

OLD RUN NEWS

Newsletter of the Middleton Railway Trust

Number 18 August 1966.

Apologies

We must apologise for the lateness of the July newsletter. The chief Gestetner operator was in the works for a boiler inspection (see elsewhere) and the operating assistant and chief Addressograph was on 24 hour duty making works visits and providing fuel for small boilers.

As it was impossible to duplicate the newsletter until about the 20th. July we felt that from the economic and time point of view members would understand if the two issues were sent out together at the end of July.

Down at the Line

The Editor has received no further news of work on the locomotives and rolling stock. However, members working at the line might be interested and pleased to hear of the comments of a visitor to the Railway last Saturday who said that he had never seen the stock looking so well turned out in all his years of visiting the line. The erection of the shed, he felt, was the greatest single improvement we had made.

In this truly British July weather we are having, a roof over our heads is invaluable!

Traffic, which has been very light, improved somewhat during the last two weeks of July. As the first two weeks of August are the firms 'holiday' weeks the resulting lack of traffic will enable members to carry out many necessary maintenance jobs.

Gardening has been carried out recently since grass on the line is worse than a greasy rail.

Stolen- one railway line

We have suffered many times from incidents of petty theft. Some of these, like the disappearance of 2 or 3 tons of chairs after the top loop junction had been laid, were not even petty.

Old Run Editor, Brian Ashurst, spotted a mass theft of track while walking the line during June, and was able to pinpoint the time to within a day. In 1964 the disused junction just North of Parkside G.N. bridge was replaced by straight track, which unlike the adjacent parts, was not blocked by dirt above the chairs. 29 chairs had been smashed by sledgehammers and the bits taken away. The rails were cut up by oxy-acetylene and taken away. The only thing left was the steel keys which might arouse suspicion if an attempt was made to sell them. The chair fragments were of course just scrap cast iron and old rails are often legitimately in private hands, not so keys however. About 190 feet of rail was cut up. The Ministry of Transport were informed, as the

danger to traffic and train crews brought it within the scope of incidents which have to be reported. (see later) Leeds City Police are helping the Trust in their investigations.

The Yorkshire Post and other National Newspapers reported the incident.

(Since then L.R. have had a mass theft of track from the dis-used Hull and Barnsley line, heavy penalties being levied on the offenders.)

Membership

Mainly due to increased publicity and the Steam Gala, we are happy to report an increase in membership. Among new members we may mention Mr. J.A. Collins from Montreal who is visiting friends and relations back home. He came originally from Stratford-atte-Bow, Essex. His father and grandfathers were railwaymen in the days of both Hill and Thompson and Fred Russell of Rainbow Express fame. Our Chairman received some first-rate therapeutic treatment by having a long conversation with Mr Collins while visiting the N7 and walking part of the line. Our visitor is an active member of the Canadian Railroad Historical Association (which is affiliated to the R.C.T.S.) who run a progressive Railway Museum in Saint Constant, Quebec.

Enclosures.

Apart from the two newsletters you will also receive two enclosures.

The first is the abstract of the new M.O.T. regulations regarding reporting of accidents. This is self explanatory.

The second is a booking form for the Aire-Bsk trip on September 10th. next. We hope that M.R.T. members will be able to support the trip which promises to be most enjoyable. To help those members who are usually down at the line, a supply of booking forms will be available there and John Lushell is holding a few tickets which he can sell there from time to time. HOWEVER to ensure that you obtain a ticket, please book early as we cannot hold any tickets back. In view of the difficulties of coaling and water points there might not be many more opportunities to travel behind the Marquess, so as they say in Yorkshire - 'think on'!

L.R. cannot give us the timings before the end of August as the trip will be run after the commencement of the Winter timetable. They will be published as soon as available and will be in time for the next newsletter, we hope.

The Chairman

Dr. Youell thanks everyone for their kind enquiries regarding his health. He reports that after the judicious splicing and welding of the main super-heater elements he ran a trial trip round the works before returning to the shed. He expects to be available for shunting and light branch duties prior to being put on the Top Link again. In accordance with G.E. practice he will have made a new number plate 'Rebuilt Leeds Infirmary, 1966'

Congratulations

Go to two University members, Sheila Macdougald and John Carr who have recently obtained Honours Degrees and to two more members Jean Tucker and Lee Towers who are to be married on August 1st.

This newsletter edited by S.M. Youell.