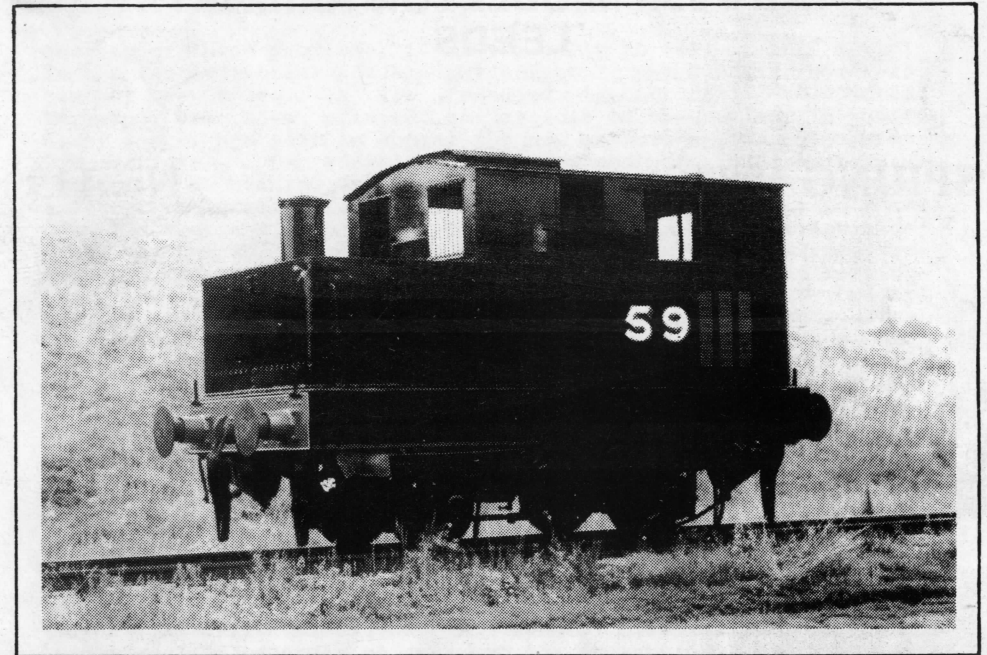


THE OLD RUN



JOURNAL OF
THE 1758 MIDDLETON RAILWAY
LEEDS

SPRING 1987

No. 119

50p

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Editorial Address:

1 Lake Street
Hunslet
Leeds LS10 2NB

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 July 1987.

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

Cover Photo:

A last look at our Sentinel as No. 59. On her return to service, hopefully in July or August, the loco will appear as BR departmental Loco No. 54, complete with BR emblem. Here, the loco is seen posed between the Motorway and GN Curve shortly after taking part in the Shildon celebrations, 9th September 1975.

Photo K. MILLS

EDITORIAL

This issue's editorial follows on from the one in the last issue. Major production problems hit the magazine so that, at the time of writing, it had still not yet been distributed, over 3 months late. This is regretted, but is a problem when anything is done by volunteers. Part of the problems were incurred when one of the production staff changed jobs and had to work out how to produce the word-processor type-up on entirely different machinery, and also had to cope with a family bereavement, which is not conducive with producing a voluntary magazine. I am hoping that things will be a little better with this issue.

Because of these problems, it is too early to tell if the appeal in the last editorial has had any effect. The Council, however, has not been idle. A few frenzied 'phone calls to 'Steam Railway' who have printed an article on the society in their April issue, has seen an appeal for new members appear alongside the article. In addition, the weekend of 25/26 April was designated a 'Working Weekend' to enable prospective new members and current members looking for ways to help the society to come down and meet the regulars. Free refreshments were available on both days, and the idea was that new workers could talk to the regulars and gain an idea of what is actually involved in keeping the line going. On a similar note, the new season started at Easter, and vacancies exist in all operating departments. The shop in particular needs staff this year. Saturdays are reasonably well covered, at the time of writing, though more help would be appreciated, but Sundays are very poorly covered. Any assistance will be more than welcome, contact the editor if you are able to give up the odd Sunday. Only YOU can help the Railway stay open and improve its operating performance in 1987.

On a happier note, arrangements for the 175th Anniversary of Locomotives in Leeds are going ahead and all seems set for some great publicity for the line, with an article appearing in the April 'Steam Railway' and also one in the June 'Railway Magazine'. Yorkshire Evening Post are staging an exhibition and are likely to be publishing a tabloid sheet on the event. The general railway press have been alerted, as have the BBC and Yorkshire Telly. If all goes as planned, the Railway should have massive publicity in June and should reap the benefits accordingly.

Finally, don't forget that the Railway can be hired by interested parties. Hire rates are £65 for a steam loco and £25 for a diesel. For the fee, the hirer gets a choice of loco, subject to availability and, if he chooses steam, about an hour or so with steam haulage. An all line tour, including photo stop, takes just over 45 minutes. Steam locos available this year are DSB 385, Peckett 2003 and, from June, Sentinel 54. Anyone interested in hiring a train should contact Traffic Manager Vernon Smith at the address given on the inside back cover.

YET ANOTHER FIRST

Looking through some back numbers of 'Old Run', I noticed an error in the Summer 1985 edition. The Editorial states that "1985 is the 25th Anniversary of the formation of the Middleton Railway Preservation Society". This, unfortunately, is not the case. Middleton may have the honour, though it is often overlooked, of being the quickest-in-action preservation society, the time from inauguration to first train being only 6 months. This was largely due to the luck of not having to purchase the line from BR and thus not having to go through the cumbersome process of having to obtain Light Railway and Transfer Orders and other formalities which hang round the necks of most preservation societies like millstones.

It happened like this. At the start of the University session in October 1959, some students, led by one named Harrison, came to me asking if I could find a railway suitable for running museum vehicles. This was, in fact, a challenge to do a real live 'Titfield Thunderbolt', although both the M & GN and Bluebell Societies were in the process of doing the same thing, though neither had as yet succeeded. I myself had attempted in 1958 to reopen the Easingwold Railway, but had been told to keep out by BR accountants eager to liquidate the line and take the proceeds. (It was ever thus, Fred - ED.) They said, in so many words, "If professional BR people cannot run the line at a profit, how can amateurs possibly do so?" We were about to show them!

I did a lot of research on the possibility of using some of the open land belonging to the University or its Students' Union. A railway could be operated but would mean starting from scratch. Then another student, Mr. C.C. Thornburn, a post-graduate agricultural student, said "Why not try the disused Middleton Railway?" The Middleton Fireclay Company, which owned the line, was in liquidation and though sympathetic, had already sold the part we could use to Clayton, Son & Company Ltd. The secretary of Clayton's, Mr. S. Jones, though reluctant to make any written agreement, said "Go ahead" although, having been told that the line was so neglected that no trains could be run without complete relaying, he probably thought that ours was a lost cause.

From student Harrison's request for a line to getting agreement to go ahead was a bare two months.

The time was now appropriate to put the proposals on a formal basis. As the idea came from members of Leeds University Union Railway Society, it seemed reasonable to continue under the management of that body. The University of Leeds, however, had other ideas! The University has an over-riding authority over any student activities which might endanger the reputation of either the Students' Union or the University itself, and I had rather a tough interview with the then chairman of the supervisory body, Professor Spaul. He asked whether we knew the magnitude and risks of what we were proposing, and raised matters of safety and the viability of a student society actually practising what they preached, and, of course, the responsibility if the proposals collapsed.

This was about the only reason why we founded the M.R.P.S. as a legally separate entity, responsible only to officers and members of that body. In fact, all members of the new society were members of the University Union Railway Society, and had it not been for Professor Spaul's quite legitimate alarm and caution, the Middleton Railway would have been run by the Union Society. There is nothing in the Union Constitution to prevent non-Union people participating in Union Society affairs, except that they cannot hold office. This latter could have created an atmosphere of unfair discrimination as time went on, but there were points for and against either course of action.

The meeting at which M.R.P.S. as distinct from the Middleton section of the L.U.U.R.S., was formally instituted was held at the end of the Autumn Term in 1959 and NOT 1960 as previously stated in 'Old Run'. The subscriptions and collection at that meeting amounted to only a few pounds, and one is reminded of the Rev. Weech in 'Titfield Thunderbolt' who went to great efforts to raise funds for the church organ for a total of only £48 and 3 shillings! It all seems a terribly long time ago now, but it's probably the one really useful thing I've done in my life, and I am reminded of the old saying "Large trees from little acorns grow" as our small beginnings have grown not only a flourishing preserved railway, but also, a few years later, an equally flourishing organisation catering for the many new societies involved in preservation, the Association of Railway Preservation Societies. It is an often overlooked fact that Middleton was one of the founder members of that organisation.

Incidentally, I hope that Middleton members are still on the lookout for any statements that the 'Bluebell' was the first 4ft 8 1/2" gauge line to be reopened by a preservation society. It WAS the first ex-BR passenger line to re-open, but that is all. In the early days, of course, neither society had any contact with each other, and consequently neither knew what the other was up to until the late Charles E. Lee asked us to tell our story in the 'Railway Magazine'. The subsequent article appeared in the June 1962 issue, pages 426 and 428.

R.F.Youell

A BAG BY ANY OTHER NAME. PART 2

Many moons ago, a previous CME published an article about nicknames acquired by both locomotives and staff over the years. Over ten years later, although locos have come and gone, as indeed have staff, the practice is still very much alive today, and it seems a good idea to inform members of the changes that have occurred since the last article was published. I am also short of material for 'Old Run'.....

The locos have, in the main, kept the names given in the original article, although there is one glaring exception to that rule, and it should come as no surprise to readers of this esteemed journal that good old 'WINDLE' should be that exception! There are also some newcomers to the fleet which have acquired nicknames, and thus the following can be taken as an accurate description of their familiar terms of endearment or otherwise:-

HE1697 'JOHN ALCOCK' has always been referred to as '97' ('The Wreck of...' being the link!) or simply as 'Ballcock'.

HE1786 'COURAGE' will never shake off the name ('Sweet') 'Pea', which refers to its small size and the suggestion that it might run better on spinach!

JF3900002 has always been known as 'Flower', or even 'Flour' - a reference to the occasion when it was named 'Ferdinand Fortescue Brown M.I.F.G.' for the day. Older members will know only too well what this was all about, but for all the new members, this name was placed on the loco at a gala as a joke, and duly noted in the railway press as an official naming. Unfortunately, the gricers didn't see the small Homepride flour-grader on the front of the loco - the initials stand for 'Member of the Institute of Flour Graders'! Such fun!

HCD631 'CARROLL' is 'Dumbo', and her appearance from the front with the bonnet doors open will leave no doubt as to the connection.

HCD577 'MARY' initially didn't have a nickname, 'MARY' being quite sufficient. She has, however, acquired the name 'Hairy' for some obscure reason - presumably it rhymes well!

TH138c managed to acquire the name 'Big E' shortly after arrival, a reference to the enormous 'E' symbol carried from her days under CEEB ownership. These days, she rejoices under the description of 'Pete's Hut', derived from her owner's first name and the size of the cab.

JF4220038 likewise is known as 'Vernon's Hut' for the same reasons.

SENTINEL 54 is referred to as 'Sent', although more than one enthusiast call it 'The Box' - a reference to its shape.

'WINDLE' used to be known as 'Dwindle' or 'Windless', referring to her never having been steamed at the time the original article was written. Now, of course, having been around for some while, the loco is known as 'The Beast', and with some justification, as anyone who has wrestled with the injectors on the damned thing will tell you!

'MATTHEW MURRAY' used to be known as 'The Bag', but these days tends to be call 'Matthew'. We hope that this popular little loco will again be in steam before too long.

'HENRY DE LACY II' has always been referred to as simply 'Henry', since, as the original article said, "what better name for a railway engine?"

HL3860 acquired the name 'Sooty' early on, and those present when the thing was in steam will know only too well the reason why. Not having steamed for over 10 years, the loco has tended to be referred to as '6', although one suspects that the original name will rapidly find favour if she ever steams again.

P2003 has been officially named 'John Blenkinsop' and may possibly be given a new nickname along the lines of 'Senkinblop'(!) but for the moment she rejoices in the nickname of either 'Peckett' or 'Bucket'.

DSB385 rejoices in the nickname of 'Bacon Slicer', referring to the outside valve gear, or simply 'Danish'. She was for a time known as 'Cheese' (she was Danish and came out of the blue!), but this fell out of favour at an early date.

HC1882 'Mirvale', having been here only a little while, has yet to acquire a nickname, but it's odds on that once she has been steamed, some bright spark will coin a suitable name for her. She could almost be called the 'People's Engine', having been purchased by a consortium of members in addition to the Trust.

Astute readers will notice that one loco is missing from the above list. The reason is that the loco concerned, NER 1310, has for some reason never acquired a nickname! Mind you, she is such an attractive little thing that she doesn't deserve the sort of name we bestow on our charges.

As you can imagine, the nicknames bestowed on our working members are every bit as interesting as those bestowed on the loco fleet, and here are just a few of them:-

We still have the pleasure of the company of Gumley, Boots (you should see the size of him!), Bog Oil (he brings waste oil for oiling fishplates, and also tends to do the job himself), Tube, Weed and Vermin. Other nicknames in use are God/Pontiff used for the CME - a reference to the rule which states 'When in doubt, contact the CME', which infers that he is always right!; 'Bishop', one of our friends from the Steam Power Trust, whilst another SPT member is known as 'Cotterpin', his surname being very similar! Another member is known as 'Castor', from the type of car he drives - three wheel Reliant cars have always been known as castors at Middleton. Yet another two are known as 'Wobbly' and 'Mini-Wobbly', both having the same forename. We have a 'Bin' and a 'Pen Man' at the Railway, whilst our Treasurer is universally known as 'Charlie' - with a surname like Chaplin, what else could he expect!

The list could go on for some while (yes, Ian, what about 'Mega'? - Typist). You will have gathered by now that our working members have a sense of humour - a most essential pre-requisite of any preservationist. We are always happy to see new faces, so why not come and meet some of us and put a face to the name - you will be more than welcome and who knows - YOU might feature in an update of 'A. BAG BY ANY OTHER NAME' sometime in the future!

Ian Smith

CARRIAGE NEWS

It is perhaps typical of the Middleton Railway that projects are never quite finished before they are required for instant (like yesterday) service. So it proved with the PMV conversion. A number of minor problems had been encountered when manufacturing the seats for the vehicle, and consequently not all the seats had been completed when the coach was required for service at Christmas 1985.

For all the usual reasons, (pressure of work, flood, fire, Act of God etc., etc.) two of the seats were never put in during 1986, making the vehicle a 28 seater instead of a 32. During March, the two intrepid coachbuilders, Messrs. Rogers and Parkin, set to work to complete the job they had started, as they had finally run out of all those other tasks which they had been given. Over a period of two weekends, wood was acquired, cut to size and shape and assembled. The two new seats were then fastened into position on Sunday 8th March. All that now remains is the task of sanding down all the seats in the coach, followed by revarnishing, and the 32 seat vehicle will be ready for service.

THE SUN RISES AT MIDDLETON

Whatever else may be said about being a member of this society, the statement 'Variety is the spice of life' is more than accurate at times.

Whilst at work a few weeks ago, I was visited by our worthy chairman, who dropped a letter into my lap, replying to a film company wishing to do some filming on Wednesday February 11th. Joe asked if I could see whether this was OK with CME Steve Roberts (this being the closed season when work is supposed to be done on locos) and then to post the reply. Within a few hours I got the reply that it was OK to steam DSB 385 providing the weather was OK and I could arrange a crew. A positive reply was then duly sent and I awaited events. A short time later I received a phone call from Mr. Cook of Tele-Search Europe, the film company, confirming the date and letting me know that they would be there by 11 am.

A quick conference with Vernon Smith, our traffic manager, got me a crew, his wife! I managed to persuade Rog Walton, one of our members who works at Hunslet with me, to take the afternoon off and so all was set for the occasion, apart from preparing 385 for steaming.

As it was somewhat chilly during January, all the locos had been drained of water to prevent freezing. All that was needed was to refill the boiler and replace two drain plugs in the tank and refill that. Alas for complacency - whilst one drain plug went in easily enough, the other one appeared to be too small! Further investigation revealed that the thread was almost non-existent and so Graham Parkin set to work to repair it. This proved somewhat difficult and instead he substituted a small pipe fitting with a proper valve so that you no longer had to crawl underneath the loco and get soaked every time the tank had to be emptied! This done, the boiler was partly filled the night before and then left for me to finish off the following morning.

Wednesday 11th February started off with sunshine, although a little chilly. My first job was to turn the tap on to fill the boiler. Once this was done, I also turned on the tap to fill the water tank for later on in the day. As this tap was in the oil store, I obtained enough oil to oil the loco round. Fireman Karina Smith arrived and set about lighting the loco up whilst I dealt with another job that morning, showing some youngsters from John Blenkinsop school round the site and answering their many questions. This done, the loco was thinking about steaming - but only thinking as the wood we were burning was awfully wet, so I set to and oiled her round.

By 11am, the loco was still only in very light steam but there was also no sign of the film company. Eventually a van drew up and out stepped the chap I'd been talking to on the phone, followed by an oriental gentleman, who it was revealed, came from the land of the Rising Sun. Unfortunately, he spoke very little English which was going to pose a few little problems. Within minutes, this guy was rushing around the yard in kamikaze fashion trying to get the best possible camera angles. I had words with the interpreter and got the information that his chap was in fact the producer of a film intended for use in Japan to accompany a text book about the Industrial Revolution in this country, and that he would very much like a freight train please! Ah so! This had been anticipated (why, I don't know - we must have been psychic) and a small freight train was already assembled in the back road and only needed the removal of 'Pea' and bringing onto the main line.

This was achieved after waiting for pressure to build up and then, following a couple of run pasts, we set off for the delightful surrounds of Middleton Park. We had to do several run pasts for the camera, and on one memorable trip the cameraman travelled in the cab, taking film of Karina firing. I say memorable because the train was hammering up the line at a rate of knots, Karina was shovelling coal into the box like there was no tomorrow and this guy was thrusting the camera and microphone at her, which is most distracting! Whilst all this was going on, the producer, through the interpreter, was telling me to carry on driving whilst I was looking at the end of the line, which was approaching rather more rapidly than I would have liked! Sanity did, however, prevail, and the brakes were applied to bring us to a gentle halt in the top platform before we ran round, went to the Yard, ran around again, then went up the line and did it again!

At one stage during the proceedings, our producer began to move his arm up and down and it took a little time to realise that he wanted me to whistle! Another interesting point in all this activity was the complete ignorance of the film crew in the workings of steam locomotives. They seemed to think that a loco could simply be 'switched on' like a light when required. They were somewhat disillusioned to learn the truth - that it takes time to steam one and also to inject and fill up with water etc. The crew were certainly more educated than when they arrived.

The whole event went off very well, and also earned the railway some valuable income at a time when we normally don't have much cash coming in. I for one would be most interested to see the finished product, complete with jap commentary - it should be quite something for our oriental friends to learn about the 'Oldest Firm in the Business'!

Ian Smith

WELCOME VISITORS

As noted elsewhere in these columns, ARPS visited the railway on 25th January. Your Editor was pressed into service as courier for the visit, which started at York and visited the Low Moor Tramway project before coming to Middleton.

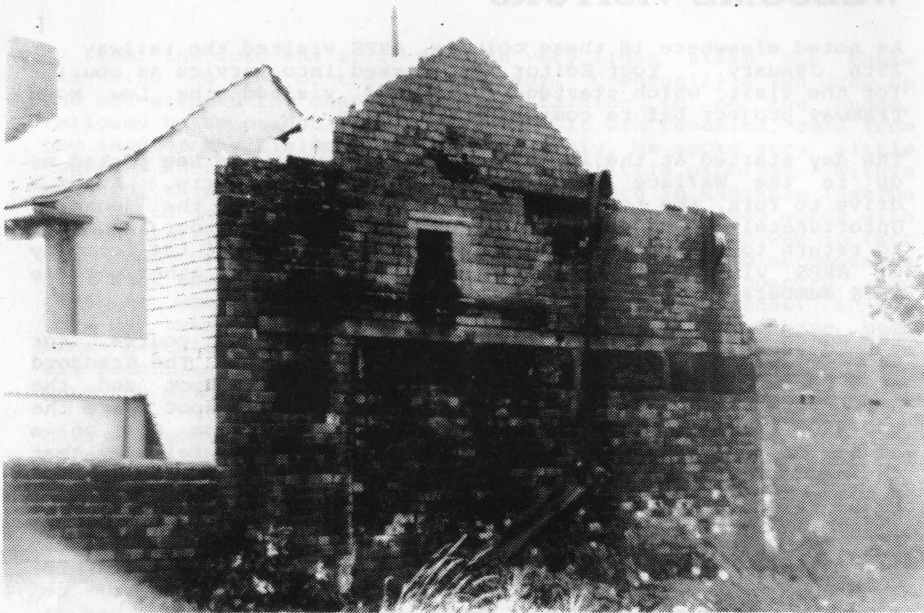
The day started at the line at around 0800 when Joe Lee picked me up in the Wallace Arnold coach hired for the trip. After a drive to York, the tour participants embarked for the journey. Unfortunately, Captain Manisty could not join the tour as he had to return to London, but we did have the pleasure of the company of ARPS Vice-Chairman, David Morgan, and several other notable ARPS members.

The coach was adorned with a red tail lamp, lit of course, for the occasion, which caused some amused comments! The Bradford area tour was quite lively and took in Ludnam St. depot and the Low Moor area before going to Hammerton St. depot where the railway items were kept. Having visited Hammerton St. on a number of occasions before closure, I think I can safely say that the place is now somewhat derelict. BR removed most of the roof since they apparently pay less rates for a roofless building, just leaving it over the two roads being used by the project for its rail vehicles. One thing I never expected to do at Hammerton St. was ride in a Budapest tram inside the depot! Most unusual to say the least.

From Low Moor, we proceeded into Leeds, and the Engine Pub. On the way, Joe took the coach down Water Lane to take in the Murray plaque and memorial obelisk, and also managed to include Leeds Pottery and Jack Lane, where we pulled into the entrance of Hunslet Engine Company to give folk a look at our recently acquired ex-NCB scrap (NCB bought locos but managed to wreck them before re-selling them to Hunslet's for refurbishment!). I say "our" because I now work for Hunslet Engine Company. 'Mine Hosts' Mick and Nora put on a splendid buffet lunch for the ARPS lads, and I grabbed a couple of sandwiches before getting down to Moor Road to see how things were going there. Vernon Smith had DSB 385 ready for action, and was indulging in a little shunting. We were joined by Derek Plummer, who was our guard, and John Bushell, who acted as courier in the brake van, and also did a number of interviews for Radio Leeds.

Many of the participants of this tour had visited the line in 1982, the last time ARPS came here, but not since. They were most impressed at the changes wrought by our small working membership since their last visit. The PMV coach conversion came in for particular praise. The tour given was an all-line tour followed by a yard and workshop tour, and was appreciated by all who came. Parting comments from the ARPS members were all favourable, and indeed many were very impressed at what we have achieved. Such praise is well worth having, as it comes from preservationists like ourselves, who know only too well the problems involved in running a railway, even one as small as Middleton.

Ian Smith

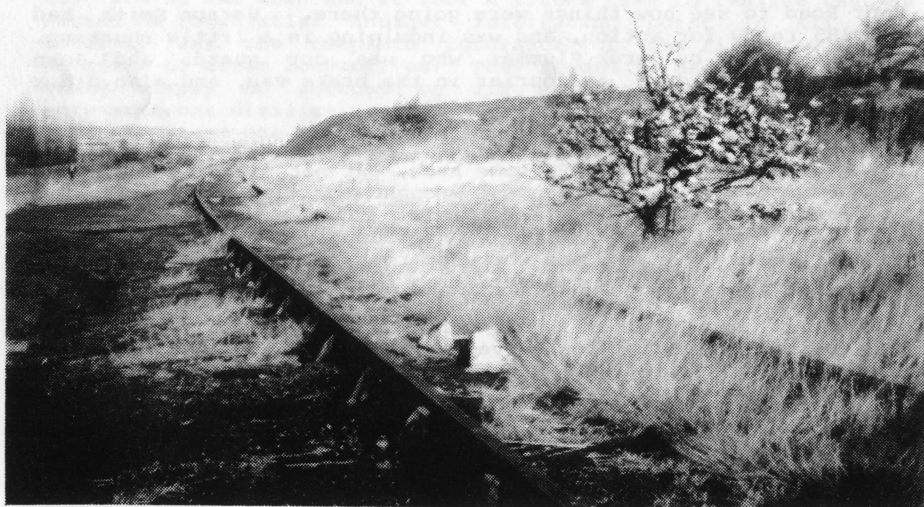


The remaining wall of the winding house, Middleton Town Street, 1964.

The GN Curve looking North towards what is now the Motorway Tunnel, 1964.

The trees on the extreme left mark Hunslet Rugby Ground, whilst the spoil heaps have been landscaped.

Both photos by S. YOUNG



A reminder of our earlier passenger trains. "WINDLE" propels a train from Moor Road, 26th March 1978.

Peckett 2003 poses for the photographer at a surprisingly rural Middleton Park halt, 5th September 1976. The loco crew are the Editor (L) firing and Dave Hebden driving (R).



MIDDLETON IN THE 1960's. PART 1

Whilst typing up an Old Run article by Geoff Dinsdale, I was interested to read of how he came to the line for the first time, and looked around the engine shed and all the rest of the grand new station complex. It suddenly occurred to me how very difficult it must be for recently-joined members to imagine what things were like back in the early days of the preservation era, when only freight trains ran, or even in the late 1960's and early 1970's, when the new visitors' trains (1 engine, 1 brakevan) operated from a little platform of sleepers, which was usually dismantled by vandals during the week, and occasionally lost components altogether - taken for the "travelling people's" fires.

I spent almost all of the first four decades of my life within a hundred yards of the line; as a small child I ran across Hunslet Moor to wave to the engine driver, and made up my mind that this was what I would be when I grew up; as a very new and ignorant engine spotter, I wondered with great frustration why only two or three engines ever appeared on that line when the nearby Midland line had dozens; as a young teenager I almost lost my mother on the line, when she and her friend were nearly mown down by a loaded colliery train whilst taking a short cut to work (they thought the frantic whistles came from down on the adjoining Midland line!); a few years later, I and some visiting cousins saw a train of wagons at the Hunslet Moor Staithes loaded, not with coal, but with hundreds of people, and we followed them up to the Colliery to see what was going on (it was the R.C.H.S. and R.C.T.S. making their bicentenary visit in 1958); about the same time, Mum and I visited a small exhibition about the Railway, in the old City Museum in Park Lane, and listened to a slide show talk by an enthusiastic young University lecturer (R.F. Youell of course). In Rag Week 1960, I took a walk to see a relative who lived near Clayton's Moor End Works, and was surprised to see what looked like an old tram loading up with passengers at the Burton Road Crossing. I investigated further but, to my everlasting regret, didn't stay and queue for a ride on the Swansea and Mumbles coach.

In summer 1964, our history lecturer at training college asked us to produce a local history study as vacation work and, naturally, I chose the Middleton Colliery Railway. I wrote about its past (largely filched from the new First Edition History), and "walked the line" to take photos and describe its geography. Here, in complete contrast to Geoff's first memories of the line, is what I saw 23 years ago.

South of Town Street, Middleton, streets had lately been built and named Staithes this and that, commemorating the coal staithes which had once marked the southern terminus of the Railway after the demise of the little branches coming in from pits in wildest Middleton (the walled-round shaft of one pit was still a landmark in the flat expanse of playing fields behind the Conservative Club). Across Town Street, at the top of the Upper Incline, a part of the old winding-house still stood, a derelict brick wall with a few parts of the mechanism still hanging from it.

A long section of incline still existed, and it was easy to see the positions of the sleepers where countless coal waggons had pressed them down into the unballasted mud. Further down, new houses were already beginning to spread across the incline and, before long, all traces were to disappear beneath some nice, neat, "civilised" concrete steps and paths.

At the bottom of the incline, the line passed through the Broom Colliery Yards (in more recent years obliterated by the baled tipping scheme). Beyond here, the track had been improved to accommodate the B.R. locomotives which, since 1959, had taken coal out via a link on to the Great Northern line. (At the time of the bicentenary run, Fowler's had tested a new diesel shunter, and the Yorkshire Evening Post reported that: "If it can stand this line then it can stand anything in the world", commented the company's locomotive manager, Mr. Fred Turner, as he eyed the ancient rails which the N.C.B. will discontinue using in December.

"The fans, swaying and rocking as their train clanked into the mist, would no doubt agree with him."

From a point just beyond our present Park Halt, the original track bed could be seen, running some several feet higher than the newer line and immediately to the Hunslet side of our track. The retaining wall, which stopped the Old Run from sliding down on to the New Run, was full of old stone sleepers from the original track, easily recognisable by the groups of holes where the rails had been fixed to them. Some of these were taken down the line in recent times to become part of our platform. Looming above both Runs was the great grey bulk of the main pit heap, most of which has now been removed and the tame remnant grassed over. The original was far more impressive, and reminded passers-by of the line's reason for being there, even if its steep slopes did make a good strategic position for young vandals waiting to stone the train! At the Middleton Park side of the track, beyond the site of the legendary row of miners' cottages, were the partly-filled remains of the old quarry and, beyond this, the easily discernible trackbed of the marvellous Middleton tram route.

At the bend where the New Run began its straight route across to the G.N. link, the Old Run turned north towards the Lower Incline. The incline, at the foot of which still stands the Engine Inn, was already tarmaced and entitled Old Run Road. Incidentally, the original name of the pub was the 'Loco-motive Engine'.

The straight stretch from the first bend to the G.N. bridge bend has seen a few dramatic changes since 1964. Then, small pit heaps from New Pit bordered the Hunslet side, parting to let through the link line to the G.N., and the Middleton side was wilderness and the remains of the old quarry. Since then, Trust members have witnessed, amongst other events, the removal of pit shale from the south side of the track for use as road stone, so enthusiastically done that the bulldozers all but undermined the track at some points, necessitating a curtailed train ride for several weeks until the contractors put things right; then the infilling with rubbish (papers and plastic bags blowing around everywhere);

and finally the clearing of the interesting contours of the New Pit waste heaps to make a "landscaped" grassy slope after the open cast mining was finished. The rubbish infilling produced a good crop of rats and a pair of weird young passengers, who unpacked air rifles as the train approached the tipping area and began to take pot shots at the rats, Western movie style. They became quite argumentative when I asked them to stop.

The G.N. bend has also changed completely, of course. Gone are the link line, the G.N. bridge (a few readers will doubtless remember the hours spent shovelling ballast out of the bridge casing before it was demolished), the Middleton tram route which joined us just before the bridge and passed under a neighbouring arch, the sections of brick wall to the Hunslet side of the line where the old wartime piggeries had been, and the Parkside Rugby and Cricket Ground to the left of the track, where the modern warehouse/light industry estate now stands. Up on the pit heap to the right of the track stood the brick and concrete footbridge over the G.N., giving access to the old Parkside Greyhound Stadium which nestled atop the pit waste - we always called the footbridge the Cuckoo Steps. Incidentally, before leaving the G.N. I must boast of being on one of comparatively few passenger trains to use the line - a train of evacuees bound for the Lincolnshire countryside in the first flushes of the 2nd World War (we came back 2 weeks later, when Mum had noticed all the airfields, searchlight batteries and other prime targets which surrounded our safe retreat).



MEMBERSHIP NEWS

Around the skirts of this pit heap appeared a whole network of surprisingly clear streams, pumped out of the mine workings below. One of these passed through a culvert below the railway and tram tracks, flowing past some old wartime allotments and then in front of the rugby ground. The pit closed, the stream ceased flowing, the allotments became a trampled wilderness. Then, at the time of the motorway upheavals, samples of a herb were found growing wild (very rare for this herb - I think it was lovage - in our area) just north of the rugby ground. Botanical gricers came from far and wide, and pleas were made in the Evening Post not to destroy the phenomenon. The bulldozers put a great big mound of earth on top of it (the one where train and tunnel gricers love to stand now, just south of the tunnel) - ecology was not as rife then. I often wondered if the lovage affair was some kind of joke (like the 'Panorama' spaghetti harvest) or if the botanical gricers really didn't know that there had once been allotments there with, presumably, a tenant keen on herb cultivation!

From the horticultural wonders of Hunslet, the line continued its unremarkable way down to a point just below what is now the Hunslet end of the tunnel, where the branch to Robbies', King's and Clayton's left the main line via the very remarkable tram crossing, a special section of track crossing - trams N.-S. and trains E.-W. The factory branch was on a completely different alignment to the modern one, passing along the N. side of the present pedestrian tunnel position to a headshunt. North of the tram crossing, the track showed a few signs of being worked, but not many beyond the occasional blob of oil. To the left of the tram route, still our fellow traveller, a small mound somewhere about the south end of our engine shed marked the spot where an unexploded bomb fell during the War. I believe it was removed.

Our present station site was deep in weeds and thistles, with the broken crossing-gate mechanism barely showing above them. The decrepit old water column still stood beside the spur down to Moor Road. No motorway of course, and the old road system was very different: just Burton Road crossing the track to meet Moor Road (our car park entrance was the end of Burton Road). Here, the full complement of railings and big iron gates still stood, giving a sense of security to those outside as well as those inside them. Some years later, as a keen new worker at the line, I was about to walk past these gates on my way to the platform when the train, drawn by Henry, came thundering down the line. Henry's whistle blew persistently and the driver leaned out of the cab, waving. Thinking he was being nice and friendly towards a newcomer, I smiled and waved back. It was only later that I found out Henry's brakes were a bit dodgy, and he was showing a marked tendency to overshoot the platform. Still, those gates would have made me feel safe, even if I had known!

The present station site seems to be a good place to stop this wallowing in nostalgia. I'll continue my ramblings in the next issue, unless the membership demands otherwise!

Sheila Bye

MEMBERSHIP NEWS

First of all an apology for anybody who has written to me in the last six months and has had to wait longer than expected for a reply but the arrival of a baby boy at the end of August has, together with the demands of the rest of the family, made great inroads into my spare time. However, things are improving now that James is getting older and hopefully correspondence will be replied to more efficiently in future.

1986 was most successful in terms of membership with a very creditable increase of about 25% overall. What is even more pleasing is that the number of people due to renew in December who haven't done is almost nil, even amongst new members. Normally, in common with other societies, we get a fair number of new members who do not renew after their first year's subscription. Even the increased subscription rate has not found opposition.

Those members whose membership falls due for renewal on 30th June should find their renewal forms with this Old Run. As has become the custom, membership cards will be sent out with the next Old Run unless specifically requested otherwise.

Postscript The above notes were written before the appearance of the April edition of "Steam Railway". Imagine my surprise, then, to find a headline in the magazine stating "Middleton puts out SOS as membership dwindles" in complete contrast to what I have written above. It appears that a plea from Ian Smith for more working members has had journalistic licence applied and a shortage of working members has become a dwindling membership!

To put the record straight, then, membership HAS INCREASED BY ABOUT 25% but, because of the increased workload created by an increased number of visitors more working members are desperately needed to augment the loyal band of regulars who really have too much to do.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This year's AGM is to be held on WEDNESDAY 10th JUNE, 1987, and will most probably be at the Adult Training Centre, Tulip Street, Hunslet, at 7.30p.m.. Full details of the meeting, plus all relevant reports, etc., will be sent to members nearer the date.

LOCO NEWS

Easter will shortly be upon us and, no doubt, the short period of panic as we try desperately to ensure that everything is ready in time. For the moment, we are still enjoying the quiet period where everything is not a rush and can be left until tomorrow. The main problem with this time of year is that the important (and usually least enjoyable) jobs tend to get left behind in favour of the more enjoyable ones. However, progress has been reasonable, if not spectacular, and by the time Easter arrives most, if not all, of the work we intended to carry out this winter will have been accomplished.

385 Apart from preparation for winter storage, no work has been carried out on this loco and it has remained serviceable. The loco was specially steamed on January 25th for the Association of Railway Preservation Societies' visit and again on February 12th for filming work. The ashpan repairs mentioned last time are not urgent, and will be done as soon as time permits.

2003 After failing on the last day of the Santa Specials with leaking tubes the decision was taken that a partial re-tube would have to be carried out. Eventually 42 tubes have been removed for replacement. The remaining 84 tubes have had the ends beaded over in the firebox in an attempt to reduce the likelihood of further leakage. Following a successful visual examination by the Boiler Inspector work is well in hand to fit the new tubes.

54 Satisfactory progress has been maintained with the rebuild of our Sentinel and, barring some unforeseen problem this loco should be in service this year. (11 years since its last steaming). The firebox has been re-tubed and re-studded and work progresses on drilling out the many studs on the boiler. The Boiler Inspector has recommended that some welding work be carried out to rectify the wastage of the outer shell and this will be carried out shortly.

It has been found necessary to remove the front part of the cab roof because of corrosion. Replacement platework will be fitted once the boiler has been returned to the frames. New ventilation louvres have been manufactured and fitted, and from the outside, at least, the locomotive looks respectably complete. Chris Barraclough has spent many hours filling in the rough spots on the paintwork and sanding this smooth. If the present standard is maintained the finished product should look first class! Most of the major parts have now been located and the jigsaw is beginning to take shape. The one major item still to be unearthed is the regulator which must be buried somewhere in a P.M.V.!!

53 'Windle' has been taken out of service to await its ten yearly boiler examination. Present plans are for Windle to follow 'Mirvale' into the workshop, probably next winter, with a view to having this old lady back in service for late 1988, depending upon what problems are found when it is stripped down.

1882 'Mirvale' will come into the workshop as soon as the Sentinel is sufficiently advanced towards completion. A hydraulic test to normal working pressure has indicated that there should be no real problems with the boiler which appears to be in better condition than was thought. If labour is forthcoming in sufficient and suitable quantity, there is no reason why this newcomer should not be steamed towards the end of this year.

All other locos are as previously reported with D631, 4220038, 138C and 1786 being available as required.

Steve Roberts

BEING PREPARED!

Members at the yard were most surprised the other week when a large wagon turned up outside the Yard gates. They were even more surprised to learn that it was delivering 'goods' to the line. Surprise turned to absolute amazement when the driver began unloading about 3 tons of wood! All was revealed when member Dave Hebden explained that this firm were getting rid of the wood from their premises and he had hired the lorry to transport it to the line for lighting up use. Our thanks go to Dave for arranging this, although, given the appetite of the shed stove, we might need some more before the start of the season!

NEW EQUIPMENT

A 15 c.f.m. electrically driven compressor has recently been installed in the workshops to provide a compressed air supply without the need to run the large 125 c.f.m. diesel driven compressor. Whilst this new acquisition is somewhat smaller than we really need, it is ample for supplying the smaller tools such as air sander, needle gun, etc that we regularly use. We are now looking for a suitable sized air receiver (about 25 cu.ft.) to go with the unit.

Another useful piece of equipment obtained (this time by the ancient method of bartering) has been a large rivetting gun. This sort of equipment is becoming more necessary as the amount of boiler work we are being required to do is increasing rapidly.

PUBLICITY MATTERS

The editorial made mention of a couple of articles which may appear in the railway press. In fact, the April issue of "Steam Railway" published a five page article on the railway, illustrated by nine photos. This was a very good shot in the arm for the society and comes at just the right time, we hope, to influence people to visit us at Easter and later.

In June, another article will be appearing in the "Railway Magazine" for that month, entitled "175 Years of Locobuilding in Leeds". This, whilst dealing directly with the subject of the title, mentions the efforts of Middleton and others in preserving the Leeds tradition.

The Steam Railway article got a very good response from folk interested in joining us and at the time of writing two new members have joined, with about another 6 "very interested" and a further four "thinking about it". This will certainly assist the railway if even half of them join us but it doesn't remove the need for more folk to come down. One final thought - some members feel that they would have to commit themselves to the same extent as the regulars. This is not so. What we really require is a large number of members doing a small amount of work each rather than a small number of members doing it all! Yes, a very small number of members do commit most of their time to the society, but these folk do it because they want to, not because they feel they have to - although it must be said that even they would like a little relief on the western front, so to speak! So think about it and, if you can spare the odd day or so this season, give the appropriate officer a ring and he will be only too pleased to let you know where you can assist in running our line.

175 YEARS OF STEAM AT MIDDLETON

Arrangements for this event are now gathering momentum. The special tours for June 20th are now fully arranged and bookings are being taken.

The Yorkshire Evening Post building will house a special exhibition from June 7th to 21st, and the paper is likely to publish a special tabloid to commemorate the event. We are still hoping to have a joint operating weekend with Armley Mills Museum, with a special bus link between the two sites, though this has still to be confirmed at the time of writing.

Full details of all these events can be obtained from the Editor at 1 Lake Street, Hunslet, Leeds LS10 2NB, Tel. (0532) 710320.

SHOP NEWS

Following the complete lack of response to appeals for a new sales manager, Council has appointed myself and Vernon Smith to act as temporary managers until such time as a permanent replacement can be found. In effect, this will inevitably mean a deterioration in the high standards set by the Chaplins due to the fact that both myself and Vernon already have other commitments to the railway. However, we are hoping that the service to the customer will be largely unaffected and that delays in ordering stock will be kept as short as possible. Once again, we need more shop staff during the Summer and most of all we need to find a suitable couple able to take on the job of Shop Manager and do it the justice that it so obviously deserves.

For the time being, any offers of help running the shop this summer should be directed to myself at the address given, or at the line.

We are investigating introducing a new colour postcard this year, that of DSB 385, whilst also under consideration is a range of Middleton badges to replace the 'Salamanca' badge of previous years. This has now sold out and the intention is to replace it with perhaps two new badges, one depicting 'Salamanca' as before and the other depicting one of our current locos. We can then see which sells the most and then standardise on the successful badge. Other sales ideas will be considered during the season and details given in future issues of 'Old Run'.

Ian Smith

WE'RE GETTING THERE!

The recently published annual returns for the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway serve to highlight the remarkable extent of our own line's rise in popularity. The 144,766 tickets issued in 1986 were only 56 up on the previous year, a rise of .0387% approximately, compared with our own rise of almost 35% of course, our own operation is very small fry compared with the mighty K.W.V.R. - only 6,183 regular service tickets sold, BUT our own 1986 Santa Specials carried a total of 2,712 visitors - nearly ONE THIRD of the K.W.V.R.'s total of 8,600. One big difference:- their operations are carried out and backed up by a much larger membership!

Our set up at Middleton is now something to be really proud of in all aspects; the train, the station facilities and the workshop - all sheer luxury compared with the situation less than a decade ago. So why not show a little pride in your Railway and come along, with or without a few friends.

Sheila Bye

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J.K.Lee B.E.M., 71, Knightsway, Whitkirk, Leeds LS15 7BL Leeds 645424

Secretary
A.J.Cowling, 2, College Street, Sheffield S10 2PH

Treasurer
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Council Members

N.Brampton, 81, Bradford Road, Wakefield WF1 2AA	Wakefield 374630
J.Bushell, 12, Trelawn Crescent, Headingley, Leeds 6	Leeds 786282
G.Dinsdale, 24, Holt Dale Gardens, Cookridge, Leeds 16	Leeds 670892
P.Lodge, 12, Butler Road, Harrogate, HG1 4PF	
A.McKenna, c/o Middleton Railway, Moor Road, Leeds LS10 2JQ	
P.Nettleton, 117, Southleigh Road, Leeds LS11 5XG	Leeds 707288
S.J.Roberts, 7, Hayton Wood View, Aberford, Leeds LS25 3AN	Leeds 813626
C.Rogers, 71, Kirkstall Lane, Leeds LS5 3JZ	
A.Russell, 35, Long Fallas Crescent, Rastrick, Brighouse HD6 3TN	Brighouse 714725
I.B.Smith, 1, Lake Street, Hunslet, Leeds LS10 2NB	Leeds 710320
K.Smith, 16, Shafton Lane, Holbeck, Leeds 11	Leeds 435174
V.M.Smith, 16, Shafton Lane, Holbeck, Leeds 11	Leeds 435174

Membership Secretary
Mrs.A.Roberts, 7, Hayton Wood View, Aberford, Leeds LS25 3AN Leeds 813626

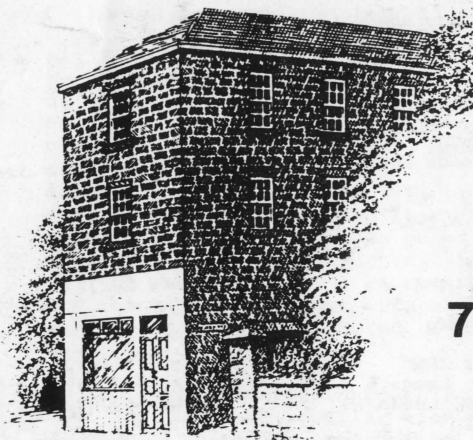
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Council Secretary
I.B.Smith, 1, Lake Street, Hunslet, Leeds LS10 2NB Leeds 710320

Publicity Officer
J.K.Lee B.E.M., 71, Knightsway, Whitkirk, Leeds LS15 7BL Leeds 645424

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Tel. PUDSEY 579639**