

## OLD RUN NEWS

+++++

Newsletter of the Middleton Railway Trust.

Number 47 December 1969.

A MEMORABLE MONTH. Ten years ago, in December 1959, a meeting of the Leeds University Union Railway Society took place; none of those present realised just how much would happen as a result of the unanimous decision to start a preservation scheme for the Middleton Railway. The idea of an operating Light Railway in Leeds was suggested in the October, and the idea of using Middleton because it was both historic and disused was that of Dr C C Thornburn, then a post-graduate student of Agriculture, and one or two others. Of the first 50 who supported the Middleton scheme, a bare handful are still with us as active members. We did not realise that in reopening just over 6 months later we should make faster progress than most other similar schemes, nor did we realise that the idea of reopening a full-sized railway would spread like a second Railway Mania until the amateurs would be active from Cumberland to Devon and Kent 10 years later. As pioneers with no precedent, we had no other society from whom to seek advice -- even Bluebell was not in action, and what will work on narrow gauge doesn't necessarily work on 4'8½"! The consoling feature was that British Railways were pleasantly surprised that what they expected to be a complete fiasco suddenly began to roll in goods traffic by the thousand tons. B.R. have been helpful and sympathetic ever since. Of the dozens of memorable events, we might recall specially the Television show of our re-opening week in June 1960, our first major publication "Third Century at Middleton", the commemorations of "150 Years of Steam" and "Matthew Murray Bicentenary", the gradual transition from scrap track into first class conditions, the record of 13,000 tons of traffic a year, and finally the fact that we are still the country's amateur experts in heavy goods traffic operation. It helped materially to expand our activities outside the University members who started them, though the solid work of the largely Undergraduate permanent way team demonstrates their massive contribution to success -- how they manage to get degrees in the same year as they learn to lay track perfectly is a never-ending mystery. In all our activities, when one member has given up due to illness or to leaving Leeds, others have stepped in to fill the gap. In 10 years many wheels have passed over the rail-joints. By most normal standards our scheme was hopeless and we should never have started -- but it is pleasant to succeed against the odds. The next 10 years should see us firmly entrenched and far more widely known. Our thanks go especially to those who have maintained their support since the early years.

STAMPS. Our Stamp Salvage fund-raiser, Roger Bareham, asks for Christmas special and high value stamps to be saved & sent as they are particularly valuable.

WATER WALK. £125 has come in so far and paid into the appeal fund. Mr John Bushell says substantial payments are outstanding -- MEMBERS PLEASE NOTE. We should acknowledge gifts to the Appeal Fund from the Institute of Materials Handling, and the Leeds and District Traction Engine Club.

MEETINGS. With this Newsletter is our programme of indoor meetings. Please give it your support. Mr. John Bushell is looking for a cheap room in central Leeds suitable for meetings if the free facilities at the University are unsuitable at any time.

MEMBERSHIP AND SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS. We have 40 members more than at this time last year. Keep it up! We enclose a list of members up to date as 1st. December, regrettably with many typing errors to be corrected in the next list.

Why let MRT remain the smallest active railway operating organisation? The year of destiny which faces us makes an expanding membership not just useful, but ESSENTIAL. DO SOMETHING about it! Why not make a year's membership a GIFT to a friend or relation? Send it with your own subscription renewal. The A.R.P.S. Journal FORUM is available. 7/6d sent with your subscription brings you 3 issues in 1970 Post Free. The Editor appeal to all members to return their renewal forms and subscriptions promptly. Delay puts an unfair load on the Membership Secretary. We must stress the importance of Covenanted Subscriptions or contributions to the Appeal Fund. If you are paying Income Tax at the standard rate, and sign the Deed of Covenant, we can reclaim the tax paid on your money. Your subscription becomes 34/- instead of a guinea. In view of the need to raise every penny, it is YOUR DUTY TO SIGN THE COVENANT. You have nothing to lose, and we pay the stamp duty on the Deed. Covenants are entirely confidential, and if the Covenantor dies within the 7 year period, payments are automatically cancelled. If in doubt, don't just sit back, ask the Membership Secretary.

TRUMPET BLOWING. The worst kind of publicity is to blow your Trumpet with no ammunition inside it, or to repeat the same story time after time in the Railway Press with minor alterations. It is also better to tell people what we HAVE DONE, or ARE DOING, rather than what we HOPE TO DO. The start of train services for visitors, and the Middleton Colliery take-over approaching its climax has now given us a good story to tell, and the efforts of the publicity team over the months are beginning to roll off the assembly line. The new issue of Trains Illustrated - Steam Alive contains a Middleton Story, and will be out in January. With this newsletter are copies of the Timetable and Information leaflet. If you want more for display or possible visitors, let us know and you will receive them with the next newsletter. They are now on show at Libraries and Museums. Leeds City Station have them at the Passenger Enquiries counter, so has Liverpool Street alongside the Bluebell timetables. Any similarity to Great Eastern Ultramarine is purely coincidental - the printer just happened to have that colour ink on! Two junior members got a copy to each of the 250 pupils in their school and extra copies to any whose parents owned a shop! A one day Transport exhibition at Cockburn High School featured Middleton, and a display at Belle Isle Library is to follow next month. You can help your Trust by buying all railway books through the MRT Sales Manager. The newly published History of the Whitby and Pickering Railway is an up-to-date version of the 1906 book. What about a Flying Scotsman pen stand at 49/6d including a Certificate of Authenticity, for the Aunt who sent you a Christmas present but didn't receive one from you? Why not follow Chris Oldroyd who has sold large quantities of souvenir pens producing a good income. The Sales Manager would like photographs and slides for sale. Old Railway Books can be valuable, so don't throw them away, give them in for our secondhand sales - don't let the Church Bazaar's have a monopoly of Bring and Buy Sales! Mr White at 66 Weetwood Lane would like to collect tape recordings and slides of the line - any era, the older the better. The latest B B C record "Sounds and Songs of the Railways" is now published at 37/6d. Longmoor Military Railway Souvenirs celebrating the final closure in October 1969 are available at 2/- each while stocks last.

In a year, Sales Manager John Edwards has turned a very modest effort into a flourishing business. BACK HIM UP, see address on Timetable.

POLICE MESSAGE. Some weeks ago, a private motor car drove past a stop signal from flagmen at Moor Road level crossing with an Engineers Train driven by Malcolm Phillips coming uphill and the Chairman as one flagman. Will the other flagman at the time please contact the Chairman immediately.