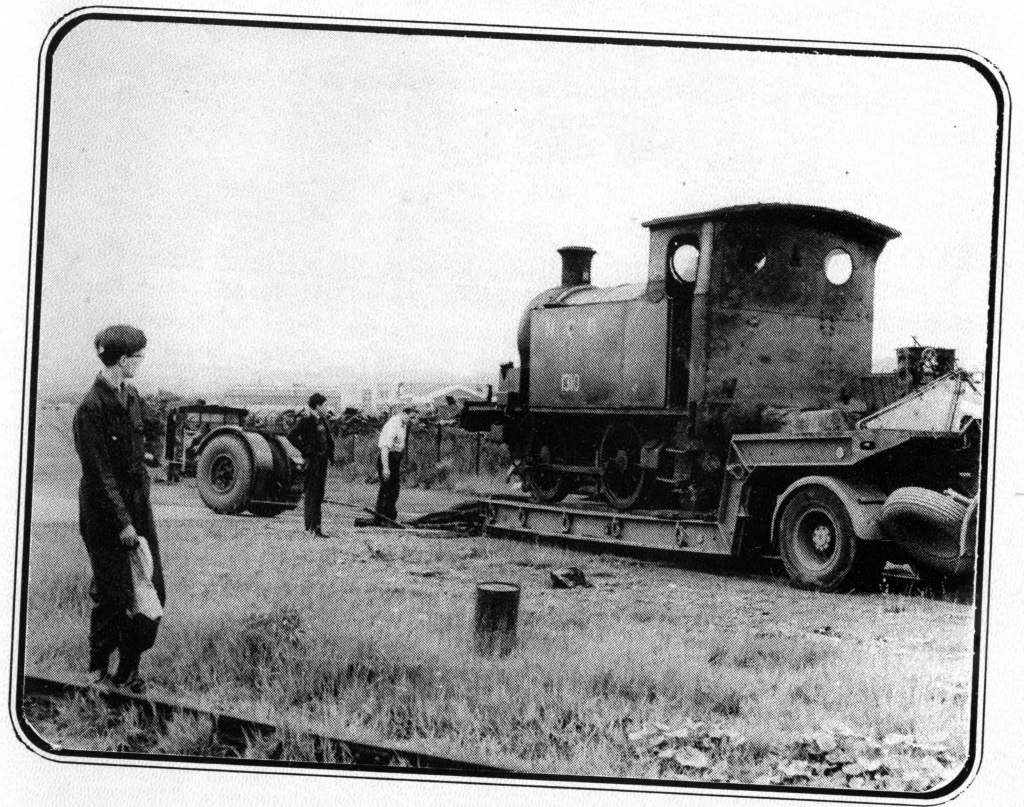


THE OLD RUN

JOURNAL OF
THE 1758 MIDDLETON RAILWAY
LEEDS



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1991

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THE OLD RUN

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Editorial Address: 15 Leylands Lane, Heaton, Bradford, Yorkshire, BD9 5PX.

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.

All articles for the next issue should reach the Editor by **1st June 1991**, at the latest.

EDITORIAL

Sincere apologies for the fact that many members in the Leeds area did not receive their copies of the last issue until around the "in by" date for *this* issue. Vice-President Fred Youell has been delivering magazines to Leeds area members by motorbike for some time, his intention being to save our money. Unfortunately, whilst going about this task with the last issue, early on in his "rounds" he was set upon by a pair of dogs who had the temerity to bite him on the leg and necessitate a couple of hours being spent in the Infirmary, to be patched up. In consequence, he was unable to resume his rounds for several days. The unsinkable Fred informs us that two dogs "are helping the police in their enquiries"! From now on, we will try to adhere to the intention of having four regular dead-line dates for contributions- the 1st of March, June, September and December, each year, so that members should not have to wait for the current issue of *The Old Run* to appear before knowing when copy for the next issue is due in!!!

Sheila Bye, Editor
John J. Bye, Deputy Editor

Cover picture: *1310* arriving by low-loader at the old headshunt near Robinson & Birdsell's scrap emporium on 16th June 1965. *1310*, as everyone should know by now, celebrates its centenary this year. (Will there be a telegram from the Queen?) Photo: M.R.T. Collection.

FROM THE CHAIRMAN

For many months now, there has been a collection of rumours in circulation regarding the future for our Railway. I would like to take this opportunity to separate the facts from the fantasies.

With the blessing of your Council, I have been negotiating with the City of Leeds to secure, if possible, sufficient grant aid funding both to improve our facilities and amenities at the Moor Road site and to extend the passenger line to a new terminus within Middleton Park. It now seems that, after agreeing these schemes in principle, the land would be made available to us, and that at least some of the funding may also be forthcoming. Other avenues are also being explored. There is a long way to go as yet, but all the signs are positive, and I am very hopeful that a firm offer will be made soon.

The most important detail I would like to make clear is that there is NO question that either Leeds City Council or anyone else is seeking to control the Railway in any way, but rather that they wish to advance the progress of what is seen as an important Tourist Attraction and place of Historical Interest.

Ultimately, the decision on any alterations of the line will rest with you, the members, and, bearing this in mind, should the time come, we shall call an Extraordinary General Meeting where everyone who wishes can have their say.

Finally, I look forward to seeing as many of you as possible at the A.G.M. in June, when I will be happy to answer any questions you may have.

Vernon Smith



1247 poses by the shed on 24th June 1990. 1247's visit generated a lot of interest, and a seemingly endless supply of superb photos: this one is by Robin Stewart-Smith.

PUBLICITY 1991

With the new season upon us, your Publicity Department can now come out of the cupboard to inform you what he has been up to whilst the Railway has "slumbered". A new leaflet was produced, using the same formula as before, but with detail changes to the styling, which have benefitted it significantly.

The biggest new product, however, has been the new poster. This has been a while coming, but all who have seen it agree that it's been well worth waiting for. The poster is A3 sized, with a colour shot of *Mirvale* leaving the tunnel as its major feature. A vast improvement on anything that has gone before, the poster is now being displayed in a number of outlets in the region. Supplies of the poster are available at the line or by telephoning me direct.

The usual adverts have been placed in the local press to advertise our activities, whilst T.V. and radio are being exploited fully this year - as far as we can, bearing in mind the problems with "casual" news items.

One major change to the publicity department this year has been the formation of a Marketing Sub-Committee, to concentrate on all aspects of the Railway's public image. This has been a much-needed innovation, and will attempt not only to market the Railway but also to improve what everyone involved at Moor Road will agree is a somewhat less than perfect environment.

As for 1990, we succeeded in grabbing much publicity and limelight throughout both the normal and the railway press, but that still did not translate into the expected bonanza of passengers. We at least maintained a very small growth over 1989's figures, with the Special Events doing rather better, but "Santa" proved disappointing, with the extreme weather putting paid to any thoughts of expansion there. All was not lost, however, since 1990 proved to be one of the worst recession years for some time, which undoubtedly had an effect on things. Our neighbours at Keighley have reported a 2.8% LOSS on *their* passenger figures for 1990, AND their "Santa" trains also suffered, so our results are really most creditable, given the circumstances. Lessons were learned from the year's activities, not least that one person is unable to cope with planning a major series of events plus running a normal year's activities, hence the formation of the Marketing Sub-Committee to co-ordinate all events.

The Railway enters the new season with hope of a good year, but would all members please do their bit to help spread the word. If YOU know of an outlet for our smart new posters, let me know and I'll either send one to you or direct to the shop, library or school. I am only too pleased to receive suggestions for new publicity outlets, so please let me know your thoughts on these matters and I'll try to incorporate them in our future planning.

My address and telephone number appear as usual, on the inside back page of the magazine, so please get in touch if you have any suggestions or simply want some posters or leaflets.

Ian Smith

LOCO NOTES

It would be nice to open these notes on an optimistic note, but I am afraid that progress appears to be slowing with part of our restoration and maintenance programme. Whilst we are always short of volunteers generally, it is becoming noticeable that this shortage is in the main with those who wish to work on the steam locos. Whilst we are too small an organisation to be grouped into departments and must all be Jack-of-All-Trades, it is a fact that a majority of our dedicated workforce prefer to work on other things besides our steam fleet. There is another side to the coin though, in that we have an adequate and well-maintained diesel fleet, and our plant and equipment far exceeds many larger organisations, and it is very rare for us to send work to outside contract.

Notwithstanding the comments in the preceding paragraph, things are generally healthy with the working fleet which must, perforce, be given priority. In detail, the current state with our locos is as follows:-

2003 JOHN BLENKINSOP awaits its future overhaul patiently. Authority has been given to purchase a set of boiler tubes, and these will be obtained in a joint purchase with other railways, when sufficient numbers are available to obtain a good deal.

385 entered the workshop for winter maintenance shortly after the New Year. The boiler tubes have been beaded over in the firebox. This reduces the tendency for the tube ends to burn away. A new clack valve has been machined up for the lefthand injector feed, and the righthand clack valve has received attention. The die-blocks on the valve gear have been adjusted to take up wear, and various other odd jobs have been undertaken. In the cab, a wooden floor has been fitted to reduce the risk of footplate crews slipping on the steel floor. A new bunker bottom has been fitted, and the bunker door 'adjusted' to eliminate its tendency to fall out. Finally, the cab interior has received a fresh lick of cream and black paint. Subject to a satisfactory steam test in the near future, it will be available for Easter service.

1882 MIRVALE Like **385**, the tube ends have been beaded over in the firebox. Various minor jobs have been carried out, and the locomotive is available for traffic.

54 followed **385** into the workshop for various winter maintenance jobs to be carried out. As mentioned in the last *Old Run*, the regulator box has received attention. The spindle has had a sleeve shrunk on, to restore it to original size, and a new stuffing gland made and fitted. A new chimney case has been made up and fitted. The Boiler Inspector required that the fusible plug hole be re-tapped, and this has been done. Externally, the bunker sides have been repainted as the 'lion & wheel' transfers on these sides had started to peel and become tatty. The 'lion & wheel' emblem is being painted on this time, to prevent a recurrence of the problem.

A problem outstanding from the loco's overhaul in 1988, was the considerable wear in the drive chains. These are 2 1/4" pitch, which has not been a British Standard

for nigh on fifty years, and they are virtually unobtainable now. Budget prices obtained at the time of the overhaul were of the order of £2,000-£3,000 per chain, a sum that we felt could not be justified. However, the situation with the existing chains is obviously deteriorating, and the situation has been re-assessed. There is an American Standard 2 1/4" pitch chain, and, following enquiries at home and in the United States, we have found an agent who has offered to supply us some chain at cost plus shipment. The British and American Standards are not dimensionally identical, but are fairly close. We are presently assessing the compatibility of the American chain with sprockets on the loco, and, if it is satisfactory, some new chains will be ordered. **54's** wheel tyres are also well worn, and quotations are currently being obtained to have these turned back to an acceptable profile.

1823 HARRY The loco passed a visual examination by the Boiler Inspector, and is to be re-assembled for a further year's service. Because we have not yet been able to enter into an agreement with the loco's owners over its future, only minimal work has been carried out to render it fit for service in 1991. Whatever the outcome of negotiations, this will be *Harry's* last year of service, as a full strip down for a ten year boiler examination is required next year.

1310 It is unfortunate that the Y7 has borne the brunt of the lack of volunteers working on the steam locos, and progress has slowed significantly. An unfortunate accident to one of the regular workers on this restoration has also affected progress. It was originally planned to have the chassis re-wheeled by January, but, at the time of writing, work still continues on the axleboxes, which have required much more work than was anticipated. The main problem really lies with the frameplates, which, to be honest, require replacement (this would be a first in railway preservation). Although much straightening has been carried out, it has only been to return the hornguides to a vertical state, and much grinding and welding has been necessary to get them reasonably parallel. The cylinders also do not align with the frames by about 1/4" at the driving axle, and this has to be catered for by machining offsets in the axleboxes and connecting rods. However, to use a well-worn phrase, we're getting there. The slidebars and crossheads have been fitted up, but await final alignment. Replacement footplating has been made, to replace the badly corroded areas under the cab and bunker. Whilst all this work continues at Middleton, the tanks are progressing in Derby, where Andy McKenna is masterminding their construction, which has now reached the assembly stage. Many other smaller jobs have been completed, including weld repairs to the cracked chimney, straightening bent hornstays, repainting the cladding 'crinolines', and painting various components.

91 has been progressing well, and hopefully it should be available for service shortly after Easter. The vacuum system is complete, and only awaits testing once the engine is started. Various parts of the fuel and injection system have received attention. Apart from finishing touches, the paintwork is complete, the livery being the Post Office red that it has always carried. "Steel Company of South Wales" is currently appearing on the bonnet sides. New batteries are being purchased at some £330 cost

and, once these are obtained and fitted, the loco should be operational. Incidentally, keen-eyed readers may have noticed the omission of the name *Alf* from this section sub-title. This has been its unofficial name since its arrival at Middleton but, at a recent Council meeting, it was agreed not to pursue this formally.

ROWNTREE No.3 The cracked valve on the starting reservoir has been replaced, and various other minor jobs have been carried out.

D577, D631, 4220038, 138C and 7401 are all available for traffic and used as required. All other locos are stored awaiting repair.

Steve Roberts

CARRIAGE & WAGON NOTES

Immediately after the end of the Christmas season services, work recommenced on repairs and repainting of Coach No.2084. The floor had been a cause for concern for some time, not because it was dangerous, but because there were gaps in the floorboards through which you could see. The original intention was to lift the existing floor, close up the gaps, and fit one or two new boards to make up the shortfall. However, the best laid plans and we ended up replacing the floor completely with good secondhand timber. Meanwhile, the interior has been receiving a fresh coat of brown and cream paint. Preparation for this revealed a small amount of rot in one of the window frames, which has been cut out and repaired. Removal of all the internal panels, for inspection, has revealed that this rot appears to be only localised, and the rest of the body is in good condition.

With all the events of the past year, one item that has escaped inclusion in *The Old Run* has been the painting of the second tank wagon, which has been turned out in black class 'B' fuel livery. The majority of our wagon fleet, except for the flat wagons, is now in a reasonable condition as regards paintwork. With possible future developments in mind, we may have to pay some attention to these vehicles before too much longer.

Steve Roberts

SHOP!

There are still vacant dates on the Shop assistant calendar. This is an excellent way in which members can help earn a great deal of money for the Trust in a matter of a few hours, without too much arduous work and without getting their hands all mucky. Please can you spare even one afternoon this season? Steve Roberts would be very pleased to hear from you. If you'd *prefer* to get your hands all mucky, he'll be able to find you that sort of job too. His address and 'phone number are on Page 23.



Moor Road, 17th June 1990. From right to left: *Rowntree No.3*, *John Alcock*, 385 and, in a role reversal, a rather Dirty *Harry* plays Clint Eastwood!



54 takes a train down the Balm Road Branch on 17th June 1990, crewed by Karina and Vernon Smith. Both photos: Robin Stewart-Smith.

AROUND THE SHED

We have recently obtained, through the good offices of one of our members, a larger air receiver to go with the works compressor. Its transport from down south to Middleton, via York (!), is a saga in itself but, as it made several unofficial journeys and stops, it is best not recounted in detail. It has now been tested and certified, and will be installed shortly.

Elsewhere in the shed, it is obvious that it is becoming very crowded with spares and equipment. We have plans to expand in the medium term future but, as a stopgap measure, approval has been given to extend the existing mezzanine stores level out over the machinery section of the building, to give a much needed storage space. This work will be started once the necessary steelwork has been obtained.

Two recent additions to our plant and equipment have been a small pump, principally for emptying the pit, and a circular-saw bench, to help speed up the large amount of joinery work that we now do.

Steve Roberts

ISSUE No.133

I suppose it was inevitable that, having written in the article 'Running The Old Run' that the laser printing system gave us a much better quality print, something would go wrong. It did, and some copies had patches of print which were far too faint, and what was a really superb cover photo lost most of its detail on the upper righthand side. The issue apparently was processed by an inexperienced newcomer who has now departed from the printworks; hopefully there will be no further problems, but please let me know if your copy of that or any other issue is not of acceptable standard. We'll not know if you don't tell us.

Sheila Bye

MAINLINE MIDDLETON

Our indefatigable Vice-President, Fred Youell, has been searching lists of locomotive names for 'Middleton connections', and so far has found the following:

G.W.R. Hall Class No.4944, *Middleton Hall*

L.B.S.C.R. Billinton (1902-5) No.399 *Middleton*

L.N.W.R. Precedent Class (c.1898) 2-4-0 No.941 *Blenkinsop*

Blenkinsop later became L.M.S.R. No.5008. It was a 2-4-0, designed by Sir Francis Webb, with 67½" driving wheels.

THREE BRIEF ENCOUNTERS

RECOLLECTIONS OF THREE MIDDLETON LOCOMOTIVES IN THEIR INDUSTRIAL HABITATS IN THE 1960'S

In the mid-1960s I was a young industrial locomotive enthusiast living in North London. I had a great envy of people who lived in places further North, because they were close to an array of heavy industries where an interesting variety, and a substantial quantity, of industrial locos could be found. In those days steam locos were probably still in the majority on the standard gauge, and the nature of steam loco refurbishment could mean that locos as old as 60 or 70 years of age were not uncommon and were not regarded as being remarkable unless of a rare type.

Unfortunately, the London area had little heavy industry: no steelworks; no coal mines (except the odd little group in the furthest corner of Kent); no ironstone or slate. However, an outstanding exception was the cement industry, which had a number of plants spread along the south bank of the Thames estuary, a few on the north bank, and some more down the Medway valley. Most plants had standard gauge steam locos of a variety of types, making them well worth a visit. I was, however, envious of what I read of the situation pre-war, when North Kent was infested with cement works, most of them having exotic narrow gauge systems with locos from extremely rare manufacturers running on unusual gauges, such as 4'3" (this was a sort of 'Kentish standard', dating from before the emergence of a national standard, rather like the Middleton's 4'1"). The most exotic line of all had been at Swanscombe, where outside flanges had been used on the narrow gauge.

By the mid-1960s almost all the exotica had gone, with the exception of a diesel-worked 4'3" system at Sittingbourne and the last of the formerly-common Aveling & Porter traction-engine-type 2-2-0 locos (now on the Bluebell Railway). Now that nearly all of the cement works railways have gone I realise how fortunate I was to have seen a number of them working with steam locos, although at the time I regarded them as a somewhat pale shadow of what had formerly been: an all-too-common realisation for railway enthusiasts!

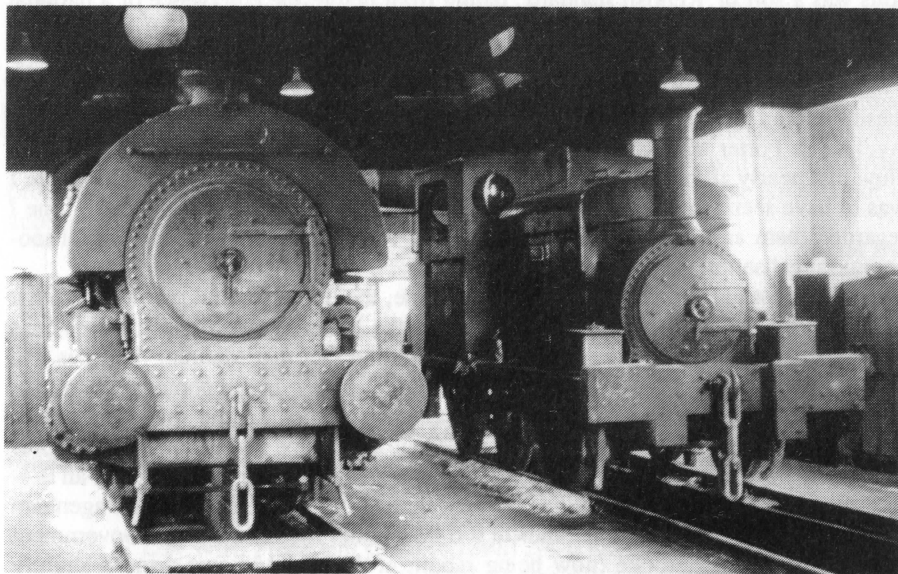
To most industrial enthusiasts of that time, the quintessential type of loco that was rare, but not so rare as to be 'exotic', was the Manning Wardle. This view was based partly on their relative rarity and partly on the fact that Manning Wardles had been the most popular type of loco for contractors, as seen in old photographs of, for instance, the construction of the Manchester Ship Canal. In the mid-1960s there were, I think, four Manning Wardles of the 'Contractor' type in the London area (plus an entirely different narrow gauge one at Bowaters' Sittingbourne paper mill): an 0-4-0ST dumped at Purfleet Deep Wharf; a very ancient 0-6-0ST preserved at Dagenham Dock (now at Bluebell); another ancient 0-6-0ST rather inaccessible in a Government establishment at Kidbrooke (now being rebuilt at Armley Museum); and a slightly more modern 0-6-0ST at the 'Kent Works' of APCM (Associated Portland Cement

Manufacturers, which became the major part of Blue Circle Industries), at the village of Stone. This last one was, of course, *Arthur*, now at Middleton.

At the time, I was in my teens and most of my visits to industrial establishments were undertaken with the Locomotive Club of Great Britain (LCGB) which had an excellent programme of London-based industrial visits. I visited a number of cement works with them, but a convenient visit to Kent Works did not arise and I decided to go by myself, on Thursday 29th July 1965.

Arriving at the small station at Stone, I was pleased to find the Works immediately adjacent, and there was a Sentinel diesel parked outside (No.10021 of 1959). These locos were much admired at the time for their attractive styling, and, since it was the first one I had seen (apart from one that was dismantled for repair at Holborough Cement works), I was as pleased as if it had been a steam loco. Following the tracks into the works, I soon found a fine example of a Peckett 0-4-OST (No.1985 of 1940) and another Sentinel diesel (No.10006 of 1959, i.e. only the sixth one to be built): both were doing some light shunting, and the Peckett was notable for its spotless brasswork, which had been polished to a mirror shine.

Finally I reached the loco shed: a solid job with two roads, having space for about six locos. Inside were the Manning Wardle *No.3 Arthur* (MW 1601 of 1903) and *No.8*, a relatively modern Robert Stephenson & Hawthorn 0-4-OST (RSH 7336 of 1947). The RSH was one of the last few steam locos that APCM had bought, but it was in dirty condition and evidently not favoured by the staff. Like the Peckett, however, *Arthur* was clean, with brasswork polished to a mirror shine: presumably it



The shed at APCM Kent Works, 29th July 1965: *Arthur* (right), their *No.3*, and RSH 7336 (left), their *No.8*. Photo: Peter Excell.

was the preferred choice as spare engine. It was disappointing that *Arthur* was not outside, but the shed was light enough to permit a reasonable photograph: I was pleased enough just to have seen the loco, as I expected it to be scrapped soon, standard gauge industrial preservation being still very rare in those days. I did not see this loco again for 25 years, when it turned up in my adopted home territory, at Middleton.

Time was always short, and so after taking my photographs I headed off to the East, on foot. I paid a short visit to the 'Johnson's Branch' cement works of BPCM (British Portland Cement Manufacturers Ltd., a subsidiary of APCM) where there was no steam, but some more Sentinel diesels and a unique overhead-wire electric system with English Electric locos permanently articulated to cement carriers (built by Leeds Forge). Next there was a long trek through the backstreets to get to Empire Paper Mills, which had a Peckett saddle tank, a Barclay fireless, and a very rare Koppel fireless loco (now all scrapped, as were the BPCM electrics).

Next stop was APCM Swanscombe works, which had an impressive fleet of seven nearly-identical 0-4-OST's by Hawthorn Leslie and RSH. One (*No.3*) was away for repair. *Nos. 1, 5* and *7* (*7* was the solitary RSH) were working the quarry system, to the south of the main road. To the North was the very extensive cement plant, and here *No.2* was working. In the workshops I found *No.6*, in filthy condition, with its wheels out. The wharf on the River Thames was some distance further north, and here I found the last loco, *No.4*, being coaled. Being identical, the Hawthorn Leslies exchanged many parts, including worksplates. *No.6* (the one that ultimately came to Middleton) carried the plate HL 3717 of 1928 at this time, although it is now believed to be HL 3860 of 1935 (the newest of the HL's). The locos here were worked hard and not kept in very good external condition, but we should probably be thankful that *No.6* was one of the last to go through APCM's workshop.

Having been thrown out by a foreman, I ate my sandwiches while watching the quarry locos from a discrete distance! The rest of the day was spent in visits to Northfleet Deep Water Wharf (two steam and two diesels) and APCM Bevan's works (two elderly Pecketts, long disused), an abortive attempt to see the locos at Bowater's Northfleet paper mill, and finally a visit to the home of an enthusiast at Longfield, where he had two very rare narrow gauge internal combustion locos.

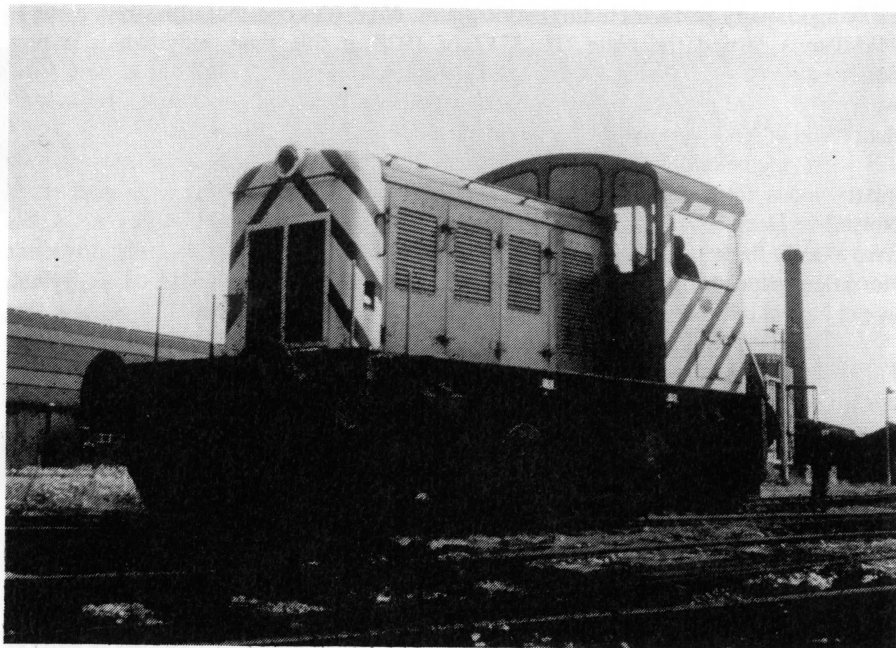
The third Middleton loco that I saw in industrial service was the Brush diesel. This was over two years after the visit to Kent, on Monday 26th August 1967, at the start of a two-day tour of South Wales industrial steam organised by the LCGB. By this time steam traction was in clear retreat and there were few 'rarities' left. It was becoming obvious that even many of the 'common' steam types would soon be no more, and so rapid tours of the majority of the steam sites in a region, usually using an overlaid minibs, became a regular practice (these were frequently referred to as 'clear-up bashes').

Most of the visits were to collieries, but quite a few of the smaller iron and steel works still had some steam and the second visit of the tour was to SCOW (Steel Company of Wales Ltd) Orb Ironworks at Newport. Here there was a very well-kept Avonside 0-4-OST of a relatively rare type (No. 1498 of 1906, named *Desmond*, and

now preserved by the Caerphilly Railway Society). This loco was virtually preserved on site as it was SCOW's last steamer, although it could be called on as spare to the only other loco on site, which was Brush **91** of 1958, an 0-4-0DE now at Middleton.

The Brush pulled *Desmond* out of the shed for photographs to be taken, but I made a point of photographing the diesel as well, as it was the first that I had seen of this rare type. Both locos were in pristine condition: the diesel was painted in red with wasp stripes at the ends (red was unusual as most other SCOW diesels were blue).

The story behind these Brush shunters is rather unusual, and worth piecing together from the evidence. SCOW was one of the most dynamic of the old private steel companies; it undertook a very large investment programme in the 1950s, constructing one of the country's largest steelworks at Port Talbot and buying fleets of modern locomotives. Its first diesels were bought in 1950 and must have been quite a shock to the industry as they were Bo-Bo diesel-electrics by the American Locomotive Company (Alco). American diesel locos were virtually unknown in this country at the time (BR was explicitly forbidden from trying them in the Modernisation Plan due to the effect this would have on the trade gap!), and bogie locos were also extremely rare in industry. After five Alcos, all further diesel locos were British diesel-electrics using Brush technology, but with mechanical parts by Bagnall (except the one now at Middleton, which was the last to be delivered, and had mechanical parts by Beyer Peacock).



Brush 91 at SCOW Orb Ironworks, Newport, 26th August 1967. Photo: Peter Excell.

The earliest Brush-Bagnall diesels were 0-6-0DE's but this design appears to have been abandoned in the mid-fifties, and SCOW only purchased 0-4-0DE and Bo-BoDE types after 1953. The Bo-BoDE's were used exclusively at Port Talbot, and were by far the largest and most powerful industrial locos in the country for many years. All are still working, although the Alcos have been withdrawn, one being preserved on the Nene Valley Railway.

Investment in diesels was a costly business in the 1950's, and diesel- electrics were far more expensive than those with other transmissions. Clearly SCOW had decided to do a top-quality job, but few other customers were tempted. The Bo-Bo design does not appear to have been sold to any other customers (although the Hunslet Bo-Bo's supplied to Scunthorpe in much later years had Brush electrical equipment); a few 0-6-0's were sold (e.g. to Corby steelworks, and to the Coal Board). Rather more 0-4-0's were sold, although it is doubtful whether there were enough to give Brush a significant return on its investment in development of the design. After SCOW, the next largest fleet of 0-4-0DE's was supplied to the Park Gate Steelworks in Sheffield, and its subsidiary, the Renishaw Ironworks in Derbyshire. The last two of the Park Gate fleet can still be seen, now dumped at the back of Rotherham Engineering Steels' Aldwarke works (they are visible from trains on the Sheffield-Doncaster line). A few more were sold to a small steelworks on Tyneside, two to Yugoslavia, and a very curious solitary example to British Railways (D2999): I am not aware of any others.

Given the size of the investment, SCOW's decision was naturally not undertaken lightly. In particular, they made a commendably thorough comparison of steam and diesel shunters (briefly documented in the *Industrial Railway Record*, December 1979). Three steam locos of the most modern type were acquired from W.G.Bagnall, at the same time as the earliest Brush-Bagnall 0-6-0DE's. As with the diesels, no expense seems to have been spared: a special design of 0-6-0ST was produced, having external Walschaert valve gear, and making extensive use of roller bearings. In the comparative trials, the running costs, excluding depreciation and footplatemen's wages, were £1-05p per 8-hour shift for steam, but only 65p for diesels. The high first cost of the diesels is reflected in higher depreciation charges: 15p per hour for steam; 25p per hour for diesel. Availability was quoted as 88% and 94% respectively, both remarkably high. The overall advantage of diesels was considered to have been conclusively demonstrated and all steam locos, even the very modern ones, were rapidly disposed of. Two of the Bagnall 0-6-0ST's went to Longbridge car factory and were subsequently preserved (Nos. 2994 and 2996). For some time they saw heavy use on the West Somerset Railway, although they have now moved elsewhere.

The prudence of SCOW's decision is demonstrated by the fact that the Port Talbot works, despite still being one of the largest steelworks in the country, has not had to purchase a new diesel loco since 1957. Presumably the depreciation figure for diesels could have been revised downwards if such longevity could have been foreseen! Most of the 0-6-0DE's have been withdrawn, as have some of the 0-4-0's. A

number of the latter have also been converted into master-and-slave pairs so that they can be worked as 0-4-0+0-4-0's.

There was, of course, nothing else with a 'Middleton connection' seen in the course of the South Wales tour, but some of the highlights may be mentioned: a number of ex-GWR pannier tanks still working in collieries; a unique Robert Stephenson saddle tank, derelict at Cambrian colliery (which had been closed after an explosion); two enormous Peckett saddle tanks (larger than the 'Austerity' type) at Mardy colliery; an ex-Burry Port and Gwendraeth Valley Rly. loco and a rare Kerr Stuart at Penrikyber colliery; the last loco built by Ebbw Vale Steelworks (to Peckett design) at Marine coal washery; and a unique old-type Fowler 0-6-0 diesel at Abercam tinplate works. Also memorable was a late-night outing by trolleybus to Cardiff Canton diesel depot, then largely occupied by diesel-hydraulics, including the last of the ill-fated Class 14 to be used in their intended territory.

POSTSCRIPT

There was one other Middleton loco that I saw in industry, this being the Barclay now known as *Harry*, when it was at Crossley's scrapyard at Shipley. It was, in fact, semi-preserved there, but was given some real work to do from time to time. I was the first Industrial Railway Society member to 'discover' Crossley's (the IRS is the society that attempts to maintain records of all industrial locos in this country), having noticed one of their first diesel locos in a corner of a photograph of Shipley station, shown at a Bradford University Railway Society meeting in the very early seventies. Some years later, the Barclay appeared at Shipley: it had originally worked for Yorkshire Tar Distillers and had then been preserved at Embsay. For a steam loco to be sold from preservation back into industrial service was virtually a unique event; however, it rapidly became clear that it was effectively still 'preserved'. In recent years I have moved to a house from which I can just see Crossley's remaining locos, and so I have an especial interest in this site, particularly since it is one of the few remaining genuine industrial locomotive users in the area.

Peter Excell

THINGS TO COME?

The Miles Kington satirical column, in *The Independent* newspaper, recently featured the following item in an article on the subject of letters (unfortunately fictitious!) about British Rail:

I have also had a letter from the steam preservation people pointing out that 20 new miles of steam railway are opened every year and that by A.D.2050 the whole of Britain will be criss-crossed by a volunteer steam network, providing a very real rival to B.R. What they fail to mention is that we will have to change trains every eight miles.

Sheila Bye

ICKLES SIDINGS AND A BUS MARKED 'PRANCER'

A YULETIDE HERITAGE AWAYBREAK IN MATTHEW MURRAY COUNTRY

"Where are Ickles Sidings?" This question came to me as I stood on the footpath behind the Moor Road Heritage Centre in the wind, rain and gloom of last Boxing Day, reminded of the 1831 quotation from Parsons' *History of Leeds* that "perhaps a more dismal scene cannot be presented than the tract of mud and marsh called Hunslet Moor on a rainy day." My visits to Leeds are not as frequent as I would like, but Christmas at my wife's family home in Oakwood gave a chance to visit Moor Road once again - an appropriate activity to celebrate ten years of Middleton membership.

With all sensible folk at home in the warm, and the site locked up, I decided to see what I could whilst dodging the puddles along the footpath. What were these two six-wheeled power bogies marked 'ELMe 139 & 140'? Sheila Bye and Ian Smith have since confirmed that they were spares for the ex-Woodhead electric 27000.

Then I came to the Sheffield sewage tipper wagon, with its plate listing 'Ickles Sidings' and 'Thrybergh Tip'. I know little of the railway geography of Sheffield, but when I got home I did search out the excellent special issue of *Industrial Railway Record* by Adrian Booth titled 'Sheffield's Sewage Works Railways'. Ickles Sidings were, predictably, close to the major Blackburn Meadows Sewage Works, which is one of the sites of Sheffield to be seen whilst crossing Tinsley viaduct on the motorway.

Sewage sludge was not a popular traffic, and at one stage the Great Central Railway District Engineer's Department wrote in desperation to the Sheffield Sewage Works Manager "... the matter exudes from the wagons during the journey and creates a considerable nuisance on the Railway, especially at stations where it frequently spills over on to the platforms and the effluvia permeates the atmosphere for considerable periods." In the Theme Park context, could we not create a 'Sewage Sludge Experience' at Moor Road? The tipper - suitably slopping sludge - could be shunted back and forth beside the platform creating a real-life nuisance, complete with atmosphere-permeating effluvia. Remember, where ther's muck, ther's brass.

Further along the footpath, I came to the tunnel which led me to the truncated siding which is all that now remains of the railway in the Dartmouth Yard area. Returning to the station car park, time and weather did not encourage me to take the Heritage Trail towards Balm Road. I did notice, however, that the timetable board looked rather tatty as a first impression to Santa Special visitors. No doubt it will be tidied up in time for the main operating season.

My second visit to Moor Road was on a much better day, the Saturday after Christmas. The morning sun was shining and *John Alcock* was literally in smoke, preparing for a chartered trip for a group of diesel enthusiasts. It was good to see the newer locomotives "in the flesh", one of the benefits of the compact site (to use estate agents' optimistic jargon) being that everything not actually in the workshop is clearly there to be seen. I was again impressed by the businesslike tidiness of the

yard - not like some more spacious Rail Heritage Centres I could mention, where "priceless artefacts of industrial history" are disappearing amidst the bramble bushes. And in the shop, of course, there was the traditional Middleton welcome.

Venturing deeper into Matthew Murray Country, I also visited the Murray Obelisk in Holbeck, and admired the dazzling red Burmantofts terracotta of the restored Holbeck Public Library building on the corner of Marshall Street. On past the Egyptian flax mill to Water Lane, I struggled to discover the Matthew Murray wall plaque, which I now gather is currently hidden by a large 'For Sale' board. I didn't like to stay too long walking up and down staring at a wall, as I was getting some funny looks from the Water Lane motor trade.

Talking of motors and funny looks, let me end with a Yuletide glimpse of the Leeds 'bus scene. Waiting at the stop by Oakwood Clock, I was suddenly confronted with a bus marked 'Prancer'. Was this a new company, I wondered - 'Yorkshire Prancer'? Quite by chance a friend had just sent me a job advertisement, cut from the *Sheffield Star*, from the Northern Bus Company of Anston:-

TRADITIONAL BUS INSPECTOR WANTED

Required to undertake various supervisory and on-board Revenue Protection duties on a small network of local services. Post would suit person who has taken early retirement from a large operator possibly because of declining standards of enforcement. . . Peak cap provided!!

Obviously no prancing permitted *there* during "on board Revenue Protection duties", and I'm sure that declining standards of enforcement amongst the large operators are regularly regretted whilst badges are polished up on Company Peak Caps!

There was, of course, a quite simple explanation to the bus marked 'Prancer'. To encourage the citizens to visit the Leeds Christmas Lights, three Yorkshire Rider buses had been given reindeer's names, the others being 'Donner' and 'Rudolf', and each bus had "Santa at the wheel":-

"If you leave your car parked on this bus stop any longer, luv, there'll be nowt coming down *your* chimney this Christmas!!"

Henry Gunston

***** WAS X.Y.Z. J.B? *****

It is difficult, perhaps almost impossible, really to imagine what land travel was like before the advent of the public railway and the mechanised road vehicle, but old newspapers help to provide some contemporary insight, and dispel previously held beliefs. For instance, we tend to look back at former days as a time when road traffic was sparse, slow, and above all, comparatively safe. This was not so; almost every week's issue of the local papers had details of at least one poor soul who had been trampled by a horse, crushed by an overturned stagecoach or carriage, or run

over by a waggon, and this was a time when the population was much less than it is now - Leeds, for instance, had only about 35,000 inhabitants in the 1810's when the events of this article took place.

The seasons, in turn, wrought havoc with road transport, to an even worse extent than they do now. Canals and navigable rivers were better in many ways, but they too suffered from seasonal problems - floods in spring and lack of water in a hot summer. It was the latter problem which prompted the writing of a letter to *The Leeds Mercury*, printed in the issue of Saturday, 16th July 1814.

TO THE PRINTER.- SIR, - As the trade of Leeds is put to great inconvenience by the stoppages which take place in the navigation of the River Aire, during the summer months, I should be glad if any of your correspondents could lay before the public a plan of conveyance between Leeds and Selby, that would be likely to secure the three great requisites - cheapness, regularity, and dispatch. I am your most obedient Servant,
Leeds, July 15, 1814. MERCATOR.

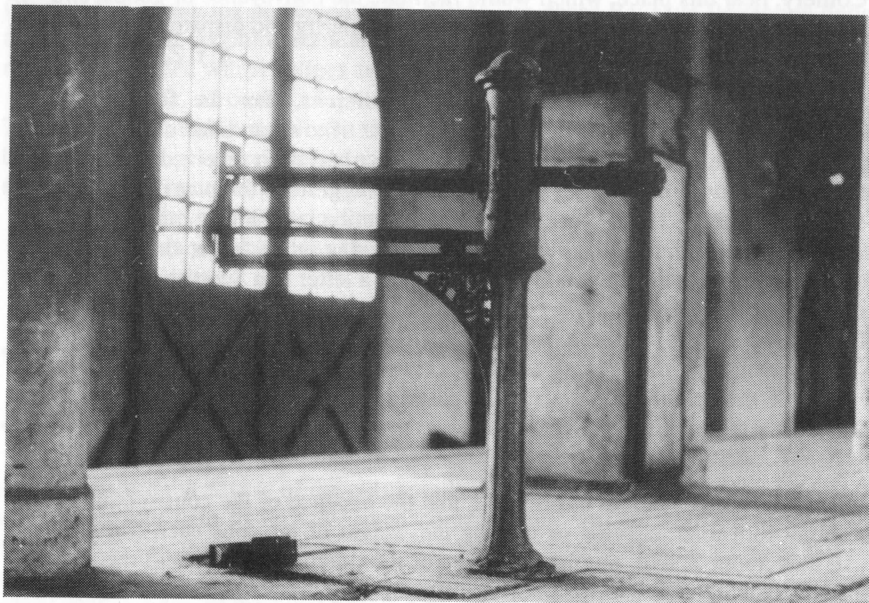
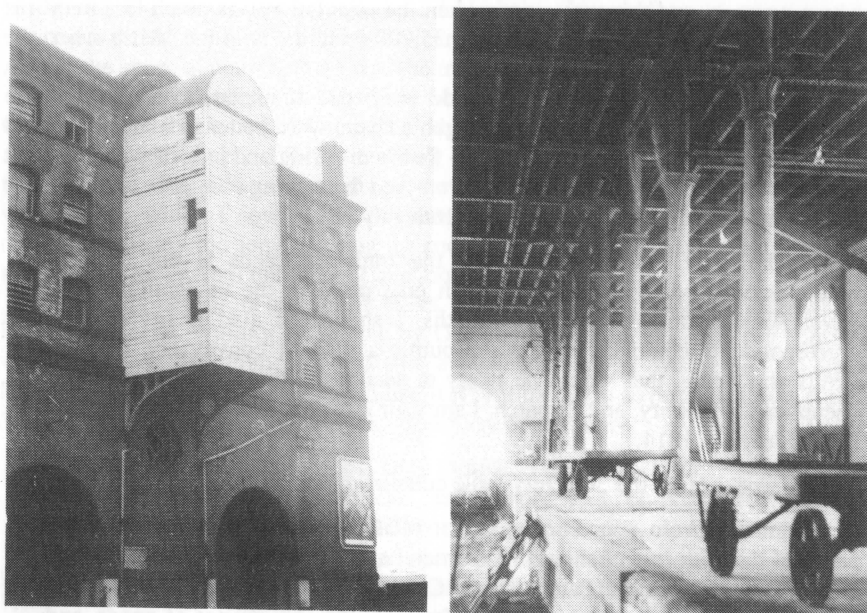
Two weeks later, the 30th July issue contained the following answer:-

Mr. Printer, - From your correspondent MERCATOR'S suggestion, in your paper of the 16th inst., I should recommend a rail road to be laid from Leeds to Selby, adapted to the Patent Steam Carriage, as now in use at Middleton Colliery, near this place, which would facilitate the conveyance of goods, and secure the three great requisites - cheapness, regularity and dispatch.
Leeds, 29th July, 1814 X.Y.Z.

The fact that the reply was dated almost two weeks after the first letter was published, perhaps implies that X.Y.Z. had been out of town and had only lately seen the 16th July issue. Two other letters on the subject had been received, but were not printed verbatim or in full form. One of them had suggested "the propriety of an iron rail-way" and stated "the expence of its construction at 300l. a mile". This was obviously for a conventional railway, but even so was rather lower than the 4s. per yard (£352 per mile) estimated in October 1813, in a letter to a Scottish enquirer from John Watson, the Tyneside colliery viewer who had been responsible for introducing the Blenkinsop system on the Kenton and Coxlodge waggonway. He estimated the cost of his own, rack, railway as being £1..1s. per yard. This would be £1,848 per mile for a 5½-mile colliery line; a 30-mile passenger class railway presumably would be more costly than these estimates, whichever system was laid.

X.Y.Z. pursued the matter in the 13th August issue:-

MR. PRINTER - I beg to inform you, that the expence of the construction of a single Rail-road, capable of bearing the weight of ten tons each carriage, will cost about 2,500l. a mile, exclusive of the purchase of the land the said road is laid upon.- The locomotive Engines may be so constructed as to convey one hundred tons from three to four miles an hour.
Leeds, 12th Aug. 1814 X.Y.Z.



The Leeds & Selby Railway's goods warehouse at their Marsh Lane terminus, Leeds, in the early 1970's, shortly before it burnt down. Photos: Sheila Bye.

£2,500 per mile was probably a fair estimate, considering that the line would have to provide a rather better ride than did those built so far; coal waggons don't usually complain about uneven track, unless it's bad enough to derail them. The price would also include Blenkinsop's fee for use of his patented invention, for which he had recently charged a customer £50 per mile of track laid.

Two weeks later, the 27th August issue contained a letter from 'A CONSTANT READER', suggesting that stationary steam-engines should replace the water-wheels at all the mills on the vulnerable section of the Aire and Calder Navigation S.E. of Leeds, which would result in much less loss of water. He estimated the cost of a railroad as being £5,000, which was probably rather excessive, even for a good, passenger class, railroad. £2,500 would seem to be nearer the mark; it would not have paid for the amount of tunnelling, cutting and embankmenting which was necessary when the railway actually was built but, using the Blenkinsop rack system, the levelling of the route would not have been as important.

X.Y.Z.'s obviously detailed knowledge of the Blenkinsop system, leads one strongly to suspect that X.Y.Z. was, indeed, John Blenkinsop himself. He tirelessly strove to promote railways as the answer to contemporary transport problems, and though this might cynically be said to be done with an eye to his patent charges, his letters about the invention are full of genuine enthusiasm. He appears almost embarrassed about making a charge, and spent some months agonising over exactly what and how to charge. All this is evident in his letters to John Watson, in the North of England Institute of Mining and Mechanical Engineers' collection of Watson Papers, which is kept in their Library at Newcastle-upon-Tyne. In January 1813, for instance, he wrote to Watson that "I trust you will not think me out of the way in asking £50 per annum".

The correspondence in *The Leeds Mercury* lapsed for some time, until Saturday, 8th October, when the following letter appeared:-

To the PRINTER of the LEEDS MERCURY.

SIR,- In answer to Mercator and others, respecting the cheapest, & most expeditious & secure, method of conveying goods from Selby to this place, I have no hesitation in saying, that the present one, with trivial amendment, will be found superior to every other mode of conveyance. A rail-road has been mentioned, but I am perfectly convinced that plan will never be adopted.- Will the merchant at York, Malton, Driffild, Beverley, Hull, upon the Lincolnshire, Norfolk and Suffolk coast, ship their grain to be forwarded by the waggons, on this intended rail-road, when they can have it through to Leeds by the same vessel, by a Captain they well know, and under the protection of a bill of lading? I say will these merchants prefer their vessels being stopt at Selby to have it forwarded for them by steam. Where are all the sacks to be found, and who is to find them? Where is there to be the check against plunder? And again, the vessels that deliver their cargoes on the railway are wanting freight back, which is chiefly coals, as such those vessels

must either proceed to the neighbourhood of Leeds or Wakefield, where the Collieries are, or rail-ways must be laid from thence to Selby. Again, on arrivals at Leeds with grain on the rail-way, how is the grain to be got to the different granaries? are rail-roads to be laid to every warehouse on the banks of the river, or is it to be carted, or by manual labour? If by either of the latter, the expence attending the removal would be more than the dues on the Navigation, the whole length of the line say 6d per quarter; a great deal of lesser objections might be mentioned, which in themselves would be sufficient to set at rest a rail-road.

The writer then proceeds to knock down the idea of stationary steam engines replacing water wheels as being "more absurd than the rail-road". He blames the water problem on the mill-owners, who he accuses of running off water from the locks after a vessel owner had paid for the lock filling, sometimes resulting in the vessel being stranded in the lock for hours until the level in the feeder dam rose sufficiently to replenish the lock water. He suggests how this might be solved, with the only difference to a vessel owner being that the journey to Leeds would take 8 days instead of 2 days. He signs himself INVESTIGATOR, and describes himself as a vessel owner which, given the suggested quadrupling of the journey time to Leeds, is fairly obvious! He either does not comprehend - or, more likely, chooses to ignore - the fact that the railway would take coal and manufactured goods away from Leeds as well as bringing grain and other produce, and raw materials into Leeds. Surprisingly, X.Y.Z. failed to reply; perhaps he was away from home or, alternatively, chose to ignore the ludicrously biased arguments.

One more letter was printed, this time from A FRIEND TO TRADE, on Saturday 22nd October. He suggests that a meeting should be convened to discuss what could be done, and comments that "It is pretty clearly understood what where [were] the intentions of those suggesting the locomotive engine, or the removal of the old water-wheels, or of Mr. Investigator." The identities of X.Y.Z., A CONSTANT READER, and INVESTIGATOR, or at least the direction of their loyalties, appear to have been patently obvious to their fellow townfolk. A CONSTANT READER presumably had something to gain from the building of lots of new stationary steam engines; could he possibly have been Matthew Murray or one of his partners?

Whoever X.Y.Z. was, his enthusiasm for the idea of a railway linking Leeds and Selby attracted no support from the short-sighted Leeds businessmen, and another sixteen years elapsed before work commenced on such a line - the first public railway into Leeds, and an important link in the formation of a route traversing England from Liverpool to Hull. Of course, it was built for the use of adhesion locomotives, and a level enough line at the Leeds end was only achieved by the means of tunnels and deep cuttings, during the making of which many workmen lost their lives. The Leeds and Selby Railway was ceremonially opened on 22nd September 1834, twenty years after it was first suggested by X.Y.Z.

Sheila Bye

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