

NEWSLETTER
OF THE MIDDLETON RAILWAY TRUST LIMITED

DOWN AT THE LINE

THE SCHOOLS STEAM DAY was on Wednesday 19th June. Many thanks to all concerned (in particular the engine crew members who got up at about 5.00 that morning). No. 6 wore her 'Percy' face to entertain the customers, and the Peckett's brass dome looked well after applications of Brasso and elbow-grease from 3 M.R.A. members. Over 700 children came, plus their keepers, and most of them seemed to enjoy the trip - not even the first sight of "Bobby" Joe in his best helmet put them off. £52.15p was the fare takings (compared with £22 in 1972, £34.10p in 1973), and shop takings were over £30. Many schools had to be disappointed, and another Steam Day will probably be arranged for October.

A NEW PLATFORM is already taking shape at Tunstall Road Halt. M.R.A. members, directed by Brian Rushworth, have dug a trench to the south of the present platform. Large stones pushed off the wall at the top end of the line by the local jobs, have been reclaimed, and are being set into the trench to form the foundations for the retaining wall. Some stone sleepers have also been brought down and the best examples will probably be sunk into the top of the platform to form part of its surface (and be there to show stone sleeper-gricers). Several hundred bricks have also been acquired from the old piggeries near G.N. bridge, and stored in and around the Middleton wagon. Some members have become avid "brick-gricers" and have formed a small collection of some of the more unusual varieties such as Nostell, Lofthouse, and Yorkshire Brick Company. As we have heard recently of the existence of a British Brick Society which is anxious to list as many makes as possible, our collection may be of some use. Those bricks which the brick-gricers can be persuaded to part with will probably be cleaned up and used for facing the new platform. Many thanks to the Rushworth family, who held a jumble sale to raise funds for materials for the new platform (unfortunately we have yet to find some "reclaimable" cement). They made £22.67, and still have a great deal of their "stock" left for the M.R.A. jumble sale to be held later.

WASTE PAPER HAS ITS PRICE £14 a ton in fact! Old newspapers, magazines, cardboard packing etc. is being collected at the Yard to sell in aid of the Depot Fund. With only the "Yard People" collecting, we already have about $\frac{1}{2}$ a tone + another $\frac{1}{2}$ ton at Derek Liley's house. If all visiting members brought their old newspapers etc. it would be even more profitable. Please leave YOUR contributions to the collection ~~int~~ in the brake van if you come at the weekend or in the p.w. container if you come to the Yard.

NOTABLE OCCURENCE On Saturday 6th July 'John Alcock' moved under his own 'steam' for the first time since Pete Nettleton began his marathon overhaul and repair 2 years ago. The loco was used to run freight traffic the following week.

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2. The lack of any response to the plea for more help with freight traffic. For the 6 months from October to March, we received a cheque for £330 for freight traffic. Very nice, but do YOU realise this money was earned for us by 2 regular drivers and a handful of shunters - most of them schoolboys, + one or two days a week in term time staffed by University students? Now the University vacation has come the situation is desperate and for a few weeks at least we expect incoming traffic of about 120 tonnes a week - £12 worth of work. DON'T sit there and think - or worse still expect - that someone else will keep the freight service going: come down to the Yard one evening about 6.30 (except Friday) and offer YOUR services. The only things you need are common-sense and a willingness to learn a simple job.

MIND THE WET PAINT! There has been a serious outbreak of new paint during the past few months. First victim was the Laporte acid tanker which Bill Holliday (fresh from his success with Henry and Matthew) quickly turned bright blue with black frames - Peter Jones later did the lettering in white. Next to succumb was "Windle", which is being undercoated grey as a protective measure as work progresses. At Tunstall Road Halt, the shop has become a much brighter red at the hands of Tom Apperley, and Joe Lee has finished off that last corner of the Middleton wagon. Last week Bill, aided and abetted by Pete, ran amok with a paint spray gun and turned the passenger wagon bright yolk yellow with black bands and frames. (The choice of colour apparently had no connection with the fact that three Liberal councillors had been invited to visit the Railway.) P.S. What about the Peckett, Bill?

THE BALLAST BRAKE VAN Work is progressing. The worser woodwork has been renewed and seating is being installed for approximately 20 people. It will certainly be a great asset in bad weather, but despite what Ian wrote in the last issue of 'Old Run', the open wagon remains the most popular vehicle in good weather - even elderly people choose to travel in there when the sun is shining.

VISITORS' SERVICE Despite one or two days of bad weather, not to mention the lure of the World Cup, the daily averages continue above £15: after the 14th July, the averages were 156 visitors and £15.26p fare takings. That day was the half-way mark for the season, and the totals so far were 4,679 visitors: £457.80½p fares compared to 2,907 visitors: £224.16p at last year's half-way mark. In fact, the fares total to date is almost exactly the same amount taken in the whole year last year.

STEPTOE'S The second-hand stall in the brake van is prospering, thanks to regular injections from several members of books, magazines, and even jigsaws and records. So far, over £15 has been made from these extra sales items which cost our funds nothing to acquire. Please help us to keep going.

SUPER-GRICER OF 1974 This year's award will probably go to the photographer who visited several weeks ago to get an illustration for the industrial railways article in the T.V. Times which featured mainly Middleton and Leighton Buzzard. He brought his wife and 3 daughters, arriving for the first train one rainy afternoon. Due to the weather, there were only 2 bona fide passengers that trip and they were only going to the Park so we had to hi-jack them for a return trip, and our clippie and the photographer's family formed the rest of the "crowd". During the course of the return trip, we estimate he took upwards of 80 shots to get the solitary one which was printed! Hope you all saw the article, and the fine drawing of 385 "Old Streaky" which appeared the following week - to be cut out and pasted in the 'Great Trains Expedition Album'. For those who do not know of this scheme, the T.V. Times publishes a monthly voucher entitling the holder's family to a 20% reduction on fares at any one of 19 preserved railways, and there is an album to send for in which to paste coloured drawings published weekly in the paper. The T.V. Times contestant narrowly beats a member of a party from the Sittingbourne & Kemsley line who was observed on the hill taking shots with 2 cameras at once. They were "harnessed" together on a strip of metal.

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THE ADS. After weeks of fraught experiences with the classified adverts department of the local paper, trying to place our Friday ad., life has become much simpler. Paul Hebden, who works for the paper in question, takes the ad. in for us and doesn't seem to have nearly the amount of difficulty I had, and none of the fun either - until a few weeks ago that is: a new dolly-bird was on duty at the desk that morning - she took one look at the ad. headline "STEAM IN LEEDS" and cooed excitedly "Ooh! Is it a new pop group?"

IMPORTANT NOTICES

With this circulation SOME members will receive their membership renewal forms. Please fill this in and return it to Brian with a cheque or P.O. At a time when so much is happening to our Railway, most of it good, we greatly need your continuing support.

Also with this circulation ALL members of the TRUST will receive a special membership application form which MUST be filled in and returned to Brian. A formal application to become a member of the new Limited Company is required by law, and you cannot be considered a Company member unless the form is completed and returned, even if your normal renewal time is December. Members who renew in June/July should please fill in BOTH forms and send them with the usual subscription, but members usually renewing in December/January should only return the special form.

Newsletter compiled by Sheila Young,

15th July, 1974.

P.S. M.R.A. members whose renewals are due will receive their copies of 'The Old Run' together with their membership cards when they have paid their subscriptions.

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