

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of the Members of the 1758 Middleton Railway Trust, held in the Holdsworth School of Applied Science, University of Leeds, on Saturday 1st March 1969 at 2.30 p.m.

1. Present: Dr R.F. Youell (in the chair) and 48 other members.
2. Apologies were received from Mrs Youell, Mrs Lonsdale, Mrs Landor, Mr Brampton, Mr Hunter, Mr Dews, and Mr Agus.
3. Minutes of last A.G.M.; it was proposed by Mr Lodge, seconded by Mr Hebden, that these be taken as read and approved as being an accurate record. Carried nem. con.
4. Matters Arising: there were no matters arising from the minutes.
5. Reports - (a) Secretary: The Secretary reported that the administrative business of the Trust had been carried on smoothly and expressed thanks to Dr & Mrs Youell for their hospitality in holding the monthly Committee meetings in their house. During the year Mr Nettleton and Mr Crew had resigned from the Committee and Mr Short and Mr Lee had joined the Committee. The Secretary was very grateful to Mrs Youell for handling personally the many matters which had been brought to her, and hoped that members would ease the load on her by bringing general Society business to him. Proposed by Mr Hebden, seconded by Mr McAskie, that the Secretary's report be accepted; carried nem. con.  
(b) Treasurer: This was presented by Dr Youell. The chief feature of the year had been the severe drop in goods traffic, to between £300 and £350, which barely covered fuel, repairs and ~~insurance~~ insurance. We must recover Claytons' traffic if possible and greatly increase our income from Open Days. Covenant subscriptions can be made as soon as our registration as a charity was completed. Thanks to the generous donation of the locomotive Henry de Lacy II from Kirkstall Forge we had not had to dip into our £500 deposit account; behind this we had the estimated scrap value of £2,500 of our capital assets. Nevertheless we must economise as much as possible this year. The final statement of account for the year was still being prepared and would be circulated to members. Proposed by Mr Syms, seconded by Mr Barry, that this report be accepted; carried nem. con.  
(c) Membership & Publicity: An increase of membership to 201 had been achieved by the end of 1968. During the year, 60 new ordinary members had been enrolled and 4 life members; 30 existing members had lapsed. The importance of enrolling new members was stressed; if each existing member could enroll at least one new one, many of our problems would be solved. Continued efforts were being made to publicise the railway in the press and on radio and TV. Main events during the year had been the Matthew Murray Bicentenary celebrations; the arrival of Henry de Lacy II; the Steam Gala, and the "Farewell to Steam" trip at Waterloo Main Colliery; this had paid for the £26 lost on the abortive "Lincolnshire Woldsman" tour.

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Exhibitions had been held at Leeds, Harrogate (twice), Normanton and other places. A vote of thanks was passed to Mrs Youell for her work in this field. There was a pressing need for more help with this work, especially for a Sales Officer with a car. It was suggested that a "Steam Special" Open Day might be held at the line on Easter Monday and Tuesday (April 7th and 8th) 1969; this was proposed by Mr Syms, seconded by Mr Ashurst and carried nem. con.

The Chairman had dealt with the annual Light Railway Guide and Timetables for 1969 and other similar publications. Mr Ashurst enquired if we could not elect a Sales Officer there and then; Dr Youell proposed (from the chair) Mr Edwards; Mr Syms seconded the nomination (which was accepted) and it was carried by the meeting nem. con.

Mr Cowling inquired if we could get a new brakevan for visiting parties. This was noted as a recommendation. The report was then accepted nem. con.

(d) Chairman: By way of comment on his printed report, Dr Youell pointed out the difficulties of operating a line much of which had no authority apart from the original Acts of Parliament. No statutory instruments seemed to have survived from the Fireclay Co.; a deed of transfer was now being drafted to which the N.C.B., the National Trust and our Trustees would be the parties. As regards the appeal, an extension of time had been agreed with the N.C.B. and a vote of thanks to Mr Kirk of the N.C.B. was carried unanimously. The acceptance of the report was proposed by Mr Lodge, seconded by Mr Short, and carried nem. con.

(e) The Trustees: The Chairman emphasised the indignation of our Trustees at the lack of information on our policies and activities: the printed report was proposed for acceptance by Mr Spencer, seconded by Mr Wade, and carried nem. con.

QUESTIONS were then invited on TRAFFIC and ENGINEERING matters.

(i) Could we acquire any normal plate-wagons for internal traffic - the Chairman replied that cost and manoeuvrability had decided us in favour of the Laporte wagons. Plate-wagons would have cost us £150-£180 each. The N.C.B. did have some semi-flats, but these again had a comparatively long wheelbase. We were still short of atabling room, but when Claytons' had cleared their scrap, we might again be able to use the "middle road".

(ii) How many trained drivers were available for weekday running? - at present there were three for John Courage, with more being trained, and four for the Fowler diesel when the latter was running again.

(iii) Could a regular drivers' rota be prepared? ~~xxx present xxx~~ This was agreed to on the basis of a daily service; the only snag was in the competence of our customers in organising their traffic.

(iv) What progress was being made on "Lord Mayor"? - Mr Wade reported that the locomotive (at Haworth) had been worked on at nearly every weekend, and had been retubed and relagged at the expense of himself and Mr Walton.

(v) What were the rules regarding running after dark and the age for driving? After-dark running was permissible under the insurance but not particularly

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advisable. For most of the year, it would now be light enough for non-University members to operate the traffic in the evenings. The age limit of 18 was now valid for all our locomotives.

5. The Swansea & Mumbles Rail Coach: The Chairman opened by setting on record his personal indignation at the idea of the coach being taken away from Middleton. Mr Rhys of the Transport Section of the National Museum of Wales had applied for the vehicle on permanent loan, and the Committee's recommendations were in favour of the loan, provided that all expenses were paid by the National Museum of Wales and the vehicle bore a plaque stating that it belonged to Middleton. Mr Lee said that the vehicle had become an eyesore and we owed it to our public image to do some restoration; we had been offered £50 of window glass for use on it. Mr Cowling agreed that we had a degree of moral obligation to restore the car. Mr Dawson suggested immediate covered storage under Balm Road bridge. Mr Hebden asked for an accurate estimate of the cost of restoration; his information was that it would be between £2,000 and £5,000, and he pointed out that Balm Road bridge was proved by the experience of Robinson & Birdsell's to be unsafe for storage. The Chairman thought the figures quoted were excessive. Mr Syms thought the cost of external restoration only might well be less. Mr Lodge said the whole body structure was rotten and that to make the body safe to board etc. would cost into four figures. Mr Barry thought we had far too many commitments already, and should accept the offer from Cardiff with thanks. Mr Ashurst suggested a loan subject to review; the Chairman thought 10 years would be a reasonable period. Mr Bushell stressed that the essential point was the future well-being of the car itself, and mentioned that its temporary home would be in the works of an electrical contractor in South Wales. Mr Jones said that we should consider the historical context of the car's preservation, and that to his mind its rightful context was in the economic history of South Wales, to which it should be returned. An Amendment to the motion, declaring that the vehicle should be restored in Leeds, was put and lost. The Substantive Motion that the car be loaned to the National Museum of Wales with a proviso to review the agreement in 10 years, was put and carried unanimously.

6. Avonside Locomotives: The member who had asked for a discussion on this topic was not present. The Chairman outlined the present situation: that M.D.H.B. No. 21 had already been cut up for scrap, and the tank and cab used to replace the originals on "Swansea". Due to a weak patch on the firebox, we should concentrate on restoring the latter as a museum piece; under no circumstances could we scrap it as it had been a gift to us.

7. Proposal to augment membership of Disciplinary Subcommittee to five members: This was proposed by Mr Short and seconded by Mr Duckworth.  
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Mr Lodge objected, pointing out that members could request a meeting of the Sub-Committee at any time and that the number of members was irrelevant; its decisions were arrived at by force of logic and were invariably unanimous. The Chairman emphasised that anyone aggrieved by a decision of the Sub-Committee first to himself, then to the Trustees and finally to the President. Under no circumstances could we have popular election of disciplinary officers from among the working members. Mr Kempston asked whether any member could be summarily suspended by an officer of the Trust. Mr Lodge replied that suspension was a matter for the Sub-Committee but that an officer had a duty to stop dangerous or wasteful misbehaviour on the railway. Mr Barry said the real cause of the proposal was clearly personal antagonism against the present Sub-Committee; someone had "got the nark" and was wasting the meeting's time by airing it. Mr Jones suggested the matter be left on the table and that those with a grievance be invited to a meeting of the Disciplinary Sub-Committee to be specially convened, where they could put their views. This was seconded by Mr Hebden and carried by 42 votes to 1. The Chairman issued a formal invitation to all who wished to come to such a meeting to sign a list so that their convenience could be consulted in choosing a time and place.

8. Limited Liability: The Chairman and Secretary summed up the proposals and invited questions. An assurance was given that the rights at present enjoyed by junior members would be fully protected. It was reported that the Trustees were in favour of Limitation of Liability by Guarantee and also of the completion of registration as a charitable trust. The following resolutions were then put to the meeting, and carried unanimously:

- (i) This meeting authorises the Committee now to be elected to make application, under legal advice, to incorporate the 1758 Middleton Railway Trust as a company limited by guarantee of £1 per member, the word "Limited" being omitted from its title; and this meeting recommends that the present title should be carried on if legally possible, and that if not possible, alternative forms of either "The Middleton Railway Society" or "The 1758 Middleton Railway, Leeds" should be adopted.
- (ii) This meeting authorises the formation of the "Middleton Railway Association" as a body in which members under 21 may enjoy all present privileges (except voting at Company meetings) without incurring liability for the debts of the railway; and this meeting recommends that every effort should be made to ensure the fullest possible participation of junior members in the work of the railway, the establishment of a separate body being purely a matter of legal form.
- (iii) This meeting approves the completion of registration of the railway as a charitable trust as soon as possible.

The Chairman thanked the meeting for the cordial and uncomplicated manner in which it had dealt with this controversial topic, and warned that a further General Meeting would be needed for the Memorandum and Articles of Association to be subscribed to.

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9. The Museum Appeal: The Chairman went over the means so far adopted for raising the sum required, which represented about £20 per member, and the Secretary urged the importance of attracting loans, for which we could offer adequate security in the form of an appreciating capital asset. Any member able to do so was strongly urged to lend the Trust his superfluous savings. A gentleman suggested the collection of Green Shield stamps, and the suggestion was accepted with thanks.

10. Election of Officers:

The following posts were filled by written nomination without contest:

President: Viscount Garnock.

Vice-Presidents: J. Alcock

Dr R.G. Lawrence

Rt. Rev. Eric Treacy

Prof. Tuplin

Chairman: Dr R. F. Youell

Vice-Chairman: it was agreed that the post should be left vacant pending the drafting of Articles of Association governing our new constitution.

Secretary: D.R. Jones

Treasurer: N.A. Brampton

Minutes Secretary: Mrs S.M. Youell

Chief Mechanical Engineer: J.A. Lodge

Chief Civil Engineer: P. McAskie

Traffic Manager: J.K. Lee

Publicity Officers: Mrs M. Landor, Mrs R. Lonsdale

It was agreed by the meeting, to a proposal from the chair, that the Publicity Officers should exercise a corporate vote on the Committee.

The following candidates were proposed for the posts of 4 ordinary Committee members. A secret ballot, proposed by Mr Lodge, was heavily defeated and the poll was by show of hands.

B. Ashurst (stood down)

D. Hebden 39 votes

N. Short 26 "

J. Crabtree 20 "

G. Duckworth 22 "

J. Foster 16 "

A.J. Cowling 14 "

T. Leech 19 "

W. Greenhalgh 14 "

Messrs Hebden, Short, Duckworth, and Crabtree were congratulated on their election.

11. Any Other Business. No business had been submitted by the closing date for this topic. The Chairman then vacated the chair at 5.57 p.m.