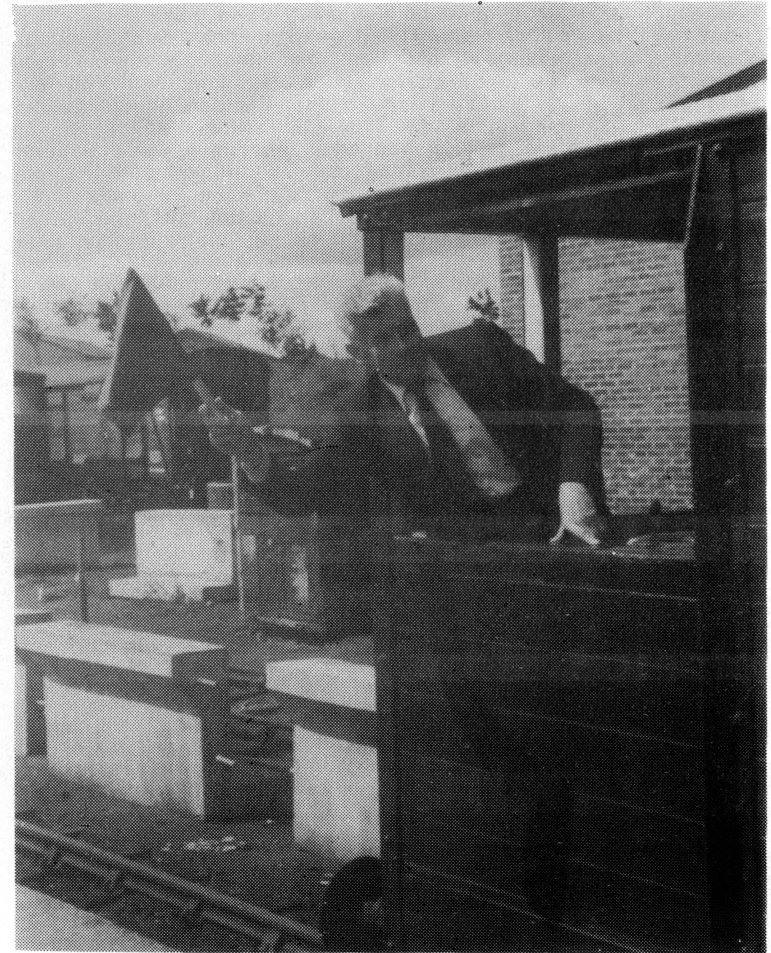


# THE OLD RUN



**JOURNAL OF  
THE 1758 MIDDLETON RAILWAY  
LEEDS**

The Old Run Summer 1985

**50p**

# The Old Run Summer 1985

Cover Picture: Founder Chairman Fred Youell flags the first all-line tour away from Moor Road on Saturday June 15th

S.J.Roberts

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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 September 1985.

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

## Editorial

1985 is the 25th Anniversary of the formation of the Middleton Railway Preservation Society and it could reasonably be expected to be celebrated in style. Unfortunately, a large section of the membership would not appear to agree with this. Our AGM was very poorly attended indeed, whilst support for a number of celebratory events at the line has so far been very poor indeed, despite a great amount of publicity beforehand. A case in point was the series of all-line tours on 15/16th June. Not one tour ran anything like full, and members were conspicuous by their absence, apart from one or two notable exceptions. It really does appear that the membership of the Trust is totally apathetic about the line and its future. What is the Trust Council doing wrong? What does the membership want the railway to do? How can we interest YOU, the member, in our activities? These are the questions which must be answered if the railway is to continue to expand, for without your active support we will surely close down, sooner or later.

On a happier note, those who did attend the All-line tours enjoyed themselves immensely and all went away much pleased with the events. The most common comment I heard on the Sunday, when I was driving, was that "Your people look after us far better than others" which was, I feel, a suitable tribute to the hard work put in by those members who flagged crossings and spent days beforehand fettling up the track in order to allow trains to run at all.

Our major event for 1985 is the steam gala, to be held on Sunday 15th September this year. This already features vintage vehicles, fire engines and the like, whilst on the loco front, we hope to have three working steamers. P2003 and DSB385 are certainties, with EB53 a strong possibility if current boiler repairs are successfully carried out. This event will be very popular and is not to be missed.

## The Name's the Same

Older members who have not been to the line for some time may well recall that most of the tracks in Dartmouth Yard had names such as Back Road, Middle Road, Dead End and Headshunt. It will therefore come as no surprise to learn that the tracks at Moor Road have also acquired names. The surprise does come, however, when it is learned that the same names are now used here too.

The layout at Moor Road comprises the main line and a loop, access to which is gained by a single turnout at the Burton Road end, and a crossover at the Motorway end. The loop is extended at the extreme end of the site at that end, to form the 'Headshunt'. A turnout from the Headshunt leads on to the 'Middle Road', the nearer track of the shed, which in fact ends several feet before the current building is reached. It will ultimately form a storage siding when the shed is extended. A second turnout immediately in front of the 'Middle Road' one gives rise to the 'Back Road', which currently enters the shed, and in fact now emerges through the other side. The function of this road is somewhat different to the original Dartmouth 'Back Road', however. The new siding's function is to allow access to the shed, the space outside the shed being used to park the CCTs, flats and tank wagon, plus the shed pilot, HE1786, universally known as 'Pea'.

At the present time, this layout is in use but within the next few months a further two sidings will appear. A turnout has already been installed at the Motorway end of the Back Road to allow it to be extended as far as the boundary fence to form the 'Dead End'. The purpose of this is to ease the shunting of this road. Once installed, a large diesel will be able to clear the parked vehicles in one shunt, hauling them into the 'Dead End'. Once this is done, our tiny shed pilot will then be able to move whatever locos or stock are needed to be moved into or out of the shed before all the stock is moved back into position to release the big diesel again. The second new siding is already in the process of being excavated, and this is a second platform road. This will allow us to park the playcoach and a steam loco at the platform for visitors to admire and actually use in inclement weather. (The coach, not the steam loco!).

A third and final siding remains to be added at a later date. This is the extension of the loop at the Burton Road end. When the old hut is finally removed to a site further down the yard, the loop will be extended along that site, in front of the newly constructed water tower/oil store. The area on the Burton Road side of the tower has been concreted to provide the base for a coal pile to be constructed, and the purpose of the new siding is for the preparation and disposal of steam locos in traffic. It will be provided with an ash pit for this purpose.

When complete, the depot layout will provide a much needed extra storage siding for locos in immediate use, display siding in the station plus the extra headshunt, all of which will make operating the site that much easier. For all that, it is nice to note that links with the old Yard, however tenuous, are being maintained in the names used for its sidings. Incidentally, the name used for the short headshunt going across Burton Road to Tunstall Road is also unchanged - it's still Whittaker's Siding!

Ian Smith

## Revenge of the Beast

Members will no doubt recall an article in a recent Old Run about our Borrow's well-tank, "WINDLE" giving a somewhat jaundiced view to the locomotive's performance since first steaming in 1976.

Never being a loco to allow herself to be criticised, "WINDLE" has hit back in no uncertain terms of late, by being featured in some of our new sales lines! She is the subject of the first of a series of postcards which will ultimately depict all of our working steam locos (DSB385 will be the second) and has proved an extremely popular choice. The cards sell at 12p each and are going well.

"WINDLE"'s second venture into commercialism has been her appearance on our new mugs, selling at 75p each. These are standard sized coffee mugs with a line drawing of "WINDLE" on one side and the railway's address on the other. Apart from the fact that someone has equipped the loco with a 'dart' fastening to the smokebox door as well as the lugs she actually uses, the drawing is very good and the mug is also selling.

It seems that "WINDLE" is determined to grab centre stage and keep it, since the firm of Waddingtons are now producing stamps with "SALAMANCA" and "WINDLE" on too! Still, anything which publicises the railway is good, even if it is the Beast!



## Silver Jubilee 1985

The weekend of 15/16th June was certainly special for most members of the Trust - our 25th Anniversary. For a select few of us, those who organised and staffed the event, it was a particularly eventful weekend.

Planning had started some months before, when Chairman Joe Lee suggested the idea of inviting VIPs to the line to see progress. After some discussions the formula was arrived at: All-line tours on Saturday and Sunday plus sherry and beer for invited guests each afternoon. Souvenir tickets were produced, along with invitations for the VIPs, press and TV/Radio were informed and we sat back to await the successful weekend.

There is a saying which goes 'The best laid plans of mice and men.....' and during the couple of weeks preceding this event, it appeared that rats had got at the job with only single numbers being prebooked on each all line tour. Added to this was the unexpected high cost of the souvenir ticket production, which further increased the gloom and despondency amongst some of the regulars at Moor Road. On the Friday evening before the event, we all contemplated on the disaster which we were sure was about to befall us.

Saturday 15th June dawned fine and clear, with a good forecast. Arriving at the railway at around 8 am, I found P2003 well on the way to steam, fireman Andy McKenna being busily engaged in cleaning the loco, aided and abetted by one of our junior members. A few slides were taken whilst engaging Andy in conversation before I set about opening the various gates on site to allow passage of our trains. To my surprise (and probably the surprise of many others that morning!) many more people turned up than we originally thought, and although we could have carried twice the number, both trains were full enough to prevent our incurring a loss on operating.

The actual itinerary for the tour trains was to propel to the Moor Road turnout, reverse down to Balm Road, straight up to Middleton Park and thence to Clayton's Yard, before returning to Moor Road. I was flagman for the Saturday tours, and driver on the Sunday, the former duty giving me an idea of what would be in store on the following day. The running of the Saturday trains was faultless, the crew providing run pasts etc. almost to order and when each train returned to Moor Road, many of the participants went out of their way to thank the crew for such an enjoyable trip.

For me, the highlight of the day was the appearance of our former chairman, Fred Youell. Even after 15 years, Fred's enthusiasm for Middleton is as strong as ever and after looking a little shell shocked at all the changes since his last visit in 1981, Fred was soon at home on the railway which he did so much to create and make secure all those years ago. One of our junior members (i.e. one who had never met Fred) was most surprised when said gentleman walked up to the GN curve where he was resleepering, and asked if he would like the services of a permanent way inspector! Fred assisted our member for a while before returning to Moor Road even happier than before. Our member was simply amazed that a guest could walk up there and roll his sleeves up just like that - but he did not know Fred! Another typical Fred gesture occurred as the first train left Balm Road to return to Moor Road. Radio Leeds had sent their car to record this historic train leaving the old loop and whistling as it crossed Beza Road. Listeners heard the loco whistle, chug away towards the level crossing and then a very odd whistle as the announcer said the train crossed the road. In fact, the loco didn't whistle, but Fred saved the day by doing one of his steam loco impressions! What made the event more amusing was the fact that the announcer genuinely believed that the Peckett was doing the honours!

All passenger services were well patronised due to the publicity from Radio Leeds' broadcast and the local paper mentioning the event in its "What's on" column. All in all, Saturday was deemed to be a success despite the disappointing number of participants on the all-line tours.

On the following day, I reported to the yard at 07.30 in order to prepare my trusty steed for duty. My fireman had already reported for duty and was busily engaged in getting coal and other essential supplies (paper, wood and matches!) ready. Today, however, was to be even more interesting as it had been decided to steam DSB 385 for the occasion. In addition, JF4220038 was started and coupled to the weedkilling train and sent up the line at 08.00 in order to complete the whole line before services started. The departure of the weedkiller left the yard devoid of members other than the traincrew and so I was left with the task of lighting up 385 and keeping an eye on both locos as they raised steam. This was most enjoyable, particularly as 385 herself has rarely been steamed and is something of a novelty to most drivers and firemen at present. P2003 on the other hand can simply be left to get on with things herself - she has been in service so long that she could run the service without any human help at all!

By 10.15 that morning, P2003 had plenty of steam and was fully oiled round whilst 385 was almost ready for steam despite being lit up as late as 09.00 - a very fast steamer indeed. The weedkiller arrived a little later and we soon completed shunting operations to allow 2003 to collect her train, fill up with air for the brakes and then await customers.



As had happened the day before, we found several more customers than earlier bookings had predicted, but even so the train was hardly half full. Despite this, those who did come were a fairly happy bunch who appeared to enjoy the adventurous ride they were given. Setting off from the platform, we propelled as far as the first turnout, then began reversing towards Moor Road. Here, flagmen stopped some amazed motorists whilst we crossed the road with much whistling. A photo stop was held at the bottom of the Balm Road branch before we returned, crossed the road again and proceeded up to the top of the line. From there it was back to the Dartmouth Branch, for me the first time since 1981 that I'd taken a train into there. On leaving Dartmouth, we proceeded back to Moor Road, reversing at the 'Top Point'. I then took P2003 back to the platform, and disembarked the passengers before shunting out of the way to allow the weedkilling train to move into the loop from its storage place of Whittakers siding.

We ran a second tour at 12.30 followed by the usual half hourly service until I was informed of a change in plan. The original intention was to use 2003 on the service, with 385 running up and down the loop. She would then couple behind 2003 to double head the 16.00 and 16.30 services. I was now informed that the old loco had been fitted with the portable airbrake system normally fitted to the diesels and would take over the entire service from 15.00 onwards. Thus it was that as soon as we arrived back from the 14.30 trip, we uncoupled from the train and moved into Whittakers out of the way whilst 385 backed out of the loop and waited on the road before being allowed to couple onto the train. They were not allowed to couple onto the train because a ceremony was taking place on the platform. Historian Eddie Doherty, who has done so much to help the Trust, was being presented with a plaque and those involved with this didn't appear to want us to couple 385 to her train during the ceremony. Obviously, some people don't understand railway operating procedures! Coupling 385 could easily have taken place without disturbing the ceremony but our's is not to reason why ..... Eventually, 385 was coupled up, then I could bring 2003 into the loop to stand in light steam as reserve in case anything should happen to 385. In the event this was unnecessary and I dropped the fire at 16.00, by which time 385 had run two uneventful trips, and by dropping 2003's fire, I could have a drive of 385!

Climbing on to the footplate of 385 prior to working the 16.30, my first job was to check water and steam levels. There was plenty of water in the boiler, whilst the manometer read 6 Kilograms per sq.cm. This pressure gauge is calibrated in metric, and as it's called a manometer, then pressure on 385 is simply known as Xmen! Full working pressure is 10 men, or 140 pounds per square inch. Controls are similar to those on other locos, with a number of additions for the steam bell and other equipment used when in service in Denmark. A good bout of firing got the fire going nicely, steam pressure rapidly rising to near full pressure as I was given the 'Right away' by guard Keith Hartley.

There are two whistles on 385, both operated by rods from the cab roof to the boiler backplate instead of a chain as on P2003. A quick blow on one of these, and I set off. The cylinder drains are unusually on the fireman's side, so he had to operate these for me. The regulator on 385 is easier to operate than 2003's whilst the longer buffers enable the coupling to be screwed up tight and prevent the jolting that is so obvious when operating with all the other steam locos. This meant that 385 very slowly and smoothly set off from the platform and it was hard to believe that the loco was moving at all. This impression is further heightened by the fact that she makes very little noise from the chimney at all, being very like a traction engine in this respect. As we continued through the tunnel and up the line, I was struck by the riding qualities of our latest addition to working stock - she rides beautifully with none of the bumps and jerks of 2003. This is no doubt due to the longer wheelbase of 385 compared to the other locos. One minor irritation was my insistence in blowing the whistle for our various crossings etc. and instinctively moving the left hand towards the cab roof for the whistle cord only to find it wasn't there! I'll get used to those levers eventually! At the top platform, I found that the brake on 385 has to be handled differently to P2003 in that it must be applied gently rather than firmly, and the loco glided into the platform quite easily. Coming back down, the steam brake needs to be handled in short bursts rather like a vacuum brake, in order to allow smooth deceleration. All in all, DSB385 is quite an addition to our working locos and judging from passenger reactions will prove very popular indeed.

Everyone who came to the celebrations was impressed with progress made, and we believe that the spin off will be greater attendances in future due both to good publicity and the impression we made on VIPs and public alike.

## Landscaping

Members Olive Chaplin and Keith Hartley have been busily improving the appearance of our Moor Road halt by planting flowers and shrubs in the gardens in front of the shop. These gardens make a welcome sight when in full bloom and are a credit to the railway.

Elsewhere, the YTS have been planting a large number of various hawthorn and other prickly shrubs to form a fence from the Motorway tunnel up to the existing fence (or what is left of it). The hope is that if they are left for long enough, they will form an impenetrable barrier within five years. The problem, of course, is that the local yobbos like nothing better than to tear down and smash up everything in their path... At the present time, however, a fair proportion of the fence has taken and is growing well, so we may be onto a winner with this idea.

## Lightning tourist strikes Middleton...

A very rare event occurred at the Middleton Railway on Tuesday June 18th - The Editor was rendered speechless! The reason for this remarkable event was the appearance at Moor Road of a taxi. From within stepped a young man who dashed up to the Editor and asked where the ex BR locos were. "I can't stay long" he said "My taxi's got to get me back to Leeds to catch my train in half an hour". To say I was stunned would be an understatement. Gathering my wits a little, I asked him to enlighten me about his quest. It turned out that he had come all the way from Southampton(!) to see the Humberside Loco Group and Middleton, but had missed his train somewhere and was consequently pushed for time. He produced his Ian Allan Combined Volume and 'Railways Restored' and asked where all the locos were. I then had to give the quickest guided tour I've ever done, with this guy underlining each loco as he saw it - in red of course! He then tore back to the gate, got into his taxi and sped off in the direction of town. Well, it takes all sorts, so they say!

## Special Trains

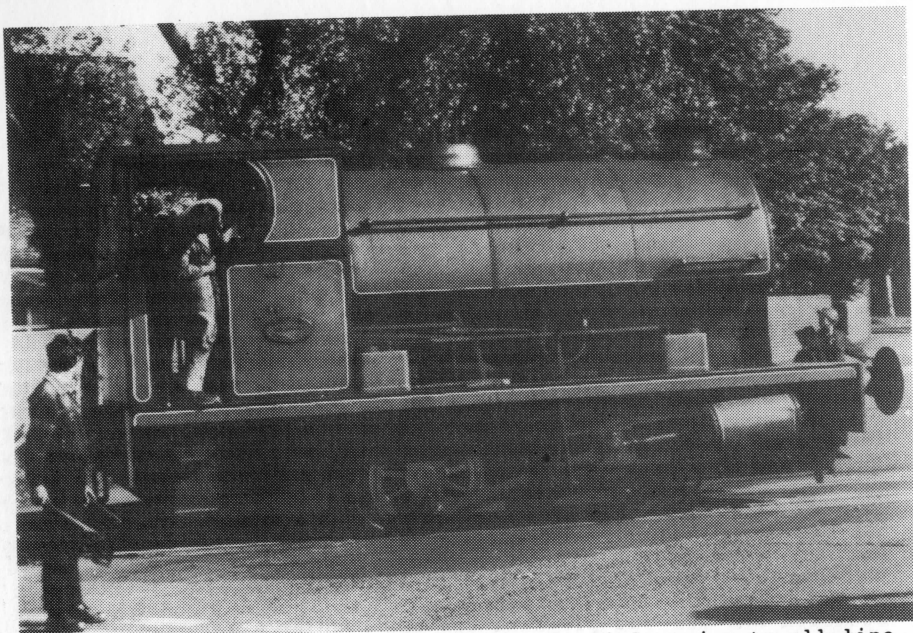
The railway has run a number of special trains of late. On June 10th, we had School specials, where 300 excited youngsters were carried in a three hour period. Driver Dave Hebden taped 'THOMAS' flags and windmills to the Peckett's tank which delighted the children. The crew also noted £ signs flashing in shop manager Chaplin's eyes as he sold out of flags and windmills because of this enterprise! Local historian Eddie Doherty came down for the day to show the children around, and all who came had a thoroughly enjoyable day. In the evening we entertained a Methodist Church group with an all line tour and guided tour of the yard. Again, they appeared to enjoy the outing, and the loco was finally put away at 22.00 that evening after a fairly strenuous day.

The following Tuesday, 25th June, we entertained the York Railway Circle. These folk had visited once before and were so impressed that they wanted to come again. A little persuasion on the part of our intrepid traffic manager secured the use of DSB385 for the occasion and all was prepared for the evening's entertainment.

The basic itinerary was for an all line tour, but with photostops etc. as this was an enthusiasts' train. Your Editor was guard for the trip, and was rather busy throughout. We had a number of run pasts throughout the tour and even an unscheduled return to the platform when the injectors didn't want to pick up. Judicious use of the hosepipe to cool things down solved that problem and no further problems were encountered. The evening was rounded off by giving footplate rides to those issued with passes and all who came expressed their thanks for a good evening's entertainment.

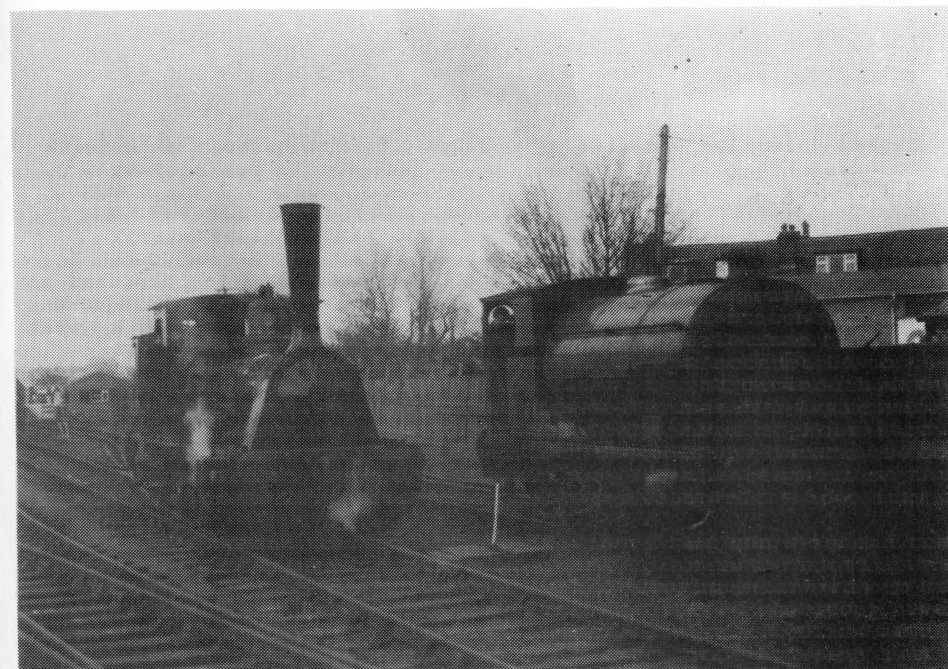
We hope the York Railway Circle will visit us again, when we should be able to give them a third steam loco! If any member is a member of another group and thinks he might be able to interest them in hiring one of our trains for a journey around the line then please get in touch with traffic manager Vernon Smith at the address given on the inside back cover. We can usually accommodate all types of party given a reasonable amount of notice.





P2003 crosses Moor Road during clearance trials prior to all-line tours, Sunday 9/6/85

M.R. Photographic



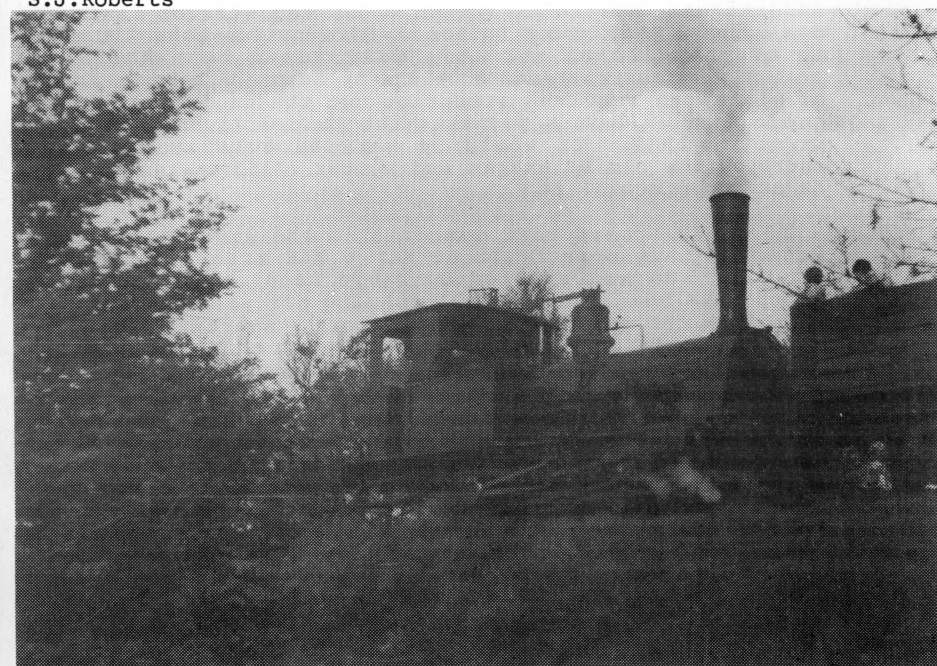
DSB385 and P2003 in steam during steam tests for the former, Easter Sunday 1985

S.J.Roberts



Local historian Eddie Doherty, as the Middleton Miner, poses alongside more modern motive power, 16th June

S.J.Roberts



DSB385 poses on G.N. curve, Easter Sunday 1985

S.J.Roberts



## Loconews

On the surface it appears that little has been done to the loco fleet with one notable exception. In fact, much has happened to a number of locomotives in order to restore them to working order even though the appearance of these locos hasn't changed a great deal.

P2003 Once again, this loco is the mainstay of the passenger fleet and continues to give good service.

EB53 This loco is now in the shed for boiler attention and should be in service by August.

DSB385 Much work has been expended on this machine, culminating in a steam test on 30th April. This and subsequent steamings have revealed remarkably few problems and the loco performs quite well on passenger trains. The loco is currently running in unlined black livery, but will undergo complete repainting to lined DSB livery during the winter months.

S8837 This locomotive is next in line for overhaul now that 385 is complete. All the defective tubes have now been removed from the boiler, which itself has had some repair work undertaken. New tubes are on order and will be fitted in due course. The outer boiler shell requires some attention to the top flange and this will again be undertaken, probably by contractors, in the near future. A large amount of platework requires attention but the engine unit is in good order. It is hoped that the loco will be in working order by 1987. It would be very nice to see the loco carrying the old BR emblem and number 68153 instead of LNER 59 or Departmental 54.

HL3860 It would appear that comments in the last issue of the magazine have borne fruit as No. 6 has been adopted by a group of MRA members led by David Lundy. This intrepid group have been hard at it, cleaning off years of dust and dirt from the underframes and generally smartening the loco up. She certainly looks much better for this attention and the lads are also doing a number of minor technical jobs under supervision.

HC1309 Remains in store but has also benefitted from the oily rags of the MRA working party with the result that the old Hudswell looks much smarter than before.

1310 This loco remains in store, awaiting a decision on its future restoration site.

P2103 Also remains stored, awaiting a suitable agreement before restoration can begin.

TH138c Remains in traffic and is a regular performer. Owner Peter Nettleton has completely repainted the footplate and the two sideskirts on the loco.

JF4220038 Is also in traffic without problems. Sister loco JF4220029 has now been withdrawn for use as a source of spare parts and work has commenced to scrap this loco.

HCD631 This loco is also in regular use. It was withdrawn in June for a complete repaint hopefully to be complete before diesel day on 6th July. The new livery will be a shade of blue, slightly darker than that currently carried.

HCD577 "MARY" has remained unserviceable with attention being given to the transmission and how to overcome the associated problems. A transmission brake has been fitted and at the time of writing requires a couple of other parts before the loco can be tested. It is hoped to fully repaint the loco in July.

HE1786 Sees sporadic use as shed pilot and is fully serviceable.

JF3900002 Is still unserviceable, but restoration is expected to commence shortly.

LMS7401 Rarely appears in these pages, but has recently been withdrawn from exhibition at the NRM. At present we don't know what plans the NRM have for the loco, but we will keep members informed if she goes back on display.

Crane 5820 Has recently been re-greased and had a minor overhaul to its transmission.

## Stephenson, a Middleton correction

In 1813, an early visitor to the wonderful new locomotive engines at Leeds was an engine-wright from Killingworth colliery, George Stephenson. So impressed was he, that he went home and began to develop ideas which resulted in the building of his own first locomotive in 1814. This encounter must be well known to most readers of our history, as would be the evidence submitted by Stephenson as to the safety of the Middleton locomotives after the 1818 explosion. In between these two events, however, Middleton had a less well known connection with Stephenson, in the form of the owners of the estates here, the Brandling family of Felling and Gosforth, who had inherited Middleton through an advantageous marriage more than a century before, and who had been responsible for the planning of the 1758 waggonway to Leeds.

During Stephenson's early working life, he had experience of the disastrous results of using ordinary lanterns and candles as pit lights. Death by suffocation or explosion was a constant threat, due to pockets of various gases trapped within the coal-seams, and many attempts had been made to replace naked flame as a source of pit working light, including the use of phosphorescent decayed fish-skins! Following a serious fire at Killingworth in 1814, Stephenson set himself to find a means of producing light without endangering life.

A safety lamp had been devised by a Sunderland doctor a year previously. It fed on air passed through water by a bellows, and put itself out if flammable gas entered, but the contraption was too unwieldy for widespread use. In 1815, a committee, formed in Sunderland to investigate mine explosions and possible means of prevention, invited the great Sir Humphry Davy to consider the problems, not realising that the little-known Stephenson was already working on them. His methods, incidentally, caused occasional panics among the miners when he was observed holding out lighted candles towards known gas-leaks! Despite still being busy with the problems of steam locomotion, his work on a safety lamp was sufficiently advanced by August 1815 for him to have a drawing prepared of the device. He later described it as having "a chimney at the top of the lamp, and a tube at the bottom, to admit the atmospheric air, or fire-damp and air, to feed the burner or combustion of the lamp". The tube had a slide at the bottom "to admit such a quantity of air as might eventually be found necessary to keep up the combustion". During the same month, Davy visited pits near Newcastle at the request of the Sunderland committee, and it was another 2½ months before his paper 'On the Fire-Damp of Coal Mines, and on Methods of lighting the Mine so as to prevent its Explosion' was read to the Royal Society. By this time, Stephenson already had a lamp made to his own design and in experimental use at Killingworth. Samuel Smiles' 'Lives of the Engineers', which supplied most of the information for this article, contains an account told to Smiles in 1857 by George's son Robert, of the first trial of the lamp.

After partly boarding up a section of gallery into which gas was escaping, so as to form a greater build-up, Stephenson lit his lamp and entered the danger zone, taking the lamp to within inches of the gas-blower. The flame increased momentarily, then flickered and went out. After bringing back his witnesses from the safe distance to which they had withdrawn, he repeated the experiment several times.

During the next few weeks, Stephenson tried out various diameters of tube using a home-made gas apparatus in his cottage. Local gentry with an interest in mining were occasionally allowed to watch; among them was William Brandling of Gosforth. One experiment nearly blew the roof off the cottage.

On the 20th November, 1815, Stephenson ordered a sample of his third design to be made by a Newcastle plumber, the plan and specifications being sketched out for the plumber's clerk at a local pub. Samuel Smiles mentions that Robert Stephenson had shown him the original sketch which "still bore the marks of the ale". The new model was being tested by the 30th November, but Davy had already presented his first lamp to public inspection on the 9th of that month, apparently unknown to Stephenson.

It was regrettable that the invention of such a vitally important device should have been marred by the subsequent controversy over who could claim the merit for it. Stephenson appears to have beaten Sir Humphry by some 19 days in the actual production and presentation of a first working example, but his idea of how it worked was that of a simple man, untutored in formal scientific theories, whereas the great and famous Sir Humphry understood the correct principles on which their lamps worked. It was inevitable in those days of poor communications that a celebratory work should become better known than that of an only recently literate working man. In 1831, a biographer of Sir Humphry wrote what was the opinion of many of the great man's friends and admirers: "It will hereafter be scarcely believed that an invention so eminently scientific, and which could never have been derived but from the sterling treasury of science, should have been claimed on behalf of an engine-wright of Killingworth, of the name of Stephenson - a person not even possessing a knowledge of the elements of chemistry."

This was apparently the opinion of the majority of the colliery owners of Durham and Northumberland, as in August 1816 they held a meeting to raise a subscription to reward Davy for "the invention of his safety-lamp". However, when the meeting changed the wording of the proposal to "the invention of the safety-lamp", the Stephenson camp immediately asserted George's claim. After much controversy, £2000 was presented to Sir Humphry as "the inventor of the safety-lamp", and a paltry 100 guineas given to Stephenson in consideration of his own work. Naturally, the controversy did not end there! At this point, Mr. Brandling of Gosforth again enters the story, encouraging Stephenson to publish a statement of the facts of his claim. When the joint efforts of George and Robert failed to produce a well set out

account, Mr. Brandling himself improved its literary qualities, and it was soon published in the local journals.

In 1817, another meeting was convened, this time to propose a reward for Stephenson. With Charles John Brandling in the chair, those present resolved that George was entitled to a public reward for having discovered the fact "that explosion of hydrogen gas will not pass through tubes and apertures of small dimensions, and having been the first to apply that principle in the construction of a safety-lamp". C.J.Brandling was one of the subscription committee, and donated 100 guineas to the fund, and John Brandling and partners gave 50 guineas. The subscription finally totalled £1000, part of which was used to purchase an inscribed silver tankard, which was presented to Stephenson with the remaining cash at a public dinner in the Newcastle Assembly Rooms. The colliers presented him with a silver watch, purchased by their own subscription fund.

However, the proof of the pudding is in the eating, and it was believed by many that the "Geordy" lamp was far safer in use than the "Davy". Smiles cites the accident at Oaks Colliery, Barnsley, in 1857, when gas suddenly burst into part of the pit. Both Geordy and Davy lamps were in use there; the former extinguished, automatically and almost immediately, but the latter became red-hot, burning the hands of several users.

It is a sad irony that a man who too often has been lauded for "inventing" the steam locomotive should have been denied too often more than local fame for the first introduction of a miners' safety-lamp.

POSTSCRIPT Incidentally, John Bushell in his booklet 'John Blenkinsop of Middleton' mentions that that gentleman also devised a safety-lamp, in use by 1825, of which it might be interesting to learn more.

Sheila Bye

## Community scheme ends

After two years the M.S.C. scheme, in conjunction with the Leeds Community Programme, finally came to an end on May 17th. Most of the recent work has been tidying up and fettling the jobs previously carried out. It is amazing just how much rubbish accumulates on site as, even though we have removed six full skips, there is still plenty left!

## MIDDLETON RAILWAY TRUST LTD (Limited by guarantee and not having a share capital)

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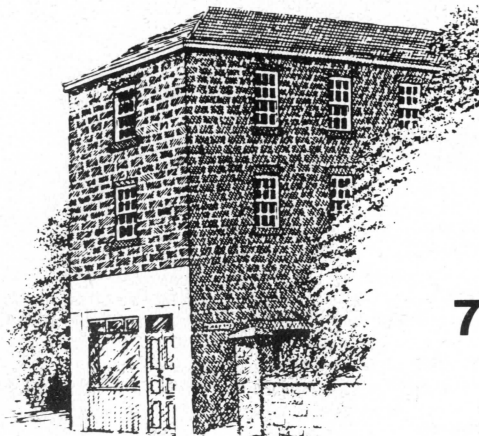
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