

THE OLD RUN

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The Editor invites all readers to contribute articles, news items, letters, photographs and drawings. All contributions should include the reader's name and address. Opinions expressed in the magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Middleton Railway Trust Ltd., the Middleton Railway Association, or the Editor.

All articles for the next issue should reach the Editor by 9th June, 1990 at the latest.

Frontispiece: the Editor makes no apologies for having people on the front cover for a second issue running! These happy folks hold an important place in the Railway's history, just as did the University Union Railway Society members on *Issue 129*; they were, in fact, on one of the first passenger trips on the line, in June 1960, in the Swansea and Mumbles Railway coach drawn/propelled by the Hunslet diesel later bought by the Middleton Railway Preservation Society and named **John Alcock**. With no covered or even secure accommodation then available, the coach suffered for many years from the dedicated attention of the local vandals. Pleas for a safer home to be offered met with no result, and the vehicle, being in a dangerous state and accessible to local children, had to be destroyed.

Photo: M.R.T. Collection

EDITORIAL

Happy Birthday to us! No member has any excuse whatsoever for not knowing that in June the Middleton Railway celebrates its 30th Anniversary of volunteer operation. It is hoped that as many members as possible will support the various events listed on Page 22 of the last issue, not only with their presence but also with some help wherever possible - the Middleton Railway is going to attract a lot of attention this year, and as many members as possible will be needed to rally round and look after visitors, particularly at special events. Please contact the appropriate officer (Shop Manager, etc.) or, alternatively, Vernon Smith, with offers of help. *The Old Run* makes no apologies for wallowing in nostalgia this year, and throughout the year will feature articles on aspects of the past 30 years. The ultimate in nostalgia, featuring aspects of the past 232 years, is now nearing completion; namely, the sixth edition of the Railway's history. A great deal of new research has gone into this - watch out for further details in the next issue, and look for it in the Shop, hopefully in time for the Anniversary Weekend.

Happy Birthday to the Talylyn Railway, which in 1990 celebrates its 40th Anniversary of preservation and its 125th Anniversary of building. An article about the Talylyn appears in this issue.

Happy Birthday to the Bluebell Railway, our fellow pioneer in standard gauge preservation, whom we narrowly pipped to the post in the starting of an "official" passenger service for the public. An article about the Bluebell line will appear in a later 1990 issue.

Happy Birthday on 20th June to Mrs. Harriet Hudson. Who? did I hear most of you say? When she made her entrance on 20th June 1960, she prevented her mother from driving the engine on our first passenger trains - her proud but chagrined mother being Mrs. Susan Youell. A few months ago, Harriet achieved the distinction of becoming the first woman - and also the youngest - Canal General Manager in Great Britain. She was appointed General Manager of the Montgomery and Llangollen Canals, one of her charges being the massively beautiful Pontcysyllte Aqueduct.

And lastly, belated Birth Day greetings to Master Vernon Mark Smith, and congratulations to Mum and Dad, Karina and Chairman Vernon. Master Vernon arrived on Saturday 10th February, just a few hours too late for mention in the last issue. However, he had the decency to appear well before the start of the Visitors' Season, thus enabling Mum to fire for Dad on the first day of regular working.

SHEILA BYE

The following article was first published in *The Old Run*, January 1983, and describes, from a personal angle, the development of the Middleton Railway during its first decade in preservation. It was written by John Bushell, then the Trust's Archivist/Historian, who, sadly, died in December 1988.

MIDDLETON; THE EARLY YEARS

The story of the Middleton Railway Preservation Society, as it then was, differs greatly from that of other similar groups. We were not engaged in resuscitating long defunct lines such as the Festiniog, nor were we preserving a line of great beauty. Our line had only closed earlier in the same year, and it ran between factories and slag heaps, passing back to back terraced houses on the way - No "Bluebell", "moors" or "parsonage" here! We had more vandals than visitors, whilst industrial archaeology as a tourist industry had yet to be born.

We did not suffer long, protracted negotiations with B.R., or any giant fund-raising projects, our negotiations only lasting from conception in 1959 to opening in June 1960. The railway was a unique undertaking in that it was owned by the Middleton Fireclay Company, a private undertaking, but linked a nationalised coal mine with a nationalised railway system. The Fireclay Company was in liquidation, and N.C.B. locomotives worked all the trains. Our major source of revenue lay not in tourists, but in tonnage of freight.

We received generous help from our future customers, Robinson and Birdsell's, and Clayton, Son and Company, whilst B.R. were most co-operative too (this was before Dr. Beeching despised "small traffic flows").

On the face of it, all that the Middleton Railway consisted of was an unattractive remnant of a once extensive industrial line. The line itself was weed-strewn and uneven, its ballast (what there was of it) consisting of cinders. In fact, the Middleton Railway hardly justified preservation at all were it not for the fact that in 1958, people had flocked to ride in dusty wagons to celebrate . . . the BICENTENARY! The one fact above all others was that the Middleton Railway was the oldest railway in the world, and we held the feeling that we should not allow this part of our heritage to be despatched into oblivion.

So the railway opened, initially to passenger traffic using our historic L.M.S. diesel (kindly loaned by the Hunslet Engine Co. at that time, prior to purchase by the M.R.P.S.) and the double-deck Swansea & Mumbles coach, looking more like a tramcar than the railway coach it actually was. It was at 16.45 on June 20th 1960 when I was amongst those assembled to witness the reopening. True to Middleton tradition I was given a flag and appointed guard on the spot! As always, M.R.P.S. was short of labour! Unlike other lines, which have since expanded their activities, we proceeded to celebrate the busiest week for passengers in our entire history, carrying no less than 7700 from Hunslet Halt to the old Parkside G.N. overbridge. The coach was too big to pass under the bridge and travel the few yards to the severed connection with the rest of the line to Broom Colliery. This had been

purchased by the N.C.B. and was operated by such diverse B.R. locos as 8Fs, Austerity 2-8-0s, Class 5s, and the odd 2-6-4T of varying sorts.

One major difference between ourselves and other societies was that we decided to preserve and operate tramcars as well as a railway. In fact, for years we had more trams than locos. The last tram in Leeds operated down York Road on 7th November 1959, and an urgent need developed to find homes for some of the redundant trams. Ultimately, we had eight lining the back road in Dartmouth Yard. From Leeds we had two Horsfield's (160 and 180) and an ex-London Feltham, two works cars and one of the renowned purple "Coronation" single deckers. Trams came from other cities too in the form of an ex-Liverpool bogie car (which was in fact from Glasgow!) and one of Sheffield's last trams owned by John Rothera. We very quickly discovered that Middleton was a most unsuitable location for such activities, as the tramcars would not run on our worn rails, and the area's high incidence of vandalism caused many problems, including the destruction by fire of a number of the trams. The surviving vehicles were quickly dispersed to other sites.

Middleton was, however, primarily a goods line and at first traffic was incredibly heavy. Ten thousand tons of steel and scrap were conveyed in the early years, putting a great strain on volunteers and locomotives alike. Some idea of operating conditions can be gleaned by reading Steve Roberts' excellent article 'Freight train, Freight train' in the 'Special' issue of *Old Run* from last year [1981]. This strain led to the proverbial 'single handed' member situation. Many members made great sacrifices to keep the railway running (though by this time I was a student myself, studying away from Leeds) but it would be wrong to omit mention of Fred.

Of all our early members, Dr. Ronald F. Youell, known to all at Middleton simply as 'Fred', was the one who spent most time on negotiation, administration, permanent way, driving - in fact you name it and Fred had undoubtedly done it! He was not alone, in spite of rumours to the contrary. Dr. (M.D.!) Reggie Lawrence, in spite of his health problems, was a stalwart on P.W. work. There were many others, but these two are worthy of special mention. One of the earliest problems was the need to operate goods traffic come what may, however much the member wanted to pursue his particular interest. This led to great ill-feeling between, for example, those who wished to preserve trams and those who maintained that the greatest need was to earn revenue by running freight. It is a matter of history that the latter group finally won the day.

Thus the M.R.P.S. became a living railway. Unfortunately, heavy goods trains never attracted the attentions that a passenger carrying line could, and membership grew very slowly to the 300 plus level, where it has in fact remained ever since. We sought to attract the interest of the public with exhibitions showing the story of the past 200 years. Monthly open days and occasional Steam Galas were also held. These last usually took place in Clayton's Yard and playing fields. Len Coles would bring his Mann Steam Tractor and Gavioli "Steam" Organ to entertain the crowds. His 'pièce de résistance' however, was his White Steam Car with which he would proceed to offer a challenge to any brave motorist willing to take it on in a tug of war. The car always won! Other events, such as the vintage Fire engines putting out

sleeper fires, and the demolition of the old Clayton's Pavilion by traction engines all helped to swell membership and maintain interest in our activities.

Perhaps a little strangely for a preserved line, early attempts to re-introduce passenger trains on a regular basis met with considerable opposition. We had from time to time obliged visiting parties, one such occasion featured on the cover of a Pete Nicholson publication "Preserved Main Line Diesel Locomotives". Perhaps the one I remember best was a group from West Germany, complete with interpreter. Whilst travelling down to Balm Road on the L.M.S. van, I heard the frantic cry "Stop ze train!" I duly obliged to find that the 'emergency' was the need to take photos of the lines of washing hanging in Gasholder Terrace! Germans, it appeared, did not hang their washing in the street! Such occasions were few and far between, however, the powers that were preferring to attract folk through the galas already mentioned.

In 1967, an Ian Allen excursion hauled by 7029 "CLUN CASTLE" brought 400 passengers to ride the line in a series of open waggon trains hauled by a loco at each end. Senior committee members threatened to resign if we entertained the group, but supervised by Reggie in his "Safety Officer's Hat", and looking more like a P.W. engineer than a medic, we safely and efficiently moved the traffic.

Sales were small and primitive, but the scene was now set for the development of regular passenger traffic when the colliery extension became our property some years later. The oldest firm in the business was becoming an established part of the South Leeds Scene.

JOHN BUSHELL

PUBLICITY STOP PRESS!

It has just been announced that the Middleton Railway is to have a guest locomotive from the National Railway Museum, for one weekend only. The loco is Great Northern Railway 1247, an 0-6-0ST built by Sharp Stewart of Glasgow in 1898. It has the distinction of being the first ex-B.R. steam locomotive to be preserved by an individual as opposed to a society. During its preservation history, it has been much travelled. It hauled the Blue Belle Rail Tour to the Bluebell Railway in 1963, and was resident at various times on the Keighley and Worth Valley line, at Tyseley, and on the North Yorks Moors Railway, before being presented by its owner, Captain W.G. Smith, to the National Railway Museum.

The loco is coming to haul the Middleton Railway portion of the Middleton Pioneer Rail Tour on Saturday 23rd June (see enclosed leaflet for full details of this). It will arrive at Middleton on Friday 22nd June, and leave on Monday 25th, and it is anticipated that the loco will be used for at least some normal passenger service trains on the 23rd and 24th June. Full details of this prestige visitor's timetable at the line can be obtained nearer the date, by sending a stamped self-addressed envelope to "G.N.R. details" at the Moor Road address (Page 23).

FOOTPLATEMAN OF THE YEAR, 1990

Our first major event of 1990 was the North Eastern Heat of the footplate competition, which took place on Saturday 31st March. This is sponsored by the magazine STEAM RAILWAY, and the magazine's Editor, Nick Pigott, was present, along with his Marketing Manager, Rennie Kapilla. Also, British Coal kindly donated 2 tons of coal for use in our heat of the competition.

We had 5 crews taking part in our heat, Derek Foster & John Kimberley from the East Lancashire Railway; Tom Walton & Phil Clayton from the Llangollen Railway; John & Richard Maughan from the North Tyneside Railway (formerly Middle Engine Lane, Stephenson Locomotive Project); John Stewart & Russell Walker from Steamport, Southport; and Bryan Gibson & David Lovat from our local Embsay Steam Railway.

The competition was in three parts, Passenger, Freight and Theory, each having its own Inspector.

The Passenger Section involved coupling together our two coaches, propelling them into the platform, and then working them to Middleton Park. After running round, these were worked back to Moor Road and then split for the next crew.

The Freight Section had crews making up a train comprising four wagons plus the L.M.S. 20ton brake van, then propelling it on to the main line and working it to Middleton Park. Whilst going to the Park, crews had to stop on the G.N. curve (approximate gradient 1 in 27!), and then perform a hill start. However, they were informed that the regulator handle had fallen off and they had to stop using only the reverser and steam brake! Most crews' reaction was !*%&"#! - but they all succeeded! Once at Middleton Park, the brake van had to be shunted on to the South end of the train, and then the whole thing had to be worked back to Moor Road. All the crews said afterwards that it was only then that they found out just how steep the Middleton Railway is!

The Theory Section comprised 50 question set by Steve Roberts. Judging from the sweat pouring from the contestants' brows as they emerged from the Norwegian Coach afterwards, they found this section difficult. One crewman had a large Doberman with him, and I noticed him showing a photo of Steve to the dog!

The standard of our contestants was high, considering the loco was unfamiliar to them, as was the railway. There were only 9 marks between the top four crews, whilst the tail enders did very well indeed considering that they had only just started operating their small line, and had not yet gained a great deal of railway operating experience. The eventual winners were Tom Walton & Phil Clayton from Llangollen, and they obviously hadn't expected to win as they were both "gobsmacked"! Nick Pigott presented both with engraved cut glass mugs, plus a bottle of Pomagne each. STEAM RAILWAY also provided a can of beer for all participating crews plus staff - thanks lads!

Our congratulations go to Tom & Phil, and indeed to all the crews, who could be well pleased with their efforts. Everyone who took part enjoyed themselves, which was the main aim of the event, whilst Middleton's organisers/inspectors have learned

much about it, and certainly would change one or two things if we were to stage a heat in a future competition. At the prize giving ceremony, Nick Pigott presented Chairman Vernon Smith with a sum of money collected by the visiting crews. This was a very generous gesture, which was much appreciated. Vernon thanked the crews for this donation, and hoped that everyone had enjoyed themselves.

For the record, our Inspectors were Tony Cowling - Passenger; Vernon Smith - Freight; Steve Roberts - Theory; and Geoff Saunders - Guard. Thanks very much folks - the competition couldn't have gone on without you.

IAN SMITH

RENAMING 'MIRVALE'

The second major event that Saturday was the formal recommissioning of Mirvale, carried out by Nick Pigott.

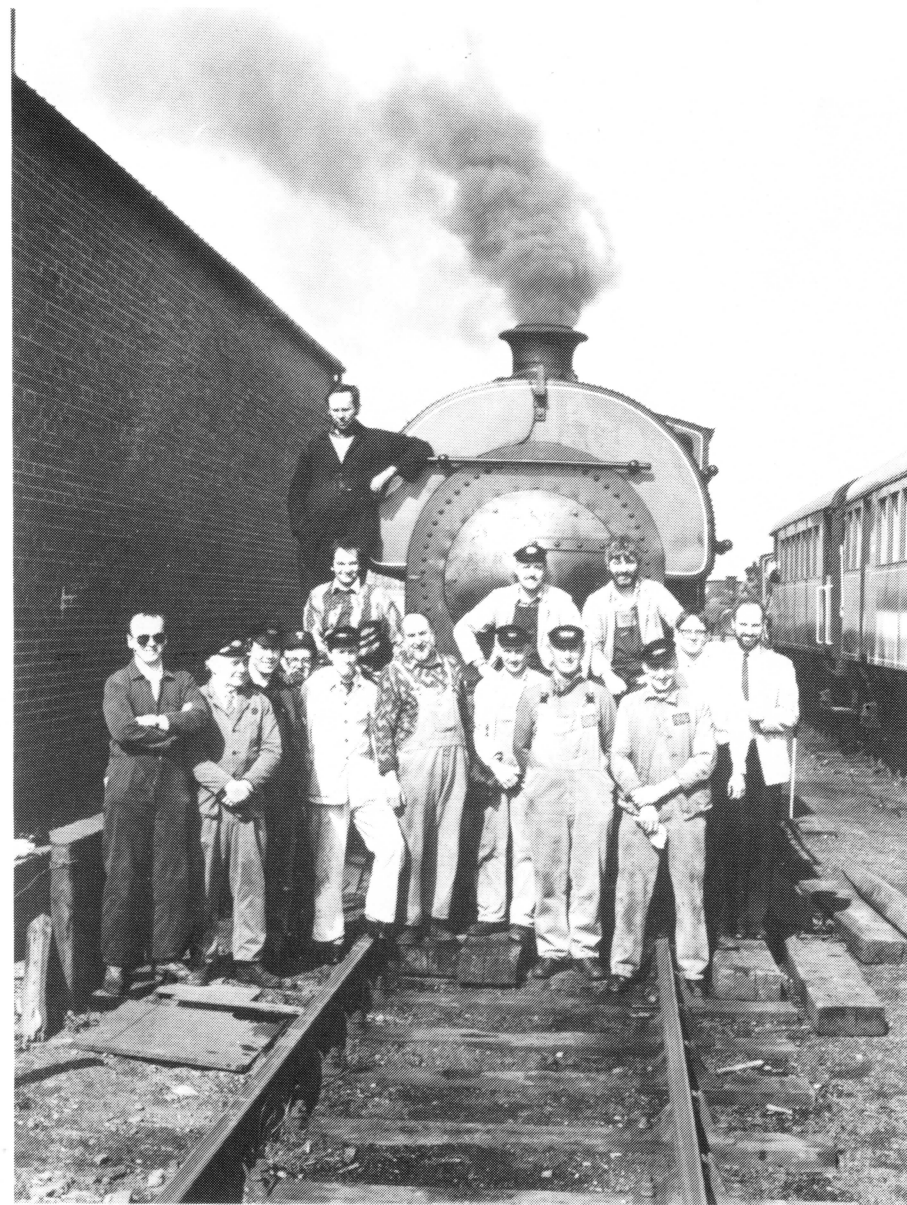
The loco looked immaculate, and certainly impressed our many visitors that day. She has been restored to her original livery, complete with hand-painted name on the saddletank, and her former owner, Ray Dixon, who had been invited to the event, was most impressed with the result. The loco was renamed at 2p.m., hauling a special train, supposedly for invited guests, but due to a misunderstanding actually for most of the occupants of Moor Road! A buffet was provided for the competition crews plus our guests, and the loco herself performed impeccably. Her new chime whistle sounded superb - a credit to one of the loco's shareholders, Malcolm Midgley, who made it himself. Thanks are also due to Roger Walton, who hand-painted the name, Steve Roberts, who did most of the lining-out, and Chris Barraclough, who provided the basic green base. Also thanks go to all the folks who worked on the loco to get her back into working order.

The whole day went very well, with much publicity also being gained. One lad who has gained fame is young Simon Flint, who is likely to appear in Steam Railway along with Pat Tonks. Nick Pigott took a photo of the two lads to illustrate the fact that youngsters who never saw steam on B.R. are getting involved on preserved railways. We were asked not to tell Simon so that he wouldn't get washed for the occasion - Nick thought the dirty face was just what was required. Quite what Simon's mother will say isn't yet known!

IAN SMITH

SHOP!

Many thanks to the members who have volunteered to do shop duty this year. There are still quite a few vacancies, however, particularly for mid-week openings, when Mr. and Mrs. Parkin are at work, and they would be very grateful for further offers of help (address on Page 23).



Footplate Competition participants and inspectors, with the victorious Llangollen crew sharing the footplate dais with Tony Cowling (standing) and Steve Roberts (sitting left). Nick Pigott, Editor of STEAM RAILWAY, stands first on the right. Photo: Mike Taylor.



Patrick Tonks (above) and Simon Flint (below) prepare 385 for use.
Photo: Mike Taylor.

ANNIVERSARY DINNER

This will be held at the Metropole Hotel, King Street, Leeds (just west of City Square) on Saturday 16th June, at 8.30p.m. in the Carvery (meeting in the Hotel's Gaslight Bar for drinks at 7.45p.m.). The meal will consist of a choice of first course (served at the table), main course - with a choice of three meats, plus vegetarian option - (taken buffet-style from the carvery table), and choice of sweet with coffee (brought to the table). The cost is £13 for adults, £6.50 for children (5-15), very reasonable for a good meal. The city centre venue makes it ideal for those who like to leave their cars at home and have a good safe drink, going home by late 'bus or taxi. There is a hotel car park, though this is not very big.

Please make your booking as quickly as possible, if you have not already done so, as we must be able to confirm numbers with the Hotel in the very near future. A booking form is enclosed with this issue, and should be sent with the appropriate deposit, plus a stamped self-addressed envelope, to Mike Scargill (address on Page 23). Please say if you would like a vegetarian option, so that this can be arranged.

THE MURRAY LEGACY, continued

Many thanks to Mr. Jack Tannett, who has followed up some of the puzzles raised in this article in the last issue. His researches amongst French books at the University of Kingston, Ontario, have come up with far more information than was available in the few books touching on the subject available at Bradford.

Bernand, scene of the incline test, does not appear even in the most comprehensive French gazetteers, and must be a small village or hamlet, or even a farm or hill name. A sly squint at detailed maps in booksellers' shops during our progress across France this year, is obviously needed.

Whereas my sources dated the Andrézieux-Roanne line as 1835-6, *France - A Geographical Survey*, by Philippe Pinchernel says it was opened in 1833, as "an alternative route to the Loire, which was shallow and dangerous for navigation". The report of the experiment was published in 1833. *Histoire Économique et Sociale de la France* says that the line had steam locomotives in 1832, linking up with the information in James W. Lowe's *British Steam Locomotive Builders*, that Fenton, Murray and Jackson supplied two locomotives to the line that year. A line using horse traction, together with a system of winches and inclined planes, had linked the mining area of St. Étienne with the village of Andrézieux, 9 miles N.W., since the mid-1820's. Andrézieux stands on the Loire, though the river was not navigable to this point. The line going on north to Roanne was a naturally desirable extension, since Roanne was at the limit of navigation, and also at the head of the Loire Canal. Though it is yet to be proved, this most likely was the elusive Railway of the Loire.

Many thanks also to Dr. Peter Excell, who kindly lent the Editor some books which gave further information on the subject. C. Dendy Marshall, in his book *A History of Railway Locomotives Down to the End of the Year 1831*, mentioned that

Fenton, Murray and Jackson supplied at least one locomotive to the area in 1832, though he said this was for the St. Étienne-Lyons line. However, he added the information that it was a 'Samson' class locomotive, and a reproduction of a plate from Nicholas Wood's *Treatise on Railways*, shows a 'Samson' class locomotive labelled, tantalizingly, "Machine locomotive du chemin de fer de la Loire"! The 'Samson' class was the heavy-duty goods version of Stephenson's 'Planet' class. It is highly unlikely that the St. Étienne-Lyons line would be called the Chemin de Fer de la Loire, as neither town stands on the Loire (in the last issue, I should have said that St. Étienne was *near* the Loire, not *on* it!). Perhaps the directors of the Andrézieux-Roanne line saw the St. Étienne-Lyons locomotive and ordered some themselves. More anon.

SHEILA BYE

P.S Obviously, our intelligent membership will have realised immediately that all was not right with the illustrations on Page 8 of the last issue; Mrs. Roi did not photograph a phantom skeleton of a rack locomotive named Carroll during her visit from the Antipodes, and Matthew Murray did not invent the diesel shunter! Somehow, the printers managed to put Photos 4 and 3 in photo positions 3 and 4.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

I am writing in response to the last sentence of your Editorial in the Winter edition. Having chanced on some of Dendy Marshall's wonderful books when I was a student, my principal railway interest has become the very earliest evolution of the technologies, and hence my main reason for joining the MRT was the Blenkinsop & Murray connection. I can therefore say that I am finding your articles fascinating, particularly since they seem to shed light on a question which has intrigued me for some time. This question is: why, with the exception of George Stephenson, did steam locomotive developers largely abandon their efforts in the period from about 1815 to 1825?

A possible answer that had occurred to me was the effect of the widely-reported explosion of the boiler of Brunton's 'Walking' locomotive in 1815, in which a number of relatively eminent people were killed. This happened in the North-East, and could have deterred steam loco developers up there: the Middleton explosion could have had the same effect further South. Since there was no Health & Safety Executive at that time I was unsure of the legal implications of such industrial accidents: your note in the Autumn edition has answered this. Your piece in the Winter edition, however, makes clear that the 'negative public relations' effect could be more serious still than the legal consequences. It would seem then that the deterrent effect of boiler explosions, probably coupled with the declining cost of horse haulage resulting from the ending of the Napoleonic War (1815), must have dissuaded the 'key players' (with the exception of Stephenson) from continuing their

experiments. The fact that Stephenson was able to continue development in these circumstances is remarkable.

Now, some further historical topics for debate:

1. Page 8 of the Winter edition shows a well-known drawing, allegedly of a B&M locomotive. This is curious for two reasons: firstly, it has rack wheels on both sides of the track, whereas all known B&M systems had a single rack wheel. This was well-known as a cause of wear, and B&M were known to favour a change to a system that would not put a twisting force on the loco frame: a rack in the centre of the rails was unacceptable as it would interfere with horses' hooves. A system with a rack at each side was mooted: this would overcome the problems (at the cost of more expensive track) but was such a system ever built? (This was discussed by Dendy Marshall in his 'A History of Railway Locomotives Down to the End of the Year 1831', without reaching firm conclusions. He also mentioned Middleton boiler explosions in 1818 and 1834, giving a brief extract from the 'Leeds Mercury' about the latter, although the date of the extract was misprinted as 1814.) Another relevant piece of evidence is the set of wheels in York Museum: this certainly has twin rack wheels, but is it from a real loco, or just the remains of someone's experiments? It came from an ironworks on Tyneside (Newburn), which was close to the Kenton & Coxlodge railway which used a B&M system of 4'7½" gauge: has anyone measured the gauge of the York wheelsets?

2. Although the question of the double rack has been discussed before, I have never seen any questioning of the elliptical boiler on the loco in this drawing. My mechanical-engineering knowledge is now very rusty, but my 'gut feeling' is that an elliptical boiler simply would not work: I think it would be blown into a circular shape under the most modest steam pressure and, since it was made of cast iron, it would crack, with dire consequences. Perhaps there is a stress expert with a finite-element program who could answer this point?

3. A well-known (to cognoscenti) mystery locomotive from the early years of steam locomotive development is the 'Steam Elephant', which is believed to have worked at Heaton colliery in Newcastle. This was a large 6-wheeled gear-driven loco which has appeared in at least three contemporary illustrations. Dendy Marshall was aware of it and ascribed it tentatively to Stephenson. Later, the eminent loco historian E.A. Forward suggested that it might be a rebuild of Chapman's experimental chain-drive loco, using unusual features of one of the illustrations to justify his reasoning (Trans. Newcomen Soc., Vol.28 (1951-53), pp1-19). Unfortunately, the illustration he was working from was extremely crude and the chief oddity (misalignment of cranks and cylinders) does not appear in the other versions. A possible origin of this loco which has occurred to me, but which I have not seen suggested elsewhere, is that it could be an adhesion-drive rebuild of a B&M loco from the Kenton & Coxlodge line, which was not far from Heaton. It certainly shows a general resemblance to known B&M locos: conversion to 6-wheel adhesion drive would be a relatively simple matter of

removing the rack gear (or gears), fitting rail wheels to the ends of the rack gear shaft, and adding gears on the centres of the outer rail-wheel axles to mesh with the gears on the layshafts. Since the Kenton & Coxlodge locos do not appear to have worked for long, and yet must have represented a very expensive capital investment, their 'recycling' for some other use such as this must be regarded as highly probable. Incidentally, there is some evidence (in Dendy Marshall) that one of the B&M locos at Orrell colliery (Wigan) was converted to adhesion drive, presumably along the lines suggested above.

4. The idea of simple convertibility of B&M locos between rack and adhesion drive suggests an optimum strategy for a replica loco. This could be built with two interchangeable sets of axles: one set would have four rail wheels to 4'1" gauge, plus an axle with a single rack gear: in this form the loco could sit in a museum (or puff up and down a short length of rack track) as an 'authentic' replica of an early Middleton loco. The other set of axles would have 4 (possibly 6) wheels to standard gauge, with adhesion drive arranged as above: if it had four wheels, a dummy rack wheel (of reduced diameter to avoid fouling pointwork) could be fitted on the centre axle. Although the idea of a standard gauge adhesion-drive approximate replica may be anathema to purists, it would have the great advantage that it could visit other railways and gain valuable publicity for Leeds and Middleton: in short, it might pay for itself!

P. EXCELL (DR.)

RHEILFFORDD TALYLLYN

This year, the Talyllyn Railway celebrates two birthdays, the 125th anniversary of it being built, and the 40th anniversary of it becoming the first railway to be preserved by volunteers.

Today, there are hundreds of railways run by enthusiasts all over the world, but the idea was unheard of in 1950, when the Talyllyn Railway Preservation Society was launched. Many thought the pioneering volunteers were attempting the impossible: they were trying to save a then almost derelict railway from closure. The experiment paid off, and the Talyllyn Railway has gone from strength to strength.

The Railway was built in 1865, to carry slate from quarries seven and a half miles inland, to Tywyn on the Mid Wales coast. Bryn Eglwys Quarry, in remote hills above the railway's present Nant Gwernol terminus, proved a commercial failure. However, a local businessman, Sir Henry Haydn Jones, came to the rescue, and kept the railway running up to his death in 1950. The Talyllyn was then in a very run-down state, but it had stayed open long enough to be discovered by Midlands railway enthusiasts, including the famous engineering author L.T.C. Rolt.

The Society was formed, and Rolt led the rescue operation as the Talyllyn's first preservation era manager, during 1951-52. The volunteers faced a formidable task: the line possessed just one workable locomotive - dating from 1866, five ancient coaches, and totally worn-out track. Despite the difficulties, the preserved line proved a success. More locomotives and rolling stock were acquired, and wholesale rebuilding of the line got under way. Meanwhile, the Talyllyn's fame spread far and wide: the line inspired the classic Ealing comedy film *The Titfield Thunderbolt*, made in 1952, and the creator of Thomas the Tank Engine, the Rev. W. Awdry, based his Skarloey Railway characters directly on the Talyllyn.

Today, the railway is very different, reflecting the progress made since the Society took over. The line now has five steam engines, three diesels, and twenty-two passenger vehicles. At the end of the 1989 season, all were in working order. It is hoped that a new steam engine, the line's first since 1954, will be finished during the anniversary year. Nearly all Talyllyn trains are operated by volunteers, and the Society has tackled many projects both to preserve the past and to meet the requirements of today's visitors. Volunteers rebuilt the former mineral extension from Abergynolwyn to Nant Gwernol, and the work, completed in 1976, opened a further threequarters of a mile of line to passenger trains for the first time. The line's original engines have been completely restored, and both see regular service. New carriages and station buildings have been constructed.

1990 sees the Talyllyn in good heart to face the future. Last year brought a welcome increase in traffic, generating extra cash to help both upgrade passenger facilities, and maintain preservation progress.

LOCO NOTES

How things change! In the last *Old Run*, I reported the arrival of Harry, but little did I know that 1990 would herald the arrival of two more steam locos (with the possibility of two more in the pipeline, but these must remain on the secret list at this stage). The arrival of Arthur first made the stop press of the last *Old Run*, but negotiations for the loan of Hodbarrow, late of the National Railway Museum, had not reached the stage for publicity. These have now been concluded, and the loco will be coming towards the end of April. 1990 certainly is proving to be an eventful year, loco-wise.

2003 John Blenkinsop successfully passed its annual boiler exam during March, and will be available until the middle of August, when its ten year stripdown becomes due. This loco is in generally very good condition, although the odd clank emanates from the running gear. However, it is not intended to carry out the stripdown

immediately, and the loco is to be carefully stored for a couple of years. We currently have a surplus of motive power, and whilst it is a pleasant situation to have, it does cost money for insurance and such things as tubes, which have a finite life time. The laying up of the Peckett does mean we have a reliable locomotive that can be returned to service relatively quickly if needs arise in the near future.

385 is available for traffic. Examination of the problem injector has not revealed any faults, and we are at a loss as to why it is so reluctant to operate reliably. A blowing dome joint has been rectified, and the opportunity was taken to re-bed the regulator valve, which was leaking quite badly.

54 The Sentinel is theoretically available for traffic, but so far we have been unable to locate the reason for it not steaming properly. The problem only occurred after the boiler was stripped for its annual inspection, and we are convinced that it is drawing air from the top of the boiler instead of through the fire but, although all joints have been remade and checked, no reason has been found. Until this is sorted out, it cannot really be used for regular service.

1882 Mirvale seemed destined not to make its scheduled return to service on the 31st March 1990 but, through much hard work and long hours it will make it - but only just. Our problems started when the "Brunswick green" gloss paint turned out to be faulty, resulting in a speckled finish. This meant another round of rubbing down before fresh paint could be applied, but perhaps more importantly, meant that the intricate job of lining and lettering could not be started. That this work has been completed with just a week to spare has only been made possible by the dedication of our volunteers. Mirvale had run at the 1989 gala with borrowed safety valves, as its own were not back from overhaul in time, but these were too large to enable the dome cover to be fitted. A trial steaming to test its own valves revealed a serious problem with these, and when they were checked off the engine they did not open until 300 lb p.s.i. pressure was reached! This was traced to the wrong size springs being fitted by the repairer, and fortunately we were able to rectify the situation in time for a trial steaming on the 24th March. Several test runs were made to Middleton Park, and the loco was declared fit for service.

1310 Work continues on needlegunning the frames to remove the old layers of paint. One side has been done, and has been covered in red oxide. All the seized pins have been drilled out of the spring hangers, and a complete set of new ones is being made. The bent spring hangers have been straightened, as have the bent brake hangers. Work progresses on the overhaul of the valve gear, with new pins and bushes being made. The plate for the footplate has arrived, and awaits cutting to shape. A start has been made on the new tanks, the plate for which was obtained at a very good price from Shaw's Metals (Derby). We have had a setback with the machining of the wheels and axles, which are now to be sent to the Severn Valley Railway for this

work. It is a little concerning that the programme which has been drawn up for the overhaul of 1310 is falling behind, but with the completion of Mirvale, it is hoped that significant progress can now be made.

1823 Harry Following the arrival of the paperwork for this loco, we were able to get agreement from our Boiler Inspector to the locomotive's use in 1990, subject to a satisfactory boiler inspection. Problems associated with the removal of the fusible plug, and some three inches of sludge in the bottom of the boiler barrel delayed the inspection, but the visual part of the exam has now been satisfactorily concluded, and a steam test is imminent. At some time in its past, the washout plug holes (22 of them) have been tapped out to a parallel thread, a potentially very dangerous situation, which has also resulted in most of the threads becoming corroded to nothing. These have had to be re-threaded to the correct taper thread, a job compounded by the fact that there are both 11 and 12 threads per inch on the loco, a very undesirable situation which we shall have to rectify when the boiler is overhauled, probably next year.

1610 Arthur Our second arrival from the Buxton site of Peak Rail came by low loader on Wednesday 31st January, as briefly reported in the last Old Run. Unlike Harry, which is on loan, Arthur has been purchased outright by the Trust, and is seen as an important milestone in our attempts to build up a collection of Leeds-built locos. Arthur had been the subject of a major overhaul whilst at Buxton. Much work has been done on the loco, including new axleboxes, crankpins, footplating, etc., but much remains to be done before it can be put into service. It is intended to leave work on Arthur until such time as the Y7 is well on its way to completion, but it is hoped that it will become a working locomotive in the not too distant future.

1697 John Alcock Work progresses satisfactorily on the fitting of vacuum brake equipment to the loco, but it is unlikely to be ready for Easter, as originally planned. The Boiler Inspector refused to accept the air receivers from the loco, which was to be expected really, having regard to their construction. New ones have been made, at reasonable cost, but because they are made from a standard size tube they are slightly larger than the originals.

91 Alf entered the repair shed on the 24th March for the outstanding work to be completed. The front of the bonnet has been removed for straightening of damage caused in B.S.C. service. Other work, notably on the vacuum brake system and on repainting, will be more rapid now it is under cover.

Rowntree No.3 The main air tanks have been removed for inspection, a job necessitating removal of half the bonnet.

138C Fitting of vacuum brakes has been completed, and the loco has successfully worked a test train to Middleton Park. Repainting will be completed shortly.

4220038, D577 & D631 are serviceable. All other locos are stored pending overhaul.
STEVE ROBERTS

ARTHUR

One of our aims has always been to build up a collection of Leeds-built locomotives. To this end, there has evolved an unofficial list of locos that we would be more than interested in acquiring. High on this list was a small Manning, Wardle built locomotive. We knew which locos would be suitable and when we learnt, during our negotiations for Harry, that the owner of Arthur would be willing to sell, it was an opportunity that was too good to miss. Our finances were in a fairly healthy state, although plans were afoot for a large increase in shed size, which would soon take care of the savings. Council agreed to a diversion of some funds and, armed with a bottom-line figure, our Chairman entered into negotiations. An agreed price was arrived at which just about matched our available money, and the sale was agreed, subject to a satisfactory examination.

The locomotive was situated at the Buxton site of Peak Rail, and had to be off site to a deadline, so a hurried inspection was arranged. It was known that much work had been done on the loco, and this proved to be the case when inspected. However, it was obvious that the boiler was not in as good a condition as we had been led to believe, although nothing insurmountable was found. The inspection concluded, the sale was agreed and the loco arrived three days later, on 31st January.

Arthur is a standard Manning, Wardle contractors' type locomotive of their Class L. It was supplied new to the contractors, P.W. Anderson Ltd., in 1903, and was used on various works before being employed on the building of the Kent Portland Cement Works, near Gravesend. On completion of the contract in 1923, Arthur was sold to the cement works company, along with a sister locomotive, Ajax.

The two locomotives continued to be used at the cement works until 1959, when two Sentinel diesels arrived. Ajax was cut up for scrap in 1960, but Arthur was retained as spare engine until 1967, when it was sold to the Industrial Locomotive Preservation Group and was moved to a new home on the Kent & East Sussex Railway. It eventually became K.&E.S.R. No.17, and was used by the railway until 1976, when it was put aside in need of major overhaul. Increasing train loads on the K.&E.S.R. meant that Arthur was unlikely to be of further use, and another change of ownership took place, the loco eventually ending up at Buxton.

Once at Buxton, a heavy overhaul was commenced and the loco was stripped down to the bare essentials. The driving wheels and journals have been machined, and new axlebox brasses cast and machined. New crankpins have been fitted, along with new valve gear and spring pins. A new running plate has been fitted, and the cab has been overhauled. The boiler had received a clean bill of health, and a retube has been carried out. However, our examination has shown that there is more localised wastage of the firebox outer wrapper than had been revealed previously, and further work will be necessary in this area if we are to have a locomotive fit for long service.

Current plans are to leave the locomotive in the "as delivered" state until work on the Y7 is well advanced. It is thus expected to be early 1991 before the remaining work can be started. Much work remains to be done on Arthur, and it is unlikely to see service before the 1992 season, although given the workforce and money an earlier date could be a reality.

TECHNICAL DETAILS

Manning, Wardle & Co. Works No. 1601, built 1903
Class 'L' 0-6-0ST
Cylinders 12" diameter x 18" stroke, Stephenson Link motion
Boiler pressure 140 lbs. p.s.i.
Wheel diameter 3'0"
Wheel base 10'9"
Length over buffer beams 19'6"
Tank capacity 450 gal.
Weight in working order 20 t. 10 cwt.
Tractive effort 8570 lbs. (at 85% boiler pressure)

STEVE ROBERTS

HODBARROW

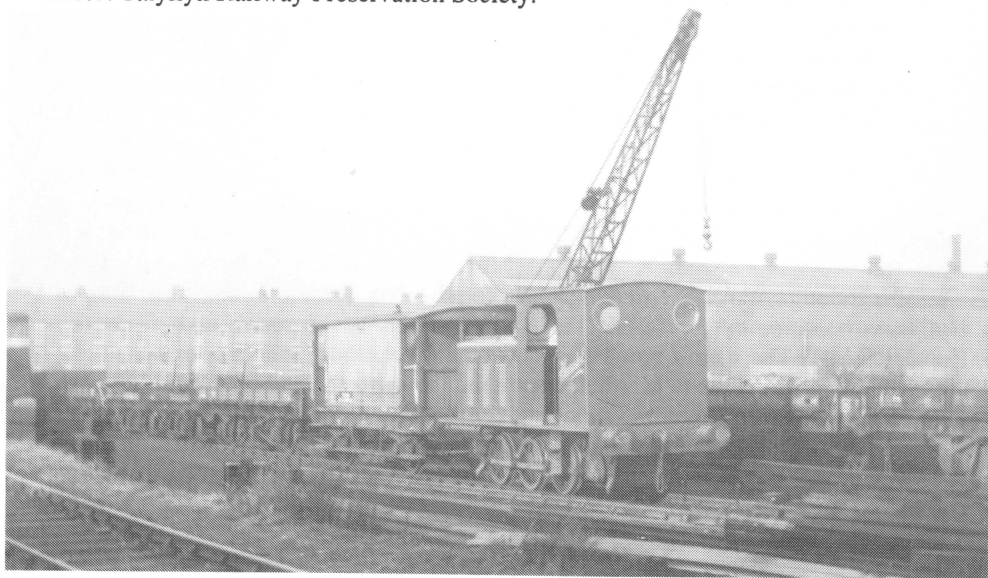
Negotiations have been taking place for some time for the long term loan of Hodbarrow, currently housed at the National Railway Museum, and owned by Hunslet/G.M.T. These have now been successfully concluded, and it is expected that the locomotive will come to Middleton sometime towards the end of April.

Hodbarrow is the oldest surviving Hunslet standard gauge locomotive (their works No. 299), built in 1882. Before purchase by Hunslets for preservation in 1968, the locomotive worked at the Millom Ironworks in Cumberland. An 0-4-0ST, it is not currently in working order, but an overhaul is planned with a view to its return to steam in the future.

STEVE ROBERTS



Rheilffordd Talyllyn 1989: No. 2 Dolgoch approaches Abergynolwyn. (See Page 14.)
Photo: Talyllyn Railway Preservation Society.



Dartmouth Yard in the very early 1960's: 1697, as yet unnamed, poses with both empty and part-unloaded platewagons. (See Page 21.) Photo: M.R. Gilkes.

THE DAILY FREIGHT - c.1964

During these early years, the Middleton Railway operated a daily freight service. In 1960, drivers and crew were mainly University students, but their lengthy holiday periods soon caused crewing problems. Middleton freight ran for 50 weeks a year, with a two week holiday period in mid August. Sole motive power was **John Alcock** or **JA** as the veteran Hunslet shunter was known. The **Sentinel** shunter was next on the scene, and did help out several times. **Windle** had appeared, but due to a tangled loan agreement, was never steamed for many years. My driving days started early in 1961, for civil engineering work and then as a holiday cover for University crews.

This period in time saw me travelling daily to Doncaster to work for B.R., so the Middleton freight was usually an evening run. Arrival in Leeds was usually behind a B1 4-6-0, at about 6.30p.m., then a brisk walk across to the bike/scooter park, and away on my scooter down to Middleton. The first call was always at the bottom of the line to see what was waiting to come in. The main snag for outgoing traffic was that if there was more than some 10 wagons, the loop entrance would be blocked, so nothing could go out until the incoming traffic was moved. However, there were two sidings available to park traffic in, one was the present station platform siding - it would just take 6 platewagons, and the second was the newly laid siding into the 'other' Clayton's, which would take 4 or 5 wagons. Once the traffic had been assessed, it was up to Clayton's yard, where **JA** was kept. The rest of the crew would be there waiting - a second man and a shunter. **JA** was kept at the top end of the yard, next to the road. The battery isolator was clipped in, the decompression lever pushed in, the starter button would bring a whirr from the engine, once up to max. motoring speed, the decompression lever was released and the engine would fire. Getting **JA** started was always tricky, but once running it was usually only a matter of waiting a couple of minutes for the air pressure to build up, then you were almost ready to go. Standing on the clutch and pushing the throttle lever shut applied the handbrake on the propshaft, and allowed you to engage forward gear. A full air brake application allowed you to release the handbrake easily, and then releasing the air brake and clutch you were away.

A gentle run down the yard across the rickety pointwork (it was Clayton's track, so we couldn't mend it), and then set back on to the centre road to pick up any empty steel wagons that Clayton's had unloaded that day. These wagons were drawn up to the end of the yard and on to the downhill slope, and the brakes were pinned down. Robinson & Birdsell's traffic was left outside their gate, and was usually 16- or 21-ton mineral wagons fully loaded with steel scrap. Tonight there were only 3 16-tonners. **JA** buffered up to the wagons, and the brakes were unpinned; this bit of the line was very steep and great care had to be taken easing the loaded wagons away. The load was stopped below the Clayton's yard point, and the Clayton's empties collected by reversing up the hill. The loaded wagons were always safer next to the loco for the downhill run. The downhill run to the headshunt gave few problems, the

loco finishing up at the buffers in the middle of the rugby ground car park, reversing now and propelling the wagons, with the brakesman/flagman usually riding on the leading platewagon. The wagons rumbled over the tramway crossing and on to the straight, the load was brought to a halt with the leading wagon level with the old water crane, some 50 yards short of Moor Road. The brakes of the leading wagons were now lightly pinned down, and the flagman went down to the road with red flags to stop the road traffic. Once road traffic was at a standstill, a whistle from JA, and the load was eased slowly over the road and the rear sanders were used to lay a layer of sand on the rails for the return run. The back sanders were much more effective, as the front sanders usually missed the rails!

A steady downhill run took the train into the left hand loop siding. The brakes were pinned down, and JA moved over on to the incoming road. The load tonight was 4 loaded platewagons for Clayton's, and 2 empty 21-ton mineral wagons for Robinson & Birdsell's. JA's limit up the hill to Moor Road was 6 loaded platewagons, about 150 tons gross. The wagons were drawn up the hill clear of the loop, and backed down on to the outgoing traffic to push it down to the end of the loop so that the B.R. 350 h.p. shunter could take it into Balm Road for despatch. JA now had to pull away up the hill with a full load of some 100 tons; full throttle in low gear gave flat out at 7 m.p.h. We were supposed to stop when approaching Moor Road, so that the flagman could stop the road traffic (and if possible a 74 'bus!). JA would then pull away steadily with a bit of careful clutch control (you could stall the engine just the same as in a car if you let the clutch out too quickly). This was when that bit of sanding going down the hill paid off. The rails laid across Moor Road were invariably filled up with mud, which was cleared out periodically. The 80 yards above Moor Road (behind the present station) were always tricky - if you slipped to a standstill, the end of your train would be on Moor Road.

Once round the corner and on to the straight, you could breath easily and let JA recover - and let your Moor Road flagman catch you up! Once you were over the tram crossing, the load was usually sorted into Clayton's and Robinson & Birdsell's traffic - a separate run round the sharp uphill curve was advisable. Robinson & Birdsell empties were pushed right up to the gate, with care being taken to avoid fouling King's road crossing. The loaded platewagons were then collected and brought up the hill, again on full throttle, and left in the centre road of Clayton's yard for them to attend to next day. JA was then eased over that rickety pointwork again, and up to the water tap at the top of the yard. The handbrake was applied, and JA's engine shut down. The radiator was always drained if a frost was forecast - anti-freeze was too expensive in those days! The air reservoir was de-watered, the battery isolator switch taken out and locked away. The wagon numbers were always recorded in the log book, and this was locked away in JA's locker.

A good run with little extra shunting required could be completed in about 50 minutes, then it was back to the scooter and home for some overdue tea.

NORMAN FEARNLEY, Operating Superintendent, 1963-7.

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