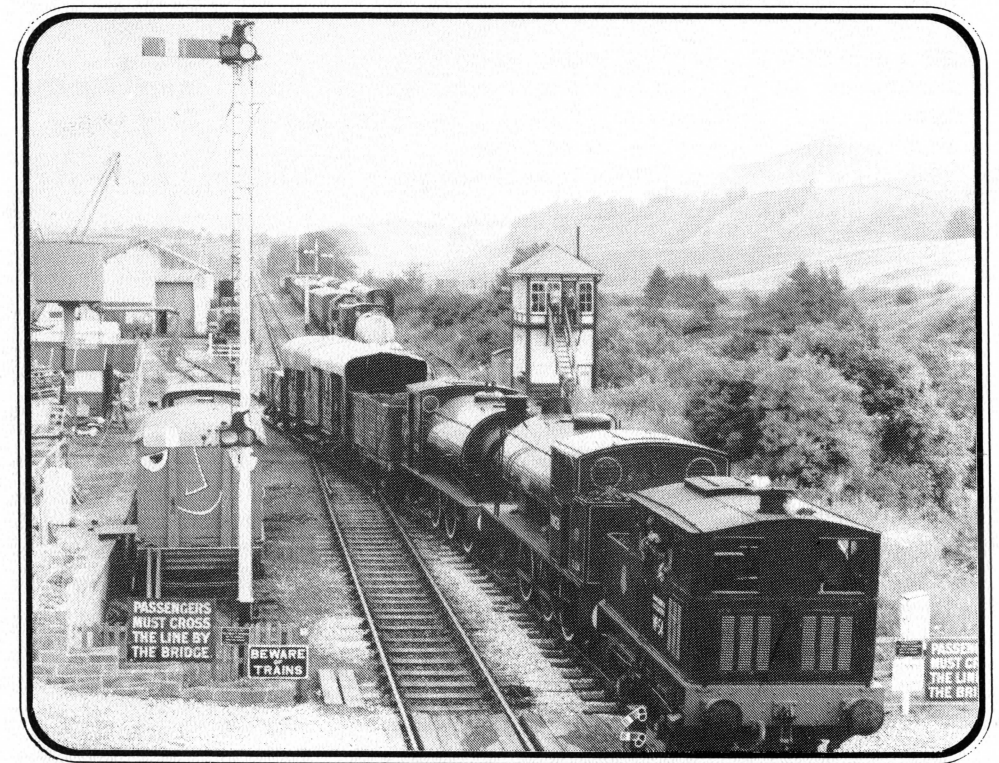


THE OLD RUN

JOURNAL OF
THE 1758 MIDDLETON RAILWAY
LEEDS



Number 136

Autumn 1991

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The Editor thanks all those who have sent articles, news items and photographs for inclusion in this issue. ALL readers are invited to contribute articles, news items, letters, photographs and drawings on subjects of interest. N.B. Whilst black and white prints usually reproduce better, colour prints can also be used successfully, but need careful assessment for shade values rather than colour contrast: black, red and bright green look good in colour, but tend to become one dark mass when printed in b/w. Contributions should include the reader's name and address. Opinions expressed in the magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Middleton Railway Trust Ltd., the Middleton Railway Association, or the Editor.

All articles for the Winter issue should reach the Editor by 1st December 1991, at the latest.

EDITORIAL

In the wake of the A.G.M., this issue has as its lead article Tony Cowling's official tribute to the work of Vernon Smith and John Chaplin, who resigned from the respective posts of Chairman and Treasurer, prior to the A.G.M. I apologise for having omitted to mention in the last issue's Editorial account of the meeting that, as well as votes of thanks being made for their years of work, tribute actually was paid to said work - not the same thing by any means, and I was pleased to see that Tony has compensated for my omission by elaborating on the necessarily short tributes made at the meeting. His last paragraph hints that there may be more to come on this subject and, as Oscar Wilde's creation, Lady Bracknell, might certainly have commented, "To lose one Council officer may be regarded as a misfortune; to lose two looks like carelessness." For the time being, however, let us all regret that we have lost two able and hard-working officers, something the M.R.T. can ill-afford to do.

Sheila Bye, Editor

Cover Picture Sentinel No.54, "shunting the yard" during a visit to the Yorkshire Dales Railway at Embsay last July. Photo: Robin Stewart-Smith. (Does anyone have photos of *Toby Two*'s recent visit to the North Yorkshire Moors?)

JOHN AND VERNON - AN APPRECIATION

The editorial in the last Old Run referred briefly to events at the A.G.M., and in particular to the retirement of John Chaplin as treasurer and the resignation of Vernon Smith as chairman. Tributes to the work of both were paid at the meeting, but since there are many members who were not at the A.G.M., it is only right that something of what was said then should be repeated here for wider consumption.

John Chaplin joined the railway in the spring of 1978, having heard a radio broadcast by Joe Lee (who was then chairman) in which reference was made to difficulties with managing the sales shop. Intrigued as to what these difficulties might be, he got in touch with Joe, and within a matter of weeks had joined the railway and had been co-opted as shop manager. This was not actually quite as sudden as it sounds, for John was already no stranger to the area: he was both manager of the Hunslet branch of the National Westminster Bank, and also actively involved in the running of the Hunslet Boy's Club. Indeed, when we needed a venue for the 1979 A.G.M. he was able to arrange for us to hold it at the club, and it was at that A.G.M. that he was elected to the council.

At that time George Lunn was the treasurer, but he resigned in August 1983, and somehow it seemed natural to ask John whether he was willing to take over the job. He could easily have hesitated at this - after all, he was still sales manager, and the job was growing steadily - but he did not. He thus became treasurer "as an interim measure", even though he had been involved with the railway for long enough to know just how long an interim measure was likely to last. It did, of course, and he was soon well established in the job, running the accounts as efficiently as he ran the shop.

Then inevitably there came a time when he realised that, although he had now retired from the bank, he still seemed to be working almost as hard as ever, and so he formally relinquished the post of shop manager at the end of 1986. (Though informally he continued to be involved with the management of the shop for another two years or so.) At that point we paid tribute to what might be called the public work that he had done on the railway: after all, the time that the shop manager spends standing behind the counter is very noticeable, and is seen by everybody who comes to the railway.

Now that John has retired as treasurer as well, we should recognise that this has also involved at least as much work as managing the shop, but perhaps not so publicly. Most of the treasurer's work is done behind the scenes: dealing with bills as they arrive; recording where the money has come from and gone to; and, more recently, keeping up with the VAT man's almost insatiable demand for information. John has carried this burden for nearly eight years now, which is the longest spell of any treasurer so far, and (since our registration for VAT) certainly the most arduous. However, he has carried it so efficiently that the majority of ordinary members will not have realised just how much work has been involved, since all that they will have seen will have been the presentations of the accounts that John has given (with characteristic clarity) at the A.G.M.'s.

Furthermore, most council members will not have realised either just how much time all this has taken up. It has all run so smoothly that the council has tended to take it for granted that regular financial reports would be produced with the usual precision, and that whenever any question of spending money arose we would be given reliable advice as to whether or not the proposed expenditure was affordable and sensible. For someone who still claims that he does not really know very much about the railway, John will be a hard act to follow, and we wish Ian Cromack well as he settles into the role.

If John came to the railway comparatively late in life, Vernon Smith was the exact opposite. Born in the year that the M.R.T. was first formed, by the age of eight he was already a fairly regular attender at the yard, even if at that age the amount of work that he was able to do was fairly limited. (Although it was not as limited then as it would be now: after all, those were the far-off days before the Health and Safety at Work Act existed, and when our activities were much less strictly controlled by the Railway Inspectorate than they are now.) He thus grew up with the railway, and even if it had to compete with other attractions such as motorbikes during his teens, he maintained an active connection throughout, and he was elected to the council at the A.G.M. in 1983.

At that time the commercial side of the railway's operation was in a very poor state, and Vernon was already concerned to try to do something to improve matters. It was no coincidence that the winter of 1983 saw us running our first Santa Specials, which brought a welcome additional revenue of £172 in fares. Other attempts at generating additional traffic followed, and by 1985 Vernon had been appointed Traffic Manager in recognition of these efforts. To give an idea of how things improved, the accounts for 1983 showed a total traffic income of £2176, while by 1985 this had risen by 50% to £3608, and for 1986 it was up by another 50% to £5481. Of course, some of these increases were due to other factors, such as improved publicity, but that again was only possible because Vernon had persuaded the council that, whether we liked it or not, we had to be more commercial in our approach to operating the railway.

By this time Joe Lee, who had been chairman for 17 years, had decided that new blood was needed in the job. So, at the A.G.M. in 1987, Vernon was unanimously elected to succeed him, becoming the youngest chairman of any preserved railway in the country. Whether he realised at that time just how much work was going to be involved is debatable: what is certain is that, as with the treasurer's job, most other members of the railway will only have seen a fraction of it. Council members will have seen more, of course, as they will have known just how many times in the last four years matters have been handed over to the chairman to sort out, and they will have had a good idea of just how much time the resultant meetings or 'phone calls will have taken. As the pressure increased, other things had to go, and it was with some reluctance that Vernon finally decided in June of last year that he could no longer continue to do the Traffic Manager's job as well, and he resigned from it. Now, regrettably, he has felt it necessary to resign as chairman as well, and we wish Chris Rogers well as he takes over the reins.

The reasons why Vernon has resigned are not simple, and deserve more explanation than there is space for in this article. The amount of time that has been involved is obviously one element, particularly since it has been having to compete with the pressures of trying to run his own business in the middle of a raging recession, but Vernon would be the first to say that it is not the only element, or even the most important one. If it had been, he would not have agreed to be co-opted back onto our council, in order to continue dealing with the negotiations with the City Council about the possible extension of the line into Middleton Park. Thus, there is certainly more that needs to be said about the other reasons for his resignation as chairman, but I do not want to spoil the effect of this tribute by saying it here. Instead, let me finish by simply saying thank you on behalf of all of us to both John and Vernon, for all the work that they have put in while they have held these two important offices.

Tony Cowling

***** LET'S WORK TOGETHER *****

It was good to see such a large turnout of members at our A.G.M. in June, and also to note the at times somewhat lively, though good-humoured, debate. In fact, the only jarring note of the whole proceedings came AFTER the event, when one or two of our "working" members commented adversely on statements made by a couple of people who were regarded as "armchair" members. The basic thrust of the comments was that such statements should not have been made, since those making the said statements were rarely, if ever, seen down at the line. I have to say that this really is a most unwise viewpoint to take. The people in question are fully paid up members of the Middleton Railway Trust, and thus are entitled not only to attend the Annual General Meeting, but also to question any of the Trust's officers about any subject which is relevant to the member concerned and also to the operation of the Railway as a whole. Any fully paid up member may question the officers of the Trust for, is he or she does not, how can he or she make a considered opinion as to the suitability of any candidate for the M.R.T. Council?

It is an unfortunate fact that some of our working members take the view that unless a member is prepared to "get involved" their views cannot be taken seriously. This is not unique to Middleton of course - many other societies have members holding the same views, but in our case we have a comparatively small number of members, and the effect of this type of attitude is more keenly felt here than at other railways such as K.W.V.R. or N.Y.M.R.

Our Railway's membership is comprised of three categories, all of which are, I believe, equally as important.

The most obvious category is our "working" membership. These are the members who attend the line throughout the year, at all hours of the day and night in

all weathers, ensuring that our locomotive fleet is in good fettle, trackwork looked after, and all the other one hundred and one jobs done which ensure the Middleton Railway is fit for use. They are dedicated members, spending long hours getting absolutely filthy and sometimes working against the odds to get everything ready, and without their efforts there would soon be very little to operate train services with. Certainly the Trust owes a great deal to the few who are prepared to go to such lengths to ensure the Railway is able to operate trains.

The second category is our "white collar" membership. These are the members who provide shop staff and guards, organise and staff sales stands at special events, guide special parties and provide administrative backup for the Railway as a whole. Some of them are also "working" members as described above, but many are the parents and wives of members, keen to serve the Railway in the best way they know. Many of these members also spend long hours on the Railway's behalf, particularly those who have responsibility for the shop; it's not simply a case of standing behind a counter, as the current Sales Manager will be only too glad to tell you.

Both the above categories are equally vital to the Railway's immediate survival. It is no use repairing and painting locomotives and stock if there is no-one to sell tickets etc., or, even worse, no customers to ride the trains and spend their money. Equally, there's no point staffing the shop etc. if there are no locos or stock for visitors to ride on and see. Each complements the other equally, something which some of our more insular members really need to reflect upon.

The third category is the "armchair" membership. These members rarely, if ever, even visit the line once they have joined the Trust, but they are sufficiently interested to pay their annual subscription. These members are also extremely valuable to our Railway. In the first instance, their subscription more than covers their magazines so that, in effect, they are subsidising the continued operation of the Railway, albeit to a very small degree, each time they pay their subscription. Also, by being members, they are more than likely to advertise the Railway to family and friends, both at home and also when visiting other railways, etc. This has a good publicity value, for there is nothing better than recommendation by word of mouth. Their final value is purely as a statistic. This may appear boring to most folk, but it is nonetheless a most important factor when dealing with such bodies as Leeds City Council. A society comprising 300 members is going to be looked upon more favourably than one with rather less!

I firmly believe that all our members are equally important in the running of the Middleton Railway, from the member who spends long hours in the shed, to the family man who has joined us following a visit and who is unable to do anything else to show his support for the Railway.

I hope that members will be drawing the same conclusion from this article, and that we can all work together to help our Railway achieve its aims. Let us all remember an undeniable fact - ALL MEMBERS ARE EQUAL - to think otherwise will not aid the Middleton Railway in its ambitions to become a leading tourist attraction in the City of Leeds!

Ian Smith



Above: Things to Come Again? **Harry** (and his crew!) struggle against some very appropriate weather during the 1990 Santa Specials.

Below: the Editor's favourite loco, **2003 John Blenkinsop**.

Both photos by junior members Simon Flint and Simon Turner.



FROM THE COUNCIL TABLE

Glasnost arrives at Middleton! (Though some *glas* may remain obscured.) A regular feature in *The Old Run* from now on will be Jenny Cowling's extracts of items from the previous quarter's Council meetings minutes, enabling all members to keep in touch with resolutions, major and minor, which affect the running and well-being of their Railway.

11th July, 1991

Mr. Roberts tabled a report on shop sales, which indicated these were holding steady. Special Events for 1992 were agreed.

Steam trains will continue to be run on Wednesdays in August this year and next.

Fares for 1992 will remain as for 1991.

30,000 simple leaflets are to be prepared in addition to the larger coloured leaflet, as supplementary advertising for the railway.

The possibility of improving drainage at the Middleton Park Gates is to be examined.

It is hoped that Y7 will be available to haul Santa Specials.

Mr. McKenna is to investigate the acquisition of a suitable Platform Bench as a Memorial to John Bushell.

In due course, a strimmer and a one inch impact wrench are to be purchased, financed through the good offices of Mrs. Nettleton's knitting fund.

Mr. Nettleton has been authorised to purchase and fit a pendulum stop to the radial drill.

Mr. McKenna has been authorised to pass out drivers, firemen etc. for steam locos.

20th August, 1991

A notice is to be put up warning that climbing on any structures is prohibited.

Mr. I.B. Smith had agreed to prepare "press releases" for internal use, to keep all members visiting the railway informed of publicity events.

The Chairman and/or Mr. G. Parkin will be preparing some boards to hang on the entrance board advertising the various attractions at the M.R.T. These will change seasonally or as required.

Mr. Roberts would be obtaining a quotation for lifting chains.

Sentinel or 385 may be loaned to the Friends of Greater Manchester Science & Industry Museum for the weekend of 9th/10th Nov., provided a suitable fee is agreed.

A Roster is to be devised for cleaning coaches.

The price for Santa Trains this year was agreed as £2.30.

Mr. McKenna would be acquiring the John Bushell Memorial Platform Bench via his College, rather than the N.Y.M.R.

It was noted that whilst the strimmer had been purchased, the stop was still needed on the Radial Drill. Mr. Nettleton had been authorised to arrange this.

It was confirmed that the *Old Run* publication dates would remain as currently, subscription renewal notices being sent separately as and when required.

It was agreed that the lubricator from *Windle* would be fitted to the Y7 rather than the one from *Harry*. A modern lubricator from stock would be fitted to *Windle* in due course.

Permission was given for *Mary* to move into the shed for painting when required.

Jenny Cowling, Council Secretary

LOCO NOTES

September, and almost the end of another operating season. Generally, we have coped well with only a few minor hiccoughs to upset the orderly routine, despite only having two serviceable steam locos for most of the time. In detail, the loco situation is as follows.

54 As reported last time, the *Sentinel* went to the North York Moors Railway for their N.E. weekend and, at the time of writing, it is still there. The N.Y.M.R. offered to lift the loco, free of charge, so that the wheels could be removed for tyre turning. Arrangements were made to have the wheels machined at B.R. Thornaby, a 24 hour job we were told! Eventually, when they did get machined there were problems with provision of a crane for the re-wheeling. The loco is now back in one piece, but the N.Y.M.R. have asked that it be made available for a special event on the 7th/8th September. It is planned to return it to Middleton immediately after this event. However, it is possible that its return will be short, as it has been requested at Manchester Museum of Science and Industry in November.

1882 MIRVALE is in service and performing satisfactorily at present. However, it has given problems with both injectors during the season. The problem with the fireman's injector was found to be due to a displaced flap interrupting the flow of water through the cones, whilst the driver's sick injector was suffering from a build-up of scale. Both these faults have now been rectified. Apart from routine maintenance it is expected to be serviceable throughout the winter period.

385 likewise has been performing satisfactorily and has also suffered from injector problems. After sorting out the long-running problem with the fireman's side injector (see the last *Old Run*) it was disconcerting to find problems recurring shortly afterwards. Wrongly, we assumed that it was the same problem and it was some while before it was traced to sludge/scale build-up in the tank. Cleaning the tank out and slight modification to the pipework has solved the problem and hopefully both injectors will now perform reliably. It is expected to be available for Christmas services.

1310 The Y7 continues to make good progress, and has at last been re-wheeled. That everything finally went together with no problem was gratifying, and confirmed that all our careful measuring and machining was correct. Following arrival of the new piston rings, the pistons have been fitted along with the remaining valve gear. However, when the connecting rods were offered up it was obvious that something was not quite right. It transpires that the righthand connecting rod is in fact bent, and

will require straightening. Once the wheel and springs were fitted, the brakegear was soon assembled, following its earlier overhaul. Both bufferbeams have now been renewed and fitted. They have been strengthened to lessen the chances of distortion. The chassis is now well on its way to completion, the major outstanding jobs being the fitting of the lubrication pipework and machining of the big end brasses. The boiler has been hydraulically tested to 1½ times working pressure, with no problems, and awaits the official inspection by the Boiler Inspector in the near future. The tanks have arrived on site, but require several minor jobs doing to make them complete. The new back plate for the cab has been cut to size, but requires fitting.

2341 BROOKES' No.1 Since its arrival, reported in the last *Old Run*, the loco's owner has put in many hours of work sanding down the paintwork and cleaning up fittings for its cosmetic restoration. It is intended to paint the loco in a maroon livery, similar to that which it carried whilst at Buxton.

1823 HARRY It was decided to investigate the leak emanating from under the cladding sheets. The investigation confirmed our worst fears, when it was found that there was considerable localised wastage due to leakage from a seam under the boiler barrel. Whilst not an impossible repair, it is considered that this work cannot be carried out until such time as the owners decide upon its future.

ROWNTREE No.3 is nearing the end of its repaint, and is looking resplendent in its coat of green and black. It should see service before much longer.

3900002 This small Fowler diesel gets little mention in these pages, other than mention that it had had a protective coat of paint. Some work has, however, recently been done on the engine water pump drive, and it is hoped that a return to working order will be possible.

91, 138C, D631, D577, 1697 and **4220038** are all serviceable, and used as required. All other locos remain stored awaiting repairs.

Steve Roberts

DOWN AT THE LINE

AROUND THE SHED

Our range of equipment continues to increase. One large chunk of machinery to arrive has been a shaping machine, from Leeds University. Although in working order, it requires a tool holder. It also, perhaps more importantly, requires space in the shed to install it. We have literally run out of room for any more machine tools. In fact, the Colchester Lathe obtained some 18 months ago is still not in use because we simply have nowhere to put it. Other acquisitions have not been as large. A 1" drive impact wrench has been donated, as has a petrol driven strimmer which will be particularly useful in keeping the undergrowth adjacent to the line under control. Work has started on the mezzanine floor mentioned in *The Old Run* No.134. The steelwork is virtually complete, and it is hoped to install the floor before much longer. Several years ago, we

acquired a capstan lathe. Although it has seen frequent use, it has never really been set up for its intended purpose - repetitive machining or batch production. A need for a quantity of seven eighths B.S.W. countersunk bolts found them to be unobtainable 'off the shelf', and various suppliers quoted prices up to £9 each! The lathe was set up to produce these, and a few hours' work was all that was necessary. With just the cost of material to consider, the saving was nearly £300.

ON THE RIGHT TRACK

As part of the scheme for extending the line into Middleton Park, Leeds City Council approached British Coal for sponsorship. The Director of the North Yorkshire Group, Bob Siddall, was sympathetic to the proposals, but could not provide cash help. However, he was willing to help the scheme by donating track. When it became known that I was involved with Middleton as well as working for British Coal, I was duly summoned and given the remit - find some redundant track, sort out the paperwork and formalities, and arrange its removal and transport to Middleton! A little bit of research revealed four potential sites where sufficient track could be available, and I was told that we could have the track from any one site. After discussion with Tony Cowling, the four sites were given an order of preference, and I duly went back to the powers-that-be to ask for permission to proceed with our first choice, which was approximately three quarters of a mile of flat-bottomed rail on concrete sleepers. Too late, I was told, British Coal had done a land swap deal with someone else, and most of the land they had swapped had the track on it - it was no longer ours! Not to worry, option 2 was just as good and would become redundant in twelve months, which fitted our time scale. Yes, you can have it, I was told, but the Opencast Executive are looking at the site, and may decide they want to use it for up to five more years. You can take the risk if you wish So on to option 3, at Askern Colliery. This was bullhead rail on timber sleepers. The rail was good, but the sleepers were an unknown quantity. There was an added problem. Askern, it had just been announced, would be transferred to British Coal's Selby Group very shortly, and the track had to be lifted by this deadline. Lifting the track would be no problem, but it could not be stored at Middleton, we simply hadn't the room. Vernon Smith, in his then capacity of Chairman, had thought of this problem, and through the kind generosity of Denison's, land at the back of their works could be made available for this purpose. The contract for lifting and transporting the track was awarded to Trackwork of Doncaster, the cost being offset by scrapping some of the poorer track. The lifting started in mid-August, and within a week the majority had been lifted by just three people and a fork-lift truck! Then problems. The contractors severed a hidden track circuit cable in which, although the track was redundant, the circuits were still live. It would have been a simple matter to modify the track circuits to suit the removed track, but since the Clapham disaster this was not allowed, and B.R. requested that we stop work for about three months while the circuit modifications were approved officially. This did not fit in with our plans, and the only realistic solution in the time available was to agree to leave about 200 yards of track, connected to this circuit, in situ and effectively abandon them to the project. The track was delivered to Denison's over a three day

period at the beginning of September, and was off-loaded by Cramscene's 35 ton crane, without any major problem. Well, we now have the track. All we need is somewhere (and someone!) to lay it. Let us hope that this next phase of the extension scheme is not long in happening.

ENGINEERING ORGANISATION

With Steve Roberts taking on the dual roles of Mechanical Engineer and Sales Manager, it has been necessary to consider the practicality of this. As a result, it has been decided to appoint three Assistant Mechanical Engineers to oversee the day to day engineering function of the Railway, and the Council have appointed the following:

1. Assistant Mechanical Engineer (Steam) - Nigel Crowther
2. Assistant Mechanical Engineer (Diesel) - Graham Parkin
3. Assistant Mechanical Engineer (Plant & Machinery) - Peter Nettleton

After several months, the system seems to be working well, and there is always plenty of work available to suit most levels of skill. In a similar vein, Tony Cowling has a dual role as Company Secretary and Civil Engineer [triple, actually: he's also Safety Officer!]. To ease this situation, Roger Walton has been appointed as **Assistant Civil Engineer**, to look after the routine maintenance of the track. Again, the improvement has been quite noticeable. Roger is wanting to set up a regular track gang, something we have lacked for several years now. Any offers of help should be made to him ('phone number on the inside back cover).

TALKING SHOP

After a satisfactory start to the season it appears that the recession is having some effect on shop sales. Although passenger figures are slightly up on budget, the average "spend" per visitor is somewhat down on what we had allowed for (80p as against 90p). As usual, the regular few have continued to staff the shop each weekend (and Wednesdays in August) and there have been few problems with this aspect. Of course, it would be much better if their numbers could be increased and perhaps lessen the workload on the faithful. As I have said previously, it is an ideal job for those who would like to help without getting their hands dirty. It is also a good way to involve wives or girlfriends of those who do wish to get their hands dirty! Before much longer, the busiest time of the year will be upon us - the Santa season. A tremendous amount of work is done at this time of year, from wrapping nearly 2,000 presents to decorating coaches and even taking on the role of Santa. If anybody can help with any of these activities, or simply help in the shop, please contact me as soon as possible. Remember, some 33% of our annual income is obtained over the weekends leading up to Christmas.

Steve Roberts

A WELCOME GUEST

Visitors are always welcome at the Middleton Railway, but especially so if they bring gifts of use to us. On Saturday 28th July, I brought along to the line Mr. Alfred Eachus of Horsforth, bearing a wooden box containing various small tools which he no longer needed to use. Included was a hexagon extension socket which would have

avoided tool improvisation the previous week during repairs to an injector, and most likely would have speeded the work along. After having a chat with the loco department staff, our visitor was rewarded with a free ride to Middleton Park and back, and an opportunity to step on to the footplate of *Mirvale* was gratefully accepted. The visit was rounded off with a cup of tea in the shop. Alfred served his apprenticeship at the L.M.S.R. Crewe works until 1933, in which year he worked on the preparation of 6100 *Royal Scot* (actually 6152 re-numbered) for its North American tour. He spent the period 1933 to 1938 at Dewsbury Carriage and Wagon Shops, prior to a wartime spell mainly at the Yeadon Avro factory, working on Swordfish and Lancaster aircraft. Mr. Eachus spent his final working years at Holbeck M.P.D., between 1946 and 1976, and visited both Hunslet Engine and Hudswell Clarke works to certify locomotives as fit to travel over B.R. running lines.

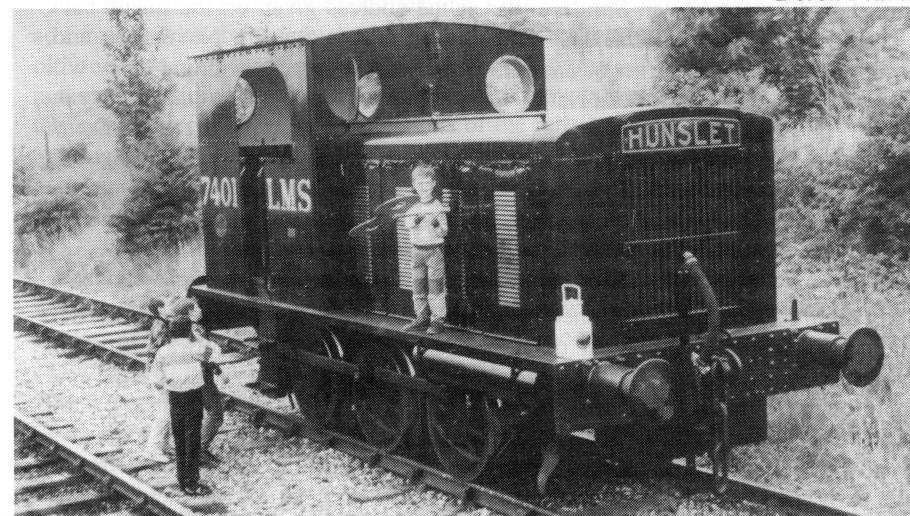
AN UNWELCOME GUEST

On Saturday 24th August, before the 1100 train, hauled by *Mirvale*, could go up the line, our diesel-electric loco *Alf* had to propel the crane and a flat wagon towards the park for the purpose of removing a burnt-out car from the track. The task was completed to allow the first train of the Bank Holiday Saturday to depart on time. Later on, during the afternoon, a flat-bed lorry fitted with a Hiab crane was seen alongside the line, with its driver apparently seeking the abandoned car. He was duly informed of its whereabouts.

CONNECTING BOAT TRIPS?

The Yorkshire Evening Post on Saturday 24th August reported, with a picture, that children's paddle boats had been reintroduced experimentally on Middleton Park lake.

Derek Plummer



Andrew Plumb winds up *John Alcock* on 17th June 1990. Photo: Martin Plumb.

THE NEW RAILWAY WORLD

On September 5th, Ian Allan Ltd. re-launched the new look magazine *Railway World*. The M.R.T.'s Sentinel loco, No.54, was requested by the N.Y.M.R. to help launch the new magazine; something we can be proud of.

The new magazine contains much more news than previously, and also has a greater emphasis on Railway Preservation, the old historical articles now being published in a companion publication, *Steam Days*. Having read a "preview" sample edition of the magazine, I can say that readers are in for a treat - the content is far superior to the original magazine and, with its greater emphasis on railway preservation, *Railway World* will prove an even more formidable competitor to others in the market.

The Middleton Railway is pleased to assist in the relaunch of *Railway World* by staging a competition, in which the prize is ONE YEAR'S FREE SUBSCRIPTION to the magazine; a quite superb prize, I'm sure members will agree.

All you have to do is answer five questions as follows:

1. What was the ORIGINAL title of *Railway World*?
2. The year 1992 sees Ian Allan Ltd. celebrating how many years in publishing?
3. What is the title of Ian Allan's guide to Preserved Railways?
4. Who is currently the Editor of *Railway World*?
5. Which M.R.T. loco was re-launched into traffic in recent years by the Editor of *Railway World*?

Answers should be sent to Ian Smith, either at the address given on the inside back cover or at Moor Road Station. Last date for entries is the 9th November and, should more than one correct set of answers be received, then the winning entry will be drawn out of the Fat Controller's Hat!

Ian Smith

RECOMMENDED RAILWAYS

My family and I (all M.R.T. members, of course!) have just recently come back from holiday in Holland. Amongst other places, we visited the Railway Museum (Spoorwegmuseum) at Utrecht, a very interesting museum with an N.S. freight line running through the middle! Roughly half the locomotive exhibits were built in Britain (Beyer Peacock, North British, L.M.S. Derby, etc.) and there was a very extensive model railway exhibition. There was also a "potted history" of railways in Britain, from the early days of Stephenson etc. up to the mid-19th century. Middleton wasn't mentioned, BUT, in a shopping precinct called Promenade Parade in Scheveningen

(the resort where we stayed), was a drogisterij (druggist or chemist) whose emblem or mark was a reasonable representation of one of the early Middleton locos, with the words "Blenkinsop A.D. 1812" and a Dutch word that I can't now recall. I took a photo of this, amongst other things - including the railway museum stock, but later found that the film had not "taken on" to the spool, so no photos. Quite what the significance of the loco, and, by extension, the Middleton Railway, has to a late 20th century Dutch chemist I couldn't find out, but it certainly surprised and intrigued me.

Clive Craven

[The late John Bushell once came across what must have been another branch of the same chain of chemists whilst in Holland, and was equally mystified. The Editor can commiserate with Clive Craven concerning the blank holiday film, having lost thirty-odd photos in exactly the same way a few years ago.]

MEMORIES OF MIDDLETON

I can't remember the exact date. It was summer, I was still at school, and it must have been about 1969 or 1970. I had read about the Middleton Railway, and decided to go on an expedition to find it. Living in Bradford, Leeds was 'Terra Incognita', but one weekend I got a bus to Exchange Station, a train to Leeds City (Central had already closed before I was conscious of it), and a No. 71 (I think) dark green rear-entrance double-decker that took me under the dark bridge at City, along Jack Lane and past various grimy industrial premises. I recall still the thrill of seeing those tall, spiky iron railings with rusty, weed-grown rails - very forbidding.

Memories blur a bit thereafter; did I have a ride? I don't know. Later I became so familiar with the weedy yard and the rusty, rotting relics scattered around it - the old double-deck Mumbles tram, a bit of Leeds tram (I think), the cranes and saddle-tanks on the siding along the wall, with the large wooden huts at right-angles to them, the incredible curves and complications of the rails around the pattern-yard, that I can no longer recall what happened on which visit. What **did** happen, though, was that an older chappie talked to me, and said that one day next week he would be laying in a new siding and could do with some help.

What was it about that invitation? I don't have a clue. What I do recall is that a half-cousin from London, Peter Fleming, and I made the trip to Middleton one day that week (a school holiday); following instructions, we walked along the track from the old tramway double-crossing towards Hunslet Goods Yard, and came across said older chappie (who told us he was Dr. Youell) shovelling black muck from a mineral wagon onto a set of rails that rose from the 'main line' towards Clayton's yard. The point and track were in, but the job for the day was depositing the rest of several tons of spoil and "packing" it (a euphemism for shovelling around the sleepers a bit). Dr. Youell was on his own, so we joined in. It was hot, dusty and thirsty work, but by the end we had emptied the wagon, and had been given a ride back to Dartmouth yard on the little

Hunslet (do I recall the name "Sweet Pea"?) from Alton brewery. We got back to Bradford thoroughly filthy and stiff, but with an immense feeling of satisfaction. Further, it turned out that Dr. Youell had 'joined us up' in return for our work, for without any ten-shillingses having changed hands we found membership cards and 'Old Runs' in the post for a year thereafter, and I kept up that membership for several years before moving temporarily down south.

So - I became an infrequent but active visitor. I recall a scouting trip up the line to look for sleepers that needed replacing, and a hot afternoon shovelling earth into what is now the main passenger platform. Once I led a school Transport Society visit to the line, and after a ride we walked up the whole line to the old colliery buildings which, at the time, were the subject of hopes by the Society as the basis of a museum. I recall getting very angry at one so-called 'enthusiast' who began throwing stones through windows at the colliery - I gave him a fat ear in exchange! Another visit I found an old, broken-flanged 2-foot tub axle and wheelset at the colliery, and **carried** it down the line to the bus stop, onto the bus, onto the train, onto another bus and back up the hill home - where it still resides in my parents' cellar, a souvenir of my youth. I couldn't do that now - my back wouldn't take it!

One day an L.M.S. bogie van was shunted onto the Middleton Line - as a rolling-stock enthusiast, I was quite excited, but it turned out to have been a mistake on someone's part, and was regretfully returned. Does anyone have more details of this incident? I was glad to see such a van reappear this year - they are handsome vehicles. The L.N.E.R. Brake Van was a bit of a mystery too, I recall - someone told me it shouldn't have come, but had, or something like that, and we weren't to 'let on'. Was I perhaps having my leg pulled?

Gradually the scenery changed. The Great Northern line bridge and embankment went, the motorway came, the bus took a different route, and when I returned to Leeds in 1984 after a gap of several years I got quite a shock. As a sign of faith I took out 'Family Membership' even before my daughter had been born, and my children have had several rides, but as a clergyman my weekends and evenings are now far too busy to do anything active on the line. Every time I take the motorway, though, I crane my neck to see "what's up" as I cross the bridge - and I recall still the shock I got one year seeing what I thought was a Class 31! How was I to know it was made from plywood?

The point has been made before; there is almost nothing left from 1971 that is recognisable in 1991. Arriving at a smart little brick station building, with platform, shed, water tower, sidings full of stock, a Danish loco parked in the headshunt and a Norwegian coach in the bay, converted C.C.T.'s instead of an open wagon and an L.M.S. brake, a line that starts with a motorway tunnel and then passes through open country - it's all different, but still there is a sense of continuity, and still the workers keep the thing going. And some things don't change, thank goodness - for on every visit I have made in the last few years, I have still bumped into that same older chappie, and after a full rebore and works overhaul, he too seems set for a good few years to come. Floreat Middleton!

Rabbi Walter Rothschild

BACK TO SCHOOL

A few months ago, I was invited to join an elite band which exists within the M.R.T./M.R.A.: the School Day group. Like most members, I knew that we hold a certain number of School Days every year, and many years ago, as a teacher, I dutifully brought my own class down from Dewsbury Road First School, but School Days then were nothing like School Days now.

Armed with a book containing potentially useful pictures of steam engines' inner-workings etc., I set off from Bradford early one Wednesday morning in June. When I arrived at Moor Road, about 9.30, most of the other helpers were already there. *Mirvale* simmered gently at the head of the two coaches, tended by Nigel Crowther and Steve Dufton, who obviously had both been on site for a few hours raising steam. Publicity Officer Ian Smith was also there, waiting to "orchestrate" the day's events. He, also, had already put in a lot of work: in his case, publicising the event, dealing with enquiries from schools, giving lectures when required, and, finally, fitting all the visiting groups into a complex timetable which would enable us to cope with as many children as possible without them all wanting to come back from the Park on the same train. The rest of the gang were: Vicky, in charge of the Shop, retired B.R. Guard Geoff Saunders, in charge of the train, and the two other retired teachers, Dorothy Hebden and Denis Caton (he actually taught Ian many moons ago). Dorothy and Denis have been helping at School Days for some years now, and had their work so well prepared and organised that they put my poor efforts to shame.

We all sat in the Shop for a while, enjoying a cuppa and a chat, and also having our "briefing". The peace didn't last long: around ten o'clock the first schools arrived. There was a positively surreal quality to the day from then on as, after talking very simple basics to a nursery class ("Do you want to ask a question, dear?" "Yes. Why is that dirty milk bottle on the window sill?!"), we had to switch to lecturing teenagers, or chatting to a lively group of middle school children, full of rather more pertinent questions. As soon as one group was waved off on the train, Ian appeared with another group for each of us, and we had scarcely a minute to change pace, vocabulary, technique and level of content, ready for the next "lesson".

Around 12.00, we despatched two classes into Middleton Park for a picnic lunch in the pouring rain (one thing Ian had **not** organised efficiently was the weather!); the supply of children had now dried up, even if the weather hadn't. We all gathered in the Shop again and Simon, the "lad", went off to the chippy with a list of various permutations of fish, chips and sausages, whilst someone made a brew up of tea. During our lunch break, the Sales Manager Steve arrived on a short visit during his lunch break, and ended up on a ladder, mending the Shop guttering, which had emptied itself down the back of a teacher's neck earlier on.

We all really needed the period of recuperation, but before long the engine crew had to get up steam again, and the first party of the afternoon was pouring through the gate. The afternoon didn't seem quite as hectic, or perhaps I was beginning to get a

little more proficient at coping. Once again, we shuttled groups around the Railway - on and off the train and around the Yard to look at and learn about the engines and other vehicles (a short goods train headed by *Alf* - sorry, *91*, had been set up in the car park to look at and talk about). The *Y7*'s boiler and firebox, still waiting to be put back on their frames, made another excellent teaching aid. If there was no-one waiting for a tour, we teachers went into the Shop to help Vicky, who coped magnificently on her own most of the time; it takes a special brand of courage to face alone dozens of hands all brandishing pencils, biros and badges at you at the same time! Ian, meanwhile, rushed around with his wad of papers, welcoming new arrivals, seeing that each group went off on the train as near to their booked time as possible, and generally making sure that no group was left to feel neglected or ignored - a very important point. The last time I went as a visitor on such a jaunt was several years ago, to help with a class trip of nine-year-olds from the Deputy Editor's school. We went to a much larger railway than ours, and it must remain nameless. Beyond making sure that all the many visiting schools went into their allotted coaches on the allotted train, the railway's staff, though pleasant enough, clearly had no brief to do anything further. They crewed the train and the souvenir shop, and it was up to the teachers themselves to make the best they could of the visit; no-one came to tell us anything about the railway or its locomotives, and the success of the day depended entirely on whether or not the teachers and parent-helpers knew much about the subject - at our own event, one school at least would have had a rather disastrous visit without the M.R.T. teachers, as the teacher who had been doing the course work on railways had been taken ill the previous day, and two other teachers of completely unrelated subjects had found themselves in charge. (To be really catty, you couldn't see nearly as well out of the other railway's conventional coaches as you can out of ours, either, and their toilets were primitive, very smelly, and totally inadequate in number for the crowds of children waiting for each train!). All in all, the Middleton system compares extremely well, or rather their system didn't really compare to ours at all well.

Meanwhile, back at Middleton, around 15.30 we rescued the last batch of soddened children from Park Halt. Surprisingly, none of the hundreds of children was ever heard to complain about the pouring rain as they walked around the Yard, looking at the engines, or as they yomped off in the direction of the Park. On the contrary, they all seemed thoroughly to enjoy their visit, an impression backed up since by the arrival of numerous "thank you" letters. Among the afternoon groups was a minibusful of mentally-handicapped teenage boys, who greatly enjoyed just being on the train and seeing the engine in steam. I think my own favourite memory of the whole day was provided by one of the lads, as their teachers prepared to take them back to school. He noticed one of Dorothy's teaching aids leaning against the Shop window - a colourful diagram of the inside of a steam engine. "That's what they're like, isn't it?", he said, pointing across the tracks at *Harry* and *385*. Using the diagram, I explained as simply as I could how steam was produced and how it made the engine move. He was clearly interested, and asked more questions. He wanted to look again at the real engines, and then at the car park goods train, and talk about them. Then, alas, it was time to go and the other boys were already being helped into the minibus. Waving them off, I felt that

though hundreds of other children appeared to have enjoyed their visit and, hopefully, learnt something from it, the whole day's efforts would have been made worthwhile anyway by the enthusiasm and desire to learn more which the Railway seemed to have stimulated in that one teenager.

His party were the last to leave, so now the packing up began. Vicky and Geoff counted up the Shop takings, whilst the engine crew put *Mirvale* to rest. Simon mopped the lino floors, and Ian, Dorothy, Denis and myself cleared up our bits and pieces, checked that the Shop and toilets were left in reasonably good order, and did the washing up. We'd all had a really hectic day: even the engine crew who, whilst not having to cope directly with hundreds of eager, demanding children, had had to work to a tight schedule to move everyone at the right times - very important when schools had buses or coaches on hire to get them to and from Moor Road, and Geoff, at the other end of the train, had managed the changeovers of passengers with the expertise of long experience, and had even found time to chat to the children and give a hand in the Shop from time to time. Despite the rotten weather, and the fact that one M.R.T. teacher was very much out of practice, the day seemed to have been a great success, as it should have been after the huge amount of planning, preparation, and sheer effort which went into it.

This was not just my own impression either. The young man who had hovered quietly around the platform for most of the morning and had ridden up and back on the last train before lunch, turned out to be a reporter from *Steam Weekly News*, who had made arrangements to come and make notes for an article about our School Days. The finished product was a really good write-up, and he, like me, appeared to be most impressed by the whole show.

Meanwhile, Ian and his teaching staff are busy planning how to make our School Days even better in the future. We have a really superior product at the moment, but some things do fall a little short (may I dare to say quite literally so in one instance? - the gents' urinals are probably great for gents of at least average height, but for small boys they're **not** use at all; we really cannot afford to have teachers and parent-helpers leave our Railway with a predominant and lasting memory of soggy smelly toilets); rainy day accommodation for picnics and on-the-spot project work and displays would be a definite asset, too - the Norwegian coach was a real boon, but could only accommodate a small proportion of the number of children we had on site at times. All in all, School Days are a really worthwhile institution; they make money, they are good publicity - if the children enjoy their visit they no doubt tell their parents so, and the whole family might come at a later date; above all, they spread word of the Middleton Railway's various claims to fame and hopefully make us a lot of new friends (and future members or visitors) among the younger generation. I felt quite honoured to have been invited to be a part of it all.

Sheila Bye

P.S. In case anyone is wondering, the dirty milk bottle was on the windowsill of the Norwegian coach. I shall make sure there are no such distractions around before I talk to another nursery class in there!

THE BRADFORD AND LEEDS RAILWAY

Part Two

As was indicated at the end of the first episode, in the Summer issue, the Reverend Mr. Brandling's suggestion that the Bradford and Leeds Railway Company should replace his old and ailing locomotives with new ones designed to fit under their proposed railway arches, and then accept his locomotives in exchange, was audacious to the point of downright cheek; a mere four years later, in his *A Home Tour through the Manufacturing Districts of England in the summer of 1835*, Sir George Head described the then one remaining working locomotive as "This crazy, rickety, old engine", and remarked on how much machinery had improved since its construction. Shortly afterwards, it broke down.

However, the Bradford and Leeds directors, as the old saying goes, were "not as green as they were cabbage-looking", and history shows that they obviously balked at the idea of replacing Mr. Brandling's ailing engines at their shareholders' expense. Both Hill and Brandling were anxious for a decision, and on 3rd March George Hill was already writing impatiently that "I have heard nothing from Hemingway and Nelson respecting the Bradford and Leeds rail way". The Reverend Mr. B. was not the only source of trouble for the Bradford and Leeds. The paper of 26th February had carried a short but substantial list of objectors: the Marchioness of Hertford (whose family owned Temple Newsam House as well as an area of land adjoining Messrs. Fenton, Murray and Jackson's premises in Water Lane, Holbeck), S. Hailstone, W. Nicholson and C. Harris, members of the Leeds and Liverpool Canal Company, P. Nevins, a local mill owner, W. Aldain, S. Clapham and W. Ward. John Varley had been elected their chairman at a meeting held the previous Monday, at which it had been decided that the "extraordinary Viaduct" would be "inconvenient and unsightly" and would seriously devalue "the very valuable Building Ground" near its intended site. The Canal Company naturally had much to lose from the building of a railway, but the reasons for objection by the other protestors are more obscure after all this time. Those who would live in the shadow had much to fear, but this hardly included the Marchioness of Hertford. Likewise, the viaduct would cause light problems for mills and factories in its shadow. Whilst a land-owner might be pleased to get a good price for any of his land required for the viaduct, it might be considered more desirable to have a good steady income from the rents of houses and workshops already built there; also, then as now, there was some personal cuedos in being able to term oneself "a landowner". The Reverend Brandling may also have had more problems on his mind than whether or not his engines would pass under the arches. Among the promoters of the Bradford and Leeds Railway was John Green Paley, a partner with John Sturges in the Bowling Iron Company, whose waggonway was a near neighbour of a proposed branch of the Bradford and Leeds - probably with a view to transferring goods to it. The Bowling Iron Works was one of a local cluster of iron works which were largely "self-supporting", being situated on or near to seams of ironstone, fireclay

(for furnace lining bricks), and at least two types of coal, one ideal for steam engine firing and the other for iron smelting. If the Bowling Iron Company gained access to markets in Leeds via a railway, rather than by the slower and more cumbersome means of Bradford's link to the Leeds and Liverpool Canal, the sale of coal surplus to their own requirements might take away some of the Middleton Colliery's already diminishing trade.

On Monday 28th February, three days late, the petition for the Bradford and Leeds Railway Bill was presented to the House of Commons, to be given a first reading a week later and the second reading eight days after that.

The Reverend Brandling apparently had now lost hope of being supplied with new locomotives, and on 5th April, George Hill wrote to his nephew:

Mr. Brandling applied to Mr. Geo. Stephenson for his opinion as to the best mode of altering the Travelling Engines so as to adapt them to the Railway Arch of the Bradford and Leeds Company.

Stephenson writes as follows.

"The Leeds and Bradford Co. ought either to supply you with such Engines as will pass underneath the proposed Archway & perform your work as efficiently as it is at present, or alter your Engines in such a manner that the power shall not be diminished. In order to enable me to state if the proposed alterations will be effective, it would be necessary to furnish me with the general dimensions of the Engines and the usual speed at which they travel."

Be so good as to take the size (the diamr) of the Cylinders, and their number (2 I think to each Engine) also the length of the stroke in the Cylinder; and the length of the Stroke at the Crank - the dimensions of the Boiler; and the length and diam. of the Chimney - Say also what is the distance from the top of the rail to the top of the Chimney; & what weight to the square Inch lies upon the Safety Valve I would think this is all that is necessary: but if you think of other particulars put them down - The Speed the Engines usually move at, or are capable of moving you must also state.

You had better give me this information, and I will write to Stephenson, or give it to Mr. Brandling.

Again, there is no reply so far discovered.

Shortly afterwards, the Bradford and Leeds Railway Bill met with a different problem. Passing through Parliament at the same session was the Great Reform Bill. The government was defeated on two points of this, leading to the resignation of the Prime Minister and the subsequent dissolving of Parliament on Friday 22nd April. Eventually, after much discussion, it was decided that Bills would proceed through the new Parliament as if a change had not occurred, and towards the end of June the railway company decided to renew their application immediately to the new Parliament. Almost immediately, the "Marchioness Dowager of Hertford" and "certain inhabitants of Holbeck" petitioned against it. *The Leeds Mercury* of 16th July 1831 noted that "The opposing parties are very numerous", and mentioned Mr. Brandling as a petitioner for the first time. It stated that the company's Bill had been in the Committee Stage in Parliament for five days, and "Their engineer, Mr. James Walker, was under examination during the whole of Thursday." Their case terminated the following Wednesday, and the opposition side began their case, but it seemed won almost before it opened; in a letter of 19th July to his nephew Thomas, George Hill

remarked that "I have not had time to look into the Leeds Mercury; but I am glad to learn from your letter that the Bradford and Leeds Railway Bill is likely to be a failure; this is one point gained." But Parliament rumbled on: *The Leeds Mercury* of Saturday 30th July had in its Parliamentary notes, written on Thursday, the news that "the reply of Counsel, in favour of the Bill, will be concluded tomorrow (Friday) morning, when the Committee will decide upon the preamble." (The preamble to a Bill is basically a statement of reasons why the Bill is needed and what great benefits will accrue from its being passed.) News travelled more slowly from London in those pre-railway-network days, and the Committee's verdict was not published until the following Saturday's paper.

LEEDS AND BRADFORD RAILWAY.- On Friday last, after a sitting of 15 days, the Committee on this Bill decided by a majority of 10 to 2, that the allegations in the preamble were not proved. The Bill is therefore thrown out for the present Session of Parliament.

The frenzy of railway construction proceeded unabated, but it was not until 4th July 1844 that an Act finally was passed authorising the building of a Leeds and Bradford Railway (*The Leeds Mercury* must have been pleased about the new name: they apparently never could get accustomed to the idea of Bradford as a dominant power, and frequently mixed up the title of the first company!). Regular services began on 1st July 1846, but the route went via Shipley, involving a lengthy foray N.N.W. from Bradford before turning eastward to Leeds. A direct route between Leeds and Bradford was not achieved until the opening, on 1st August 1854, of the Leeds, Bradford and Halifax Junction Railway, which followed very closely the route surveyed for the ill-fated Bradford and Leeds Railway, nearly a quarter of a century earlier.

Sheila Bye



Mirvale poses on the run-round at Park Halt. Photo: Keith Hartley.

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