



The Old Run

Journal of the Middleton Railway Preservation Society

No. 5

May 1960

The most important event for the Society this month has been the Inaugural General meeting. The date - 7th May - had been fixed last February, but various events conspired to make this as inconvenient as possible. The RCTS ran one of their popular rail tours, thereby removing many of our railway enthusiast members; the Bradford tramcar made its periodic 100 yard excursion outside Thornbury depot, and four trams arrived at Crich tramway museum, including two from Leeds -

these two events effectively decimated the number of tram experts present; there was a Cup Final, and it was a hot day. We were therefore lucky to find that 25 people attended our first public meeting, at which we recruited three new members.

In contrast to events at Wembley, the meeting was lively and interesting. As Dr Youell revealed our hidden aces there were gasps, "Oooh"s, and finally complacent laughter. A report is printed separately, but it must be realised that it is not yet possible to disclose in public many of the items discussed, and they have had to be omitted. Further information may be obtained from members who were present, but it must not be repeated outside the Society.

We should like to draw members' attention to some changes in the Constitution. It was agreed that this Journal should not necessarily be "monthly", as was implied in the first draft of the Constitution. We shall continue as a monthly newsletter as long as there is enough news to justify this, but if a fairly uneventful month should occur, as is likely in the winter, we may combine two months' news into one edition. Another significant omission from the original draft is that of the word "rail" in Clause two in the phrase, "...to establish a Museum on the Railway devoted to (rail) transport". This is to cover the possibility of the Society being offered vehicles other than rail. Our chief object, however, is still to establish a railway museum, so purists need have no misgivings.

The approved Constitution is by no means final, but it was passed on the understanding that if, after due experience, any clause should need modifying, this could be done at the Annual General Meeting (Date to be decided).

Sheffield Tram Tour

The following are details of the tour. Fares may be paid on the tram, but it would be helpful if members could pay in advance by postal order for 5/- made out to the Society when they book. All profits will go to the Society. This will be one of the last comprehensive tours of Sheffield to be made, as the tramways close down in October. Bookings to Peter Dean.

Sunday 26th June 1960

1.0pm	depart	Midland Station
		via Sheaf Street
1.5	"	Blonk Street

2

via Waingate, Flat Street, Pond Street

1.10pm depart Midland Station

via Blonk Street, Waingate, High Street, Church St.

1.20 " Leopold Street

via Fargate, Angel Street, Bridge Street

1.40 " Weedon Street

1.45 arrive Tinsley Depot (via Metro-Vickers Cross-over)

2.00 depart " "

via Waingate

2.20 " Fitzalan Square

via Commercial Street, Sheaf Street, Queens Road

2.45 " Millhouses

via The Moor

3.5 " / Leopold Street

via Church St., Commercial St., Blonk Street.

3. 30 " Vulcan Road

via Blonk Street, Sheaf Street

3.50 " Shoreham Street Depot (Cross-over)

via Sheaf St, Commercial St, Church St, the Moor

4.20 " Beauchief

via Wolseley Road, Queens Road

4.40 " Midland Station

via Sheaf St, Blonk St, High St, Fargate

4.55 " Chippinghouse Road (Cross-over)

via Fargate, Angel Street

5.10 arrive Tenter Street Depot

It is hoped to use Car No 517

The Leeds City Museums Committee have been interested in our scheme for some time, as they themselves have bought Horsfield tram No 202 and have nowhere to keep it. They were considering building a small transport section at Kirkstall Folk Museum, but the cost of this would have been too great. Whatever the outcome of their deliberations would have been, a crisis has now occurred which promises to be advantageous to the Society. Leeds City Transport have contacted them and ordered them to remove their tram from Swinegate depot immediately. Naturally, Mr Mitchell, the Director, rang Dr Youell and asked permission to store it with us until its future is settled. The Middleton Committee agreed, and the tram should be delivered to Clayton's Siding, which is to be fenced off, before June 17th.

There is a real probability that the Museum Committee may ask the Society if they can help us in establishing the Museum part of the enterprise in the Fireclay works. The likely arrangement is for our Society to provide the technical skill to keep all exhibits in working condition, and the Museums Committee to provide enough money to make a start on converting the premises. This would mean that we should forfeit a small part of our independence in exchange for an assured future and many other advantages. If such an agreement is reached, a document will be prepared giving all details and circulated to members.

We hope that members will not feel that all this is being done over their heads. We try to keep everyone informed, but it is impossible to consult the Society when important decisions have to be made in a couple of hours. However, if you are not satisfied with the way in which your affairs are being handled, or if you have any suggestions, please do not hesitate to write to "The Old Run". We shall be glad to publish your letter or bring it to the notice of the Committee.

The Merseyside Tramway Preservation Society, to whom we offered space for their ex-Liverpool tram, have arranged for it to arrive from Glasgow on the morning of June 10th. This is an awkward date, as some of our members will be in Swansea. We should like to appeal to all those in Leeds on that date to help with the unloading at Clayton's Siding. Incidentally, the tram is being moved free of charge by Guinness!

Rag

It is proposed to lend the Leeds University Railway Society the Swansea and Mumbles car No 2 (now unofficially christened "Swumbles") for running every evening from 18th - 25th June inclusive, and on the afternoons of the weekend days, to raise money for the Students' Charity Rag. It is uncertain at the moment which part of the track will be used, but if permission is obtained, the run should be about half a mile. If not, it will have to be a great deal shorter.

The Hunslet Engine Company are to lend an engine, either diesel or steam, for towing the train.

Pickford's have very generously agreed to move our Leeds railcar No 601 free of charge on June 17th, and it is therefore likely that this will be attached to the train, leaving the locomotive between the two coaches.

Souvenir tickets have been printed by the Bell Punch Company at reduced rates, and enough bell punches and ticket racks are available for our volunteer student conductresses (hand-picked by your Editor). Publicity for the venture is well in hand, and the site is to be beautified, in so far as this is possible, with the help of members.

We should like to take this opportunity to thank Messrs Clayton's, the engineers, who have allowed us to use their siding.

ICI have offered to provide the Society with free paint for renovation and other purposes.

We have received a disappointingly small number of orders for the booklet, "The Middleton Colliery Railway". Price 1/-, post free, this tract presents a compact and accurate account of the long and complicated history of our railway, which it is surely the first duty of all members to know. It is a valuable piece of research, and it would be good publicity for the Society if members would buy a copy to present to their local library. Postal orders should be crossed to the MRPS and sent to the Editor. (After 30th June to Dr Youell).

From now on until further notice there will be field meetings on the Railway from 2.30pm on Saturdays, to do maintenance work and discuss progress. The site is best reached on a No 74 bus from Infirmary Street, City Square, to Belle Isle. A fourpenny fare takes you to the stop after Hunslet Station (Burton Road), where there are two level crossings. A Committee member will be in attendance.

London Transport, in reply to our enquiry, have quoted a price of £1250 for one of the ex-Metropolitan Railway electric locomotives, due to be scrapped in 18 months. The Southern Railway is buying the motors, which have roller-bearings, but has agreed to replace them with reconditioned plain-bearing motors if one is preserved. These locos operate on 600 volts DC, the same as the Mumbles train and electric trams, and would simply require a pantograph to adapt them for use at Middleton. Unfortunately, unless several miracles happen, we cannot possibly raise £1250 in two years (which is the approximate time-limit for payment), so it is hoped that a separate preservation society, based in London, can be set up with the sole object of preserving one of the locos. This Society would pay the cost of transport, and it would be made clear from the outset that it was intended to restore and use the loco at Middleton. If this plan succeeds, in two years we could operate a vintage electric goods service and considerably cut working expenses.

Tale of Two Cities (contd.)

The Story so far:

Intrepid Adventurer Dr R. F. Youell, and Hero of Socialist Labour Cliff Simpkin, have undertaken the hazardous 225 mile journey to Swansea by treacherous motor-cycle, protected from the lashing rain only by a kit of tram-cutting tools. The date: 13th May (Friday!). After a fitful night's rest in the familiar Barrington boarding-house at Mumbles, they set out on the hazardous five mile journey to the depot at Swansea, accompanied by 15 year old scout John Barrington, there to complete the task of slicing Mumbles train No 2 into three pieces - three including the bogies, which had to travel separately. Little did they know - presumably - that their heroic efforts were to receive a full page coverage in the "South Wales Evening Post".

That job is now complete, and all that remains is the loading of the car onto three wagons, to be undertaken on 10th/14th June. The GWR has borrowed suitable well-wagons (leaving one inch clearance at each end of the 45ft No 2) from the Midland, and arrangements have been made to load the coach, using blocks and tackle and a convenient bridge for hoisting.

The President of the Union of the University College of Swansea has offered as much assistance as he can raise for the job of loading, as has the secretary of the Monmouthshire Railway Society, and about six MRPS members are going to Swansea. Everything should be ready in time for the Saturday goods to the West Riding.

Owing to circumstances completely beyond our control, the day of departure is being turned into a local valediction festival. The goods train will run parallel to the Mumbles Railway for several miles, and it has been arranged for it to go especially slowly so that the people of Swansea and Mumbles can pay their last tribute. It is hoped to have collecting boxes ready to receive this.

The gigantic coffee-party which Mrs Barrington was to have held to raise money to help purchase No 2 has taken a step up the social scale to become a vast Sherry Evening, and is now to take place on 27th July, at "Pengroes", Mumbles Road, West Cross. We hope to go there to show a film and slides of the train's successful operation in Leeds. Tickets are 2/- each, but only those familiar with the carefree gaiety of Welsh sherry evenings will know their true value. It could be the alcoholic experience of a life-time.

All notes, letters or articles for this journal should be sent to: Mr B. Ashurst, 48 E stcourt Terrace, Leeds 6.

All enquiries about the Society should be sent to: Mr P. Dean, 24 Allerton Grange Drive, Leeds 17.

We welcome the following new members:

Derek T. Plummer, 44 Broadgate Lane, Horsforth, Leeds.

R. P. Lee, "The Sycamores", Golcar, Huddersfield.