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An archive picture from Chris Nicholson: "Sir Berkeley" and "Matthew Murray" double head a passenger train towards Park Halt, looking north-west from the John Charles Approach road bridge.

The Old Run

No. 263

JULY 2024

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The above details apply to this issue: see the editorial for changes that will apply to future issues.

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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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Our Chairman speaks:

The 2024 season has got off to a good start, though the summer weather has not been kind to the Railway. However we have had a series of very successful events with, hopefully, more to follow.

Teddy Bears Picnic was a great success and this was followed by one of our best ever Model Railway Exhibitions. There were some superb layouts, it was well attended and revenues were up on last year; most importantly it was enjoyed by our visitors. As ever thanks for this event go to Ian Dobson. An event of this scale does not happen by magic but by a lot of hard work: phoning prospective exhibitors and confirming their availability, checking the size of the exhibits and deciding where they will fit, arranging the logistics, liaising with the Commercial and Traffic Departments to ensure that all the supporting activities such as 'Driver for a Fiver' will happen etc., etc. The reward for all this effort is the sight of visitors enjoying the event you have created.

This event was followed by Classic Car Sunday, a new event in our calendar and one which brings people to Moor Road from groups who might not otherwise visit the Railway. Thanks go to Colm Patrick for both dreaming up this event and then for making it happen. Hopefully this event will be repeated next year with some additional features.

On August 3rd and 4th 'A Taste of Yorkshire' will be held at Moor Road; a food and ale festival focussed on Yorkshire produce and featuring live music. This event has been the brain child of John Linkins who first planned it as part of the Trust's Diamond Jubilee Celebrations and without his hard work it would not be happening this year.

Finally September 29th sees the long awaited return of Star Rails – Robert Taggart and Gavin Johnson's event

Our Chairman speaks, continued

targeted at Star Wars and Sci Fi fans. Based on its predecessors Star Rails 24 should be both an entertaining and very enjoyable event.

Whilst individuals are responsible for driving forward each of these events and making them happen, it must never be forgotten that delivery is a team effort involving the whole of the Middleton Team in different guises from those who maintain rolling stock to train crew, from shop and café staff to those who ensure that the Railway's power supply and lighting are safe and work on demand and finally to those whose work is entirely behind the scenes - finance and IT support. To all who ensure that these events are delivered goes a huge vote of thanks.

A feature of the events listed above is that they are not designed to appeal to the railway enthusiast community, but are intended to appeal to groups with very different interests: modellers, foodies, car enthusiasts and their families. It is the Railway's hope that people attending these events will enjoy themselves and tell their friends and relations that the Middleton Railway is a great place to visit and encourage them to come down on a normal running day and see what the Railway then has to offer. 'Word of Mouth' is still the Railway's most important promotional tool and in their different ways each of these events is a show case for the Railway.

Not only must the events the Railway stages appeal to a wide and diverse community, but the way that the Railway tells its story and that of the Leeds locomotive building industry must be relevant to a diverse community, few of whose members will have any recollection or knowledge of steam railways and/or heavy industry. Visitors will not come to our Railway out of nostalgia but because they expect to have an enjoyable and rewarding experience and to create memories. This is why the Middleton Railway sees its competitors for the 'visitor's pound' as not just being other heritage railways and industrial museums, but visitor attractions such as Tropical World, Temple Newsam House and Grounds, Mother Shipton's Cave, Meanwood Valley Urban Farm and the like – all of which engage with and entertain their visitors.

The Middleton Railway has an extraordinary story to tell; critical steps in the development of railways and steam locomotives occurred on our Railway and what happened on our Railway led to the development of an industry which helped power the development of Leeds as a major regional centre. This story in conjunction with a ride behind one of our vintage steam or diesel locomotives is the Railway's biggest asset and should provide the means by which the Railway engages with and entertains its visitors. The challenge for the Railway is to tell this story in a way which will be physically and intellectually accessible to and engage and entertain visitors of different ages, of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, and of different genders. This is a big challenge and to succeed the challenge must be addressed with ambition and imagination and must be met by taking full advantage of both modern technology and traditional technology.

Transforming the Middleton Railway from an enthusiast led business whose fundamental offering is train rides supported by a few events, to a business which offers its visitors a much broader and hopefully more rewarding experience, represents a big change and is the underlying theme of the Railway's long term plan. The alternative to such a change is not pleasant to contemplate.

Our Chairman speaks, continued

At the Spring conference of the Heritage Railway Association (HRA). Michael Whitehouse (the chairman of Vintage Trains at Tyseley) gave a keynote address on the need for heritage railways to move beyond the model of their founding fathers, to a new model which is relevant to the society of today, not that of the 1960s.

There are some valuable take-aways from his presentation:

“The world is changing fast. We need to change faster and ensure we remain relevant or risk being left behind”;

“Nothing lasts for ever without change”;

“The future is about people not locomotives”;

“Modern generations have no idea what we are being nostalgic about”;

“Hope is not a strategy!”.

The changes our Railway needs to make to ensure that its story is not forgotten start with being an inclusive and welcoming organisation which looks outward and is prepared to work hard to realize the advantages given to us by our story.

Charles W Milner, Chairman

Editorial

Recent issues have either not included an editorial because there was not space for one, or have only included some very brief explanations, but there are two announcements to be made here that do require a proper editorial.

The first of these is that, after nine years and 36 issues, I now need to stand down as editor, due in part to various health-related reasons that do not need to be detailed here. I am delighted to say that Ian Dobson has agreed to take over the role of editor with effect from the next issue, and I am sure you will all support him by contributing material as you have done during my tenure. From now on he can be contacted via the usual editorial email address of

oldrun@middletonrailway.org.uk

Editing the magazine has been an interesting experience, following on from the work that Graham Findley had been doing during his time as editor. I hope that you, the readers, have found it worthwhile.

The other announcement is that, following the recent untimely death of Chris Nicholson, the Old Run now does not have a pictures editor. Chris had taken on this responsibility for the October 2021 issue, when we were still recovering from the CoViD pandemic, and since then had been punctilious in attending events at the railway in order to take pictures of them for the Old Run. This was perhaps more the role of a staff photographer than of a pictures editor, but it was just what was needed. If anybody with suitable photographic skills would like to volunteer to take his place, I'm sure that Ian would be delighted to hear from you.

Jenny Cowling

Obituary: Chris Nicholson

We were shocked to hear of the death of Chris Nicholson on Tuesday 14th May, after a short period in hospital. This was all the more of a shock because it came not long after he had been declared free of the cancer from which he had been suffering for several years. His funeral took place at St Philip's Church, Middleton, on Monday 3rd June, and was attended by many working members of the railway.

Chris had been a volunteer on the railway for over 50 years, qualifying as a fireman, and bringing to his work at the railway the skills that he had developed as a maintenance technician at Leeds university. At the October 2023 Volunteers Forum he had been presented with his 50th anniversary award, which was a framed drawing by Richard Stead of '45'. Chris was so pleased and impressed by this drawing that he took a photograph of it to share with others, which we were pleased to publish in the April edition of the Old Run.

As noted in the editorial, for the last three years Chris had been acting as pictures editor, but he had been taking photographs at the railway for years. We have nearly 900 of his images in our official collection, including the one below of him as fireman on "Brookes No. 1" before it was converted back to a saddle tank.

Chris was as nice a bloke as you could ever wish to meet, and he will be greatly missed.

Tony Cowling



Chris Nicholson, a Memory

As a tribute to Chris, we are reproducing here the short article which he wrote in 2022 for the July Old Run of that year, and which was entitled "Memories Of Sentinel"..

"Back in 1975, when I was a young 21 year old, we ran steam trains from 14.00 to 16.00 on Saturdays and Sundays.

One Saturday we had Sentinel on the service. It went out on the 14.00, but the train then came back late. The crew was asked what was the problem. They said that the Sentinel was throwing sparks out of the chimney and setting the grass on fire. I was at Moor Road and was asked "What are you doing?" I said "not a lot", and at that I was given a shovel, and was told to go up the line and put the fires out. So, off I trotted with my shovel over my shoulder (as I was young I could trot then).

The Sentinel came up on the next train and sure enough it set the grass on fire, so I got to work putting the fires out. Then I heard a voice behind me, saying "You're doing a good job. You don't need our help". I turned around to find the fire brigade standing behind me. We had a few words, then they left saying "Carry on the good work, if you need any help just call and we will come back and help you."

I have heard that Sentinel is still a fire-starter, and the fire brigade has been called to least one fire."

Obituary: Una Blears

It is with sadness that we have to record the death of Mrs Una Blears on 15th May. Una was the wife of Dr Gordon Blears, who donated MSC 67 to the Middleton Railway after we had taken the engine on loan and then restored it to working order. Una was a great supporter of her husband's railway hobbies and embraced our railway as she had done previously when he was a KWVR member. Following his death, she made one or two visits from her home in Ripon and on her last visit she very generously donated £1000. She died after a short illness and we send our condolences to her family.

Ian Smith



*MSC 67, shortly
after it arrived at
Moor Road.*

*Source: MRT
collection*

The Survival of History

The movement of the railway's archives from Sheila Bye's house to Moor Road has resulted in various activities, and one of these has been to start creating catalogue information for the railway's archive of images. As well as obvious aspects like identifying locomotives, this has also involved identifying the locations for some of the images, which is fairly simple for places along the current railway. For some of the more historic images, however, it has involved trying to identify features like roads or buildings that no longer exist. As such, it has raised the question of just how much of the railway's historic infrastructure does still exist, and this article will try to illustrate some of the main answers.

Going from north to south along the line (even though this is the opposite direction from the historic movement of coal), the starting point was originally at a place called Casson Close, which was close to Leeds Bridge, in the triangle between Meadow Lane and Hunslet Lane. The records indicate that there was a staith there, but we have no illustrations of it, and so have to guess at the details of it. It was probably a wooden structure, consisting of a ramp up to the top of an archway, under which a cart could be driven. We know from financial records that it had a horse-powered gin, which would have been a horizontal winding drum for a rope that could pull one chaldron wagon up the ramp, so that when it reached the top the door forming the bottom of the wagon could be opened, to drop the coal into a waiting cart.

To create more capacity, in 1789 a second staith was constructed to the south of Casson Close, and this became known as "Brandling's New Coal Staith", by contrast with "Brandling's Old Coal Staith" at Casson Close. As with Casson Close we have no illustrations of this structure, but it was probably very similar, although possibly larger. These two staiths worked well when wagons arrived singly, each pulled by one horse, but once steam locomotives were introduced in 1812 it soon became obvious that they could not cope easily with the arrival of a whole train of wagons. Consequently, in 1814 work started on the construction of a new staith just to the west of what was then called Kidd Acre Street (now Kidacre Street). This new staith was built of stone, carried two tracks side by side, and had 52 arches, each 9 feet wide (to match the length of a wagon).

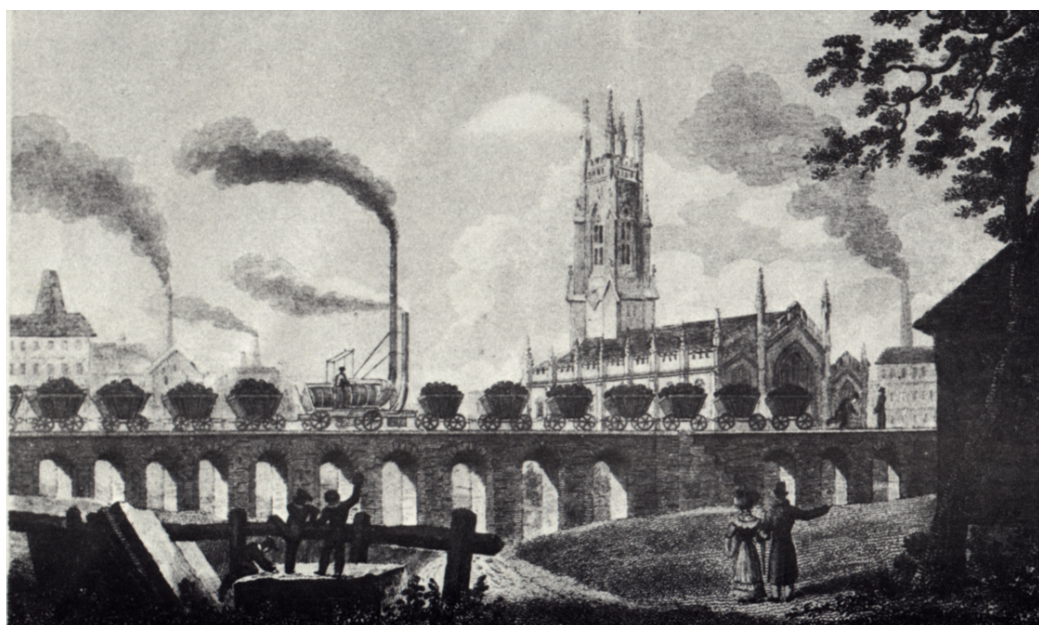
From the records it is not clear quite when the new third staith came into operation, but it was probably before the end of 1816. Meanwhile, it is known that Casson Close was abandoned by some time in 1813, leaving just the second stage, but use of this had finished by about 1818. When the first Ordnance Survey map was produced, in 1847, it showed not only that the Casson Close staith had disappeared, but that its site had been completely re-developed to create what was then called South Market. For the second staith, some of its area was now part of Great Wilson Street, which had been built in 1838 along with the Victoria Bridge that carried Neville Street across the river Aire. The rest of its area was simply shown as Coal Staith Road, with no indication of either a staith or any railway tracks.

So, for both the first and second staiths at this end of the railway we have neither illustrations nor any surviving structures, even though they had lasted for between 30 and 50 years. Indeed, the only evidence that these staiths ever existed is in the historic records relating to them, and in particular the maps from that period, such as the one produced in 1815 by the Giles brothers, Netlam and

The Survival of History, continued

Francis. While these records would enable a historian to work out where the staiths must have been, that hardly counts as “survival” for this purpose.

By contrast, for what has become known as the Kidacre Street staith, we do at least have a contemporary illustration, in the form of an engraving of a print that is entitled “Christ Church and Coal Staith, Leeds”, which was published in 1829. This shows the eastern side of the staith, with Christ Church behind it, and two rakes of wagons on the staith. An oddity of this illustration is that the engraver had apparently confused a factory chimney behind the staith with the chimney of the locomotive, so that the locomotive appears to have two chimneys, which it certainly did not.



The Whittock engraving of the Kidacre Street staith.

Also, this illustration shows a roadway coming through one of the arches of the viaduct, but this is probably artistic licence, as the contemporary maps do not give any indication of such a roadway. There was a roadway at the south end of the viaduct, namely Holmes Street, but it is known that this was crossed by a girder bridge rather than an arch of the viaduct.

Like the rest of the railway, the tracks on this staith were originally built to the gauge of 4' 1" (1244 mm), and then converted to standard gauge in 1881. The staith continued to operate until 1947, but once the collieries had been nationalised in January of that year, the NCB soon closed this northern section of the Middleton Railway, on 13th September. The bridge over Holmes Street, which had very limited headroom (usually quoted as 7' 6"), was demolished quite quickly, on 1st February 1948. Photographs of the site of this bridge taken at the time show where the gaps left in the retaining walls had been bricked up.

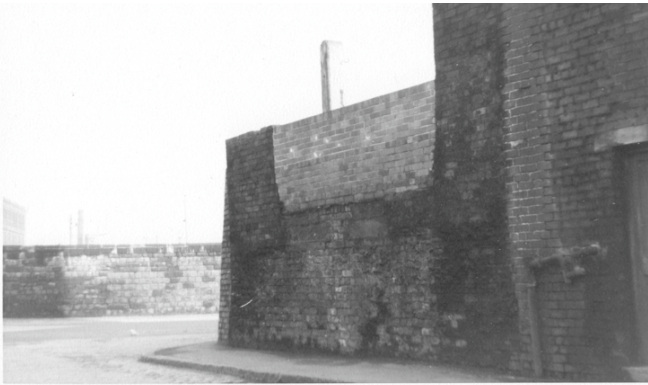
The site of the staith viaduct was then acquired by the gas board, to enable them to extend their Meadow Lane works, but the viaduct itself survived until about 1956, when it was demolished. Subsequently, as part of the work of remediating the contaminated land, an archaeological excavation was carried out on the site during 1994 and 1995, and this unearthed various items including lengths of historic rail, some of which are now in our collection. Consequently, there is now

The Survival of History, continued

no trace of where this staith was, apart from the maps and old photographs (a few of which are in the Leodis collection that is operated by Leeds libraries).



*Looking northwards along Kidacre Street, past the junction with Holmes Street.
Left: circa 1960s, right: 2024.*



*The South side of the junction of Holmes Street and Kidacre Street.
Left: circa 1960s, seen from Holmes Street; right: seen across Kidacre Street.*

South of this staith, the railway ran to the west of the Leeds Pottery, and they had their own staith, although this may just have been a siding where a wagon of coal could be parked and emptied, so that the coal could be taken to the pottery kilns. The pottery finally closed in 1881, and its buildings were demolished soon after that. The pottery site extended as far south as Jack Lane, and the railway crossed this at roughly the site of its junction with Parkfield Street. Although the



*The trackbed beside the Leeds Pottery site, looking north from Jack Lane.
Left: circa 1970s, right: 2024.*

The Survival of History, continued

track itself has disappeared, some of its route north of Jack Lane is still clearly visible through the gates from the road, much as it had been in the early 1970s.



The Middleton Railway route looking south across Jack Lane.

Left: circa 1970s, right: 2024.

On the south side of Jack Lane the railway ran alongside a building which still stands, although the land over which the railway ran is now hugely overgrown. Beyond this the railway crossed what the 1880 OS map described as the Leeds and Bradford Railway, on a bridge that was significantly skewed to the south-east. This bridge was eventually demolished in September 1973 by British Railways, who brought in the breakdown crane from Tinsley for the job.



Left: demolition of the Middleton Railway bridge over the British Railways tracks;

Right: the 2024 view south-east across these tracks, along the line of the bridge.

The picture above of this demolition shows the green lattice work of the footbridge which had also crossed the main railway line at this point, but soon afterwards this footbridge was replaced by a road bridge to carry the southbound side of Dewsbury road, which was diverted along Parkfield Street to reach it. Looking from the south-east corner of this bridge today, the whole area above the railway retaining wall is now sufficiently overgrown that it is very difficult to tell precisely where the abutments of the old Middleton Railway bridge were on the north side. The same is true of the view towards the retaining wall on the south side of this railway, as in the picture above.

South of this old bridge over the main line railway, the Middleton Railway ran through an area that has now been re-developed as the New Craven Gate Estate, consisting of a line of buildings that back onto the main railway line, with

The Survival of History, continued

New Craven Gate running along their south side. As recently as 2008 the OS maps showed part of the Middleton Railway route running through the north-east corner of this site, but there is now no sign of it visible from the road. Beyond this point the entire line of the Middleton Railway, including what was usually known as Whitaker's Staith, vanished during the motorway work, so that going southwards the next sign of the railway is the siding in our Moor Road car park.

This siding was originally part of the Middleton Railway line going northwards towards the city, and the entrance to our site was originally the eastern end of Burton Road. Where this entrance crosses the siding, just in front of our coal pile, was until the motorway was built the Burton Road level crossing, which had a similar set of gates to the Moor Road crossing. These gates and gateposts had to be removed to make the site workable, but two of the gateposts are still on display at the northern end of the car park siding.

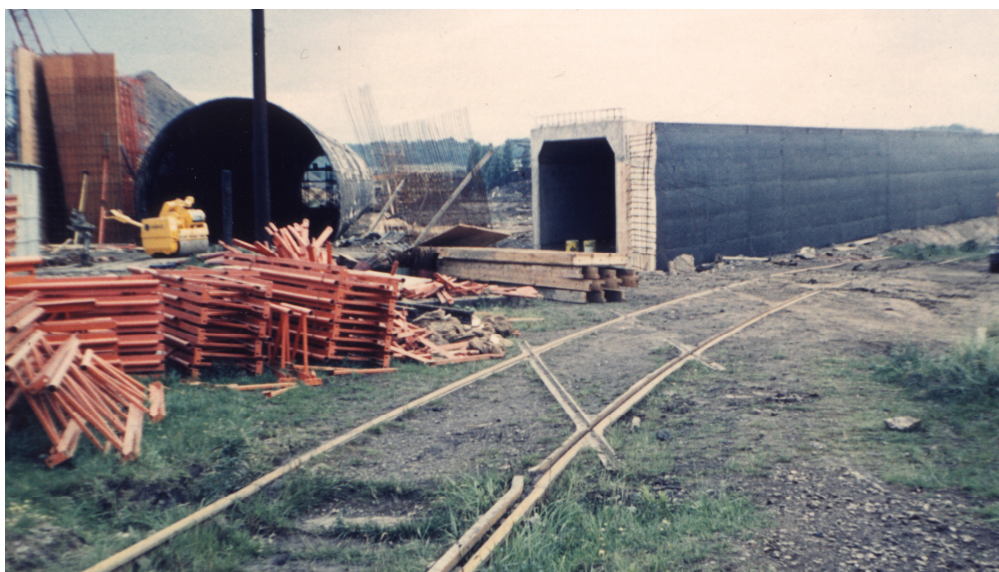
Southwards from this point, until 1875 the Middleton Railway ran along what is now Moor Road, and then up the rope-worked incline that was latterly known as the Old Run. The railway was diverted onto its present alignment in 1875, six years before the conversion to standard gauge in 1881. Meanwhile, the Leeds Corporation Act of 1879 empowered the corporation to purchase Hunslet Moor, which included part of the land over which the railway had run, and to construct what is now this section of Moor Road over the old alignment of the railway. Similarly, the incline became Old Run Road, which still follows the original alignment of the railway's incline.

Eastwards from this point the branch to Balm Road is still in situ, although the land either side of it has changed enormously since it was built in the 1890s (the exact date when this branch was connected to the Midland Railway is not known, beyond the fact that the connection was in use by 1895). To the north of the branch Clayton's Moor End works closed in the early 1990s, and the site of them and the associated housing was eventually redeveloped to become what is now the City South Retail Park. As part of this, the level crossing for Beza Road was extended, and a new level crossing was constructed across our Balm Road loop. To the south of the branch, prior to preservation of the Middleton Railway there had been two sidings into the works of Wagon Repairs Ltd., which by 1960 was owned by the Acme Engineering Co. This ceased to exist not long afterwards, and eventually its site was redeveloped for social housing, which is still there. Nearer to Moor Road the Hunslet Vicarage had stood to the south of the branch, but that site too has been re-developed.

The construction of the motorway in 1971 did not actually affect our Moor Road site, but it did result in huge changes to the railway further south. By this time the line to Park Halt was our main passenger line, and the present tunnel was constructed to carry the motorway over it. By contrast, the old branch into Clayton's Dartmouth Yard disappeared completely, to be replaced by a new line that connected the Yard directly to a new turnout on the passenger line, above the tunnel. The old branch had consisted of a level siding leading to a headshunt in the car park for the old Parkside Lane rugby ground, and then a sharply curved incline up into Dartmouth Yard, and this all disappeared. In particular, the special crossing was lifted, where the track had crossed the tramway that ran alongside

The Survival of History, continued

the railway line up to Middleton, but we were able to rescue two portions of this crossing. We have explored various options for displaying these components, but all of these have had significant problems, and so they remain in storage until we can find a satisfactory solution.



Construction of the motorway tunnel and pedestrian subway, showing the old Dartmouth Branch and the tram crossing.

What had to be retained during this demolition of the old Dartmouth branch was the footpath that had run alongside it, and so a pedestrian subway was built to carry this underneath the motorway. From the western end of this subway the footpath crosses the new version of the Dartmouth branch and leads down to what is now an industrial estate, but there is no visible indication that there had ever been a railway track there. The new version of the Dartmouth branch continued to operate until 1983, when Clayton's closed the works and sold the site for re-development. This meant that the railway's operating headquarters had to move too, to the present Moor Road site. There is now no indication that either the works or the associated railway tracks had been there.

Further along the passenger line from the turnout for the new Dartmouth Branch, there have been major changes to the surrounding land, but not to the railway. In particular, the motorway work had taken over the cutting to the east of our line, which had previously carried the former Great Northern Railway Hunslet branch towards Thwaite Gate and the bridge over the river Aire. In 1973 landscaping work removed all visible signs of the rest of this branch in the vicinity of our line, including demolition of the two bridges (usually known as the Parkside bridges) that had carried it over both our line and the valley to the west of it. Southwards of this the valley was filled in, and subsequently the John Charles Sports Centre was built on the site, and later on was built what is now the Cockburn John Charles Academy school, opposite it on the east side of our line.

Historically, from here southwards to the site of Middleton Colliery there have been three different routes for the Middleton Railway's tracks. The first route, built in 1758, ran northwards from the colliery site on a steady downhill gradient, until turning eastwards to climb up what became known as the Little Run incline, to reach the top of the Old Run incline. The second route was built in 1813 to cater for the new steam locomotives: from the colliery northwards it ran just to the east of the first route, but on an embankment supported by a retaining wall that

The Survival of History, continued

included many of the old stone sleepers that had been used originally on the first version. This second route therefore by-passed the Little Run, and ran almost on the level to the top of the Old Run.

When New Pit was constructed in 1868, it was sited just to the west of the northern end of this route, but only a few years later (in 1875) the third route was built to by-pass the Old Run. The first OS maps of this area were surveyed in 1846 and 1847, and so before the sinking of New Pit, whereas the next survey was not until 1889 to 1890. Consequently, we do not know for certain whether New Pit had sidings connected to the second route, whereas from the later maps we do know that it definitely had sidings connected to the third route. From roughly the site of the Parkside bridge southwards this third route re-used the alignment of the first route. Some photographs of trains on this section, such as those of our passenger trains between 1969 and the 1973 landscaping, have the retaining wall for the second version of the alignment as part of their background, but all signs of it disappeared in 1973.



Left: New Pit and the line to Broom Pit, seen from Parkside bridge.

Above: looking north along the line to Broom Pit, showing the retaining wall for the second version of the route.

The significance of this is that, until fairly recently, it was commonly believed that almost none of the railway as now preserved ran over the original 1758 alignment. This was because almost none of the current railway ran over what was known to be the second route for this part of the railway, and it was assumed that this must have been the 1758 alignment. Now, though, we know that this was not the case, and that this section of the 1758 railway followed the first version of the route. Since this is the one that was re-used for the third route, over which we now run trains, we do now know that roughly half of our passenger line does indeed follow the exact route of the 1758 railway.

Going further along the line, our Park Halt was constructed just north of where the access road into the colliery (which was a turning off Winrose Drive) crossed the railway track. There is still a footpath along the route of this access road, which now marks the end of our line, but south of this the entire colliery site was flattened in 1970, once we had been forced by vandalism to abandon our attempt

The Survival of History, continued

to convert the colliery buildings into a depot. Subsequently the site was used for tipping baled waste, and then eventually it was landscaped, with the ground levels now considerably higher than they had been.

The railway had actually extended south from here, with an incline (commonly known as Rope Hill) that started at the south end of the colliery site, from the area known as Dayhole End, and climbed steadily to a winding house on the north side of Town Street. When the incline had been built, which was probably some time between 1813 and 1819, the track continued across Town Street, and south of this a number of pits were sunk, and tracks laid to connect them to the top of the incline. As far as is known, these lines were only ever worked by horses, but there was a steam winding engine to operate the incline.



Left: the view southwards up Rope Hill towards the winding house.

Right: looking northwards across Town Street to the Rope Hill winding house.

Eventually these pits were linked underground, and their shafts were retained just for ventilation, so that by 1890 the whole railway network south of Town Street had been closed, and there is now no trace of it visible. The incline was still used, but to haul wagons of coal up to a staith next to the winding house, although somewhere around 1930 the winding engine was replaced by an electric motor. Not long after nationalisation this operation ceased, in 1948, and an explosives store was built across the bottom of the incline. The track was gradually removed, but the site of the upper part of the incline survives, in the form of Manor Farm Rise and the stepped footpath that connects the top of it to Town Street. This footpath is the most southerly part of the Middleton Railway that is still visible.



Left: the view southwards in 2024, up the footpath that follows the route of Rope Hill.

Note on sources: the historic pictures are from the MRT's collection: the modern ones are from the author.

Tony Cowling

Model Railway Exhibition



Above: “Colinton”, a Scalefour layout based on a station on the Caledonian Railway’s Balerno branch, built by Alastair Dickson.

Below “Pucklechurch”, an O gauge layout based on a possible Midland Railway branch line to a location east of Bristol.

Both © Tony Cowling, 2024



Model Railway Exhibition



Above: “Much Llaughter”, by David Harris and Nico Mulcock, an 009 layout of an imagined narrow gauge preserved line.

Below: “Oxforth East”, by Peter and Tommy Morley-Yates, based on an imagined location with both standard and narrow gauge lines.

Both © Tony Cowling 2024



Model Railway Exhibition



Above:
"Pucklechurch",
an O gauge layout
operated by
Robert Davey and
David Smith

© Tony Cowling,
2024

Right: "Bryn
Llechi" (Slate
Hill), built by Colm
Connolly-Taylor
and on its first
exhibition outing.

© Ian Dobson,
2024



MOOR ROAD HAPPENINGS

I'm writing these notes whilst on holiday in deepest Devon, so I may be slightly out of date on some of what has been happening.

LOCO NOTES

HL 3860

Swanscombe No.6 was the only steam locomotive available at the start of the season, and so saw significant use during April and early May, clocking up 13 days in steam, which is nearly half of its planned annual usage. Our maintenance regime requires a B exam at 15 days and a boiler washout and C exam at 30 days. The washout and C exam involve quite a bit of work and wherever possible we try to share out the number of steaming days to avoid doing this during the year, particularly as much of it has to be done for the Boiler Inspector in any case for his annual inspection. The locomotive is currently being rested in the Engine House, although is immediately usable if required.

No.6's time in service proved to be fairly reliable and the only thing of any note was a blown left hand steam chest gasket, which was soon rectified.

1210 SIR BERKELEY

The last Old Run mentioned that the locomotive had gone on hire to Beamish and was expected back at the end of April. However, things didn't exactly go to plan. After doing half of its planned steamings we received a report that steam was coming up through the concrete base in the smokebox. This was extremely concerning as the usual source of such leakage is a hole in the cylinder block and it was known that the block was not in the best of condition. The loco was returned to Moor Road and immediately put into steam to gauge the extent of the problem. To our relief we found that Beamish's diagnosis of the problem was wrong and the steam leakage was from the joint in the main steam pipe just above the concrete. In essence, this was a relatively minor job to rectify and the steam pipe was removed to enable a new joint to be fitted.

However, the minor job turned out to be more of a mammoth one when a socket being used to tighten one of the joints was accidentally dropped down the blastpipe. This is a nightmare scenario which most people involved with steam locos avoid by covering such openings, and this was something that had been done. However, once the job had been completed the cover had been removed but then it was suggested that the nuts should be checked for tightness once more and that's when it happened. The blastpipe was quickly removed but there was no sign of the socket so it was concluded that it must have found its way into one of the valve chests. This meant that, under no circumstance could the loco

Moor Road Happenings, continued

be moved as there was a possibility of catastrophic damage. With a 50-50 choice, the decision was made to dismantle the right hand valve first. Unfortunately the locomotive was in the Engine House, and so not over a pit, and the valve rod had to be split from its crosshead by someone lying flat on his back on the floor and shuffling underneath. The valve chest cover was removed and the valve extracted. Unfortunately, there was no sign of the lost socket so the whole process then had to be repeated on the left hand side. Once done, the socket was found and removed. The whole lot was then re-assembled, a few words which cover a lot of work.

In addition to the leaking joint it was noted that two of the washout plugs in the smokebox were weeping slightly, so the boiler was drained and the holes re-cut. This necessitated the fitting of the next size of washout plug. The boiler is fitted with B.R. standard washout plugs and these are available in a range of sizes from several suppliers. Following a successful steam test the loco was declared fit for service and became the rostered loco for the next few days of operation. However, the joint has once again failed and the loco is currently out of service while we consider what to do. The face of the flange on the steam pipe is not in the best of condition and is probably contributing to the problem. We are looking at the possibility of machining it to improve things but the need to carry out other work on the milling machine has put a temporary halt to the work.

No. 11

Still no progress to report.

SENTINEL No.54

Following its formal boiler inspection and steam test, this locomotive is available for traffic but has not been used so far this season.

HE 2387 BROOKES No.1

The last Old Run mentioned that there were three leaking washout plugs in the smokebox. These plug holes were re-cut to restore a satisfactory screw thread. However, this process enlarges the hole and the old plugs would no longer fit so new plugs were required. Unlike with Sir Berkeley, Brookes's plugs are a non-standard size that is not obtainable off the shelf, so we had to set to and machine new ones from SAE 660 bronze bar. Once this was done the Boiler Inspector was invited to conduct his formal steam test which was declared to be satisfactory.

Moor Road Happenings, continued

The locomotive is now available for traffic and has been used as required.

HC 1544 SLOUGH ESTATES No.3

During May the pattern for the tube from which the piston rings would be made was completed and taken to the Batley Foundry to be cast. We were pleasantly surprised to be told the next day that they had been cast and were ready for picking up. At a cost of £75 for sufficient material to make four rings this was significantly cheaper than the £1300 we had been quoted to have four of them made outside. The tube was soon in the Swift lathe and the required four rings machined to size. These then had to be split and opened up to give the required 'spring'. This is achieved by tapping them on the inside with a ball pein hammer. The hammering slightly stretches the metal on the inside and opens out the ring.



Above: one of the new piston rings being machined to size.

© Tony Cowling, 2024



Above: Rod opening up one of the new piston rings.

© Tony Cowling, 2024

Once this was done the rings were quickly fitted to the piston heads and the pistons themselves inserted into the cylinders, enabling the piston rods to be fitted to the crossheads. It was hoped that this would be a simple task but when the first one (on the left hand side) was fitted, the whole assembly was tight and would not slide easily up and down, indicating some slight misalignment somewhere. We still have to work out where, and then how to fix it.

The other big happening during May was the delivery of the new frame stretcher from Northern Steam Engineering. This was soon in the workshops and being dropped into place. However, it was soon apparent that there was a dimensional problem preventing it being fitted. This was traced to a dimensional error which, unfortunately was of our making. However, it was an error that could be relatively easily overcome if the stretcher could be fitted on the Huron milling machine. It

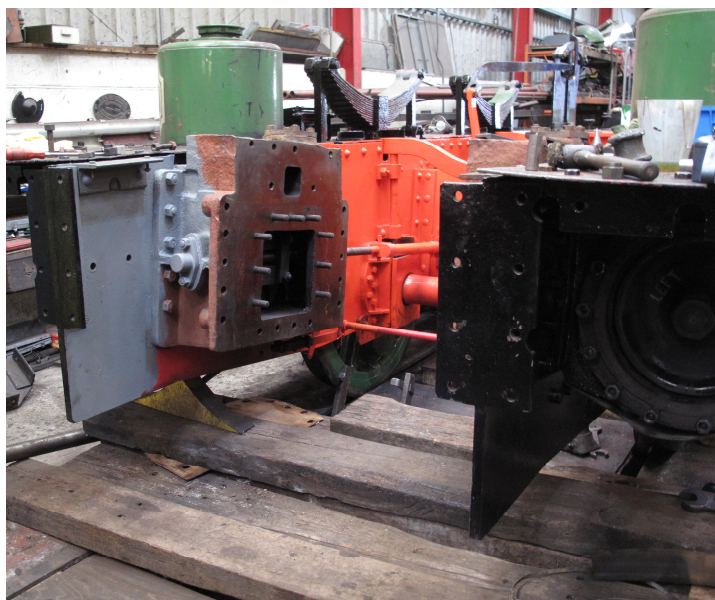
Moor Road Happenings, continued

was a very close fit on the milling table, but it was successful and the required metal was soon removed. The frame stretcher has now been dropped into position and appears to be a good fit. The next job will be to carefully mark off the centres of the various holes so that they can be drilled out. This will entail lifting the frame stretcher out and onto the large radial drilling machine.



Above: the new frame stretcher, as delivered, looking at the front left-hand corner. The inverted U shape fits round the valve chest covers.

© Steve Roberts, 2024



Above: the frames waiting for the stretcher to be fitted. The visible set of studs secures the cover over the right-hand valve chest.

© Tony Cowling, 2024

Work has also been ongoing on the water tank as manpower enables. More needle-gunning has been carried out and, inevitably, more holes have been found. It has been decided that it will be easier and more beneficial for the re-plating work to be carried out by contractors.

Finally, the boiler inspector came and examined the boiler during May. He was satisfied that it was in sufficiently good condition to allow a further period of service subject to a few expected works, such as re-cutting all the washout and fusible plug holes. As a precautionary measure he requested an ultrasonic inspection of the firebox shoulders to make sure there was no internal cracking. This was duly carried out by a contractor with no faults found.

One other job remaining to be done was the recovery of a lump of metal that had been accidentally dropped into the boiler whilst removing the old tubes. Doing this involved turning the boiler upside down, allowing the lump of metal to fall so that it could be removed easily through the safety valve opening. Once all was found to be satisfactory it was time to order the boiler tubes, which arrived

Moor Road Happenings, continued

towards the end of June. These were soon all inserted ready for expansion into the tube holes, a job that is currently ongoing.

Fowler 42200033 HARRY

This locomotive was used on the Saturday diesel service on a couple of days but, on each occasion, it had to be taken out of service due to problems with maintaining vacuum. The vacuum exhaustor was removed for inspection but no fault has been found, so now we must look elsewhere for the cause of the problem. In the meantime the loco is available for shunting, if required.

Peckett 5003 AUSTIN'S No.1

Available for service. A replacement pressure unloader valve has been sourced and fitted which will overcome the problems being experienced with the original one. It is planned to bring the loco into the workshops for a much needed repaint and other minor work. This will be dependent on manpower and workshops space being available.

D2999

The problems with the batteries not charging have now been solved. The exact cause has not been ascertained, but some of the wiring has been renewed and the voltage regulator and other contacts have all been cleaned. The locomotive has been successfully started up and, following a B exam, it became available for service. However, it was failed on its first day in traffic due to overheating of the cooling system. This is yet to be investigated but has happened in the past, and on that occasion was due to an air lock in the cooling system following a period of being out of traffic.

D1373 MD&HB No.45

In service and running satisfactorily.

HE 6981

The battery boxes have now been made and fitted. Attention has now turned to the exhaust system which essentially requires renewal. The locomotive was originally flameproof and, as part of this, the exhaust passed through a water bath which also acted as a silencer. At some point this was done away with and the exhaust manifold simply connected to the exhaust pipe, resulting in a rather loud loco. We have obtained a second hand silencer but this needs significant

Moor Road Happenings, continued

modification to get it to fit.

D577 MARY, D631 CARROLL and L.M.S. 7051

All currently on display in the Engine House, and available for use if required.

All other locomotives are stored, either on display in the Engine House or awaiting overhaul.

CARRIAGE & WAGON NOTES

All three coaches are currently in service and each had a 3 monthly 'B' exam during June. Coach 2084 (the balcony brake) was recently reported as having a leaking roof during a heavy rainfall. Investigation could find no definite cause but it was immediately below a joint in the steel roof sheeting. As a temporary measure the joint was covered in Bostik Flashband sealing strip and this appears to have solved the problem, so far.

This coach was fitted with steel roof sheeting shortly after it was converted from a PMV, as before then it had been covered in a plastic sheet by British Railways, but it was soon being found that sparks from the steam locomotives were creating holes in it. Initially, the steel sheeting was a success, but after some time it was found that expansion and movement were causing the holding down screws to come loose, and so these had to be replaced with larger ones. In recent times we have used traditional canvas sheeting to cover vehicle roofs, and the plan is to do this with this coach when it comes in for overhaul at the end of the year.

Coach 2223

With the start of the running season progress on this conversion has slowed due to the priority of running trains but it has continued. The interior has now had three coats of varnish except around the windows, as the glazing needs to be installed before this is done. The glass and beading for the windows has now largely been obtained and a start has been made on fitting this. Once the windows are in place it will be time to start on building up and fitting the seating and the end will be in sight.

Externally, the body has had a coat of red undercoat. Once the windows are all in place the top coat will be applied. This is our standard colour of RAL 3004.

Moor Road Happenings, continued

AROUND AND ABOUT RUNNING SHED

The new smoke vents have now been installed and we are once more able to light up locomotives within there. In the end, for the internal work we resorted to working off the cab roof of D1373, as this was at an ideal height and essentially a flat surface. The smoke trough itself effectively created a guard rail to the sides and, even though it didn't exactly comply with handrail standards, was considered to be a safe method of work for the short time required.

Right: Roger and Geordie on the roof of the running shed, while fitting the smoke vents.

© Steve Roberts, 2024



SURFACE GRINDER

The motor was returned from the repairers and immediately refitted to the grinder enabling it to be put back into use.

PERMAQUIP BALLAST PACKER SHELTER

Work has continued on the shelter as time and manpower permit. All the cladding and flashings have now been fitted and the shelter itself is now complete. Work is currently centred on the fabrication and installation of the track within the shelter and over the running line. We are not using conventional rail for this as the bit that sits on the running line needs to be lightweight so that it can be carried by one person.

To get the tamper onto the running line, two lengths of 'rail' (actually 50 x 50 hollow section steel) are placed over the track and connected to the 50 x 50 steel in the shelter. The tamper can then be driven over the running line. When in the correct position the tamper is lifted and turned with the aid of its own inbuilt rotating jack.

Moor Road Happenings, continued

The temporary rails are then removed and the tamper lowered onto the running line. Removal of the tamper when not required is a reversal of this process.

Although the shelter is made from galvanised steel sheeting it will eventually require painting. Traditionally, such shelters were painted with a black bitumastic paint and this was the original intention. However, it has been suggested that it be painted green to match the nearby carriage shed, so we shall have to await a decision. Livery debates can be interesting!

LEVEL CROSSINGS

Work has continued on the two footpath crossings on the running line. The new signposts have so far survived intact but those at Bannisters crossing have been subject to attacks of graffiti. Fortunately we have been able to remove this. Footpath 201 required the installation of fencing to direct people to the actual crossing and this was installed at the end of May. We had installed a timber crossing over the track during April but this had been ripped up by the end of the month. We are still considering what is to be done about this.

JCB

It has been planned to carry out various works on the JCB for some time, mainly to improve the steering which was very 'loose', although the necessary time had not been found for this. However, matters came to a head at the end of June when the steering failed altogether. Fortunately it happened as it was being driven out of the Picton shelter and it was possible to get it back inside using the skid steering facility.

For those that do not know, it is possible to apply the brakes to each of the driven rear wheels individually and by applying the appropriate brake the machine can be steered to the left or right, albeit not too accurately. Work is currently ongoing to repair the machine as it is needed for moving coal from the main coal dock in the car park to the coal stage on the platform.

Steve Roberts



Left: a view of the platform from the roof of the running shed, taken during the work of installing the smoke vents.

© Steve Roberts, 2024

The MRT Youth Team

There is very little to report on since the last writing. This is largely due to members of the team focusing on their operational duties during the 2024 operating season. Those who are passed out in roles have also been needed to fill spaces in the operating roster giving them less time to supervise workshop sessions.

Following the delivery of the boiler tubes for HC1544 'Slough Estates Ltd No.3', Oliver and I worked to clean the 115 tube holes in the tubeplate of any corrosion and build up of scale. Once cleaned the tubes could be inserted from the smokebox end and pulled through at the firebox end using a long rod. These were put in working from the bottom row upwards until eventually, in a matter of hours, all 115 tubes were in place and ready for expanding.

Hopefully I shall be able to provide a more filled update on the team's doings in the next issue. At the time of writing 'A Taste Of Yorkshire' is a week away and will see many members of the team assisting to deliver this new event..

Geordie Brown

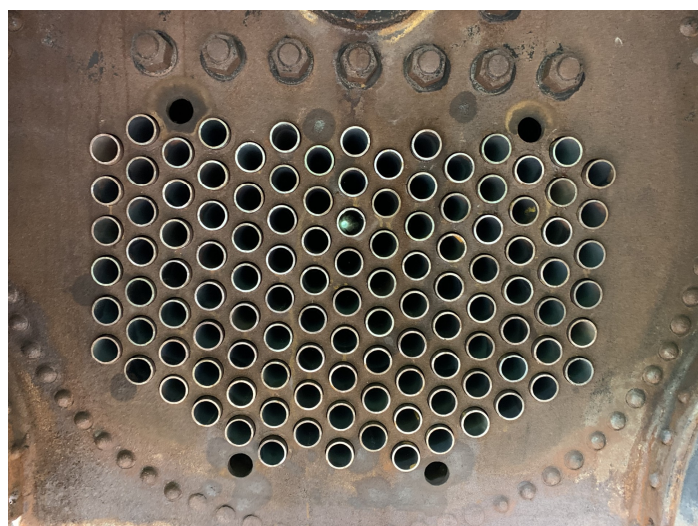
*Below: the team in action, fitting the new tubes into the boiler of HC 1544
"Slough Estates No. 3"*

© Geordie Brown, 2024



Left: Oliver Brookes (just visible in the firebox) pulling a tube through the boiler.

Below: the smokebox tubeplate, with all 115 tubes in position, ready for expanding.



Shop Notes

For the front-of-house team, life has been full of variety, starting with our opening with the Community Day through Teddy-bears picnics, the model railway exhibition, classic cars, a steam punk fair with (at the time of writing) a food and drink festival to come. Sadly, this year's steam punk fair had no small owls but we have just had a visit (and some songs) from Leeds People's Choir.

In the display hall the dramatic and inspired development to report is the moving of the model of the "Salamanca" to be near the rail of 1812. The two items now form a more meaningful display.

What is to come? Santa bookings go live soon: watch out for them

Richard Stead

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor

When your request for material for the next issue of Old Run arrived, I was in the process of reviewing some of my photographs taken when the Moor Road site was being redeveloped in 2005, . For what they are worth, here are a few to choose from.

They are very evocative of the upheaval and transformation of the Moor Road site, and the infectious enthusiasm shown by our members as they transformed the old into the new that we enjoy today.

I also attach a photo of Henry de Lacy receiving a cosmetic facelift to make it ready for display in the soon to be built Display Hall. I hope they will be of use!

Sincerely

Howard Bishop



Howard's picture of HC 1309, before it was lined out.

For the benefit of newer readers who may not recognise the name, Howard was a former editor of the Old Run, before he retired to the Isle of Man.

Letter to the Editor, continued

Two more of Howard's pictures, showing the foundations being constructed for the back wall of the platform.



From the Archives



Here are two more of Chris Nicholson's photographs, that were picked out while looking through the archive for ones suitable for use on the front and back covers.

Both feature HE 2387 "Brookes No. 1" before its overhaul which started in 2014, and were taken from the John Charles Approach road bridge.

Above: a mixed train, with the buildings of the Cockburn John Charles Academy school behind.

Left: a goods train, looking back towards the city.



Introducing Matt Berry

I would like to take this opportunity to introduce myself as incoming traffic manager. Before I do, I would like to thank Chris Campbell, as the outgoing manager, for all the work that he has done over the past few years.

As for myself, I have been volunteering at the railway for nearly 5 years now, 4 really as Covid got in the way of most of 2020. In that time I have progressed through the footplate ranks, and passed as a steam driver just over 12 months ago.

In addition I have been volunteering on the Embsay and Bolton Abbey railway for nearly 8 years, and passed as a driver there just over 2 years ago.

In my professional life, my background is in retail, with several years at varying levels of supermarket management. I hope to bring these skills to the traffic manager role, along with my passion to see the railway develop, succeed and thrive.

Feel free to contact me via email, on trafficmanager@middletonrailway.org.uk

Please be aware that I may not reply immediately as I work full time, 9.00 - 5.00 Monday to Friday, but rest assured I will reply as soon as I can. You will also be able to grab me in person either when I am on the footplate, or during one of the other regular days, probably monthly, when I plan on attending the railway in person.

I look forward to working with you all.

Matt Berry



To help people recognise him, here is a picture of Matt, in “working at the railway” gear.



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A View from the Past



An archive picture from Chris Nicholson: “Sir Berkeley” heads a goods train across the Beza Road level crossing, with Moor End works in the background.