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The Old Run

Journal of the Middleton Railway Trust

No. 180



December 2003



Gala glimpses
Mirvale memories
When Santa's train broke down

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Editorial

As we approach the end of another operating season there have been days when it has been touch and go until the very last minute whether we could find a guard for the train or open the shop in order to serve the public. Yet these are the two main ways in which we gather in the essential revenue to enable us to actually run trains at all, and further the aims of the Trust. 2003 appears to have been one of the most difficult seasons for getting volunteers and thereby ensuring that our core business carries on. Without income, the need for which is ever increasing, we are sunk.

Here's a revolutionary thought! If every existing volunteer worker, be he/she an engineer, driver, cleaner, general dogsbody, or whatever, decided to **give just one extra day a year** by putting their name on the shop roster, the almost weekly staffing crisis could be eliminated at a stroke. Problem solved! Is this idea too radical? Is the actual running of the trains and opening of the shop important enough to challenge us into doing things just a bit differently?

A happy Christmas and a healthful New Year to everyone!

Howard W Bishop, Editor


The deadline for the next issue is 31 January 2004

Front cover photo

Season's greetings from Santa and his merry crew, as he boards his Santa's Special Train, hauled by 1948-built **Peckett Class 'R4 Special', No. P2103**, Christmas 2000. Enviously eyeing the scene, Diesel looks on from a distance (see page 8 for more on the subject). *(Photo: Peter Nettleton)*

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Especial thanks to those who have provided copy for this issue.

The President's page

This week two special deliveries arrived at Warren Avenue. The first was the Autumn 2003 issue of *The Old Run* followed two days later by a letter to me from the Editor requesting a Christmas message for the next issue.

Yes, it's that time of the year already! Or so it will be by the time this issue of the magazine is out on the streets!

Having read the journal I decided to re-read the No. 175 issue of *The Old Run*, published in the Autumn of 2002, and discover what a difference a year makes.

On page 2 of the Autumn 2002 issue—the position of Editor is vacant. One page 2 of the Autumn 2003 issue—the Editor is Howard Bishop. Thank you on behalf of all members for your enthusiasm and presentation. I cannot believe how the journal has changed over the years, professionalism is a quality earned by hard work.

On page 3 in the Autumn 2002 issue—"From the Chairman, Ian Dobson" An excellent article, but who is this Ian Dobson? On page 4 of the Autumn 2003 issue- "From the Chairman". Yes, Ian, we now all know you and thank you for your dedication to the Railway. Following on the tracks of some excellent chairmen is no mean task, but you have made an important contribution to the aims and objectives of the Trust.

Changes have taken place in the Marketing Department. Thank you Emmanuel for all the good work you have done and good wishes to Ian Smith in the present year.

Plenty has been said and written about the "Wednesday Gang", and long may they continue, but let us not forget those who labour in the workshops, the shop, and the operating staff who between them provide the service.

It is hard to believe that projects such as *OLIVE*, *PICTON*, the Wickham Railbus and the Crane restoration continue apace. Dedication is the name of the game, and we salute those involved.

Back to Autumn 2002, page 8, the Extension. Leisure Services to be written to expressing our concerns at the lack of progress. We did contact them, but come Autumn 2003, the Autumn issue on page 9 reveals we still are awaiting the draft from Leeds City Council. It is hoped that some definite news will be made available in time for the next issue.

The Museum registration is a tremendous task being guided through by Ian Smith and his enthusiastic committee. Following on from Pete Waterman's comment about a Theme Park, my ambition is to see a Steam Park and a Park and Ride facility being provided by the Railway. We certainly need the extension and the revenue it will create During the long hot summer I am sure weekends were spent at the seaside.

Continued on next page

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Hopefully the November Thomas and Santa events will help with our numbers and consolidate our financial position this year.

The feature *On the Web* revealed that there are 600 entries on the internet referring directly to the Middleton Railway! Perhaps we could advertise on the web for new members? (*This is included in the Railway's website, Ed.*) It is pleasing to read that eleven new members have been recruited this summer.

We all thank Dorothy Hebden for her dedication to the Railway, and I am sure she will continue to visit us from time to time.

Twelve months ago we had a good railway. Twelve months on we have a better railway. What then of the future? Let us all strive to reach the objectives we have planned for.

Every good wish for Christmas and the New Year.

Gerald Egan, President

From the Chairman

Ian Dobson writes:

Well, It's nearly Christmas! As I write this we are still expecting the junior addition to the Dobson fleet but by the time you read it he or she will be with us – a lesson in how time flies! Another lesson which you will probably find more relevant is that it only seems 5 minutes since I was writing an article along the lines of 'well, the new season is nearly on us' and now it's been and gone!

What sort of a season have we had? A pretty successful one, we have managed (at the time of writing!) to provide the advertised service every day but as I said last time we have struggled to do so. The usual suspects have pulled out all the stops and changed personal plans on occasion and I am grateful to them. A point which I failed to mention directly last time was that sometimes we think that we have a gap in the roster and run around to find someone to fill it and then

find that several people turn up unannounced to do it. This is frustrating for the person who chased around and sometimes annoying for the person 'called out' who may have had other plans that did not involve the railway on that day! The moral of the story? Please roster yourself wherever possible, it makes life much easier for all concerned. A phone call to the relevant roster person or Steve Roberts will soon confirm whether a gap exists – or check the online roster for train crews on the railway's web site. Even if we have got to the Friday we may still be struggling to find someone for the following day and at least you may give someone a better night's sleep knowing that you are coming down! It is a favourite topic of mine that we ought to try not ringing around one week when the roster is blank as someone will almost certainly turn up – they usually do! It wouldn't be a very professional way to run the railway

though would it? Please help if you can! We have seen some new working members in most departments during the latter part of this season and this bodes well for the future. I hope you all find your efforts worthwhile and we see you again next season! This leads me on to my next point, the running of the last Santa's Special does not mean the railway goes to sleep for the winter! Instead it means that we catch up on all the jobs we don't have time to do between April & December as the efforts of the working membership are mostly taken up in operating the public service! I expect one of the coaches will be coming into the workshop for a 3 month fast track 'overhaul'. The coaches serve our purposes well but we do need to bring them in for attention in turn each year. We are still actively looking for a third vehicle somehow which would allow us to withdraw a coach for a full overhaul rather than just a quick bi-annual tidy up. In addition to the engineering work required we can also catch up on the administrative side of the railway – if anyone needs a winter project in writing a business plan by the fireside please let me know!

The coach work is just one example of what needs to be done in the closed season. We will also be relaying the Dartmouth branch turnout following the recent experience of the track team in relaying the top turnout on the Balm Road loop ready for the September gala this year. This work went on unnoticed by the majority of both the public and some working members but deserves much praise as without the gala would have been far less impressive than it was! Another pair of backroom heroes as far as the gala was concerned were Martin & Andrew Plumb, this pair put in an enormous

amount of work on re-writing the gala timetable to enable us to keep to time for virtually the whole event. If you come along and just watch the trains go by at the gala please take a moment to think that every movement (and there were many!) were plotted and re-plotted. With some minor amendments this looks set to become the standard gala timetable for future years – thanks chaps! Another word of thanks must go to all those members who turned out to do anything from driving to keeping an eye on the car park (and all duties in between) the gala was a great success even if the visitor numbers could have been slightly better than they were. With a combination of an interesting visiting loco (even if it was GWR ;-)) and great weather on both days I'm not sure what else we could have done!

One thing that has concerned me over this year is that sometimes I personally feel that the Railway is a group of individuals rather than a team. Don't get me wrong – when the chips are down we pull together and get the job done but sometimes I think we could gel together better and support and encourage one another more. I stress this is a personal opinion but I think a valid one. If you agree and feel you could offer any solutions please let me know. A quick 'thank you' now to one another doesn't go amiss as an easy start.

So, to close on a positive note, thank you for all your support for the railway over the year. Even by paying your subscription and reading the magazine you are doing a bit, but (as I believe I have said before) if you can get out of your armchair and lend a hand at Moor Road we would be very pleased to see you! **A happy Christmas and peaceful New Year to you all from the Railway Council and myself.**

Ian Dobson, Chairman

By the time you read these notes another year will almost be over. It is perhaps premature to say that we have managed to get through without too much trouble as there are still the 'Thomas' and 'Santa' events to happen but we seem to have survived without becoming too short of steam locos (the diesels always seem to be available in reasonable supply!).

1601 Matthew Murray It has been in regular service and has created few problems although it continues to demonstrate its age and reveal the need for further work.. During recent routine maintenance it was decided to reduce the amount of play in the reverser weighshaft. For whatever reason, the right hand bearing casting broke during this exercise. Initially, a weld repair was carried out, which, at first fitting, appeared to be successful. However, this has also fractured and we have now resorted to machining up a new bearing housing. An old rail chair is providing the material. Whilst this will take more machining, it has saved us the time of making a pattern. Whilst in the works for this attention, it was decided to do some remedial work on the tank paintwork where it had blistered slightly. The unfortunate volunteer doing this wished he hadn't when he found himself in the firing line of a jet of water! Further investigation revealed the source of this leak as being a rivet on one of the strengthening gussets. What is more intriguing and problematical is that the tank has been lined with fibreglass on the inside so the water must also be finding its way behind this. At the time of writing, the necessary repairs for both these jobs are ongoing, but it is expected that the loco will be available for traffic shortly.

2103 The little Peckett has seen increased use as the season progressed and is performing satisfactorily apart from the continuing problem of wasting water at the injectors.

No. 67. This Ship Canal tank has settled down and been a regular and reliable performer, requiring little work other than routine maintenance.

No. 6 We are presently at the stage where skilled labour is necessary to rebuild the pistons, axleboxes, etc. and due to holidays and other things, progress on no. 6 does seem to have slowed somewhat. The right hand crosshead has had the brass slipper blocks built up and re-machined to bring them back to the correct tolerances. However, we made the fatal mistake of assuming that the slidebars were fitted true and parallel; after all, they are not something that should be wrong. We should have known better! We have found that the top and bottom slidebars on both sides are not on the cylinder centreline and on the left side are not even parallel to each other. This will take a bit of head scratching to sort out without recourse to some major machining work and replacement. It also means that we have to start over again with the crosshead slippers. No wonder the crossheads had so much play in them! Other work has included removing the firehole door assembly from the boiler and cleaning and painting of the frames, which continues at a slow pace.

1210 Sir Berkeley. No change with this loco, I'm afraid. The lottery application is still being progressed. It is
(Continued on page 20)



This Santa train didn't break down! But see page 8 for the one that did?

(Peter Nettleton)



Brian Wood in FC mode assessing the amplification, whilst Peter Nettleton enjoys the ambience of a packed platform at a *Day Out with Thomas* event, April 2003.

(Keith Hartley)

When Santa's steam train broke down

Julie Marshall

Chapter One

Sammy the Sentinel woke up with a jump as the door to the Engine Shed creaked open and Nellie's Fireman bustled in. It was still very dark and for a moment Sammy wondered why Nellie's firebox had to be lit so early, then he remembered. It was Nearly Christmas!

At Christmas time, the Fat Controller swapped his smart top hat for a cosy red Santa hat and gave all the children who rode on the special Christmas trains a present. The Fat Controller chose engines that had been Really Useful all year to pull the Christmas trains. The engines were decorated with tinsel and holly and felt very proud to be doing such an important job.

Sammy had been hoping he would be chosen to pull a Christmas train and he had tried his best to be a Really Useful Engine. Sadly, he had not been picked. His Driver had explained it was because Sammy was a diesel engine and that lots of children liked steam engines best, because of all the steam and smoke and exciting chuff-chuff noises they made. Poor Sammy had been very disappointed. He felt sad as he thought about how he would be stuck in the Engine Shed all day.

Nellie started to snore gently as the warmth from her firebox spread through her boiler, and then she opened one eye.

"Eee Sammy," she yawned, "Ah'm getting' too old to get up so early in the mornin'!"

Nellie always spoke with a strong accent, because she came from the North East of England. Sammy sometimes found it hard to understand her, especially when she mumbled. Nellie was indeed an old lady – well over a hundred years old. Sammy loved to hear her tales of the old days, when she pulled coal and steel trucks in a huge ironworks.

"Well, pet," said Nellie, as she began to wake up, "I'd better pull me pistons and pipes together – it's a big day for the bairns."

Sammy felt even sadder and a big tear trickled down his face and plopped on the Engine Shed floor, followed by another, then another.

Nellie noticed that Sammy was crying. "Whatever's the matter, hinny?" she asked.

"Oh, Nellie, I did so want to pull a Christmas train," sobbed Sammy. "But I can't, because nobody likes diesels."

"Hush, hush," said Nellie soothingly. "Everybody knows you new fangled diesels can knock spots off us old steam buckets when it comes to bein' Really Useful. No one has to get up in the middle of the night to set a fire to get you goin', do they?"

"Well....no," sniffed Sammy.

"Well there ye are!" finished Nellie firmly. "Bairns just like us steam trains 'cos we're a bit different, that's all."

Sammy began to feel a little better.

Chapter Two

"A..a..a..ATISHOO!" sneezed the Fat Controller into his red spotted handkerchief.

"Dearie me," exclaimed Mrs Dobbie the Guard's wife, as she dusted the ticket office. "You *have* got a cold!"

The Fat Controller wiped his eyes and blew his nose. His head was aching, his throat was all scratchy and he felt hot and cold at the same time.

"I must say, Mrs Dobbie," he said, in a bunged up sort of voice, "I do feel rather unwell."

"You sit down by the fire and I'll phone for Dr Steph, then make you a Nice Cup of Tea," said Mrs Dobbie, kindly.

"I couldn't possibly sit down – I must get all the presents ready for the children on the Christmas train today!" replied the Fat Controller.

Mrs Dobbie put down her feather duster, folded her arms firmly and looked hard at the Fat Controller.

"There's lots of people who can help with the presents – my Dobbie, for starters," she said in a firm voice. "But if you don't take care of that cold you'll be Proper Poorly, make no mistake!"

The Fat Controller sat down next to the fire without another word.

Chapter Three

"Say aah," said Dr Steph, peering into the Fat Controller's mouth with a little torch. "Hmm... nasty," she murmured.

"Wha...?" started the Fat Controller, before Dr Steph popped a thermometer into his mouth.

"Deep breath in.....and out," she continued, listening to the Fat Controller's chest with her stethoscope. She tutted and shook her head, then took the thermometer out of the Fat Controller's mouth.

"Well, that settles it – home to bed!" said Dr Steph in her best no-nonsense voice. "You've got a Nasty Cold and a Temperature. I'll find some pink jelly medicine for you." She started to rummage in her huge doctor's bag.

"But what about the children?" croaked the Fat Controller anxiously.

"What children?" asked Dr Steph in a puzzled voice, looking up from her bag.

The Fat Controller, between sneezes, explained about the special Christmas trains and how he dressed up in a Santa hat to give presents to the children.

"Hmm.." said Dr Steph, thoughtfully, then she started rummaging even deeper in her bag. She pulled out all sorts of odd things – a giant stethoscope and a bottle of extra large blue pills that she used when the Engines were ill, a jar of interesting purple and green stripy cream for bumps (or squeaky wheels) and finally, a rather tatty-looking prescription pad.

"Ah-hah!" she exclaimed happily. Taking a pen from her coat pocket, she began scribbling busily away on the top prescription. She signed it with a flourish and ripped it off the pad - it was very strange, but the Fat Controller was almost certain he saw a shower of golden sparkles as she did so.

Then, to everyone's amazement, Dr Steph walked over to the fireplace and, taking a deep breath, blew the prescription up the chimney! The Fat Controller began to wonder if his Temperature was making him see things, except that Mrs Dobbie was just as surprised! There she stood with her mouth wide open!

Dr Steph turned and smiled. "We'll have to wait a little while now, so how about making us all a Nice Cup of Tea, Mrs Dobbie?"

Chapter Four

The Fat Controller had almost finished his cup of tea and Dr Steph was just giving him a large spoonful of pink jelly medicine, when they heard some rather peculiar noises on the roof - a sort of thud, a trip-trap sound, a long scrape, then a second thud, right outside the ticket office. Straight away there was a loud knock at the door. Dr Steph smiled mysteriously and hurried over to open the door.

"Hello, hello, my dear," said a booming, merry, ho-ho sort of voice and then in walkedSanta!

The Fat Controller almost choked on his jelly medicine, and poor Mrs Dobbie went all wobbly at the knees and had to sit down suddenly.

"Excuse me for not coming down the chimney," apologised Santa, "but I'm trying to keep my suit clean for Christmas Eve."

"That's quite alright," stuttered the Fat Controller, still not quite able to believe his eyes.

"Perhaps one of your Guards could find a quiet corner in the Engine Shed for Rudolph," went on Santa, "We can't do with him catching cold again this year."

"Of course, of course," said the Fat Controller, "er...who, and should I say where is Rudolph."

"My reindeer," said Santa kindly, "he's on the roof."

Dr Steph laughed. "We certainly can't do with old Rudolph living up to his reputation of being the Red Nosed Reindeer again this Christmas!"

"I've been giving him those Vitamin Pills you recommended, Dr Steph and he's fine so far," said Santa, seriously. He turned to the Fat Controller.

"Now then, I understand from Dr Steph's prescription that you have a problem - how can I help?"

Between them, the Fat Controller, Dr Steph and Mrs Dobbie explained about how disappointed the children would be if they did not receive their presents on the Christmas train.

"I would *love* to hand out the presents," boomed Santa, cheerily, "it would be such a treat. You see, the children are usually all fast asleep when I deliver their gifts and I will so enjoy seeing them awake!"

Chapter Five

The Fat Controller was tucked up in bed with a hot water bottle, Rudolph was in the Engine Shed munching a huge pile of carrots and the excited children had started arriving for the Christmas train.

Nellie was manoeuvred on to the track, puffing busily, and then coupled to the front of the train.

All the passengers climbed aboard, Santa and his helpers loaded the presents, Dobbie the Guard blew his whistle and off they all went, chattering and laughing, down the line.

The children were thrilled that Santa was there. One rather naughty little boy didn't believe it was really him and tried to pull his beard, but Santa jumped back just in time! Everyone sang Christmas carols and played games, then Santa gave a present to each boy and girl.

The train had reached the end of the line and Nellie was being driven round to the rear of the carriages, ready to start the return journey, when suddenly she began to feel unwell. She had an awful pain in her boiler. She didn't mention it at first, because she didn't want to cause a fuss, but then her Driver noticed she was losing power.

"What's the matter, Nellie?" he asked anxiously.

"Ee e - I've such a pain in my pinny," gasped Nellie.

Suddenly, with a great bang and enormous whoosh of steam, one of the pipes in Nellie's boiler burst! The Driver had to stop Nellie fast and leap clear!

Dobbie the Guard noticed something was badly wrong and jumped down onto the track.

"Whatever's the matter with Nellie?" he shouted to the Driver.

"She's burst a pipe - she won't be able to pull us back to the station - you'll have to send for help!" replied the Driver.

Dobbie hurried to let Santa and the passengers know what was happening. They were all very concerned about poor Nellie. Luckily, once the pipe had burst, Nellie didn't hurt any more, but the Driver had to put out the fire in her firebox to make her safe.

"Dobbie will have to walk down the line and bring Sammy to pull the train - and Nellie - back to the Station," said Dobbie. The Driver on the Fat Controller's Railway always carries a special Token that allows only one Engine to move on the main line at once, to make sure that there are no accidents - Dobbie had to take the Token back to the Station before Sammy would be allowed to set off.

"Hold on, I've got an idea," said Santa. "Just wait a moment."

Santa reached into one of his pockets and pulled out a beautiful silver whistle. He blew it hard three times and then waited, peering up into the dark winter sky. Quick as magic, there was a thud and a trip-trap sound on the carriage roof.

"Right we are, Dobbie," said Santa, pleased, "follow me up on the roof."

"Wha..what?" stammered Dobbie, "you're not supposed to climb on the carriage roof!"

"I'm sure you're right," said Santa, "but this is an emergency, and you see my reindeer Rudolph can take off much better from the roof than from the ground, and it will be quicker for you to ride him back to the Station if he's flying rather than galloping."

Ride? Fly? Gallop? On a reindeer? Dobbie didn't like the sound of that at all!

"Oh, don't worry, Rudolph won't let you fall," smiled Santa.

Dobbie took a deep breath and followed Santa up on to the roof of the carriage, then clambered gingerly onto Rudolph's back; it was a bit like being on the back of a huge dog and Dobbie didn't like dogs very much, having been frightened by one when he was a little boy.

"Hold tight!" said Santa, then he patted Rudolph and whispered in his ear.

Dobbie felt Rudolph sink back onto his hind legs, then with one enormous bound they were up high in the sky, the wind whistling into Dobbie's face and blowing his peaked cap right off! Dobbie hung on for dear life and after one quick glance at the ground rushing past far below, he closed his eyes tight shut.

"I think I'll get airsick," he groaned.

Chapter Six

Back at the Station, Sammy and his Driver, Peter, were already beginning to wonder if there was something wrong. They had seen Rudolph trot out of the Engine Shed and fly off into the darkening sky.

"Tell you what, Sammy, let's get your motor turning over, just in case," said Peter.

Mrs Dobbie had just got back from taking the Fat Controller some hot Ribena, when to her astonishment, she saw Rudolph swoop down from the sky and trot along the platform, with the wind-swept form of her husband clinging to his neck!

"Dobbie, whatever are you doing riding that reindeer – you might Do Yourself a Mischief!" she scolded. Dobbie slid slowly to the ground and stood swaying gently. "Nellie...burst a pipe...up the line...need Sammy," he gasped.

"Oh my word," exclaimed Mrs Dobbie, "Sammy, Sammy, come quickly!"

In next to no time Sammy, with both Dobbie and his Driver, Peter, and the Train Token on the footplate, was rushing to the rescue.

Soon everyone was safely back at the Station and Mrs Dobbie was busy serving delicious Mince Pies and Nice Cups of Tea in the waiting room. The passengers had all thanked Sammy for his help and best of all, the Fat Controller had sent a special message to Sammy, saying what a Really Useful Engine he was. Nellie was safely home in the Engine Shed, ready to be repaired.

Santa polished off his fifth Mince Pie and then stood up, brushing crumbs off his beard.

"Well, well, what an exciting afternoon this has been," he chuckled. "Must be off now, though – lots to do before Christmas Eve, you know!"

Everyone crowded on to the platform to wave Santa off. He leap-frogged nimbly onto Rudolph's back, then with three short bounces, the reindeer leapt up into the air. Everybody cheered and waved, then from far away in the frosty, starry, night sky came Santa's voice,

"Ho, ho, ho – Merry Christmas!"

The End

(Editorial note: Instead of the usual double column format, this story has been purposefully set across the page (rather than at the perverse whim of the editor!), in order to create optimum space combined with a preferred storybook effect for the subject matter involved.

Memories of Middleton

Dorothy Hebden

Little did I dream as a child travelling to Leeds from Middleton by tram, and much later journeying daily to Cockburn High School, that my life, and the life of my family would be influenced so much by the Middleton colliery railway. The two familiar steam locomotives of the time were Matthew Murray and John Blenkinsop.

In my childhood the Broom Pit, the Fireday Works and the busy Rope Hill, were very much part of the life of Middleton. We walked down Town Street, through the little village of Nova Scotia, past the Colliery reservoir, down to Old Belle Isle, now buried under our rail terminus. Amid the noise and activity we were fascinated by the slurry pit, known as 'Black Pudding'. Behind this we could glimpse the coke ovens and the stacks of newly fired bricks. At the side of the park boundary were stacks of household sinks awaiting transporting away.

The Rope Hill holds its memories. Standing on Town Street, Middleton, you could hear the rumble and then the clatter as the rope hauled trucks progressed up the incline. Once in view we waited to see them unloaded by the weighbridge.

Few people in Middleton, then a new estate, appreciated or indeed knew the historical importance of the area. This was all to change, when, after the closure of the colliery in 1959 Dr Youell and the LUURS set up the beginnings of the Middleton Railway.

My son, David, and his friends at Cockburn became very interested and joined the first band of youthful enthusiasts at the railway. I joined shortly afterwards to see what really went on in Clayton's yard. The Hebden involvement in steam had been triggered! Shortly afterwards, late in 1960, I met Dr Youell outside the school in Town Street, where I was teaching. He was wandering up and down deep in thought about something concerning the remains of the old winding gear at the top of the incline. We talked, or rather I listened, and I realised for the first time that the railway would be the means by which we could save the history of Middleton and mining for future generations.

I wonder how many parents today are as concerned as we were about their son's activities on the railway at a time when there were no telephones at home or near the railway, let alone mobile phones and text messaging? Ten o'clock, eleven o'clock, at night, and no son in sight! A derailment and Dr Lawrence needed all the hands he could muster.

The memories of the early days of the railway in and around Clayton's yard and the cricket ground are many. David arriving home on public transport as black at the fireback. No automatic washing machine and overalls to be washed. Clayton's canteen, the wooden hut, sparsely furnished, in the yard, where we catered for the needs of visiting railway enthusiasts. Fish and chips in newspaper from the local chippie, and tea made using the temperamental water geyser.

Open days when the yard and the derelict cricket field hosted steam traction engines and their drivers. We provided sandwiches, cakes and tea. Our food centre was a camping tent and water was boiled on a Gaz stove. To see the steam crane working in the yard was a noisy occasion. □

(Following Dorothy's retirement reported in the last issue, she agreed to share some of her early memories of the Middleton Railway with us, and, in view of her increasing visual impairment, we are doubly grateful to her for this contribution, Ed.)

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**Deadline for the
next issue is 31
January 2004**



Dogfish ballast wagon No. DB993425, with a tare weight of 24.5 tonnes, and complete with a full load of new ballast, newly arrived from Toton, at Moor Road, and pictured ready to spread its load on the newly laid turn-out at Beza Road crossing. 20 August 2003. (HWP)

Final day's work after several weekends of labour, and following the delivery of the ballast by the Dogfish ballast wagon: levelling and packing the turn-out on the Balm Road branch after relaying, making ready for the Gala weekend. 30 August 2003. (HWP)



Spreading and packing of ballast continues apace, with level boards in position, to ensure a smooth ride for the All Line Tour trains at the September Gala weekend. 30 August 2003 (HWP)

Boardroom jottings

Rostering

The question of rostering staff has been a difficult one over the season. Steve Roberts undertook to oversee the rostering of staff and get people to fill gaps that the roster clerks have been unable to fill.

Stock arrivals & departures

It is hoped to hire in a locomotive (probably a Leeds built Kitson) for the opening weekend of the 2004 season when we will also be visited by the Lord Mayor and receive a blue plaque for the Railway and officially receive the certificate of museum registration.

Thomas

Despite much effort by many people it is becoming clear that the holders of the 'Thomas' licence are not keen on our events – contrary to the opinions of our own customers! It was agreed to hold an event in 2004 but seek to develop other family friendly events to cover the possible loss of the Thomas events in the future.

ANY ideas from any members would be welcome for this potentially serious situation – please contact the Marketing Officer in the first instance.

Disability Discrimination Act

Mr Bishop spoke to a paper he had prepared on the subject and the board agreed to review the issues raised. As a first development it was agreed that we would purchase a portable wheelchair ramp to provide access to the shop.

Gala 2004

It was felt that the 2003 gala had been a successful event and the timetable had been particularly good thanks to the efforts of Martin & Andrew Plumb. It was agreed that Mr Wilkinson would convene a

meeting of interested parties to discuss the event to enable the 2004 event to be even better. There was some discussion over the issue of photographic 'set pieces' on the Balm Road branch and this would be specifically discussed.

Connection with Network Rail

We had been formally notified of Network Rail's desire to sever the link with the main network at Balm Road. Tony Cowling is in correspondence with them over this issue and it was agreed that we should have a site visit if at all possible to see what benefits we could gain from this – it being agreed that we were not surprised with the request and had no real need for the connection.

Civil engineering

Thanks were expressed to those members who had worked very hard over the summer to relay the crossing timbers on the top loop turnout on the Balm Road branch. Sufficient spare timbers had been purchased to enable the Dartmouth branch turnout to be relaid over the coming closed season as these timbers were now life expired.

Lord Mayor

The chairman had met the current Lord Mayor of Leeds (Councillor Neil Taggart) at the recent unveiling of the blue plaque at Hunslet Engine Company. The Lord Mayor seemed very interested, and keen to promote, Leeds's industrial past. He had expressed an interest in visiting the railway in addition to his formal visit in late March 2004 (see above). Mr. Smith is following this up. □



Gala glimpses

A montage showing some of the highlights of the excellent Gala Weekend held on 27 and 28 September 2003, and mainly featuring our visiting locomotive, 1934 Swindon-built 0-6-0PT No. 1369 on loan from the South Devon Railway. Peckett No. 2103 is seen in full-cry at bottom far left; Manning Wardle No. 1601 *Matthew Murray* at bottom far right. [Photos: Ian Dobson (left); Keith Hartley (below left); all others HWB]

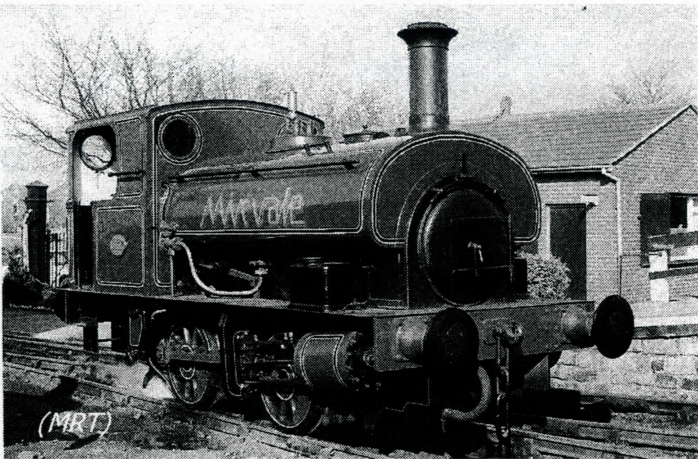
More gala photographs in the next issue.



Mirvale miscellany

Mirvale was built by Hudswell, Clarke & Company in 1955 (Works No 1882), for the Mirvale Chemical Company at Mirfield, as a 'one off' design, using component drawings prepared for a variety of earlier Hudswell locomotives. It worked regularly at Mirfield until late in 1964, when it appears to have been placed in store.

In 1968, it became one of the most modern industrial steam locomotives in preservation, when it was purchased privately and taken



to the North Yorkshire Moors Railway, which was then in its infancy. There it became a celebrity, being the first steam locomotive on the preserved line, and also the first locomotive to traverse the full length of the preserved line from Pickering to Grosmont. However, it was only steamed occasionally in the following two years, and then fell into disuse as it was considered to be too small for regular work, and there were doubts as to the condition of the boiler.

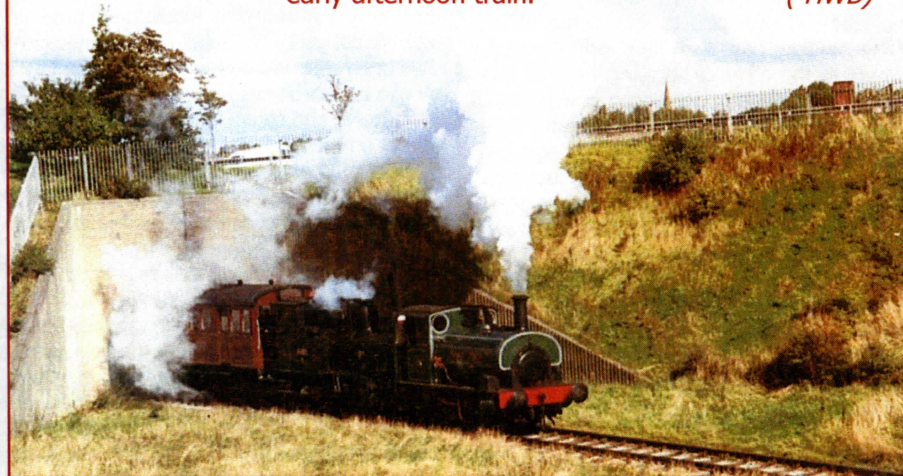
Mirvale languished largely out of the public eye on the Moors, until the locomotive's owner put it up for sale in 1986. The MRT, together with a consortium of individual members, were successful in their bid for it, and *Mirvale* arrived at Moor Road in late December 1985, for restoration to working order. The distinctive lettering of *Mirvale's* name, incidentally, recreates the style of the original name, which was a transposed from the company's letterhead.

The fully-restored locomotive was ceremonially rededicated on 31 March 1990, and formally entered service the following week. It is just the right size for the Railway's current passenger service, and was in regular use until late 1998, when it was withdrawn for boiler repairs a few months ahead of its 10 yearly boiler examination and overhaul becoming due.

It currently awaits its turn in the line-up on the shop floor, time, space and cash permitting.

Mirvale memories

Hudswell, Clarke No. HC1882 *Mirvale* pilots Danish State Railways Nr.385 as they emerge from the tunnel on Gala Day, 25 Sept. 1999, with an early afternoon train.
(HWB)



Late afternoon train from Park Halt having passed Dartmouth Jct, whistles for the tunnel, on Gala Day, 25 Sept. 1999
(HWB)



Loco Notes (continued from page 6)

proving to be a slow and painful process!

No.11 As with No.6, there is little obvious progress with No. 11. The weighshaft has now been refitted following the fitting of new bearing bushes and much filing to bring the journals back to some semblance of roundness. Various parts of the drain cock linkage have received attention, comprising of cleaning and re-boring pin holes to make them round and manufacture of new pins to suit. Some of the sanding linkage has also received attention, generally in the form of applying heat to free off seized components. Receiving similar treatment has been the mechanical lubricator linkage. A manufacturer of volute springs has been located and an order placed for four new ones for the buffers, the one remaining intact spring being used as a sample. The front drawbar has been fitted, utilising an existing volute drawbar spring from stock. Design work for the vacuum brake system has been completed and, whilst the loco is stripped down, the opportunity has been taken to cut two holes in the right hand frame plate to accommodate the additional pipework.

54 We are having little success in our search for a suitable replacement cylinder block or patterns. Various leads have been followed up but all have failed to provide the right answer. The cylinder has been drawn up and it may be that we have to manufacture our own pattern and make castings from this. In the meantime, work continues on the remainder of the engine unit. The existing piston rods were badly pitted and attempts to have these re-ground to eliminate the problem took them below scrapping size. New piston rods have therefore been made and fitted to the crossheads. To complement the new rods, the gland bushes and packing rings (which were fairly worn) have also been replaced with new material. Work currently centres on refurbishment of the ram pump, used for pumping water into the boiler, and driven from the crankshaft.

1310. In continuing preparation for the boiler lift all the boiler tubes have been removed and further dismantling carried out. The cab and tanks have now been removed and the next step will be to remove the cladding and lagging

to fully expose the boiler. Subject to a satisfactory inspection from the Boiler Inspector not identifying too much work, it is intended to send the boiler away for overhaul with the intention of having it back during 2004. Removal of the tanks has uncovered the fact that the reverser reach rod arm has been working in the weighshaft, probably accounting for much of the knock that emanated from this part of the valve gear.

BROOKES No.1 (aka THOMAS) The little blue engine returned to Middleton in time for the annual gala. Problems with its injectors had been reported during its sojourn in East Anglia and these have received attention. The clack valve and steam valve seats have been re-cut on the left hand injector in an attempt to reduce internal leakage. The injector cones have been 'pickled' in phosphoric acid to remove a build up of scale. However, the injectors continue to be unreliable in operation as the level of water in the tank falls and they have to lift the water further to work. This, perhaps inevitably, resulted in the loco failing with shortage of water during the gala, necessitating the hurried dropping of the fire. This type of combination injector has an unenviable reputation for problems of this nature when it has to lift the water out of the tank and we will have to give it more attention over the winter. A further problem to manifest itself over recent months has been that of leaking tubes. Attention by a professional boilermaker whilst away has cured the problem but the further leakage is very likely to occur in the future. It is a common problem with steel tubes in steel fireboxes, a main reason why they are often welded in. Because of this and the need for the loco to be reliable when on hire it has been decided to carry out a re-tube over the winter months.

138C Painting of the body and frames is now all but complete. The air tanks remain to be fitted, along with the valance plates which cover these.

PICTON As reported in the last Old Run, the owner has now started the long and steady task of needle-gunning and painting of the frames and wheels. In addition to this, the search goes on for suitable components. A recent acquisition has been an injector.

(Continued at foot of next page)

* A glowing Gala *

Dear Middleton Members,

What a pleasurable day we had at your excellent Gala. We were pleased with "extensive opportunities" throughout the day in "watching, filming and riding" the trains. Everyone was so friendly and helpful during our visit. Even the weather was kind.

We have visited many preserved railways and have gained many experiences. However, our view of the Middleton was positive. Some of the 'Big Boys' could learn much from your excellent operation!

We look forward to visiting the Middleton again soon. Well done, everyone!

Best wishes,

**Steve Blake & Neil Tudor,
Oswestry, Salop**

Loco Notes (continued from previous page)

7401 Back in traffic after rectification of the vandalism and repairs to a broken compressor drive. The loco recently visited Barrow Hill, fortunately without a repeat of its last visit away (when the engine threw a connecting rod, smashing the crankcase!)

D2999, 5003, D577, D631, 1786, Rowntree No.3 and Olive are, as usual, all serviceable and used as required. All other locos are in store pending overhaul or repair. □

2004 Special Events

LEEDS WEEKEND, 27, 28 MARCH

Visiting centenary loco No 29 Lambton Unveiling of Blue Plaque. Museum registration.

BLUE BELL WALK, 9 MAY

The Park Ranger's conducted tours of Middleton Woods in all their natural glory.

DAY OUT WITH THOMAS, 22, 23 MAY

Meet Thomas the Tank Engine and his friends.

HAPPY ENGINES' WEEKEND, 10 & 11 MAY

A weekend for families.

SCHOOLS' TRAINS, 15 & 24 JUNE

DIESEL WEEKEND, 14 & 15 AUGUST

All our fleet in action, and perhaps a visitor.

CIVIC TRUST HERITAGE VISITORS' WEEKEND, 11 & 12 SEPTEMBER

Link up with the nationwide event.

ENTHUSIASTS' WEEKEND, 25 & 26 SEPTEMBER

A Leeds locomotives' event with a visiting Leeds-built loco.

HALLOWEEN EVENT, 31 OCTOBER

Ghostly trains! Wizard!

SANTA'S SPECIAL TRAINS, 28 NOVEMBER, and 4&5, 11&12, 18&19 DECEMBER

Meet Santa on the train. Presents for the children and wine and mince pies for the grown ups.

SCHOOLS AND PLAY GROUPS SANTA'S TRAINS, 10 DECEMBER

Fred Dibnah's *Age of Steam*, BBC2

The Editor

When I viewed the above television programme which was screened on BBC2 on 22 July 2003, I was moved to write the following which, readers will recall, appeared in the Autumn 2003 issue of *The Old Run*.

"Middleton on television: The showing on 22 July of Fred Dibnah's *Age of Steam* on BBC2, whilst failing to mention the Blenkinsop/Murray contribution to the development of the steam railway locomotive, included shots of the Middleton Railway! One was of *Mirvale* on the Great Northern curve; the other of a very steamy multi-headed train in full cry, en-route to Park Halt, at one of the Railway's galas. Almost subliminal!"

Following this matter being discussed at the Council meeting on 22 August 2003, and the decision that the Marketing Officer make representations to the BBC about the omissions and failure to include the MRT in its programme credits, I referred to the **BBC BOOKS Fred Dibnah's *Age of Steam* by Fred Dibnah and David Hall**, published to accompany the TV series. I also referred the contents below to our Historian, Sheila Bye, and she has added her comments shown in parentheses and underlined.

Pages 52 and 53 of this publication have in fact got the record right to large extent, and I quote: "In the beginning, though, they had a lot of bother. The main problem that faced Trevithick and all the early engineers was the cast-iron rails: they couldn't find enough grip. For a long time it was believed that a smooth steel locomotive wheel on a smooth rail would skid and wouldn't be able to pull a load. [THE LOCOMOTIVES THEN WERE VERY LIGHT, TO AVOID BREAKING THE CAST IRON RAILS – "A SMOOTH STEEL LOCOMOTIVE WHEEL ON A SMOOTH RAIL" WILL STILL SKID AND BE UNABLE TO PULL ITS LOAD IF THE LOCOMOTIVE IS TOO LIGHT FOR THE LOAD.] There were various schools of thought regarding the track and engineers tried different ways of solving the problem. One of the first was John Blenkinsop, who went to Leeds to construct a loco-

motive to run on a track at Middleton. [HE CAME TO MANAGE THE MANORIAL ESTATE & COLLIERY – THE LOCO WAS HIS SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF THE RISING EXPENSE OF TRANSPORT, NOT A MISSION HE WAS SENT ON.] Like all the early railways it was built to transport coal from the mines down to the river or the sea – in this case the River Aire in the centre of Leeds. [IT NEVER WENT TO THE RIVER IN LEEDS, THOUGH BRANDLING TRIED TO GET PERMISSION TO DO THIS IN 1809, & TRIED RUNNING ROAD WAGGONS FROM THE STAITH TO THE RIVER WITHOUT PERMISSION. THERE WAS ANOTHER WAGGONWAY GOING FROM MIDDLETON TO THE RIVER A COUPLE OF MILES DOWNSTREAM OF LEEDS.] In 1811 Blenkinsop took out a patent for a rack-and-pinion form of propulsion for his steam locomotives. The idea was to have a cogged wheel attached to the side of the engine, which would pull it along by engaging in teeth cast into the side of the rails. The boiler of his engine was supported by a four-wheel carriage, which was independent of the working parts of the engine.

In 1812 this engine began running on the railway from the Middleton collieries to the centre of Leeds, a distance of about three and a quarter miles (5.2km). [THE LOCOMOTIVES ONLY RAN FROM HUNSLET CARR TO LEEDS UNTIL LATE 1815.] Six or seven locomotives in all were constructed to his design and they pulled thirty fully loaded coal wagons at a speed of three and a quarter miles per hour (5.2kph). They were in use for many years, and although other railways, which came later, have become more famous, the Middleton railway was the first place where locomotive power was used on a railway lines on a regular basis for commercial purposes.

The Middleton railway gave great impetus to the growth of Leeds and the city's industries. It made possible a good supply of

(Continued on next page)

cheap coal, which was of benefit to the developing use of steam engines in textile mills and other factories. Its pioneering use of steam locomotives proved to the world that they were commercially viable and led to the development of an extensive locomotive-building industry in Leeds.

At first everybody thought that the rack-and-pinion system that had been used in Leeds was the way to do it. But it wasn't very long before they discovered that smooth steel wheel would get traction on a smooth iron rail [AS LONG AS THE RAILS WERE OF MALLEABLE IRON, STRONG ENOUGH TO BEAR THE NECESSARILY INCREASED WEIGHT OF LOCO TRYING TO PULL THE LOAD.] And, although the Middleton railway can claim to be the first regularly operated steam railway in the world, it is to Northumbria that we have to go to find the 'great men' of the railways, the men who were the pioneers of steel and steam. [THE ESTATE OWNER WHO PAID FOR THE MIDDLETON LOCOS, THE ENGINEER WHO BUILT THEM, AND THE PIT MANAGER WHO THOUGHT OF THE RACK WHEEL WERE ALL ORIGINALLY FROM NORTHUMBRIA.] Three of them were born within a few miles of each other: William Hedley at Newburn, and Timothy Hackworth and George Stephenson at Wylam. All three of them were involved with the region's expanding coal industry."

On page 54 of the book it goes on, "The idea of using a rack-and-pinion system like the one in operation on the Middleton railway was looked into, but to convert the 5 miles (8 km) of smooth wrought-iron plate-way that Blackett had already laid would have cost him £8,000, which was a considerable sum at that time. Anyway, Hedley had other ideas. He believed that if the wheels of the locomotive were coupled together, the weight of the locomotive alone would provide sufficient grip to haul a train of loaded wagons even where smooth wheels were running on smooth rails".

On page 55 we read, "The steam railway was essentially the result of two major technical advances: the ability to produce the necessary quantities of high-quality, low-cost, wrought-

iron rails and the great advances that were being made at this time in steam-engine technology. The first steam locomotives built by Trevithick, Blenkinsop and Hedley all suffered from technical inadequacies. Low speeds of around 4 miles per hour (6.4 kmph), limited power and a tendency to break down on a regular basis meant that early locomotives weren't a serious alternative to road and canal transport. [THE MIDDLETON LOCOS MANAGED TO MOVE AT LEAST 80 3/4 TON WAGGONS OF COAL TO LEEDS, 6 DAYS A WEEK, FOR 22 YEARS BETWEEN THEM. AFTER SALAMANCA EXPLODED IN 1818, ONLY 2 LOCOS DID THIS WORK, THE 3RD BEING KEPT AS SPARE – THEY OBVIOUSLY DIDN'T BREAK DOWN AS OFTEN AS IMPLIED!] But in spite of these inadequacies, it was the work of pioneers like these three men that paved the way for George Stephenson".

Page 56 tells the story of Stephenson's industrial espionage, involving his visiting Leeds: "Stephenson was very aware of all that was going on at the time with regard to the development of the steam locomotive and he studied the design of all those that were around. He certainly took some of his ideas from Trevithick's work and, hearing of Hedley's work at Wylam, he went over to the colliery to study his engine. He also went to Leeds to see the Blenkinsop engine at its trials, when it pulled a load of 70 tons at a speed of three and a quarter miles per hour (5.2kmp/h). When he was there he expressed his opinion in the characteristic remark, 'I think I could make a better engine than that to go upon legs'. [SAMUEL SMILES'S BIOGRAPHY, BASED ON INFO FROM ROBERT STEPHENSON., SAYS HE SAW IT ON 2ND SEPTEMBER 1813, WHICH WAS THE DATE THE KENTON & COXLIDGE LOCO MADE ITS CEREMONIAL INAUGURAL RUN – IT'S MUCH MORE LIKELY THAT GEORGE SAW THAT RATHER THAN MAKING A WASTED JOURNEY DOWN TO LEEDS TO SEE THE SAME SORT OF THING AT WORK. THERE SEEMS TO BE NO EVIDENCE OF HIM VISITING LEEDS AT THIS PERIOD – HE WAS STILL JUST A FAIRLY POOR WORKING MAN. ROBERT, VIA SMILES, DOESN'T MENTION ANY VISIT TO LEEDS AT THAT TIME.] Once he'd seen the Blenkinsop and Hedley engines Stephenson was determined to build his own, so he convinced Lord Ravensworth, the mine owner, of the advantages to be gained from using a travelling engine.

(Continued on next page)



Fred Dibnah's Age of Steam
(cont. from previous page)

Ravensworth advanced Stephenson the money that he needed and work started on his first locomotive engine in his workshops at West Moor".

It is most unfortunate that the TV programme did not give the whole story, with the Middleton Railway and Blenkinsop and Murray not receiving their rightful place in history yet again..

[Footnote from Sheila Bye - *I THINK THAT'S ABOUT IT! - I'VE WRITTEN TO DIBNAH & SENT HIM A TIMETABLE AND A COPY OF THE HISTORY FOR FUTURE REFERENCE.*] □

Deadline for the March 2004 issue is 31 January

The Waterways Museum at Goole, East Yorkshire. Exploring the Aire & Calder Navigation & the Port of Goole.

Readers may recall the Road, River, Rail event we held two years ago which included a trip along the Aire & Calder Navigation. The Waterways Museum at Dutch River Side, Goole, situated at the other end of this fascinating waterway, warmly welcomes members of the Middleton Railway, whose leaflet is included in their display. A visit is highly recommended.

Book review

Fred Dibnah's Age of Steam by Fred Dibnah and David Hall.
BBC Worldwide Ltd, 2003. ISBN 0 563 48743 7. Hardback £16.99.

From a very young age Fred Dibnah harboured a passion for steam-powered machines, nurtured by living alongside railway lines in Bolton, surrounded by tall chimneys that fascinated him. Having spent a large part of his life studying their construction and history, he draws on his extensive knowledge to create a fascinating insight into this unique form of power and the characters that helped bring it to life.

Beginning with the invention of steam power Fred traces the fundamental part steam played in the industrial revolution, from farming through mining, printing and transport, showing how steam power gradually penetrated almost every area of industry and even played a part in shaping our leisure hours. Along the way he gives cameos of some of the great pioneers of steam, from James Watt to Richard Trevithick. He includes our own Middleton colliery railway and John Blenkinsop, to George and Robert Stephenson and Isambard Kingdom Brunel, breathing life into these legendary characters and revealing their true genius.

The present day is not neglected as Fred explains how steam engines and turbines are still at the heart of many areas of industry all over the world, and shows how steam power could be the solution to many of our environmental problems and even introduces us to the concept of steam-powered cars.

A compelling history of a romantic and versatile form of power, it is unfortunate that the TV series, shown on BBC2 in July 2003, contained glaring factual omissions that the book fortuitously puts right to large extent. □

HWB

Will power

An amount in excess of £4,800 was recently received from the estate of Lillian and Alfred Rogers deceased for which we are extremely grateful. This has been applied for the general purposes of the Railway.

The Middleton Railway Trust Limited, is a Charity, registered number 230387, and so there are tax advantages both for the Railway and for the estates of people who are kind enough to make bequests to us. If you are drawing up your Will, you might therefore like to take the opportunity to arrange for a gift to the Railway.

A simple way of doing this would be to draw the following alternative clauses to the attention of your legal adviser when you are giving instructions about how you want to leave your estate:

either: *I give to the Charity called Middleton Railway Trust Limited of The Station, Moor Road, Hunslet, Leeds LS10 2JQ, the sum of £xxxx and declare that the receipt in writing of the secretary or treasurer of that Charity shall be sufficient discharge to my Executors. (Often more useful, you may like to specify a percentage of your estate, as you will not know how much you will have in liquid assets at the time of your death, and this may avoid the need for your executors to sell any property before they can pay out the bequest).*

or, (after any named beneficiaries have been paid) the remainder to go to the Railway:

I give all [the rest of] my estate both real and personal to my Trustees in trust to sell and convert the same into money and after payment of all my just debts and funeral and testamentary expenses to hold the net proceeds of sale and the net rents and profits until sale upon trust to pay them to the Charity called Middleton Railway Trust Limited of The Station, Moor Road, Hunslet, Leeds LS10 2JQ, and declare that the receipt in writing of the secretary or treasurer of that Charity shall be sufficient discharge to my Trustees.

Dear editor, "I must say....."

Icertainly didn't expect to be 'on view' in The Old Run (Autumn 2003), and I was so very surprised at the 'send-off' I received at the last Schools' Specials day.

I have jotted a few notes about my involvement at the Railway (*See separate article in this issue, Ed.*) and send them in the hope they may be of interest. I am partially sighted now and learned to touch type in recent years. My sight, or rather lack of it, has been my main reason for retiring from the Schools' Specials team, a job I really enjoyed.

Recently I have been given several maps of the workings of the Broom Pit. They are in fair condition and very interesting, and I hope they will find a home in the MRT museum.

Dorothy Hebden, Middleton, Leeds 10

Thanks for publishing the letter and enquiry about the locos at New Wortley. I have obtained this information from Bob Darvil.

There were actually three locos at the works in 1952, all built by Hudswell Clarke. HC489 was delivered to New Wortley 30.11.1898, with 15x20 cyls, 3'3" dia wheels, cost £1120, given the number 1 and returned Sept.1955 to Hudswells for scrapping. HCS20 delivered 31.12.1900 to Meadow Lane and transferred to New Wortley May 1951., with 14x20 cyls, 3'3" dia wheels, cost £1200, and scrapped on site by Robinson & Birdsall, Leeds c.July 1960.. HC1594 delivered 30.9.1927 to New Wortley, with 15x22 cyls, 3'4" dia wheels, cost £1975, given No.2 *Eric Clarke*, and scrapped at unknown date. I hope this is of some interest to members.

Alex Hurd, PM Video, Reepham, Lincs

Caption competition



(Peter Nettleton)

Now then, what's this? A prize of a video will be awarded for the best caption received by the editor by **31 January 2004**.



The Lord Mayor of Leeds unveiling the Civic Trust's Blue Plaque on the site of the Hunslet Engine Company's works in Jack Lane, Leeds, on 21 September 2003.

(Ian Dobson)

Mystery photograph competition ± solution



The winner of a video is Prof. F W Hampson of Newcastle-upon-Tyne who was first to correctly identify the above as Hunslet-built Tralee and Dingle 3 foot gauge 2-6-2T No.5. This is the sole example of its class in existence. The photograph, taken by the editor in July 1999, is at the Tralee terminus, in County Kerry, Eire.



On the web, continued

Following on from the last issue, here are a further selection of useful and interesting websites which give links or refer to matters Middleton Railway.

Leeds attractions, including our own Railway are on a Leeds attractions website: www.leeds.angle.uk.com/attractions

For local Leeds history the Thoresby Society caters especially for you. Their website is www.laplata.co.uk/thoresby/chronology.htm

Reference to DB998901 (*OLIVE*) is to be found at www.railcar.co.uk/bulletin/078.htm

Teachers' resources relating to educational visits at www.teachetnet.gov.uk/teachingandlearning/Community_Links/educationalvisits/Leeds/ includes Middleton Railway.

The Heritage Railway Association website at www.ukhrail.uel.ac.uk lists all UK and Irish Heritage Railways as well as a host of other relevant information.

For information about railway enthusiasts holidays including our own railway, try www.choo-trek.co.uk/attractions/at_westyorkshire.html

Yorkshire Steam is highlighted on

www.uk/geocities.com/krisward42/pres.htm

The M1 Motorway history trail includes ourselves on www.wildyorkshire.co.uk/naturediary/docs/mar00.mar.12html

The Yorkshire District of Rotary International on www.rotary1040.org.visitor.htm refers to Yorkshire's broad acres from the flat plains of the south to the rolling Dales of the North, and includes a direct link to Middleton Railway in its list of noteworthy places to visit.

You would expect the Yorkshire Tourist Board, of which the MRT is a member, to feature Middleton Railway. Under its *Hidden Yorkshire* heading we can be found at www.yorkshirevisitor.com/hidden/itineraries/on_the_right_track_itinerary.asp

The Online Travel Company covers all UK Train, Bus and Coach timetables, including ours at www.myoffers.otc-uk.com/trains/heritage.asp

The Wickham Railbus now has a website all its own, thanks to Graham Parkin, at www.wickham-railbus.org.uk

Lastly, we can be found on the Swiss website featuring railways and trams in UK at www.furka-bergstecke.ch/links/great_britain.htm □

Do you have the bottle for this?

As a holder of the Chartered Institute of Environmental Health's Advanced Hygiene Certificate, it is my duty to ensure that all foodstuffs served in the shop are fit for human consumption.

Some bottles of wine were surplus to requirements after last year's Santa's Special trains and held in stock for this year. To ensure that they were fit for human consumption they had to be sampled.

I took a bottle of wine, inserted a corkscrew into the cork and removed the cork from the bottle. I poured a soupson of wine into a glass and tried it. It passed.

I took a bottle of wine, inserted a corkscrew into the cork and removed the bottle from the cork. I poured a

Where am I?

I stand at the station, near water, not fresh.

I shall travel some 12 miles up, to be near different water—rushing and tumbling. Look! One, one and another one, evil—maybe. Look up and see birds a child could fly.

Where am I?

Answer:

*Wales
Vale of Rhaidol Railway, Aberystwyth, West*

soupson of wine into a glass and tried it. It passed.

I took a glass of wine, inserted a corkscrew into the cork and removed the bottle from the cork. I poured a soupson of wine into a glass and tried it. It passed.

I took a corkscrew, inserted it into the bottle, removed the cork. I poured the wine from the glass and tried it. It passed.

I took a glass of wine, inserted a corkscrew into the bottle and removed the wine from the glass. The soupson was tried and was found not guilty.

Where was the corkscrew inserted next? Answers on a postcard please to....

I am not as much under the affluence of incohol as some thinkle peep I am!

CedrHic Wood

Autumn 2003 issue

Due to a mismatch of colour at the printing stage, the front cover appeared in deep lilac rather than pale blue. Some copies also had the centre-fold pages inverted. We apologise and trust this did not spoil your enjoyment. If anyone wishes to return their spoilt copy to the editor he will arrange to send a replacement.

Personnel personal profiles Geoffrey and Clarice Saunders

In this issue we salute Geoffrey and Clarice Saunders as the Middleton Railway's oldest active volunteers!

Born on 12 April 1926, in Rothwell, near Leeds, Geoff attended Robin Hood Mixed School. As a boy he first became aware of and interested in railways watching LNER tank locomotives working between Lofthouse and Stourton. In 1940, shortly after the start of the second world war he began a lifetime of railway service with the then London Midland and Scottish Railway in the Stourton Carriage and Wagon Department. From 1943 he transferred to the Stourton Motive Power Depot, continuing with British Railways on nationalisation, and from 1965 to retirement in 1983 served at the Neville Hill Depot.

From Cleaner, through Fireman to Driver, Geoff fired and drove a range of steam locos from LMS Class 3F and Class 4F 0-6-0s, Jinty 0-6-0Ts, 2-8-0 Class 8Fs and the occasional Black Five which he describes as "a real treat". His favourite steam locos were the Class 3F and Class 4Fs which "you just showed them the shovel and they steamed themselves". After transferring to diesels at Neville Hill he drove Class 37s and Class 47s, the Class 37s being his favourites.

Clarice is a local girl and hails from Hunslet, Leeds where she was born in 1928 and attended Middleton Girls' School. She found employment with Goodhall & Backhouse from 1942 to 1948 and Harding & Rhodes until 1951. Marriage to Geoff kindled an interest in railways and together they joined the Middleton Railway shortly after Geoff's retirement in 1984.

Within a few days of joining the Middleton Railway, Geoff was passed out as a guard. He has continued to serve as a train guard to the present day, for some years he was Yard Foreman at Moor Road, and with Clarice has worked in the Railway's shop, and represented the Railway at many exhibitions in the area. Over the years they have been jointly responsible for a vast amount of fund raising for the Railway manning stalls at special events and exhibitions.

Geoff and Clarice are both life-long members of Hunslet Parish Church, and life members of the Church Lads' and Church Girls' Brigade. Geoff is a keen railway modeller, and war games participant and they are both keen to see the Middleton Railway extended to the Park in the near future. □



Did you see? In the press

The **Railway Magazine**, in its September issue, carried a delightful photograph of Manning Wardle O-6-0ST (MW1601/03) *Matthew Murray No.4*, and the 1905-built 'Yorkshire' steam wagon at the Leeds in Steam event.

The Greenwood & Batley coke ovens loco no. 420452 and Brush 91/Beyer Peacock 7856 were featured in the October issue of **Railway Magazine**.

The 14 September 2003 issue of **The Sunday Times Magazine** in its *Facts of Life* series referred to the Middleton Colliery having had the world's first practical steam locomotive in 1812 designed by John Blenkinsop.



Can anyone say when this picture was taken, and who the two gentlemen are? Some heroic, pioneering track work appears to be in progress, aided by Hunslet tractor, *Courage*, and the chassis of an ancient wagon: this photograph taken from a tattered print found kicking around in the Moor Road shop. Please contact the editor if you can help. (HWW)

The October issue of **Old Glory** carried a photograph of the Leeds in Steam event.

The **Yorkshire Post**, 29 September, carried a photograph of Bob Payne in charge of *Matthew Murray* and an accompanying write-up of the Gala weekend.

Heritage Railway, November 2003 issue, under the title "Middleton Magic!" gave its readers two whole pages of photographs and narrative of our September Gala event, together with a photograph of *John Alcock* at the Barrow Hill First Born diesel event.

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