

OLD RUN NEWS

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Newsletter of the Middleton Railway Trust.

Number 43 August 1969.

FULL STEAM AHEAD. For the last month, we have been open to visitors, and shown what we can achieve with a service from Denison's crossing to Middleton Park Gates, the train being hauled by Henry de Lacey II, the Fowler taking over when Henry returned for water. To run on a line with the only junction bolted over, no sharp curves, and no public level crossings, and over half the track in very good condition, puts up our spirits and our safety-consciousness. As from September 1st, we shall appear in the Leeds City Transport Timetables, and shall be running every Saturday and Sunday from 2 p.m. onwards connecting with the 74 'bus service from City Square every 20 or 30 minutes.

We have moved the start of the visitors' runs back to Burton Road level crossing, so that we are in full view of the public. Throughout we had good organisation from the Mechanical Engineers and Traffic Departments, the Civil Engineers keeping the track safe, and the junior members on the Sales Stand, ticket office and guard's van. Patronage has varied from moderately good to borderline - we even had visitors queuing on the Saturday of the Hunslet feast, with our loud hailer attracting people from the roundabouts to an entirely different kind of ride.

Running at weekends naturally causes a problem, since this has traditionally been one of our permanent way sessions in the past, when goods traffic was not running. Undaunted, however, Chris Metcalfe and Patrick M. Askie dealt with this by managing spot re-sleepering in the time between trains, with a flagman on duty and all drivers warned to approach at caution. Henry's 30 tons on two axles will certainly detect any track defects. We are however pleased to record that the subsidence of sleepers and joints is far less than we expected, and the steady hard work of the Civil Engineers is paying dividends. At the same time, we might well ask, how is it that in a Society of over 200 members there are only 2 gangers helping the Civil Engineers on track repairs? Where are the other 196? Like Rome, a mile of track is not built in a day, but it shouldn't take a month of Sundays. If Patrick can leave home in Rochdale in the small hours, work all day and get home at 22.30hrs. members a short distance from the line might feel disposed to give him a hand! We must emphasize the importance of practical assistance from members; we have 700 yards of track to lay at Middleton and about 600 yards to overhaul from Parkside to Whitakers Siding. Don't do a Pontius Pilate Act and wash your hands of it! Write to Chris Metcalfe at 5 Kingston Terrace, Leeds 2, or Patrick M. Askie at 221 Drake St., Rochdale, saying when and how you can help them. We are now relaying the curve at Parkside Junction to a smooth layout of 25 chains radius.

MECHANICAL ENGINEERING PROGRESS. Henry was in steam very quickly after her Boiler test following an excellent effort by several members. Our Carriage and Wagon people have removed the surplus tank off a Laporte wagon and started overhauling Middleton Colliery wagon No. 350, dismantling the broken brake control for repair. It was very frustrating for the Boiler Inspector to order the removal of the Sentinel's new boiler just after it had been put together. The inspection was satisfactory, but then we found the assembly pit had been blocked by some urgent work of Clayton's. We have a very tight timetable to get her finished.

PUBLIC EVENTS. As a large R.C. & T.S. party is coming to the line on 27th September, the Sponsored Walk along the Leeds and Liverpool canal has been postponed to Sat. 11th October. On the same day is the Barnsley Model Railway Exhibition with the Theme "A century of railways". We are exhibiting and making THIRD CENTURY noises. Volunteers please write to the Secretary at 58 Ridge End Villas, Shire Oak Road, Leeds 6.

SAFETY FIRST. Following a recent derailment, we should remind train crews to approach facing turnouts dead slow unless they are bolted across or of modern standard type.

DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENT. The encroachment of large quantities of pit shale on the line was dealt with by a member who turned up with a Caterpillar excavator and did battle. An 8 feet wide level section appeared next to the line, and the shale gave up the contest over about 200 yards beside the track. We can see to move now and the drainage is greatly improved as a result. Unfortunately a Caterpillar cannot excavate an 8 feet wide hole between rails 4'8 $\frac{1}{2}$ " apart without affecting the gauge alignment and level. Hard work with shovels was needed on the heavily overgrown section near the G.N.R. Bridge, and an unauthorised level crossing has become plain track. It is reassuring to find that there are actually keys, chairs and sleepers under the foliage!

Matthew Youell, Leeds 6,

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS:- Robert Davis, Leeds 10, Robert Hannaby, Leeds 11, and Richard Whitaker, Leeds 12. Does anyone know the whereabouts of member L. Roper, whose Newsletters have been returned from Bradford marked "House Demolished" ??? Please notify Membership Secretary, 12 Trelawn Crescent Leeds 6.

TIME IS RUNNING OUT. May we impress on ALL MEMBERS the urgent need for fund-raising for the appeal? The demand for the full £4000 may come AT ANY MOMENT, and we simply haven't got it. Other Societies have raised their required sums in time - do we have to be the odd man out by failing to foot the bill, and taking over in the normal way? Unless we raise the money we shall have No Depot, and No Museum at Middleton, and the rest of the line will be pulled up and scrapped. Get cracking everybody, please!!

THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY. Our thanks to the Traffic Manager for repairing all the brake van windows quietly, efficiently and without fuss.

MORE HOLE-DIGGERS. The latest offenders in digging holes dangerously close to the line without the slightest consultation are the Y.E.B. We remember that in 1960 a whole train was derailed due to subsidence over an imperfectly filled electric cable trench. We have read the Riot Act to them.

FOLLOW THAT MAN. A thrilling epic resembling a mixture of Z-Cars and The Untouchables took place during the Hunslet Feast week. A group of drunks smashed the window of the Guard's van, broke windows at Samuel Denison's works, and beat up a 'bus conductress. In the absence of our Traffic Manager's long-arm-of-the-Law, Bill Barraclough gave chase, and his opposite number Sugden rang for the Police. One of the crooks was cornered between Bill's car and a Police Car. The Offenders are on a Fizzer and will appear at the Magistrate's Court.

PUBLICITY. What are YOU doing, members, to tell the public our very good story? Please do all you can to bring our membership up to something like the 4-figure membership of other Societies. The Chairman has approached the Yorkshire Post, who are interested in a full window display at their Head Office on Middleton Past and Present. This should be of immense value in putting us in the public eye.

S T O P . P R E S S . A WELCOME GUEST.

Well-known TV Personality Jimmy Savile came down on Saturday 30th August, was photographed leading the train with a red flag, and recorded a "Savile-Travel" session for Sound Radio and Radio Leeds. He has Coal Mining experience in Leeds, lives near the University, and already knew our Traffic Manager Joe Lee from Air Training Corps days. The resulting Wizard Prang included a driving lesson on Henry, with a Guard's Van full of supporters, a tour round the Broom Pit area and an outline of our plans there. We enjoyed him driving us round the bend (in the strictly permanent way sense). We couldn't produce any women engine drivers for the occasion, but the fair sex was represented by Sheila Young from the Historic side, and Diane Quigley with her Guard's van experience. We found that Bannisters had let loose contractors who had piled up bricks and cement between their building and the rails. A Henry de Lacey Whistle cleared them out of the way. We are delighted to welcome Jimmy Savile as an Honorary Member of M.R.T.