

THE OLD RUN

The Journal of the
Middleton Railway Trust Ltd.

No. 267 Summer 2025 £3.00

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Since 1825



The Old Run

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Grateful thanks to all who have provided copy and images for this issue

The Old Run is published quarterly by The Middleton Railway Trust Ltd.

Intended publication months are January, April, July and October

Deadlines for contributions are 1st October, January and April and July

The Editor welcomes contributions relating to the interests of the Trust and the operation of our and other Railways, especially if Leeds built equipment is in use. Items for publication, including images (please send in resolutions higher than 1Mb) are acceptable in any format and may be sent via email, post, CD or USB stick

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Editorial



SPOILER ALERT: If you are in any way averse to 1935 built standard gauge diesels this issue may not be for you...

The highlight of the quarter has undoubtedly been the return to traffic of the UK's smallest standard gauge diesel 'Sweet Pea'. Sadly the weekend celebrations on 19th/20th July managed to take place on one of the wettest weekends of the summer (see left) and 24 hours after this photo we were sunning ourselves along the shores of Lake Llanberis behind 'Thomas Bach' on the Monday! The weather seemed to keep the visitors away but those who came along marvelled at the work that had been done by Geordie Brown in returning Sweet Pea to probably the best condition she has been in during her Middleton career. The fact

that Geordie is a 'graduate' of our Youth Team and now working on the 'Big Railway' at Neville Hill makes this particularly gratifying.

Other things have happened at Moor Road this quarter and, as ever, I am grateful to those who have taken the time to provide me with details of these. I am also grateful to those who have provided me with articles which are being held in stock for future use. I currently have an almost embarrassing number of these but they will only be used once so if you have anything you want to submit please don't be shy!

At the time of writing, passenger numbers are on the low side although last Wednesday (23rd July) the shop seemed very busy so hopefully that is a sign of things to come. Please don't pass up any opportunity to publicise the railway to anyone. Word of mouth is the best (and cheapest) marketing tool we have.

Ian Dobson

Front cover: 90 not out! Our two 90 year old locos are seen at Moor Road on Sunday 20th July 2025 in a rare patch of sunshine during Sweet Pea's birthday weekend.

Back cover: Sweet Pea (again!) near the foot crossing during a specially posed stop whilst undertaking the line check on Sunday 20th July. (Photos: IRD)

From the Chairman

We are now well into the 2025 Season. After a promising start, visitor numbers have not held up as well as expected. The prolonged period of fine weather has probably not helped; the Railway always seems to do best on uncertain weather days which do not encourage prospective visitors to invest time and money journeying to the seaside, Yorkshire Dales or elsewhere. The Trust is about to launch a marketing initiative to boost sales on Saturdays which is the day when visitor numbers are at their lowest but all readers can do their part by boosting the Railway at every opportunity. 'Word of Mouth' remains the best way of promoting the Railway and for our size we offer a pretty classy and affordable half day out. When the Heritage Railway Association Board visited the Railway in July they commented favourably on the standards we achieve on presentation, cleanliness and offering.

'Teddy Bear's Picnic' was as successful as last year and the second Classic Car Sunday attracted a bigger display of cars than in 2024. The plans to display some cars at Park Halt did not materialise due to problems with securing permission from Leeds City Council, but having gone through the application process we are confident that this will happen next year. All being well, the 2026 display at Park Halt will feature various models of Morris Minors.

The next event was the Model Railway Exhibition (MRE) which was again organised by Ian Dobson to whom thanks are due. Based on return on investment the MRE is probably the most successful event in the Trust's calendar.



The team who delivered Classic Car Sunday led by Colm Connolly-Taylor (standing in the driver's door) Photo: Richard Croft

During the rest of the 2025 season there are a number of exciting events starting with the second iteration of 'A Taste of Yorkshire' on the 2nd and 3rd August. This will be held at Moor Road, and will feature Yorkshire produced foods and drinks plus live music. This event has again been masterminded by John Linkins who is hoping to repeat the success of the 2024 event.

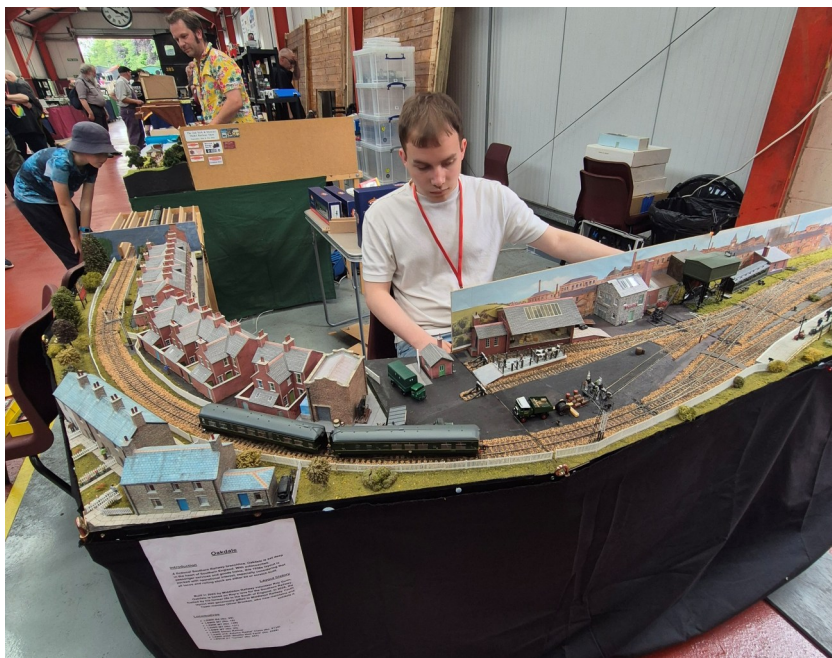
On Saturday 16th August Robin Hood visits the Railway. There will be morning and afternoon performances of a play about Robin Hood written for children and supported by a children's entertainer.

Finally Sunday September 28th is dedicated to Star Rails 2025 – Robert Taggart and Gavin Johnson's event targeted at Star Wars and Sci Fi fans. As was done in 2024 the Star Wars characters will be portrayed by cos-players from the Mos Eisley Misfits.

The other forthcoming event of note will be the last of the three Railway 200 linked talks which have featured different aspects of the Railway's history. This talk will be held on the afternoon of 16th August, will be given by Ian Smith and will be about the Middleton Railway as a Preservation Pioneer.

Details of all these events and others can be found on the Trust's Website; all readers are encouraged to attend.

All that the Railway does is due to the volunteers. The individuals who give up their free time to come to Moor Road to staff the shop and café, to crew trains, to repair and overhaul locomotives and rolling stock, to maintain buildings and track, and to clean the museum exhibits. Without their labours and efforts there would be no Railway, no working steam



It was a pleasure to see young volunteer Oliver Brookes operating his layout 'Oakdale' at the Model Railway Exhibition in June. This was built by the late Roy Gunn and is now in Oliver's care - providing a link between senior and junior volunteers and keeping Roy's memory alive.

locomotives, no hot drinks for visitors, no clean toilets etc. etc. These roles all offer the volunteers something different from what the majority either did in their working lives or still do. They all offer the pleasures (and frustrations) of working in groups with other volunteers which, for the retired in particular, has a wide range of health benefits. They also have built in reward mechanisms. For those interacting with customers, there may be the satisfaction of words of thanks from visitors about what the Railway offers (even if all too often they get told "I never knew this existed and I have lived in Leeds for XX years!") . For those involved in maintenance in its various guises there is the pleasure of seeing projects come together, seeing an overhauled coach placed in service or a turnout made sound - despite the inevitable challenges - and successfully solving problems. For train crew there is the pleasure of driving and firing a historic locomotive (though cleaning out the smoke box on a hot day might not count as a pleasure!) and of signing off on a job well done at day's end. The Trust needs more volunteers to help fill these roles and improve our offering to visitors. The Trust is working to improve volunteer recruitment by launching a monthly programme of introductory sessions where prospective volunteers will be closely supported and encouraged to find out what the Railway offers. Again, all readers can help in this by promoting to friends and acquaintances the Railway and the benefits it offers volunteers with regard to learning new skills or rediscovering and using old skills, working with others on common tasks, interacting with visitors and helping preserve, for the education and enjoyment of future generations, an important part of the story of Leeds and its contribution to the development of Railways.

I have written about the various practical aspects of running the Railway and how volunteers are responsible for all of this.

There is another side to running the Middleton Railway – much less obvious but just as important. The Middleton Railway Trust is not just a heritage railway, it is a business and has to be run in a business-like manner if it is to survive. This involves all sorts of tasks which most visitors and many railway enthusiasts give little thought to. It is tasks like submitting annual returns to the Charity Commission and Companies House, preparing monthly and annual accounts, claiming VAT and Gift Aid, negotiating annual insurance and utility contracts and setting up bank accounts. It is tasks like applying for grant funding,

renewing leases, seeking permission to hold events on Leeds City Council owned land. It is tasks like investigating safety related incidents and updating the Trust's safety documentation and developing the Trust's IT system. As an accredited museum, the Trust has to periodically reapply for re-accreditation – successfully done at start 2025 – and to properly document all exhibits: condition, location, loan arrangements etc. A common feature of these tasks is that they are not something which most people would choose to spend their discretionary time on. Most individuals whose careers might have involved/ involve report writing, drawing up procedures, budgeting, preparing charts of accounts or setting up IT systems, usually look to do something very different with their free time – like mending locomotives, serving customers, keeping the yard tidy. The membership of the Trust should never forget the huge debt of gratitude owed to those volunteers, past and present, who have taken on these often solitary and unrewarding tasks to keep the Railway running.

Trust members who are willing to assist with these vital tasks will always be welcomed but be warned – the Middleton Railway might be a small business but it is a complex business with many transactions.

Members can help the individuals doing these things by simple measures such as making sure contact details are up to date, invoices submitted for expenses have VAT details included so that VAT can be claimed, identify the department to be charged with the expense and by working with each other as part of the greater Middleton Railway Team. Helping in this way means that the energy and time of those carrying out the behind the scenes tasks is not unnecessarily dissipated sorting out inter departmental problems and allocating expenses.

Hoping to see many of you at the Railway in the remaining months of Summer 2025.

Charles Milner



We celebrated Sweet Pea's birthday on Sunday 20th July under the title of 'Ninety Not Out'. Our esteemed Chairman suggested this cricket analogy to remind visitors that No.6 spent its working life in the great cricketing county of Kent and has retired to the even greater cricketing county of Yorkshire. The cricketing link was spoiled somewhat by the fact that rain spoiled almost the whole weekend!

Further Leeds links are that No.6 worked in the Portland Cement industry on the banks of the River Thames and, as all Loiners should know, Portland Cement was invented in Leeds by Joseph Aspdin, who was born in Hunslet on 25th December 1778. In 1824 the Thameside cement industry was established by Joseph Aspdin's son William.

Shop notes

The high spot of interest in the last three months was the moment when the Little Owl (brought, in company with two other larger owls, to the Steampunk Market) listened intently to the noise of frogs chirping. Its ears scanned the ledges and frames of the locomotives in the display hall for the source of the sound. This process lasted but two or three seconds; then, the source of the sound having been located, the small predator flew directly at it. Its reaction on finding that, rather than a pond full of frogs, the chirp-maker was a small electronic device was not easy to discern. The creature was nevertheless rewarded with a titbit. (The display was, to the joy of the spectators, repeated two or three times).



Little Owl awaits its next performance at the Steampunk Market. Photo: Ross Needham

High drama aside, business rolled along. As well as normal traffic, there were the bluebell walks, the vintage cars and the model railways. There also seems to have been quite a number of birthday parties (the birthdays ranging from the seventh, through the twenty-somethingth, to the seventieth) and school visits. We again hosted parties of Guides and Rainbows seeking information about railways in the light of certain events at Stockton and Darlington 200 years ago, whatever they might have been.

To celebrate its sixtieth anniversary, Leeds Civic Trust organised two bus tours of the city - each one involving a 20 minute stopover at the railway (a little sit-down on our mezzanine). Clearly Leeds Civic Trust continue to think we are important. One stopover was arranged for dinnertime, when the party were to eat their 1960s style sandwiches. Did Spam play a central role? Haplessly your correspondent was too taken up with giving a potted history-cum-hypothetical-museum-tour to notice.

The technical advance to report is that the guard now has a card machine for the sale of tickets. Very handy, particularly for passengers joining at Middleton Park Halt.

Richard Stead



News from Moor Road

As has become the norm for a number of years now, I'm writing these notes for the summer Old Run whilst basking in the glorious sunshine in South Devon. It would be good to forget the Railway for a short while but life isn't like that and I know that the editor is expecting me to exercise my fingers on my laptop keyboard and type something about what has been happening. When I went on holiday, things were generally satisfactory although with the start of the running season in April, our regular band of volunteers has had to give priority to the operation of trains and maintenance on the operational fleet. As a result, progress with work on non-operational locomotives has not been as good as hoped. Having said that, this is nothing new and has been the case of many years.

Hawthorn Leslie 3860 of 1935 'No.6'

The loco is currently serviceable and used as required. However, this use has been somewhat limited as we have been giving preference to the other operational locos, and the hot dry weather has also meant the use of diesels on days when it was planned for No. 6 to be used. Although generally reliable, one problem that is becoming more apparent is leakage of steam through the regulator when it is closed. There is a possibility that it is not actually the regulator but the main steam pipe and this will all require further investigation.



Manning Wardle 1210 of 1891 'Sir Berkeley'

As planned, Sir B was used for the first couple of weeks of the season before going on its travels to the Mid Suffolk Light Railway where it saw several days use and performed satisfactorily. From the Mid Suffolk it went directly to Beamish for use on their newly reopened passenger line. Unfortunately, whilst there it suffered from a stuck open clack valve and had to be failed. The good lads at Beamish were able to sort this out, though, and the loco fulfilled its remaining planned days of use. It had been planned to return the loco to Middleton during June but, whilst at Beamish the VCT received an urgent request for it to return to the Mid Suffolk as they had had a loco failure.



However, as Brookes No.1 was planned to go away on hire, that would have left Middleton short of locos so a compromise was reached whereby Sir B would return to Middleton for a couple of weeks before returning to the Mid Suffolk where it will probably remain until September. Once back at Moor Road the loco had a water change and was put to use on the 22nd June where it ran without problem. The loco was used again on the 29th June but was failed towards the end of the day with a hot right hand leading axlebox. Later examination found no fault with the 'box or the lubrication system so it was agreed to continue using it the following week, after it returned to The Mid Suffolk Railway where it is now performing well.

Sentinel no.68153

In the last Old Run it was suggested that the loco would be used more during 2025. However, this idea didn't exactly get off to a good start as the lack of rain during April and early May meant the ground was tinder dry. The Sentinel is a known spark thrower, as anyone who has travelled through the motorway tunnel on a train hauled by it will know and, because of this, it was decided that it would not be a good idea to use it.



The weather had returned to a more normal state by the beginning of June and the Sentinel had its first full day in traffic on the 8th of the month. Apart from problems encountered when the boiler was overfilled, the loco ran successfully. There is an enamel notice in the cab, dating from BR days and possibly earlier, which states that boiler water level should never be higher than half glass. However, it is the norm for firemen on any steam loco to want to run with the water at a much higher level than this and such habits are hard to avoid. A problem then arises if the safety valves lift because this also causes the water level to lift in the area adjacent to the safety valves and the steam take-off for the vacuum ejector is also in this region. When this happens the boiler water gets into the ejector and it stops working, so the train brakes come on and everything grinds to a halt. The crew then have no option but to sit there and wait for the safety valves to stop blowing and for everything to settle down, which can take several minutes.

Over the winter, the steam brake valve has received some attention. Although working correctly in applying the brake, when the valve handle was put in the 'off' position, steam was blowing continuously out of the exhaust. This could be overcome by moving the handle slightly back towards the 'on' position. On stripping the valve down it was found that the stop pin was quite worn allowing the valve to over-travel. This was rectified and, along with other work done to tighten loose handles, was expected to solve the problem. However, whilst curing this problem we now find that the brake handle does little to apply the brake until it is almost in the full 'on' position so it is not very variable in its application and will require more investigation.

The loco is planned to be in use on the second Sunday of each month for the remainder of the season.

Hunslet 2387 of 1941 'Brookes no.1'



As briefly mentioned in the last Old Run, the boiler inspector required both fusible plug holes in the firebox to be re-cut to give a satisfactory thread. This is fairly easy to do with taper screw threads, the hole just getting slightly larger in so doing, but new fusible plugs were required as a consequence. Fortunately, we had these in stock so it was a fairly easy job to do this work. Following this, the boiler inspector came and witnessed a steam test on the 16th April. The loco was then used on the remaining steam days during April and as required until the 22nd June when it was taken to Embsay on a low loader to participate in the E & BAR 'Hunslet' gala. The loco spent most of its time double heading with Hunslet 15" No. 2409 'King George'.

Feedback seems to suggest that the loco performed well and was well liked by its crews. It did require some attention to the driver's side injector due to a failed gasket but otherwise ran well. It has now returned to Moor Road in a very well polished state - thanks to Embsay for this.

Hudswell, Clarke 1544 of 1924 'Slough Estates no.3'

The last Old Run reported that we were awaiting delivery of new boiler washout plugs. These duly arrived and were soon fitted. The Old Run also reported that the fusible plug holes were still awaiting tapping out to a larger size. Once this was done we were able to order new fusible plugs of the correct size from South Coast Steam. Fitting of these last items were the last pieces in the jigsaw that were needed before the boiler could be filled with water. This highlighted a few leaking tubes in both the firebox and smokebox that required further expanding before they were water tight. We were then able to apply hydraulic pressure to the boiler using the hydraulic



test pump and it was not long before the required test pressure of 240 psi was reached. The application of pressure revealed a few more leaks, principally around the dome joint and where the gauge glass cocks were fitted. When all this work had been done it was time to call in the Boiler Inspector to formally witness a hydraulic test. However, due to holidays and other commitments that couldn't take place until the 10th June.

Whilst we were awaiting the visit from the Boiler Inspector, we were able to progress the manufacture of the new ashpan. With no drawings available and not wishing to replicate the old one, it was a slow job requiring a lot of measuring to make sure it would fit with no problem. The brake rigging dictated how deep the pan could be and the brake cross beams dictated where the main access plate could be fitted. The axleboxes and axle were also critical items that the ashpan door would have to clear. Eventually, the design was evolved and the ashpan fabricated and successfully trial fitted before removal for the hydraulic test.

The hydraulic test went well and there were no problems so it was time to start thinking about a steam test. First job was to refit the ashpan, followed by the firebar carrier and the firebars. This was followed by the safety valves, firehole doors and gauge glasses. It was then possible to light a fire in the overhaul led boiler and build up steam pressure. All went fairly well and it wasn't long before the safety valves started to lift, albeit at 50 psi. The valve set pressure was slowly increased as any slight problems were attended to. Eventually we were able to get to the full working pressure of 160 psi. All the work that we had done proved to be satisfactory; however, a couple of rivets adjacent to the boiler blowdown valve started to sizzle and required careful caulking to seal them, as did the seam where the smokebox angle ring is riveted to the smokebox tubeplate. This seam proved harder to seal as it became a case of chase the leak. Careful use of a hammer and caulking chisel seals the original point of the leak but simply moved it further along the joint. We have now managed to seal all the leaks but one, which will have to wait for another day as there is only so much that can be done in one steaming.



We had got agreement from the boiler inspector that the boiler



could be replaced in the frames as long as all the platework remained visible prior to a formal steam test. The chassis was extricated from the west road of the workshops where it has sat for the last three years during a grand shunt that took most of the day. The boiler was then lifted and carefully dropped into the frames. There were a few anxious moments as we were unsure whether it would marry up with the new frame stretcher or whether we would have a major problem on our hands. In theory, there should be a $\frac{1}{4}$ " gap between the smokebox tubeplate and the stretcher to allow the boiler to drop in and this proved to be the case.

We are now ready for a formal steam test but this will have to wait until August due to holidays and other commitments.

Work has continued on preparing both the cab and tank for repainting. Significant amounts of filler have been applied to both in places and this has all required to be sanded smooth.. The boiler cladding sheets have been extracted from storage in a container and these will also require cleaning and sanding down to make them suitable for painting. There is still much to do.

Fowler 4220033 of 1965 'Harry'



During the grand shunt referred to above, the loco was used to shunt the frames of Slough out of the workshops before taking its place on the west road of the workshops. The main reason for this is to utilise the space created by removal of the frames but it has been decided that, as its paintwork is in poor condition, Harry will be repainted, most probably into the British Sugar Corporation blue livery that it carried in its industrial service.

Peckett 5003 'Austins no.1'

Available for service and used as required. A reported problem with it struggling to create sufficient air pressure was traced to slack drive belts. These have been shortened and re-tensioned and this has solved the problem. However, solving this problem has highlighted that the compressor unloader valve is not working and the compressed air maximum pressure is being controlled by the safety valve and not the unloader. Another job to sort out!



Brush/Beyer Peacock 91 of 1958 'D2999'



Currently available for service. It was reported that it was struggling to create sufficient vacuum at times. The problem was traced to the front vacuum pipe which had a crack in it which sometimes sealed and sometimes didn't. It has now been replaced and the problem solved.

Hudswell, Clarke D1373 of 1965, MD&HB No.45

Currently available for service. In a repeat of December's incident, the loco again became derailed on the turnout into the Engine House but this time the reason for this was quickly established. Fortunately, there was no damage and it was quickly re-railed.



Hunslet 6981 of 1968

Work has restarted on this loco, albeit largely as a one volunteer job. The battery isolation switch has been overhauled and refitted. The silencer and associated pipework has now been completed and fitted; a few words to describe a lot of work. Attention has now turned to completing the modifications to the braking system necessary for the fitting of



proportional braking. Apart from painting, this is probably the last major job that requires doing apart from the cab heating system and throttle linkage. Until we find something else, that is! We are currently considering repainting the loco in the livery in which it was delivered by Hunslet.

Hunslet 1786 of 1935 'Courage'

A lot of work has been done on this loco in the last few months in anticipation of its 90th birthday in July. After some time in the old workshops it was shunted into the main workshops where pit space was available, giving access underneath. A lot of time has been spent on cleaning things down and painting but there has been mechanical work carried out, as well. The loco has long been devoid of a rear right hand sandpipe (well before we acquired it). A new one has been made and fitted, along with a support bracket. The gearbox has had an oil change, as has the engine. The fuel filter and system has also been cleaned. The engine has also had a service. Beforehand it was only really running on one cylinder but following attention to the valve clearances it now runs smoothly on both cylinders. It is probably as good now as it has ever been since arriving at the railway. At some time after the loco arrived at Middleton, an exhaust silencer was fitted. As it was not originally fitted with one, this has been removed.



New brake blocks have been cast and fitted. The old brake blocks were remarkably similar to those on Bagnall 2702, now long departed from the Railway, but we still had the pattern for this and it required little modification to enable it to be used.

It had originally been intended to overhaul the engine side panels but the more we looked at these, the more we realised that the most sensible approach would be to replace them with new. The old ones had pockets of corrosion round the edges and they had been run over at some time, resulting in creasing of the sheets. After initially starting work on the old panels, the decision was eventually made to abandon them and make new. We couldn't press the louvres in the panels so these had to be done by a contractor but the rest was done by ourselves.

The finishing touch was applying lining to the side panels, which was completed in time for the 90th birthday party on 19th and 20th of July. The event mainly involved the loco working brake van rides within Moor Road yard but trips were also made to Middleton Park Halt with the brake van each day.

LMS 7051



This loco has been in regular use during the season on what are being marketed as heritage diesel days. A problem was recently reported that the drive shaft band brake valve was sticking in when operated, preventing the brake from releasing. The valve was stripped, cleaned and reassembled and is now working satisfactorily. It had been intended to operate the loco on Saturday 19th July as part of Courage's 90th birthday celebrations but it was failed during preparation due to what appears to be a leaking head gasket - another one to look at..

Hudswell, Clarke D577 of 1932 'Mary'

Some time ago the fluid flywheel was checked and found to be short of fluid according to the manual. This was topped up to the maker's recommended level but this turned out to be a big mistake as it was then found impossible to select forward or reverse with the engine running. The level of fluid has now been reduced back to what it was before. It appears that this was a deliberate action by a previous owner to overcome this problem.



It also currently has a coolant leak on the cab heating system which requires investigation.

Hudswell, Clarke D631 'Carroll'



Available for traffic if required but currently on display in the Engine House.

Carriage and Wagon Notes

Coaches 1074, 1867 and 2084

All four coaches have been in service during the last three months and each had a 3 monthly 'B' exam at the end of June.

Coach 2223

Following a lot of hard work all the seats were installed and this coach was sufficiently complete to allow it to be used at Roy Gunn's funeral wake on the 25th April. However various snags raised their inevitable heads and these have had to be attended to before it could be released to general traffic. On test, the vacuum brake cylinder was not becoming evacuated on the chamber side when a vacuum was created, so this had to be done manually. Once this was done it worked perfectly well but could not be released into regular service like this. It was therefore brought back into the workshops and removed from the coach and dismantled. The brake cylinder had



Coach 2223 in the platform at Moor Road

been overhauled several years ago as one of the first jobs done when the van arrived from the East Lancashire Railway. No obvious cause for the problem was found so it was reassembled with a new rolling ring and seals and tested again. This time the brake cylinder operated correctly so the problem has been resolved without knowing the cause. It was also noted that there was quite a bit of play in the brake cross shaft bearings, and it was decided that it would be sensible to rectify this before the vehicle entered revenue service. The shaft with its levers fitted was too big to fit in the Swift lathe and we didn't want

to remove the levers, so it was mounted on the Huron milling machine and a fly cutter used to machine the bearings round. The two hanger brackets were then bored out round to suit and bushes fitted. This actual job took several weeks to do as it was not an easy task with our limited facilities.

The other main problem that became evident was a tendency for the passenger doors to come open when the coach was on the move. The latches that we use only have the standard 9-10mm protrusion and we have to ensure that the clearance between the door and frame is minimised, but provide sufficient clearance for the natural expansion of the timber door due to seasonal changes. Unfortunately, this hasn't been allowed for when the doors were made and they require some slight modification to rectify this.

Around and about

Volunteer numbers

We are unfortunately seeing a reduction in volunteers compared with the last few years, especially on a Saturday. On paper, we have probably never had so many volunteers but today's volunteer is more likely to come once a month rather than every week. Today's volunteer is also less likely to have an engineering or other railway related background. Both these facts mean that we are struggling to do all the work that needs doing. This is especially so in the workshops and on the civil engineering side where the latter, especially, really could do with more help.

Steve is correct in that we have vacancies in all departments - including in the shop and museum. Could you join us? It is worth noting that we still have a healthy complement of young volunteers. On 27th May the train service was operated with one of our youngest crews: Driver Ross Needham, Second Man Joel Leverton and Guard Joe Brewer. Photo: Ian Smith



Train Formations

Regulation 4 of the Railway Safety (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 1997 requires that: *"The operator of a vehicle which is being used for the carriage of fare paying passengers shall ensure that there is provided and maintained on such a vehicle suitable and sufficient means whereby passengers can communicate with a person who is in a position to take appropriate action in the event of an emergency."* In days gone by this was provided for by the pull chain in each coach which, when operated, partially applied the brakes and, on more modern trains, an alarm which alerts the driver.

We have no such system on our trains and have long had an exemption from this but it restricts our trains to two coaches and we have an increasing need to run with three. This is not specifically due to visitor numbers but is generally related to when we have birthday and other parties which hire coach No.1867 (the party coach). This usually runs with coach

No.2084 (the balcony brake). This latter coach is very popular with the public due to the balcony so we prefer to use this as the north end vehicle. However, it does not have



The always popular view from Balcony coach no.2084 seen on 28th May 2025

disabled access so we either have to swap it with the other brake coach (no.1074) or add the latter at the south end to make a three coach train. We do not like shunting and remaking our sets so would prefer to run with a three coach train all the time but, this would contravene our exemption. To overcome this problem of communication, we fitted an alarm system using a wireless doorbell. However, although it worked well when the vehicles were stationary, it did not like movement and has been abandoned. We would prefer to maintain a three coach train to avoid unnecessary shunting so entered into discussion with the ORR on increasing the number of coaches to three but they are not in favour of this and have suggested deploying an additional member of crew to ride in the third vehicle. This we are doing when required but when we don't require three coaches for disabled access purposes we have reverted to just using two.

Scrap metal

People often think of scrap metal as a resource that can provide income for the railway and it is not unknown for volunteers and others to bring unwanted metal items to the railway in the mistaken idea that they are helping us. I say mistaken as it can actually cost us money. We recently had a skip in to get rid of our increasing mountain of scrap metal and we were selective as to what was put in it. In simple terms, scrap is graded as heavy or light but, if a skip has any light scrap in it, the whole skip is regarded as light scrap. By only putting in heavy scrap we are getting £180/tonne, about twice that which we get for light scrap. As most of the light scrap that we have has been brought in by well-meaning people, we are simply left with it, unless we contaminate the heavy scrap with it. The message here is please don't bring your unwanted pieces of metal to the railway. Not only don't we want it, it is also illegal, as we do not have a waste transfer licence.

Redundant Machine Tools

As is obvious to anyone who has visited Moor Road, we are desperately short of space, both indoors and outside. This is very much the case in the workshop and we are attempting to improve things by getting rid of equipment that we have no real use for. Last year we got rid of the Sentinel lathe, which had not been used for several years. We recently sold on the shaping machine which we acquired in the 1980s. In the early days it saw some use and when we built our new workshops in the 1990s, it was moved in there but it was never wired up, and so it has stood disused for the best part of 30 years. The latest machine tool to get the chop is the Kingsland cropping and punching

machine. This was acquired about 10 years ago from Don Whiteley Scientific but, again, has never been powered up as it needed some repairs. We have a potential buyer for this but it will depend on the cost of the repairs. It is possible that further tools and equipment will be got rid of but nothing has yet been decided.

Train fire exercise

A train fire and rescue exercise was carried out by West Yorkshire Fire Service on 3rd July. This is something that we have done several times in the past and is useful training for both them and us. The scenario on this occasion was a train on fire, inevitably in the motorway tunnel. Smoke machines were used to improve the experience(!) and the ends of the tunnel had sheets put over them to keep the smoke in. Several fire engines and support vehicles filled the car park and the fire crews attending to the train all wore breathing apparatus. All in all a worthwhile exercise and I'm sure both parties had lessons to learn.

Steve Roberts



Views from the Fire Service exercise by Ross Needham



Purchase of 1684

The Middleton Railway is now the owner of unique Hunslet 0-4-0T No 1684, built in 1931 and long stored at Moor Road.

The locomotive was originally built for use in a Quarry in Couldson, Surrey before being resold back to Hunslet in 1953 as part of their hire fleet, eventually being sold on to the NCB. It went to Norton Hill Colliery in 1964 and then it finally ended up at Kilmersdon Colliery in Somerset from where it was preserved by the 1338 Preservation Fund in 1968.



1684 in her working life. Photo: MRT Archives

For many years it was plinthed at Bleadon & Uphill Station just outside Weston Super Mare and was apparently named “Mendip Collier” although the nameplates were never fitted. When that museum closed, the loco came under the custodianship of preservationist Martyn Ashworth and went to a number of sites before ending up at Ruddington on the GCR, where it was stripped down for a major overhaul, which never actually happened.



Stored in the Picton Shelter in 2025. Photo: Ian Smith

The then MRT Chairman, David Monckton, was approached about possibly housing the locomotive and after some negotiation, an agreement was signed and the loco arrived at Moor Road in 2004, shortly before the remodelling for the Engine House development.

Weighing just 23 tons and with 12” cylinders and outside Walschaerts valve gear, this diminutive machine is ideal for use at Middleton. It’s also a rare example of an industrial machine built with outside valve gear and a Belpaire firebox, features virtually unknown for UK machines, but common on export contracts and as such is a valuable addition to our “Leeds Collection” of locomotives.

The loco has been stored inside the Picton shelter for some years now, but with the agreement with 1338 Fund approaching its end, it was considered that the railway needed to consider the engine’s future. Although ideal for our railway, the stumbling blocks to restoration have been both the high cost and also the

fact that it is was not owned by the Trust and thus we couldn't spend money on it without a new agreement.

With this in mind, it was decided to attempt to contact the 1338 Fund, which proved difficult as two of them had passed away and the third had not responded to emails in the past. The solution was to send a Recorded Delivery to the last known address and we got a response from Ed Freeman, the last 1338 Fund member. Ed was sympathetic to the railway's concerns and after a visit to Moor Road, he was happy to agree to selling the locomotive to us. He said "I am delighted to be able to transfer ownership to Middleton Railway in order to facilitate its restoration to working order in due course"

Chairman Charles Milner said "Middleton Railway is grateful to Ed for his assistance in the sale of the locomotive. We can now plan for the restoration of the locomotive, initially cosmetically and then to working order as funds and manpower permit. It can now be cared for as part of our Leeds Collection of locomotives."

This historic locomotive is now the property of the railway and we are now actively looking at ways of obtaining funding for its restoration. This will not exactly be easy due to the sums involved, but the first stage will be to fund a cosmetic restoration before looking at full restoration to working order.

Ian Smith



Brookes no.1 has had a short working holiday at The Embsay and Bolton Abbey Railway this year and is seen here working a test train prior to their Hunslet Gala. Photo: Matt Anderson (EBAR)



More views of Brookes' holiday

Above at Embsay Station heading a line up of the Hunslet Gala participants. The loco has a new fan club in North Yorkshire! Photo: Mark Calvert

Below: Heading a Goods Train with King George. Photo: Jordan Bell



New additions to the Mezzanine display. A 1/8th scale Blenkinsop loco model built in 1910 and a more recent model of a Horse drawn waggon by Anthony Dawson. Photos: Andrew Johnson



A car park full of locomotives during preparations for the Model Railway Exhibition. MDHB 45 has moved Mary, Carroll, 68153, 7051, Matthew Murray, Austins no.1, D2999 & the crane. Photo: IRD

Letters to the Editor

One of the pleasures of editing The Old Run is receiving the correspondence it provokes. In this case from former Chairman David Monckton..

It was good to see that the worksplates for Brookes no.1 have seen the light of day again since I put them in the brass store for safe keeping in 2006, they were made for me by ProCast in 1991 just after I had acquired the loco, but never fitted because Chris Rogers had by then made a pair of fibreglass replicas that were used with its first cosmetic overhaul. I later found out that the original plates had been kept by Alf Hall who first saved the loco in 1971 and kept it at Delph. When we met at the Grand Opening we made a verbal agreement that these plates would eventually come back to the loco and so the replicas were not fitted at that time. I guess that is lost in the mists of time.

The next bit requires a declaration of interest on my part and is not intended as a criticism, merely defending the alternative. Reading 'From The Chairman' it may be laudable that the Trust's long term stated aim is to own all its working rolling stock. However, this presupposes that either the finance or appropriate volunteer resources will always be available to ensure this can be achieved. Experience during my 'active' years of membership (between 1985 and my retirement in 2010) suggested that the Railway relied heavily on a number of privately owned items (with agreements in place) to provide a service through this period.

Whilst I would agree that there were also a number of less successful arrangements during this period, surely the need is to get Agreements right and not to discourage owners offering to bring appropriate stuff to Moor Road? After all The Trust can always say "no" if the proposal does not suit the Railway's needs. For my part, my locos were the reason I hung around Moor Road for so long as a volunteer and whilst it was not always plain sailing, I don't believe The Trust lost out on our arrangements and I can think of others who drifted away who could have continued to offer a lot if they had received the right messages.

It is not my place as Editor to comment on this letter, I merely present it and invite others to respond to the points raised. Now over to David Hebden..

It was of great interest to read the latest copy of The Old Run. Well done.

Of particular interest was the article by Colin Dews about the old times. Being another long standing member (joining in September 1962) the article about the 'Derbyshire Dawdler' was of interest. In my possession I have a copy of the original booking form and the costs:

Leeds to Derby or Crich, Adult 36/-

Juvenile (Limited Number) 22/-

Return Tram Trip 1/- extra if visiting Crich

Also available to order:

Tray Meals 8/6d: Cold Beef Salad, Roll & Butter, Fruit Flan or trifle, Cheese and Biscuits

Buffet Pack 3/6d: Ham Roll, Sausage Roll, Packet of Crisps, Bar of Chocolate, Portion of Fruit

I have a copy of the handout given to passengers with a description of the route. (possibly the one drawn by Colin). Those were the days. One thing I noticed is that the date is incorrect. The actual tour was on April 22nd 1967.

I also have a copy of The Dartmouth Dawdler date unknown, but must be after 1969 as it refers to "Chairman" coming from the Yorkshire tar distillers in 1969.

For the benefit of our post decimal members I should translate some of those prices in decimal currency (without doing any inflation based calculations, I think the value should speak for itself..) 36/- is £1.80, 22/- is £1.10, 1/- is 5p, 8/6 is 43p and 3/6 is 18p. All seems to be a cheap day out to me!

As regards the dates it would appear that David is correct as the railtour website 'Six Bells Junction' has a copy of the ticket on it's entry for the tour..



Tony Cowling has pointed out in correspondence on this that the 'Dartmouth Dawdler' run with Sentinel 54 (now 68153) and 'Henry De Lacy II' in top and tail formation on 6th March 1971. This was the last train to operate over the old formation before construction of the M1 (now M621) motorway commenced. The photo below from the Trust Archives shows the tour heading north in a rather different landscape to that which we are used to in 2025..



Whilst this is not strictly a letter to the Editor my friend and namesake Iain Dobson circulates a weekly newsletter of European railway interest and he visited for 'Sentinel Sunday' on 8th June. His notes contain an interesting idea...

There was a reasonable turnout on Sunday 8th June with four Ramble readers and seven people who were there because a Ramble reader had said the Urn was out. (*guilty as charged - although I deny referring to 68153 as an 'urn'. Editor*)

The locomotive was supposed to be out a few weeks ago but it was cancelled due to the fire risk. Apparently it throws sparks and they were not kidding. There is a tunnel under the M621 just outside the station at Moor Road and the sparks rained down on the coach behind the engine. What I would do is NOT switch the lights on for the short tunnel and make this display part of the trip. Obviously tell people that the lights are not going to be turned on and people must remain seated. Tell people to get their phones ready etc and then let the sparks fly! Add in a bit of show boating [safely of course] and make it a selling point - especially as the chimney is next to the coach. Imagine what this photo would have been like without the rather harsh carriage light on.



Whilst I quite like the idea of a Sentinel pyrotechnic show (which probably happens without too much planning anyway) in the tunnel, I'm not sure how environmentally friendly it is in 2025 - over to the readers for comment I think... The last letter comes from long distance member Ivor Wiggett.

A Day in the life of a Heritage Railway Volunteer

I really hope that the following piece will not bore readers to tears, but being a Middleton member and having seen and experienced the Railway, I'm sure much of what I do will resonate with other members of the Middleton. I live in Enfield, which used to be in the County of Middlesex, but that authority was abolished in 1964, although the County name lives on through county cricket, army connections and numerous sporting associations. Enfield is famous for having the world's first ATM (cash machine, Barclays since you ask), and the small arms factory which produced the Lee Enfield rifle (now sadly gone). I think also Royal Enfield motor cycles come in to the equation somewhere, but not sure on that.

Enfield is fortunate to have 20% of it's land area as parks and green belt making it a very pleasant place to live (at least, I think so). I'm probably the only Middleton member who lives in Enfield, but no-one could pretend that is anything like Yorkshire, but that's another

story. I've always wanted to try volunteering, so when I worked out that the Epping-Ongar Railway (EOR) was only a forty minute car journey away, I was off. Initially, they asked me to maintain the flower beds on the two stations. No-one had taken this on for some time, and I'm not what you would call a horticulturist.

It was seeing the well kept beds at Moor Road that inspired me to a certain extent, But my first efforts worked really well, and after a year, another couple joined me. They did one station, me the other. We have a good working team at the Railway, and I was asked to do other non-flower jobs. At one station, there is a traditional phone box (not connected), and I completely renovated it including new glass 'telephone' signs. I was really pleased with the result, but three years on, the Post Office red top coat has faded to dark pink, so I'm having to re-paint it. That's what you get with something south facing!

There's not too much demarcation in what we do, so apart from keeping the flower beds looking good, there's always painting the fencing with Cuprinol, general tidying up, and making sure that the gates that lead over the line to a Right of Way footpath are fit for purpose. Last year, the Railway ran cream tea specials, so I was roped in to the serving team. Not only did I get a free ride over the six and a half mile route but also a free cream scone. The positive feedback from the punters was very satisfying. I suppose it's that feeling of doing a worthwhile job and being appreciated for it is why us volunteers do what we do.

Again, like all heritage railways, recruiting and retaining volunteers is a big challenge facing the EOR. We are all of a certain age and with age comes the usual medical problems and the Grim Reaper. We have a Volunteer Co-ordinator who has managed to recruit a fair number of new younger volunteers (not sure how), so we are able to tick along and keep the trains running.

Reading the 'Old Run' regularly and learning how your team of volunteers keep the show on the road, just like all the other heritage railways over the country. Personally, I love Yorkshire, so different from southern England, and so I will be attending your 'Yorkshire' themed event in August, hoping to take home some tyke food. Obviously, the Epping-Ongar is a much bigger operation than the Middleton, but I'm still in awe on what you have achieved over the years. It's just a pity you can't demolish a few buildings to extend your route by another mile or so! I would love to attend your AGM, but being a midweek evening makes it a problem unless I stayed over for the night.

It is always interesting to hear from other railways - particularly when we have been an inspiration, as in this case. Sharing ideas, best practice and good (and even bad) experiences all helps, in my opinion. Keep up the good work in Epping, Ivor and we hope to see you at Moor Road sometime soon.

Hopefully this recent view of Mick Cox's handiwork at Moor Road will further inspire you!





The overhaul and restoration of 'Sweet Pea' has been undertaken almost single handedly by Geordie Brown and it is a credit to his hard work and commitment. The thoroughness included new engine compartment doors (left)





A highlight of Pea's 90th birthday was the loan by John Yeo of Glastonbury of the pub sign featuring the loco which formerly graced the pub of the same name in Alton, Hampshire, where Pea spent its working life. The photo above shows our Hunslet pioneers at Park Halt during a pre-event test run (all photos: Geordie Brown)





The photo above is a reminder of what Sweet Pea looked like before her recent makeover. She was repainted maroon for her role at Railfest in 2012 at the National Railway Museum and is seen here with 'Mary' outside the Richard Holland Building at Moor Road in May 2023. The comprehensive overhaul has included attention to the engine and it is almost certainly safe to say that she is now running as well as she ever has in her Middleton Railway career!

In addition to working on the overhaul Georgie Brown has also somehow had time to write a book on the history of Sweet Pea and The Courage Brewery Sidings. It is comprehensively researched and very well written.

Available from the Railway Shop at £5.50 and also available via mail order from the Railway Website.



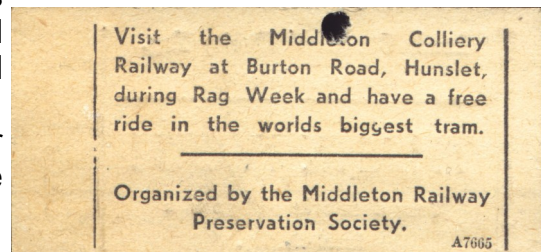
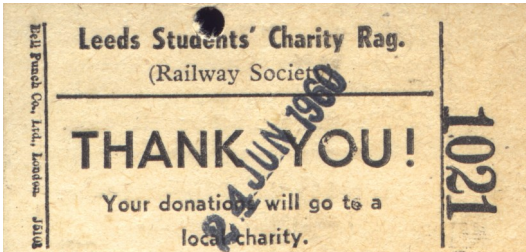
**The History Of
Hunslet No.1786 'Courage' / 'Sweet Pea'
&
The Courage Brewery Sidings
Georgie Brown**

That Famous Rag Week

Thanks to Brian Ashurst for this contribution and its acknowledgement of some unsung heroines of those early days at Moor Road...

Leeds University Rag Week, 1960, was the week in which the Middleton Railway Preservation Society established its claim to be the first preserved standard-gauge railway to achieve passenger service, the first day being Sunday, 19th June. The Mumbles car ran from Burton Road on Sunday from 2:30 to 7:30 pm, and then every evening from 4:30 to 8:00 pm until the following Saturday, when it left Burton Road at 11 am and retired to bed at 7:30 pm. 15 minutes was the time between each departure, which seems somewhat optimistic, even over the comparatively short distance to the bridge and back. (This was before the junction with the colliery line was re-established.) That was the published timetable, anyway, but garbled memory paints a much more chaotic scene with children running up and down stairs

and alongside the train, the volunteer conductresses happily clanging their bell punch ticket machines and giving out souvenir tickets when a penny was dropped in the charities collection tin, and a general joyful din punctuated occasionally by the loco driver whenever he felt it necessary to announce departures on the horn. Amazingly, there were no accidents all week, although no doubt there were some near misses.



Fred Youell had arranged the hire of 7051, later to be named after John Alcock, its designer and managing director of the Hunslet Engine Company. John and Fred between them arranged for the coupling of the tram to the locomotive. A steel bar, about 16 feet long, was attached to the leading bogie of the tram. It ran parallel to the ground until clear of the tram body and was then bent upwards at an angle to a height of 3 feet, after which it was bent back to parallel and attached to a fixture under the engine. That's the best I can describe it. Fred Youell and John Alcock fixed it up between them. The work was done at Jack Lane, passing through the books as "apprenticeship training".

There was quite a lot of publicity generated for that week, although I'm sure most of the passengers found out locally by word of mouth. For the record, this is the letter I wrote to the Yorkshire Evening Post:

May I tell your readers about the University Railway Society's Rag Week effort. Starting at 4:30 pm today and every day this week, we are offering free rides in the world's largest tram from the 156-year old Swansea and Mumbles Railway. The train will traverse part of the oldest railway in the world, the 203-year old Middleton Colliery Railway, starting at Burton Road, Hunslet. Student conductresses will issue souvenir tickets, using our now antique bell punches, to those who put money into Rag Week collection tins.

Visitors will also be able to inspect two Leeds and one Glasgow tramcars, and our members will be there to answer questions. On Rag Day [Saturday 25th June] the train will operate all day, and we hope that as many people as possible will come and spend some enjoyable hours with us!

Who were these conductresses? I've looked through my MRT collection and I can't find that we ever acknowledged them in print. Fortunately, I still have my university lecture notes from that time, and nestled among the pages was the duty roster for the girls, most of whom were from the English department (as I was). What a debt we owe to them - they

brought human faces among some grim and determined young men, intent on keeping things going and only marginally interested in who climbed aboard. Each of the girls did one or two turns, although a few came back more times for the fun.



Here's the list. Most of them changed their surnames on marriage, and some have gone to their reward in a higher place. But here they all are, and we thank them for their service.

Brenda Handscom, Ann Richardson, Brenda Lawrence, Frances Clough, Enid Robinson, Pat Park, Sheila Ashcroft, Margaret Fackrelle, Maura Kennedy and Kath Hinds

I apologise if anyone is missing - there could have been last-minute replacements which I didn't note. In tribute, I have (with some help from AI) put together the following poem, which I hope they or their descendants would appreciate. It's meant to be in the style of John Betjeman, the railway enthusiast's poet.

The Ladies of the Line

By tram stop near the crossing gate,
Where wires may hum and oscillate,
Ten stalwart girls of cheerful hue,
With polished brass and pride in view.

Their hands were swift, their stance was stout,
Issuing tickets, calling out -
A bell punch click, a paper tear,
A nod, a smile, a knowing air.

Oh, ride ye forth on timbered floor,
Past slagheaps, past old Hunslet Moor,
Where curving tracks once raced to town,
The ten fine ladies built renown.

The chime of bell, the rhythmic thud,
The wheels that stirred the Mumbles mud -
The city sighs, the decades pass,
But still remembered is the Rag Week Lass.

Brian Ashurst

Highway Robbery at Middleton

Some rather older history from eminent railway historian (and trainee Middleton guard) Anthony Dawson...

On Friday 26 February 1847 69-year-old James Heald, a Middleton Colliery labourer was making his way back to work. He had gone, as usual by foot into Leeds to collect from the one of the staithe offices at Leeds Bridge the wages of the colliers from the colliery cashier Mr Wright. It was a crisp spring day. But his movements were being watched.

Heald had upon his person what was then a large sum of money: £117 10s in cash. This included ten five pound notes, £5 10s in silver and 2 ½d in copper. He set off from Leeds about 3 o'clock in the afternoon so that the colliers could be paid later that same day. About half an hour later, as he was walking along the railway track back towards Middleton, at about half way point at 'the bridge, which passes over that [tram] road' at Belle Isle he was attacked and robbed, not just of the colliers' wages but his own money.

His assailants, apparently been lying in wait, had been hidden in a hedge alongside the railway. Having heard the resulting noise which alerted Heald to their presence, Joshua Exley – a grinder from Sheffield who had recently come to Leeds to find work – attacked him, hitting Heald over the head with a wooden stake which dropped him to the floor. He was then set upon and kicked by Joshua Brooks, the son of a clerk at one of the Middleton Colliery staithes who had potentially tipped off his associates as to the movements of Heald. One reason the attack on the old man was so violent was because Brooks was scared that Heald might recognise him.

Sprawled on the floor, Heald's pockets were rifled through and the wages were stolen. Shouting out for help, a couple of members of the public came to Heald's aid: three of his attackers ran off in the direction of Beeston Lodge and the fourth toward Beeston Town. Heald was found near the track having 'bled most profusely from his ears, nose, and other parts of his body.'

Exley apparently ran straight back home to his house in Beeston Lodge where he was apprehended by the Constable 'in a state of exhaustion' and arrested. It was found that 'Joshua Exley' was but one of several aliases used by him, having also been known as 'Kendall.' Joshua Brook was arrested two days later.

The two other men – William Pinder (24) and Thomas Robinson (20) – were also arrested and taken before the court. Pinder had been tracked down and arrested by 'Inspector Child' in Birmingham, whilst Robinson of Holbeck was arrested locally.

Brook and Exley were tried before the Leeds Spring Assizes, found guilty and transported for a period of 15 years. Robinson and Pinder were taken to court in the Summer of 1847 and the Judge found them both guilty, and their crime so serious, that he sentenced them both to be hanged. At a minimum he said that they could expect 15 years transportation like their cohorts.

None of the money, reported the Leeds newspapers at the time, was ever found. James Heald recovered from his injuries; together with his wife, Ann he was recorded in the 1851 Census as a colliery labourer aged 73 in Holbeck. It is worth noting, however, that this was not the first time misfortune had fallen upon the family. William Heald (18) and James Heald (12) were killed in the Middleton pit explosion in 1825: their father being another James Heald. James' father (William) and 17-year-old son John had died in the same accident at the pit in February 1820, grandfather and grandson having 'lost their way' in trying to escape from an explosion of fire damp and both suffocated.

Anthony L Dawson

The People Page

It's not always possible to include every successful progression through the operational grades but when the opportunity arises (and someone tells me) it's good to be able to share in people's achievements. Recently Tom Allmark qualified as a diesel second man and is pictured here with traffic manager Matt Berry following his successful turn.



Well done Tom and may you have many more years on the footplate!

It's also worth remembering that not all volunteering takes place at Moor Road. On 14th June Max Emmett (left) & Ross Needham (2nd left) distributed railway leaflets and timetables at the Hunslet Gala. The Food Festival particularly created a lot of interest. Great work Gents!



And finally: Available soon in the shop: Sweet Pea starter train set. Contains loco, coach, brake van and not quite a mile of track...

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(Limited by Guarantee and not having a share capital)

Registered Office: The Station, Moor Road, Leeds LS10 2JQ

Registered Company No. 1165589 Registered Charity No. 230387

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