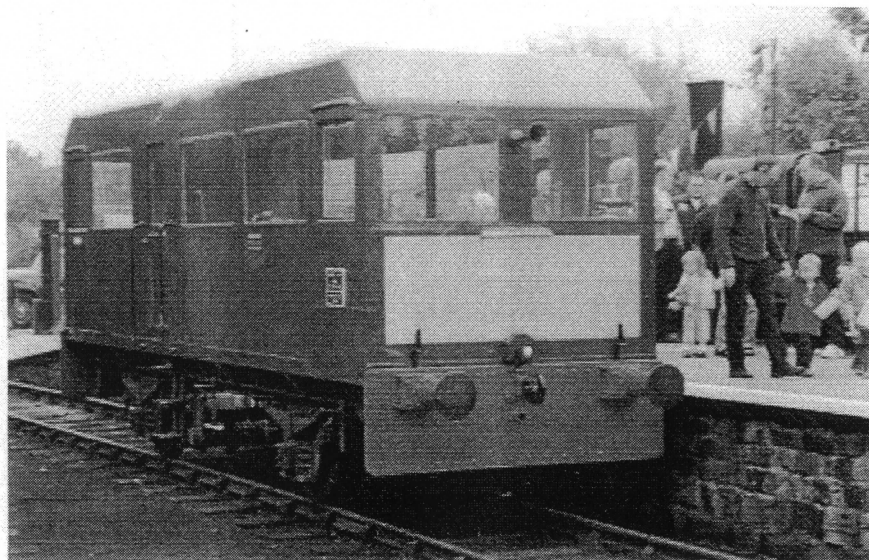
'Arghhh'

After clearance of debris the event was able to continue whilst the unabashed Mrs M took tea in the wrecked cab of 'Sweet Pea' which is now more diminutive than ever.

Investigators interviewed the driver who's only comment was 'Well, the earth moved for me' before he was led away by representatives of a tabloid newspaper.



Jackie (turbo) Maples rests and dines on the footplate of 'Sweetpea' during a quiet moment at the gala Photo: R. Lodge



Practice your Swing Emanuel Lanne

Sometimes ago, as fireman, I had the opportunity to be trained on how to improve my swing. The real swing, the coal shovelling one of course. Not the golf swing! A useful swing, as a good friend would say.

I realised during that day, that it is not the size of it which is important but the way of doing it. Mine (the shovel that is) is slightly longer than the average one at the railway. Y7 was a very appropriate engine as the top back of the cab is fully opened. Therefore the full amplitude requested by the movement is permitted. The art of shovelling implies an ongoing movement, which has to be done without interruption while executed. The beauty of it is created by this

supple and wide gesture. It does not begin near the fire door or half the shovel into it. It starts from the coal bunker, once the coal is loaded, the arms and shovel move backward partly outside the cab, let say one foot. And then, in a nice, determined and wide frontward move propels the shovel through the fire door in order to throw the coal to the desired place.

Once that gesture is fully applied, from loading the coal onto the shovel to throwing it in the fire it looks like a very authentic swing. But do not miss the hole and bang the door... During that day the driver showed me how to fire the engine with the firebox box absolutely full of coal without lifting the safety valves. But that is an other story.

OLIVE An Update on Progress

The state of play at the moment is that we are continuing to work on one evening per week to progress things. The pace tends to hot up when the evenings get longer!

As things stand at present we have a cab partition with two doors at no.1(engine) end. This is now to have a second skin fitted with sound deadening material (rock-wool) fitted between the two skins. This should be a relatively quick job. The cab doors are to be fitted with spare EM2 bodyside windows and a 'spare' Drewry Car door window will be put in the central bulk-head.

The battery box has now been removed and is to be scrapped. The floor (113year old church pews - removed legally!) is in the process of being fitted. The batteries and associated wiring and switches are to be resited in a box under the two seats to be placed where the battery box was. the interior light switches will be repositioned behind the driver at the number 1 end.

Once the cab at number 1 end is complete we will start on the suspended ceiling and lighting working towards number 2 end where much smaller cab partitions will be needed. It is hoped that the inside

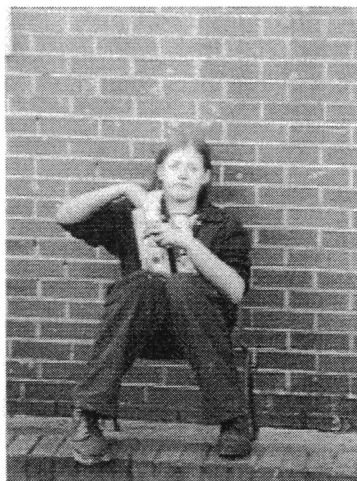
work can be finished by early/mid Summer (2001!) so that we can think about an inspection by HMRI. The disability access remains a cloudy issue but we now think we MAY have some grandfather rights!

We believe that we are on target for a public debut at the gala in September but our AGM in June/July is an outside possibility. In addition to the above the job list includes:

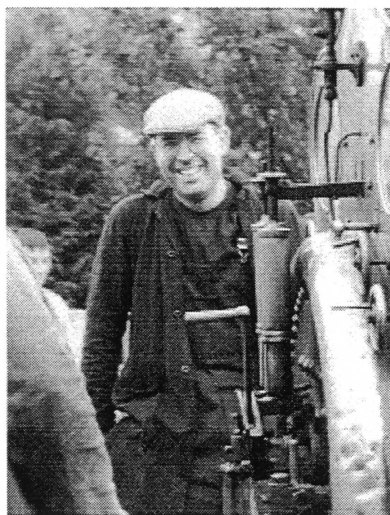
- new door skin to be fabricated and fitted to the 'motorway' side door (in shed job)
- new window frame to fit at number 2 end
- underframe to wire brush / scrape / needlegun and paint - Summer job.
- new window to fit in 'shop' side passenger door (in shed job)
- 2/3 coats of gloss, transfers and varnish (3 week in shed job)
- refit the exterior platform steps at number 2 end (currently sharing the car park with boliers etc) Summer job

Editor : I will be looking forward to seeing this in action at the 2001 Gala

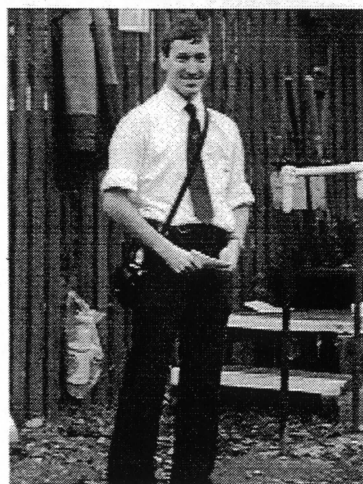
Opposite Page: During the Gala 2000 'OLIVE' took part in some photo run pasts to Middleton Park
Photo : I. Dobson



SOME OF THE WORKING MEMBERS AT THE 2000 GALA WEEKEND



34



WEAVING THE WEB

Martin Plumb.

My son, Andrew, and I have recently been refurbishing the Railway's web site. There are still plenty of things left on our list of 'things to do' but we have, at least, taken down the scaffolding now so I'll tell you about some of the changes:-

- 1) By making use of frames, Andrew has provided a set of buttons that are nearly always visible at the side of the screen and so it should be easier for people to find their way around the site. In the early days of the web (circa 1758), frames had a nasty habit of causing problems but I'm reasonably confident that most people's browsers will now be able to cope.
- 2) The page that shows the timetable and a brief description of each special event will be automatically updated every few days so that it excludes things that have already happened. That means that people will no longer have to download, information that has already passed its steam-by-date.
- 3) The locomotive roster is available so that people can see when each locomotive is rostered for use. Don't be surprised, if the locomotive for a particular duty is rostered or changed at the "11th hour"!
- 4) The site includes an 'Information for Working Members' section, the username/password for which will

be made available to working members. The most conspicuous offering in that area is a "snapshot" of the train crew roster which is updated every few days from the master copy stored on the computer at the Railway. Again, turns that have already taken place will gradually disappear from the roster and so the download time will decrease as the season progresses.

5) Following a very recent change, the online roster now allows people to volunteer by simply clicking on the appropriate turn and filling in some details on an electronic form.

As with all my developments, messages of praise should be addressed to me and complaints to Andrew :-)

While on the subject of the web site, we experienced some problems with the Railway's domain name towards the end of last year for reasons that were out of our control. Just in case something similar happens again, it is worth noting that the web site has two doors. The front door is <http://www.middleton-railway.org.uk> but, if that fails to open, try going round the side, to the back door at <http://www.personal.leeds.ac.uk/~mph6mip/mrt/mrt.htm>

Martin Plumb (Webmaster)

35

End of an era?

Now that the train crew roster is available via the web, I intend to schedule an early disposal for its predecessor which automatically returns a copy of the roster in response to an email message. The system, which was first advertised in the Winter 1995/6 edition of 'The Old Run', has been in use since 1995 and was the very first to allow people to view the roster without visiting the Railway.

According to its log, it hasn't been used in anger since 24 May 2000 and so I think it can be disposed of without upsetting anyone. If you disagree, please contact me before I throw out the fire, empty the ashpan and clean the smokebox!

Martin Plumb (Webmaster)

Train Crew Roster

We now have a user-friendly web-based system that allows people to volunteer their services for train crew duties from the comfort of their homes (see above).

As time goes by and more people establish connections to the internet, there will hopefully be less need for the roster clerks to phone people with their hard-sell, "You know it makes sense" messages

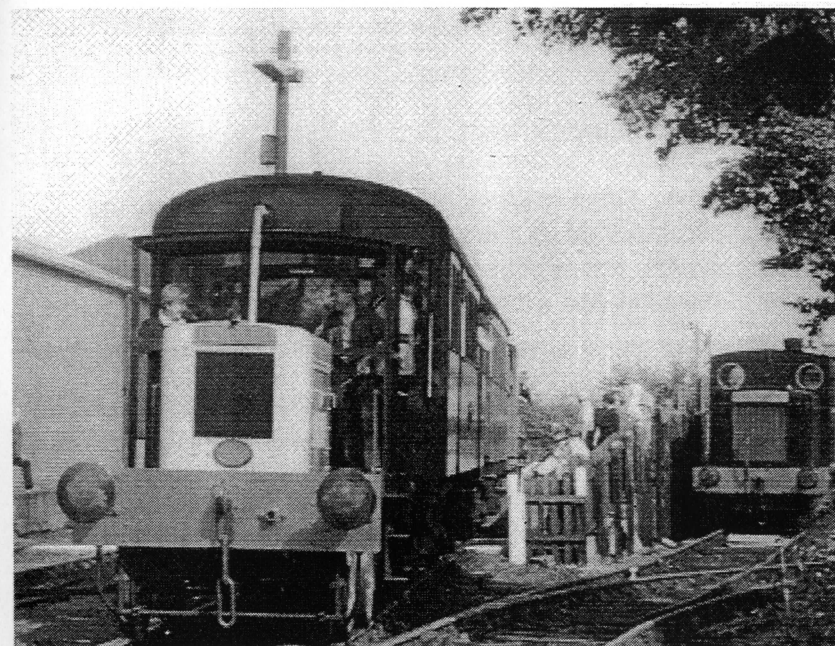
used to persuade them to drive, fire, second-man and guard (usually one at a time!)

Of course, people are still encouraged to put their names on the roster at the Railway and that is where the master copy is held.

For the system to work correctly, though, I must ask you all to ensure that changes to the roster are entered on the computer there and not just on the paper roster. Anyone who fails to do that may find that they have a double when they arrive for the turn and our footplates are not big enough for up to six people! If you need help to use the computer, most of the regular volunteers now know how to drive it and will be willing to help.

The task of trying to improve the roster mechanism is a bit like painting the Forth Bridge because I'm now going to clean my brush and start at the beginning again by re-writing the software used on the computer at the Railway. That should eventually result in a friendlier system there but please be patient and, whatever you do, don't hold your breath !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Martin Plumb
(Assistant Traffic Manager)



Above : Sweetpea assisting a passenger train to Middleton Park with Mr Nettleton and Ms Maples on the footplate Photo : K. Hartley
Below : Santa Special at Middleton Park 2000 Photo: H Bishop



The Trials and Tribulations of a Santa Booking Clerk

Cedric Wood

Having spent the last several years as the Sanat booking clerk for the railway, I have had a fair amount of interesting conversations with people calling to book their tickets. (No details have been changed to protect the guilty.) I have detailed out some of the more interesting ones below.....

"To save postage I will collect the tickets from the station, but can you please send me directions how to get to the railway"

"Could you send me your email address so I can send you some money"

"We are members so you will have our details. Please send us some Santa tickets" They withheld their number, and never gave their name !

Message at 10.37 on Saturday morning "Will I have to book for the 10.40 train today"

"Will you send me the tickets, I will pay for them on the day"

Caller was asked "When does your card expire", reply was "10th January next year" The card actually expired 10 01 (October 2001)

"Can we catch the Middleton Railway train at Doncaster"

"What time is the next train to Leicester"

"Can you ring back tommorrow when my husband is in, I can not remember my telephone number"

"I know where the Middleton Railway is, just behind the Queens Hotel in Leeds"

"I know where Middleton Railway is, I see it every time I visit my grandchildren in Haworth"

Incoming Calls Average 40 per day during the Santa season, peaking at 52 on the last Friday, the earliest call has been 0714 and latest at 2342.

.....And Finally

The answer to the question on theand finally page in the last edition, the picture was of John Wilkinson many years ago at 'Carnforth'

This edition is the holiday snap from last year, where would you go on your holidays..... Erm ? Middleton - on - Sea



The deadline for the next editions are

**20th April 2001
20th July 2001
20th October 2001
20th January**

Thanks to everybody who has contributed this time, it has made it the biggest edition yet.

