

# THE OLD RUN

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*The Editor welcomes contributions relating to the interests of the Trust and the operation of our and other Railways, especially if Leeds built equipment is in use. Items for publication, including images (please send in resolutions higher than 1Mb) are acceptable in any format and may be sent via email or by post.*

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### Editorial

When I volunteered to take over the Editorial role on retirement from paid work I thought that a quarterly magazine was not too onerous a task - but three months soon pass by and it's time for another one. The Santa Season has been and gone and appears to have been at least as successful as 2024 was, thanks to all those who helped and pulled out all the stops - as usual - to make sure every train ran and everyone enjoyed themselves. It also hopefully sets the railway on a firm footing for the 2026 season. This will also be here sooner than we think. If you can spare any time to help in any way then our volunteers would really appreciate it. Even running a duster over exhibits in The Engine House one afternoon would help, you don't necessarily need skills, just the time is enough.



As regards the magazine I have tweaked the font size and some layout issues this time following some feedback. If anything is not to your liking then please let me know. I can't fix something if I don't know it's broken. My stock of articles is also on the low side so if you have anything to share please let me know or drop me an email to discuss. The press date for the next issue is 1st April (insert joke of choice here) but you don't have to wait until then to submit things. I hope you enjoy this issue in the meantime.

***Ian Dobson***

**Front cover:** *On Saturday 13th December 2025 No.6 heads for the M621 motorway tunnel with a Santa Special Service.*

*(Photo: Andrew Johnson)*

**Back cover:** *The new platform lamps at Moor Road make the station seem far more welcoming. Seen here during the post Santa shunt on Saturday 20th December 2025.*

*(Photo: Roger Walton)*

## From the Chairman

First, I will start by wishing all members of the Middleton Railway Trust the very best possible 2026.

I am pleased to report that 2025 ended on a positive note with another very successful Santa Special season. The importance of the Santa Special Season in ensuring that the Railway's finances at the year end are on a sound footing cannot be overstated; it is the Railway's most important fund-raising activity.

The Railway once again provided a very special experience for our visitors – young and old - as evidenced by the smiling faces of visitors as they departed, and their words of thanks. Although the Trust has stuck to its policy of providing a traditional family experience with tinsel and twinkling lights for many years, in 2025 we were very much 'on-trend' which bodes well for the 2026 season. We will continue to market our Santa Specials as a "Reet Yorkshire Christmas" with all the positive connotations that implies.

The Santa Special Season is in many ways the best example of the Middleton Railway operating as 'one railway'. Without every department and division of the Railway playing their part, we would not be able to provide the Santa Special experience we promise our visitors. Just think what the Santa Specials would be like if the track were to be unavailable because it was not safe to run on or there were no steam locomotives able to haul the trains or coaches to ride in. Just think



*'One Railway' in action - present wrapping in full swing on 4th November 2025. Volunteers from across the railway (and beyond) come together in a flurry of gifts, wrapping paper and Sellotape!*

what the visitor experience would be like if no one bothered to clean the Display Hall and Café, test all the lights and then put them up with the decorations, or if there were no one to serve mince pies and refreshments to visitors or buy presents for the children? The Santa Special Season works because the Railway's volunteers pull together to make it happen and because they trust each other to deliver their part and repay that trust year in, year out.

*Hawthorn Leslie No.6 looks suitably festive behind the platform shelter at Moor Road, ready to haul another day of Santa Specials. Meanwhile, the shop staff, Santa and his elves are sorting gifts, tickets and refreshments. The guard is checking the train and the diesel crew are shunting the yard. A fantastic team effort to deliver an enjoyable and quality experience for our visitors.*

*Photo: Geordie Brown*



As ever, a huge vote of thanks goes to all those volunteers who played their part in making the 2025 Santa Special season so successful. This includes not just those who worked 'front of house' in the cafe and shop, but those who took on the demanding roles of Santas and Elves, those who welcomed visitors to the Railway, issued tickets, marshalled the visitors and led them to the trains and answered their queries and those who emptied rubbish bins and wrapped the children's presents. It also includes those who worked behind the scenes to promote the Santa Specials, to manage the finances of the event, to provide and crew the trains and to carry out all the other administrative and other tasks necessary to make the Santa Specials happen. Hopefully all those involved enjoyed themselves and all know that they played their part in ensuring that the Railway's finances were in good shape at year end 2025.

Christmas 2025 is now part of our past and we can look forward to the 2026 Season. All being well the season will see the return to traffic of 'Slough Estates No. 3' after a thorough overhaul. It should also see the entry into traffic, for the first time since it arrived on the Railway of Hunslet built diesel 6981, resplendent in its 'as built' two tone green livery with red striping.

The year will also feature a range of events, some old, some new. The year will feature A (third) Taste of Yorkshire and Classic Car Sunday which will be expanded to include a display of cars at Park Halt, plus stalwarts of our events programme including the Community Day. Steam Punk Market and The Model Railway Exhibition. A new feature which will be trialled in 2026 is 'Creation

Station’ – a programme of craft workshops which will be held on specific weekends throughout the season and hopefully will engage the attention of young visitors with creative activities linked to their visit to the Railway.

The year 2026 marks the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the death of one of the greatest of the Georgian Engineers – Matthew Murray. To mark this the Trust is planning an exhibition on the Display Hall Mezzanine Floor centred on the work of Matthew Murray and which will feature **four** scale models of the Murray Blenkinsop designed steam locomotives which commenced work on the Middleton Railway in 1812. This will be the first time that four of the 1812 design locomotives have been seen together - albeit only in model form - since 1818. The full size four became three when, as recounted in Sheila Bye’s history of the Middleton Railway, George Hutchinson, the driver of ‘Salamanca’, refused to release the safety valve whilst firing up. The inevitable result was that the boiler burst, thus ending his life and reducing the number of steam locomotives employed by the Railway.

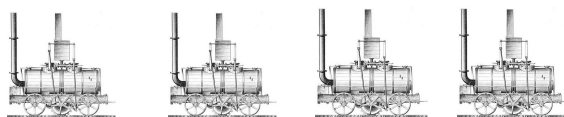
In addition to the exhibition, a programme of three afternoon talks about the work of Matthew Murray and his legacy are planned for Saturday afternoons in the summer months, and an event will be staged to name Hunslet Engine Co. built diesel locomotive 6981 ‘Salamanca’ in commemoration of the Middleton Railway’s very first locomotive. 6981 was chosen for this honour because it represents the final new design Leeds built locomotive and thus neatly bookends a story which started in 1812 with the construction of ‘Salamanca’

Details of all the events and activities planned for 2026 are to be found on the Trust’s website and social media platforms, and all Trust members are encouraged to participate in them. Other activities planned for 2026 include completing the overhaul of coach 1867, repainting in its ‘as built’ livery John Fowler built locomotive 4220033 and upgrading the Museum documentation to bring it into line with Arts Council England requirements for Accredited Museums.

All of the above is in addition to manning the shop and café, crewing trains, routine servicing and inspection of locomotives and rolling stock, cutting back lineside vegetation, maintaining the track, paying the bills and the myriad of other tasks necessary to keep the Middleton Railway operating. Each of the various tasks and activities is necessary for the survival and development of the Railway and they are all dependent on each other: without crews, trains do not run; without the money from commercial activities, rolling stock and locomotives cannot be maintained; without being able to offer a train ride, there is little to attract visitors to the Railway; without publicizing the Railway, few people will know the Railway exists. There is one Middleton Railway, and all the different departments and sections have to work together to ensure the survival of that one Railway.

Looking forward to seeing many of you during the 2026 season either working on the Railway or just visiting your Railway and enjoying what you have helped to preserve.

*Charles Milner*



## Obituary – Jim Lodge

The Middleton Railway is saddened to report the death of former Chief Mechanical Engineer (CME), Jim Lodge, at the age of 85 in January this year. Jim was an outdoor engineer for British Rail and joined The Trust in 1964, becoming Civil Engineer the following year and CME upon the resignation of Derek Rayner a few years later.



Jim's day job with British Rail (BR) was as a foreman in their outdoor machinery department, maintaining all kinds of equipment including lifts and coaling plants. Indeed, by the time he retired he was effectively in charge of all such work over quite a wide area. This meant that he had a huge amount of experience of keeping old machinery working, and (particularly in its early days) the Middleton Railway had a great need of such experience! He was very much a "Hands on" maintenance man and somewhat old fashioned compared with today's standards.

Very much a character, he used to purchase a Lambretta scooter every year or so, and do absolutely no repairs or maintenance and then, when ready to sell, he'd clean it up and get a new one. Around the railway he had a saying "Jim is King!" and, with Peter Nettleton alongside, he tended to rule the roost in Dartmouth Yard – we younger members were always found holes to dig and bits to clean rather than anything meaningful for quite some time! One of his BR duties was maintenance at Healey Mills marshalling Yard, near Wakefield, where he tended to the retarders on the hump. Every so often, the oil in these would be changed and Jim used to have the waste oil transferred, at no charge, to Dartmouth Yard, where it became known as JCO – "Jim's Clock Oil". Some of us older hands still refer to lubricating oil as "JCO" to this day! Dave Hebden tells another story of Jim working on the bearings on Henry De Lacy II, which was jacked up in Dartmouth Yard. Dave brought a friend down, who was at the time training as a Clergyman and Jim was amazed that a man of the cloth knew all about scraping loco bearings! He hadn't been told this chap was a former engineer!

He resigned from the Trust in November 1977 following a visit from an official who been very critical of the condition of what little workshop machinery we had, and had made recommendations for improvements that Jim was convinced were gold-plated to the extent of being unworkable. He therefore felt that he could not continue to take responsibility for having to try to operate under such a regime, and so resigned. He went on to be a musician in his beloved jazz world until last year when his band disbanded.

In those early days, the main focus was on keeping locos running under quite difficult circumstances. We had no covered accommodation, no pit and not much of a workshop, only the infamous "Bog Hut". Jim's resourcefulness kept locos running in this environment and we should never forget his contribution in those difficult years.

***Ian Smith***

## News from Moor Road

What appears to have been a successful Santa season is now behind us and we are able to relax for the next three months. Well, not exactly, there is an inevitable long list of jobs to that need to be done before the start of next season and many of these can only be done when we are not running trains.

### **Hawthorne Leslie 3860 of 1935 'No.6'**

The last Old Run related in some detail the work that had been carried out on the locomotive's regulator in order to cure a persistent leakage of steam through it. It would have been good to report a successful outcome but, after a successful test once the loco was back in service, the regulator was noted to be passing once more, albeit not as badly and not on every occasion. It is quite common for locomotive regulators to not shut properly when the second (main) valve is opened and there are well-known practices to deal with this, such as fully opening the regulator and slamming it shut. These have all been tried with no success so it looks like we will just have to live with it as long as it doesn't get too bad.



No.6 was used for most of the Santa services and once they were over it was then drained and the coal bunker emptied as part of the winterisation process as it is not good to leave steam locomotives with water in them for long periods, especially in freezing conditions. However, all this had to be hurriedly reversed when it was found that Sir Berkeley was a failure and No.6 was the locomotive used on the New Years Day services. It has now been winterised, once more. There are no plans to do any significant work over the shutdown period and it will be kept serviceable for use at short notice if required.

### **Manning Wardle 1210 of 1891 Sir Berkeley**



Sir B has spent the last few weeks on display in the Engine House. However, it has become a bit of a tradition to use this locomotive on New Years Day so after Christmas Day it was shunted out and into the running shed to be made ready for steaming. Because it had not been used for three months it was deemed sensible to give it a steam test. This initially proved to be satisfactory with everything working as it should do. However, when the smokebox was being cleaned out at the end of the day

a wisp of steam was noted around the joint between the main steam pipe and the cylinder block. The regulator was opened to check this and it was obvious from the amount of steam issuing from the joint that there was a problem, either with the joint or, far worse, with the cylinder casting. It was obvious that the loco could not be used for New Years Day and No.6 was hurriedly put back into service.

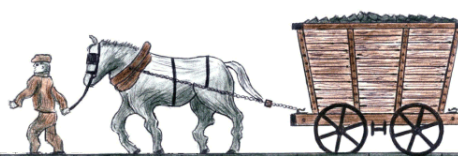
The steam pipe has since been removed and, fortunately, the problem was found to be with the joint, a large portion of it having been blown out. The joint faces were cleaned up and a new joint made and fitted. This is no five-minute job as, to get the steam pipe out, it is also necessary to remove the steam pipe elbow and the blower pipe, all of which also then need their joint faces cleaning and new joints making. Once all was reassembled the boiler was filled with compressed air and the regulator opened to test things. Although all initially seemed to be Ok, application of a leak detector spray showed that there was still some slight leakage so everything will have to be removed again and another attempt made. We are currently considering other means of jointing materials rather than the Novus 34 sheet jointing that we generally use.

### Sentinel no.68153



The Sentinel has spent most of the last three months on display in the Engine House but was moved into the workshops to create a bit of space in the Engine House. The steam brake valve was removed in order to ascertain why it wasn't working as intended. What is happening is that, when the operating handle is moved, nothing happens until it has moved most of the way with the brake only being applied for the last part of the handle's travel. This is perplexing us because it previously worked satisfactorily in that respect. We overhauled the valve last winter, as previously it was found to be passing

steam to exhaust in the 'off' position but nothing we have done should have any bearing on this current problem. After dismantling once more and not being able to find any obvious reason it was decided that the simplest solution would be to fit a spare brake valve that we had. An initial test under compressed air showed that it was leaking by quite badly, not surprising as we have had it in store for some 60 years and it was second hand when acquired, so this had to be dismantled and everything cleaned up. Once it had had the necessary TLC, it was tried with compressed air and found to work satisfactorily. It just needs testing under steam now, something that remains to be done.



## Hunslet 2387 of 1941 'Brookes no.1'

Although working satisfactorily, the leakage of steam and water through the fireman's side injector was becoming significant so this was removed to allow it to be stripped for assessment. The steam valve, clack valve and shut-off valve were all stripped out and ground in. The seat of the shut-off valve was also removed for examination as it was suspected that steam was passing along the screw threads that hold it in position. These were given a coating of steam seal in the hope that this would provide a fix. On re-assembly and fitting there was some improvement but it is still far from perfect. The injectors on Brookes have never been good in terms of leakage and they have now been away for professional overhaul on three occasions. It would be good if they could be replaced but nobody now makes a suitable backhead combination injector and they are very much in demand so we are unlikely to pick up a spare from anywhere.



Brookes was used during the first week of the Santa season, which was four days due to running school Santa trains. It then had a 'B exam but was relegated to standby duty as No.6 did the rest of the Santa trains.

Winter work planned will be the investigation of the steam leak in the smokebox which is probably due to corrosion of the cylinder block. Hopefully, it will be nothing serious and the loco will be able to see out the rest of its boiler 'ticket' which will be in 2027 unless everything remains satisfactory and an extension can be agreed with the boiler inspector.

## Hudswell, Clarke 1544 of 1924 'Slough Estates no.3'



The last Old Run said that the boiler had been lagged and a start had been made on fitting the boiler cladding. The locomotive came to us with no crinolines which are basically hoops onto which the cladding sheets are fitted. It is not unusual for smaller locomotives to have no crinolines and there was some debate as to whether we should make some. However,

in the end it was decided to not do so and retain the status quo. Well, not exactly, as we decided to fit joining plates at the top instead of simply overlapping the two sheet which form each hoop of cladding. This meant that the cladding sheets had to be shortened slightly and was not a simple task as the holes for the clack valves and steam dome had to remain in the same relative positions. Once the cladding plates had all been fitted, they were given a coat of green primer followed by a coat of gloss.

It was then time to fit the cab but before this was done the cab came inside and two side bunkers were given a coat of paint as it was deemed to be much easier to do so. Dropping the cab into position was a quick and simple affair and this allowed us to weld back on the steel angle at the bottom which had previously come loose due to corrosion. We hadn't done it previously as we wanted to ensure that all the bolt holes were properly aligned. We did find that we had to remove the safety valves to fit the cab, though, which now means that they will have to be re-set.

*An unusual view of 'Slough'. Photo: Geordie Brown*



It was then time to fit the tank, another relatively easy job with the aid of the crane although we found that we could not get the existing bolt holes in the smokebox to properly line up and some of them had to be opened out with a boilersmiths reamer. We suspect that smaller bolts had previously been used to overcome this problem. We then came across another slight problem. The tank had previously been bolted to the cab bunkers by means of short lengths of angle iron which were welded to the tank bottom. When the bottom had been replaced these angles had also gone and new ones were welded on as replacements. However, we had only measured up

one bunker, naively assuming that they would both be the same width and this turned out to be wrong so one of them will have to be modified. The tank has also benefited from the application of a coat of Belzona 5811 which is a two-part epoxy designed to give permanent corrosion protection to tanks. Because of the

price (c£250 a tin) we have only done the bottom part of the tank. To do the whole tank would have cost well over £1,000 and as the upper parts are in better condition, we decided it was not worth it.

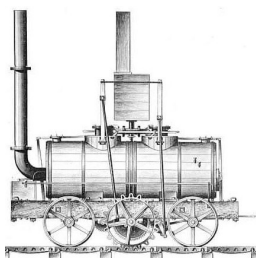
We have been giving much thought to the vacuum system. When it was originally fitted it seems that those doing so had simply started at one end and screwed everything together as they went along with no couplings that could be undone if there was a need to do so. This meant that the only way to remove it from the loco was to either repeat the process in reverse or cut the pipes where necessary, which we did. We wanted to introduce joints into the pipework so that sections could be removed, when necessary, especially within the cab area. At the same time, it was decided to invert the Hugh Phillips vacuum ejector to prevent water from getting into the vacuum system, something that pipe corrosion showed had been happening. This led to a complete re-design of the vacuum pipework in the cab area which we hope will be a significant improvement and allow things to be dismantled when necessary.

When the boiler was re-united with the frames it became evident that there was a slight lean to the chimney when viewed from the front and it was decided that we really ought to do something about it so the chimney was removed and rebuilt. Whilst doing this we realised that when the base was attached to the existing holes in the smokebox it was not in line with the blastpipe. We initially thought that we had simply got it the wrong way around but rotating it did not solve the problem. Further investigation showed that the blastpipe was not concentric, as the drawing showed that it should be. Rather than make a new blastpipe we decided that it would be sensible to just plumb the chimney to the existing blastpipe and move it forwards slightly. It is now about 1½" further forward than the drawings show that it should be but we are sure that no one else will notice, especially as the smokebox is nothing like the drawings, in any case!

Work currently progresses on the fitting of the various fittings and pipework. We had originally hoped to have a test steaming before the new year but have failed to make that. It should have happened by the time you read this, though, subject to the weather.

### John Fowler 4220033 of 1965 'Harry'

No further progress, other than the exterior paintwork has been rubbed down preparatory to repainting.





### **Peckett 5003 of 1961 'Austins no.1'**

Available for service and used as required. It had a 'B' exam (6 monthly) during December.

### **Brush/Beyer Peacock 91 of 1958 'D2999'**

The sanding valve problem has been attended to and the loco is available for service, as required. It had a 'B' exam during December.



### **Hudswell, Clarke D1373 of 1965 'MD&HB No.45'**

Currently available for service. It had a 'B' exam during November. Not previously reported is the fact that the upper part of the cab interior was sanded down and repainted during the summer. Diesel locos left outside generally suffer from condensation forming on the inside of the roof and this does the paintwork no favours.

### **Hunslet 6981 of 1968**

To ease our workload with regard to painting (there is a lot to do) we have decided to have the loco professionally painted and, having received quotations, the work will be done by Pioneer Diesels. As previously reported, the loco will be turned out in the same colour scheme as it originally left Hunslet in. One problem that we have to overcome before this work can be done is to empty the fuel tank as the level gauge has a very slight leak on it which prevents this area from being painted. It is only a slight leak as there is still 125 gallons of fuel in it. Unfortunately, it cannot be used in other locos as it is at least 12 years old and diesel goes off with time. We have a plan; all we have to do is implement it and this should happen shortly.



*Whilst on the subject of Hunslet 6981 here's a photo from the archives of 6982 which was delivered to British Leyland at Longbridge in the same livery as 6981 was delivered to Immingham. The two tone green with red lining will look smart on 6981. If you are impatient to see a colour version then feel free to colour this picture in...*



**Hunslet 1786 of 1935 'Courage' (Left)**

Currently on display in the Engine House but remains available, if required.

**LMS 7051 'John Alcock' (Right)**

Currently on display in the Engine House. It is still awaiting the necessary



time and manpower to investigate the cylinder head problem.



**Hudswell, Clarke D577 of 1932 'Mary' (Left)**

Like LMS 7051, this locomotive is on display in the Engine House awaiting shed space and time for the repairs to the cooling system.

## Hudswell, Clarke D631 of 1946 'Carroll'

Available for traffic if required but on display in the Engine House. It probably needs to see some use as, when it was recently started up, it was found to be very difficult to engage both forward and reverse and the drive gears.



## Carriage and Wagon Notes

Coaches 1074, 2084 and 2223 are currently available for service with brake 1074 and saloon 2223 forming the set in use. The balcony brake 2084 was additionally used as the 'quiet coach' on Santa trains when we advertised this as an option. However, when we do this, we currently have to provide a member of staff to ride in the coach to comply with the Railway Safety Regulations.

### Coach 2223

This coach has been used throughout the Santa season. The south west door started to stick in the closed position due to the timber swelling. This has been cured by the removal of some timber shims at the hinges which were originally fitted because the door had a tendency to come open when the coach was in motion. It may be that these will have to be replaced in the summer when the timber framing dries out. If so, we will have to come up with a better solution.



*1867 in The Workshop on 3rd January 2026. The removed beading and the replacements are on the floor to the right.*

### Coach 1867

Perhaps inevitably, removal of the rotten beading on this coach revealed more rot, so much so that the decision was made to remove all the beading and, this in turn revealed more rot. This is disappointing because we had originally decided on using pitch pine for the framework in order to minimise this happening. Except for a couple of places, all the affected timber has been treated with Ronseal Total Wood Preserver followed by Ronseal Wet Rot Wood Hardener. The couple of pieces not treated have been replaced completely and these

have also been treated with preserver, as has all the beading, whether re-used or new. The treatment of the timber is now all but complete and work has started on replacing the beading. In addition to this, all the body paintwork has been sanded down ready for repainting. It is still expected that the coach will be finished by the start of the 2026 running season



### **Dogfish ballast wagon DB3993425**

This has recently been giving problems with the brakes being stuck in the 'on' position and needing 'persuasion' to get them to release. This is probably entirely due to lack of use as the vehicle spends much of its time sitting in a siding. The vehicle was recently placed over a pit to better establish why this was happening. The cause was found to be a very stiff brake shaft where the vacuum brake cylinder is connected

to brake linkage. Getting to this is a challenge in itself but we have managed to free it off and lubricate the bearings even though, like most traditional freight vehicles, the brakes are not designed to be lubricated.

## **Around and about**

### **Volunteer numbers**

Volunteer numbers continue to be fairly static although there has been a slight upturn. Indeed, there were 20 volunteers working in the Engine House taking down decorations on the 3<sup>rd</sup> January.

This contrasted with just four people helping with track maintenance and one person working in the workshops on that day.



*Trackwork in progress on 3rd January on the Moor Road Yard turnout.*

Track maintenance is probably the one area where we need to significantly improve volunteer input, especially during the winter months when we have both the opportunity and need to carry out this work.

## EMERGENCY ALARM SYSTEM

Work continues on the fitting of the new alarm system to the coaches with 1074, 1867 and 2223 now completed. If 1867 re-enters service at the start of the season it will enable us to run three coach trains once more without having to have a member of staff riding in the third coach, which is the way currently agreed with the Railway Inspectorate.

## FUME EXTRACTION SYSTEM

We have recently purchased a mobile fume extraction system for use when carrying out welding work. In recent years scientific evidence has shown that exposure to all welding fume, including mild steel welding fume, can cause lung cancer and the HSE has significantly increased their expectations regarding the control of mild steel welding fume, however little is carried out. The new equipment is now in use and must be used by those carrying out any welding activities, however inconvenient it is.



## WATER TANK

The water tank adjacent to the running shed (*pictured left*), which effectively supplies all our locomotive water. Is starting to look tired and in need of some care and attention. In addition to this, the pipe which feeds the water supply at the running shed recently sprang a leak due to corrosion and is currently isolated.

As a result of these issues it has been decided to lift the tank down from its supporting structure for a repaint and any other remedial work that is

considered to be necessary. The tank just sits there year after year and people just expect locomotive water to be available without giving much thought as to how critical to our operations this is and what we could do if it or its associated pipework sprang a major leak. Without it, we have no means of quickly watering our locomotives. It takes about one hour to fill an empty locomotive tank simply using mains water so we could not simply rely on this for operational purposes. Improving this supply would require a bigger supply from the mains than the  $\frac{3}{4}$ " one that we currently have.

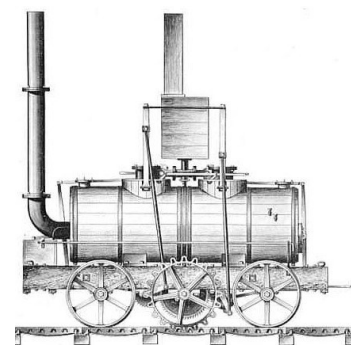
At the same time it is intended to fit a trace heating system to the pipework as we are vulnerable to frozen pipes in winter and this can effectively stop us from operating steam locomotives.

The tank itself is probably going on for one hundred years old and was originally fitted to a timber framed wagon and was owned by La Porte Acids in Hunslet. It was acquired by the Middleton Railway in the 1970's when Robinson & Birdsall secured the contract to dispose of La Porte's fleet of tankers - see photo below.



**Above:** How it began: John Alcock (in blue undercoat) propels two La Porte acid tankers up Claytons curve from Parkside (note the Leeds tram in the background). The wagon adjacent to the loco (No.98 in the La Porte fleet) was the one that our tank came from. These two tankers were the first of quite a few that travelled over the railway for scrapping. We were allowed to keep No.98 because it had a timber frame. We also acquired three sets of frames which became our flat wagons, used for Permanent Way work. These have now all been scrapped, being replaced by two ex Hunslet Engine Company flat wagons and a pipe wagon, which came from the Llangollen Railway. (Photo: Steve Roberts)

**Below:** How it's going: The removed tank has just been needle gunned in The Workshop on 17th January 2026. (Photo: Michael Cox)





*The water tank is generally more than adequate for our steam locomotives but in July 2015 it was overwhelmed during the Hunslet 150 Gala by the simultaneous presence of two Austerity Saddle Tanks. Given that these required 1,200 gallons each, not quite 3 times that of 'Sir Berkeley', it's not really surprising! The visitors were 19 (HE3818/1954) and 66 (HE3890/1960). Photos IRD.*



## Shop Notes

If you want to know what Santa has in his sack as he works the train, it's this: cough sweets and throat lozenges. The backdrop to the Santa Specials this year was (at least in part) illness. As of the last minute, all was ready: the decorations, the fairy lights, tickets, presents, mince pies - every possible thing. The last minute came and went. It was at this point that ill fortune struck, knocking holes in the roster (which was already rather tight). Other factors haplessly rendered the situation even more difficult. You will, dear reader, be relieved to learn that those shop-side volunteers still standing (and willing) - a gallant band, if few - rallied to the colours; the show (with the help of the cough sweets and the throat lozenges) went on.



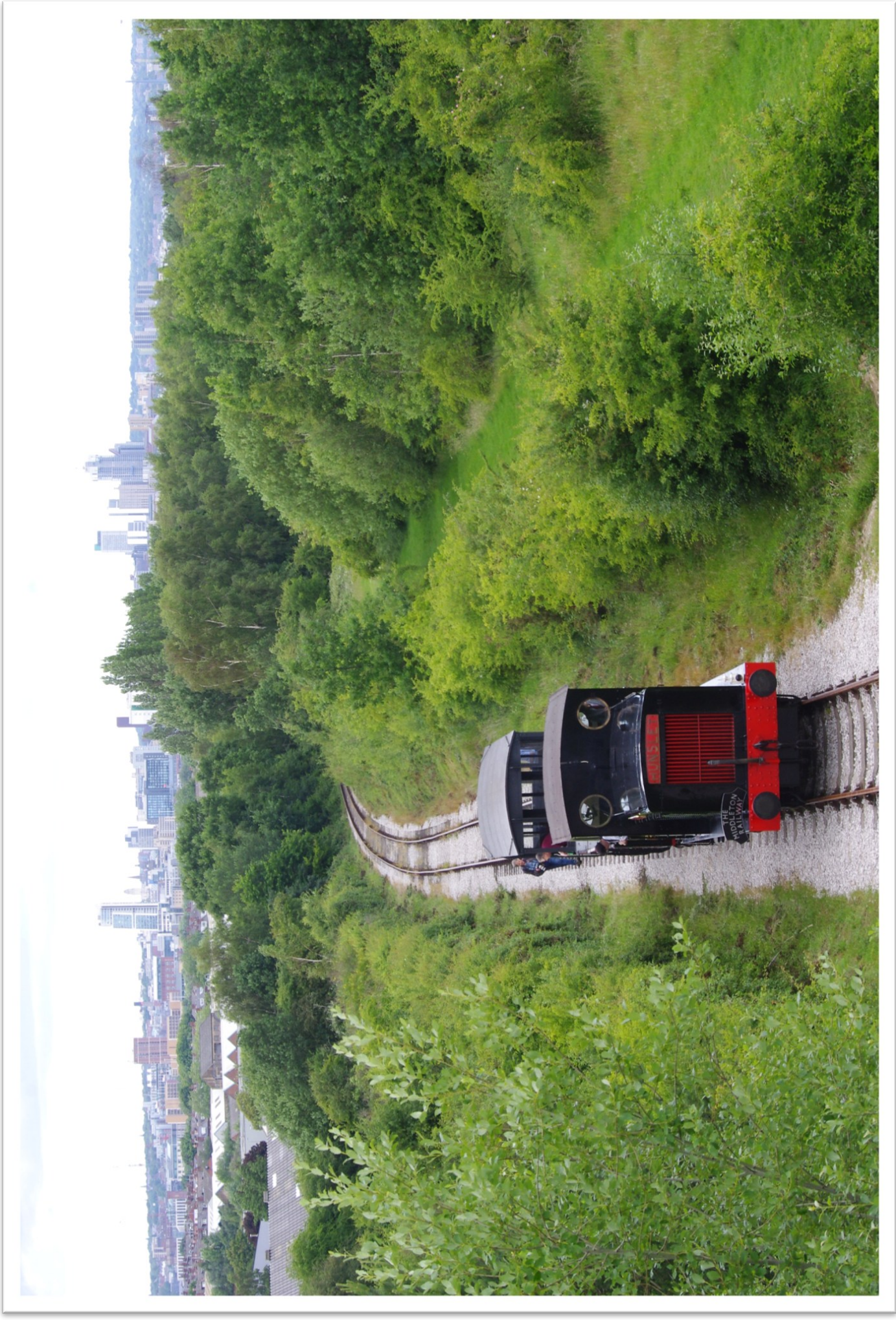
The visitors seemed happy. We will soon know definitely one way or the other because an innovation this year was the deployment of a feedback questionnaire. Covering a side of A5, the questions asked visitors to rate their experience. Results? Perhaps they'll be in the next issue... (*They will be more than welcome - all content is appreciated, Editor*). Bookings were up on last year. The difference was not great but nevertheless discernible. The interesting point here, a contributor remarks, looking up from his Financial Times, is that consumer spending in total ("it says here on page 2" he explains) has been going down since October - fewer meals out, less shopping in general, more money being saved. Middleton Railway, however, bucked the trend - hurray! Furthermore, Sue's tombola did even better than 2024 - hurray again!

To serious matters. Few who are not involved in the event appreciate the central role played in the Santa Specials by the docket. It is the foundation stone of the entire event. Every party gets one from the railway. What, pray, is this docket? I will endeavour to explain: It is a bundle composed of three elements: (1) a print-out of the party's booking form, (2) the boarding tickets (no tickets, no trip), and (3) a laminated card for each child - that is, for each child's present. These must, of course be of the correct gender and age; the scope for error is, well, there isn't any. Every party coming on a Santa Special - every booking, needs a docket to take on to the train.

Every entry in the whacking great electronic database of bookings thus has to be provided with its individual docket. When bookings approach capacity, as they did this year, there would be roughly a thousand bookings and hence roughly a thousand dockets to assemble. These all need to be grouped by train service (of which there are, over the 8 working days, 64) and then arranged alphabetically. This is a lot of work!

Next season our entertainer, Penny, will launch her 'Creation Station' in the youngsters' area, so get your marker-pens out!

**Richard Stead** (text and self portrait)



## Sixty years on...

If you cast your mind back to the last issue of The Old Run (issue 268) you may recall a full page photograph on page 23 of 7051 and the Swansea & Mumbles Railcar heading towards Moor Road roughly on the site of the recently upgraded foot crossing. This photo was taken by Chris Thornburn on 25th June 1960 from the GN Bridge and a smaller version is below. Whilst looking for another photo recently I came across a photo (opposite) which I took from the John Charles Approach road bridge on 20th June 2020. For the benefit of older members John Charles Approach is effectively an extension of Old Run Road from Belle Isle and leads to the South Leeds Stadium.



The significance of the train in the 2020 image is that it was a one off run to commemorate 60 years since the first volunteer operated Middleton Railway services. Sadly, the COVID Pandemic was in full swing (I cycled to the bridge - daily exercise and all that...) so observers were few and the planned celebrations never happened. It is still interesting to compare the two images taken 60 years apart and from similar viewpoints. The skyline of Leeds is a clear difference but it is also interesting to note how green the 2020 image is. We tend to assume that recent years have seen green spaces built over but this doesn't seem to be the case here - although there is a motorway hidden behind those trees!

I will leave it to others to ponder further and if anyone can provide similar 'then and now' photographs I would love to hear from you.

***Ian Dobson***



## More news from the Railway - and elsewhere!

*If you were around the Railway in the 1990s you will have doubtless come across Ian Hodgson and Martin Plumb on the footplate and it was always a pleasure to work with them. I was delighted to hear that they both visited the Railway recently to deliver a gift from Ian. Martin said..*

“Ian Hodgson had offered to donate a nameplate and a builder's plate for display at the Railway and today turned out to be the agreed delivery day. Ian delivered them by taking them on three separate trains from Chapel-en-le-Frith to Woodlesford and then used the boot of my car for the final leg from there to Moor Road Station.

We were met by Mick Jackson and John Holmes, and I managed to get some pictures of the handover. I took four pictures, one of which was subsequently deleted for being blurred. The remaining three range from smiling people with a bin in the background to people saying through gritted teeth, "Just take the picture please Martin; these are starting to get heavy!" and no bin in the background.”

*I have used the photo of Mick Jackson and Ian Hodgson with the plates and partially cropped the bin (above right). We are grateful to Ian for these additions to our collection and I'm sure they will be admired for years to come. Ian himself provided some further details of the plates and the loco that carried them as follows..*

Manning Wardle locomotive 1912 of 1917: When the Locomotive was withdrawn and scrapped in early 1963 one nameplate 'Ellen' and one worksplate were obtained by Ivan Savin-Jones, latterly of Northwich. Following Ivans death in 2015 the two plates passed from his estate to my care.

It was built by Manning Wardle and Company at the Boyne Engine Works at Leeds in 1917. It was classed a 15" special, inside cylinders were 15" x 20" and the wheel arrangement was 0-6-0 with a saddle tank . It was dispatched from the Boyne Engine Works on the 28th February 1917 to the South Leicestershire Colliery Company at their at their Snibston Colliery where it spent all its working life.

Looking to the future and wishing the plates to have a secure future I have decided to donate the plates to the Middleton Railway Trust, Leeds, for display in the Museum collection.



There is a photograph of the locomotive credited to the SLS on page 124 of volume 2 of the book 'Locomotives Built By Manning Wardle and Company' by Fred W. Harman.



*Just too late for the last issue I was told that some new display boards had appeared in The Engine House to further educate our visitors in the important role Leeds played in supplying coal locally and locomotives all over the world.*

*This a key part of the Railway and essential to engage visitors and keep them on site for longer.*

*Photo: Ian Smith*

Whilst we were busy with the Santa Specials in December we received great news from the Heritage Railway Association (HRA) that two of the Trust's submissions for the HRA 2026 Annual Awards have been shortlisted for the Awards. These are:

**1. Innovation of the Year Award:** Fran Bailey and her team's work to develop the role of the Almoner. The HRA citation reads: *"The Almoner role exists to contact former volunteers who, for a variety of reasons are unable to be active on the Railway and to make them still feel welcome in the Middleton Railway family. The formal role comes from combining a number of pastoral roles which existed unofficially at the Railway into one function co-ordinated from a central source – instilling a feeling of goodwill towards the Railway".*

**2. Diesel or Electric Locomotion Award:** Geordie Brown's work to lead the restoration to as-built condition of HE 1786 'Pea' and to research, write up and publish the history of the locomotive. The HRA citation reads: *"Hunslet No. 1786 built in 1935. This early diesel locomotive has been restored following decades of use. The work has included producing brake blocks and body panels, overhauling the engine and repainting in as-built livery. Restoration at the*

*Middleton Railway was conducted in parallel with research into the locomotive's history and that of its owners, Alton Brewery, which culminated in publication of a history of the locomotive and the Brewery".*

Both Fran and Geordie and their teams are to be congratulated on their work being short listed for these prestigious awards. I'm sure that you will join me in wishing Fran, Geordie and their teams success at the Awards ceremony on March 7th.



*Andrew Johnson drew my attention to, and provided a photograph of, the new development on the site of the Tetley Brewery. It is now being developed as:*

*“A 6.6 hectare neighbourhood on the former Tetley Brewery site at the heart of the Leeds South Bank. The centrepiece of the scheme is a 2.3 hectare urban park, with the new quarter providing around 15,000 m<sup>2</sup> of active cultural and retail uses with some 85,000m<sup>2</sup> of employment space, a 400 bed hotel and around 850 residential units.*

*The concept embraced and exceeded the city's ambition for park land in its developing of the Southbank area by making a linear park which will extend the*

*urban pattern of the city southwards, bringing social benefit through amenity and at the same time provide the setting and character of a new urban quarter. The scale and continuity of the urban forms give definition and a sense of enclosure to the park.”*

*There are a couple of points of interest here, firstly that the path Andrew photographed (above) is meant to represent the Railway that once existed across the site - which originally carried coals to the River Aire. The second is that 'Aire Park' represents a rare leisure venue on the South Side of the City that we could potentially work with...*

*Perhaps we have been looking in the wrong direction for an extension - Aire Park via Crown Point Retail Park anyone? I am joking here, but it must be a development to keep an eye on in future for any partnership opportunities, surely?*

## Letters to The Editor

*I should know better than to ask questions in photo captions - particularly when the photographer themselves reads them. So, in answer to the question posed on page 29 of the last issue in relation to the photograph shown right David Hebden writes...*



The photograph of Len Cole on the Mann tractor was the 1967 Gala. There are also photographs of the sentinel lorry pulling down Claytons pavilion!

*There are indeed David, and I have chosen these two of your photographs to share from that event. I would very much like to see the risk assessment for this 1967 Gala attraction - I suspect it was very brief and along the lines of "shall we? Yes". It seems to be a Foden rather than a Sentinel lorry but I'll assume it only happened once...*



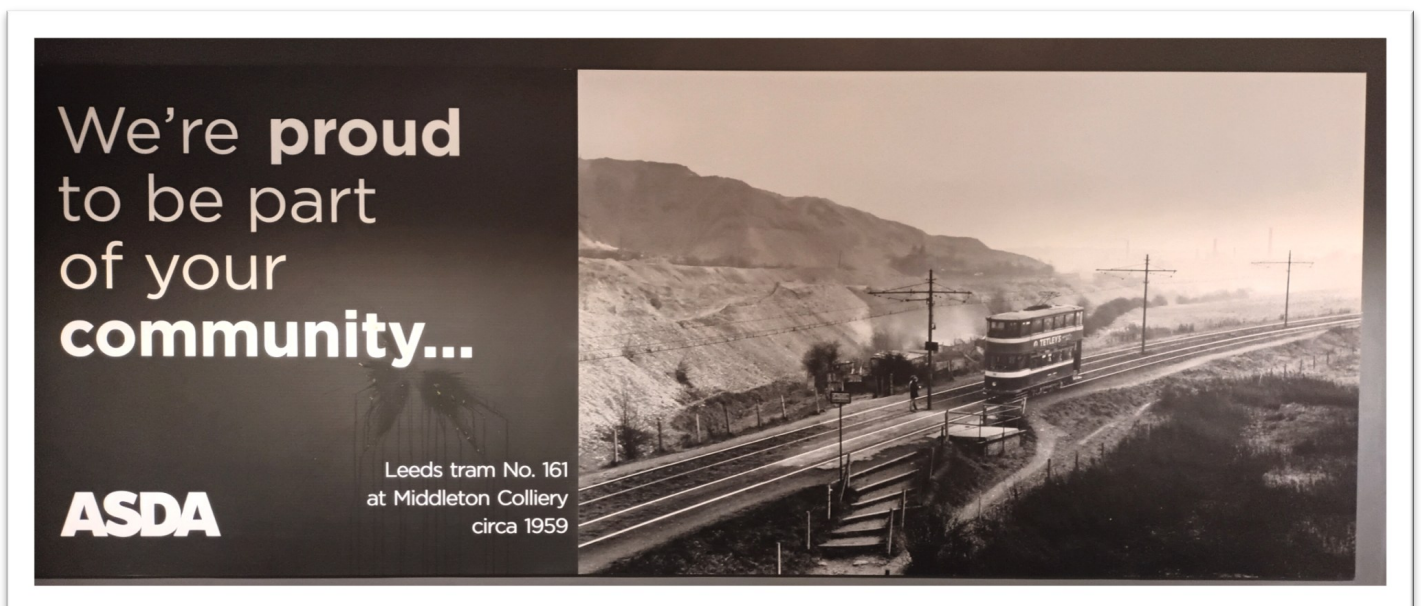
*Different times indeed...*

*Gordon Bell got in touch and provided both an interesting photograph and some food for thought - which has been passed on...*

I called in at Middleton Asda today to do some shopping. I spotted that over 60s could get soup with a slice of bread and butter for £1 whenever the cafe was open. Whilst consuming this I saw the attached rather fine photo on the cafe wall. The words claim that Asda supports the local community.

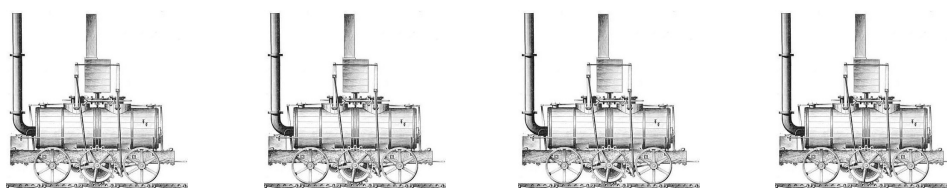
There was plenty of space on the same wall for an MRT display. I get the impression that there are plenty of residents in the Middleton/Beeston/Hunslet area unaware of the railway.

Is it worth a try, even a possible link with Asda?



*My curiosity is aroused by the reference that the photograph is taken at "Middleton Colliery" as I can see no sign of a colliery personally? Those steps are very distinctive though and I look forward to someone who can pin down the location in time for the next issue - any takers please?*

*Gordon also suggested I draw members attention to the 'Leeds Engine Builders' website ([www.leedsengine.info](http://www.leedsengine.info)). This is run by Middleton Railway volunteers Andrew Johnson and Kris Ward and is an excellent source of information for anything related to Leeds Builders (and not necessarily locomotive builders). I can heartily recommend it to Old Run readers and suggest you take a look at the multitude of information, including some local walks, available on it.*



## Railway Connections

Whilst watching a YouTube video showing enthusiasts excavating Victorian Bottle Dumps, they dug up a broken tea cup with a transfer printed marking of 'Express Dairy Co. Ltd and incorporating a steam locomotive and tender. I have not been able to trace any other images of this logo online so this is a screen shot from the video itself. This prompted me to do some further investigation...



It appears that as London grew it became more and more difficult to supply fresh milk to the growing population from the local urban

Cow Keepers Shops - where cows were kept and milked on the premises (*not sure what happened to the other byproducts of the cows in these situations - Editor*)



Left: A Cowkeeper's shop in Golden Lane (1825) painted by George Sharf © British Museum.

Note the cow stalls to the rear of the shop

George Barnham (1836-1913) was one of the first dairymen in 1858 to use the then new railways to transport milk to supplement the milk from his urban cows with that produced in the countryside. In 1864, George opened 'The Express Country Milk Supply Company'. In 1882 he shortened it to 'Express Dairy Company'.

In 1883 George set up a network of farmers in Derbyshire who supplied him using Express Train Services with fresh milk delivered direct to London via the Great Northern Railway to King's Cross station. This eventually became Express Dairies, who ceased to operate around 2015.

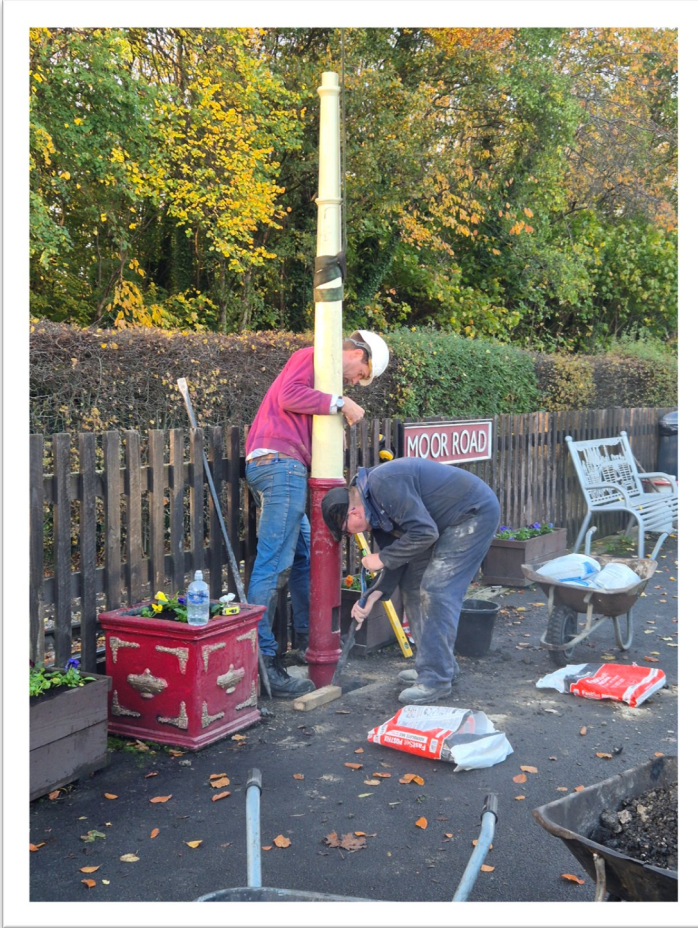
**David Hector**

*Later 'The Milk Train' became a generic term for any overnight/early morning service so it's interesting to see how this first started. I remember seeing milk tanks being shunted at St Erth when I was there on holiday in the very late 1970s and there was an experimental 'milkliner' service operated from the North West in the mid 1990s that seemed to have been unsuccessful - a long history. Editor*

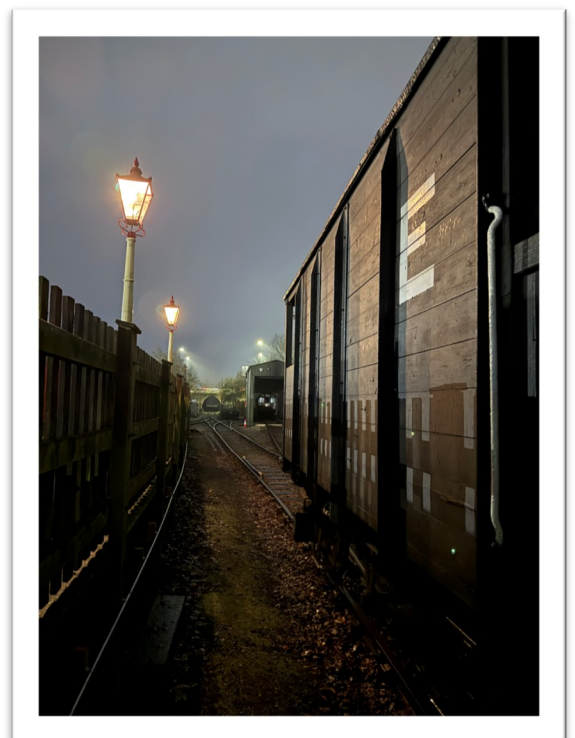
## Let there be light!

*“...and there was a darkness over the platform and the people did say, “we could do with some lights for the later Santa trains really...”*

There have been two cast iron lamp standards in the compound for some time with an eventual plan to install them on the platform at Moor Road. They were painted over the summer and during the November closedown the holes were dug and wires were laid. On 8th November, after lots of digging the posts were finally planted. The photograph on the left shows Mark Calvert and Richard Pike adding the final ingredients to whatever compost was used to plant these things on that date. The lower left photograph shows them seeing their first sunset as the Works Train is about to be shunted away for the night.



The (removable) lanterns were installed and wired up in time for the first Santa Specials and Geordie Brown's photograph below shows them illuminated (see also back cover). A great effort all round and a fine addition to the platform ambience.



## A different sort of packing...

In addition to all the present packing going on in The Engine House in the run up to Christmas, Saturday 3rd January saw our Permaquip Ballast Packer come out of hibernation for a check over. This provided a rare opportunity to see it in action. According to my Platform 5 Publishing book 'On-Track Plant on British Railways' (1991 - it's a real page turner...) The Permaquip Ballast Packer "...uses a pincher motion to pack ballast with eight hydraulically powered independent packing arms, each having a packing force of 1.2 tonnes. This pincer action is claimed to avoid unnecessary sleeper-bay disturbance and also compacts ballast to a lower level. It is self-powered with its own 30hp diesel engine which drives the hydraulic system and can also propel the ballast packer at 10mph along the track. It is transported to the work site by road in a standard 3 tonne lorry. The Ballast Packer is equipped with its own hydraulic lifting turntable which can lift onto to the rails, or transfer it between tracks, in four minutes. It is fitted with a fully enclosed and heated cab and adjustable track lift rams."

Our example, numbered 74059 and built in 1984 with Permaquip works number 063, was nominally allocated to Bristol in 1991.

It now normally lives in a purpose built shelter at the south east end of the Moor Road yard. When it is needed special 'rails' are laid across the running line to allow it to move into position (1), before the self contained turntable is dropped to



enable the vehicle to rotate itself through 90 degrees ready to drop onto the rails (2).

The Packer is now ready for action and the temporary rails can be removed to allow it to drop itself onto the running rails to transport itself to wherever it is required. Up to this point The Packer can be operated via a cabled remote control.

The Packer is now ready for action (3) and can be set to an appropriate position using the rams seen at the far end. The pincher arms are then hydraulically driven into the ballast bed to pack the ballast under the sleeper (4). This all saves an enormous amount of physical jacking and digging - a great benefit for all!



*So that's another issue done, by the time you see the next one we will be running trains again. Mark Calvert's team of 4 did fantastic work on the track in the yard on 3rd January, but there is plenty more to be done in the next few weeks. Not just track either, plenty to do sprucing up the Shop, Engine House and Exhibits, then there's the stuff in the workshop too. Every little helps. Please help if you can...*



### **STOP PRESS**

*'Slough' was steam tested and moved under its own power for the first time in several years on Sunday 18th January 2026 and whilst snags were expected (and found) there's nothing serious.*

*You may also notice that the water tank has been removed from the tower and needle gunning and repairs are now underway (see page 17...)*

*Photo: Andrew Parsley*

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