

MIDDLETON RAILWAY TRUST LIMITED

NEWSLETTER

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETINGS

It was nice to see both the M.R.T. and M.R.A. annual general meetings being a little better attended this year, though not nearly as well attended as either organisation would wish them to be. However, remembering days when a p.w. gang had to be brought in their muck from the Yard, and when senior members had to be 'adopted' by the M.R.A. to make up their quorum, attendance was better. The Minutes of the Trust's A.G.M. accompany this newsletter, and a list of the new Trust Council members and Association Committee members is included in the newsletter.

M.R.A. MEMBERSHIP

As can be seen from the accompanying list of officers, the M.R.A. now has its own Membership Secretary, to whom renewals will be sent from this Summer onwards. If M.R.A. members can persuade any of their friends to join, these new applications should be sent to Steve - who will be very pleased to receive them. In view of the latest postage increases, the M.R.A. subscription will be raised by 5p to 80p from Summer onwards as the M.R.A. subscription only just covers present expenses. A revived version of the Association Advertiser section will be in the next Old Run, and the new A.A. editor Nicholas Beckwith would welcome contributions.

DOWN AT THE LINE

The Santa Special The weather was fine, but an icy cold wind blew most of the time, which perhaps was why we did not get as many customers as in 1973. Those who helped deserve congratulations for their stamina, especially Santa Joe whose practically see-through robe was not exactly designed for North Pole weather.

Takings were: Saturday - £7.40p (27 Adults, 20 Children)
Sunday - £20.69¹/₂p (82 Adults, 52 Children)

Ballast Reclaiming Much of the work done lately at the line has been the excavation of antique ballast from the G.N. bridge. A source of good ballast has long been needed, and the expense of importing stone ballast from elsewhere has led to such unsuitable things as pit shale being used until now. Since the G.N. ballast quarry was discovered several weekends have been spent shovelling it out from between the bridge girders in to a wheelbarrow and tipping it down the embankment at the side of the bridge. It is then loaded on the Wickham trolley and taken to where it is to be used. Two sections of track suffering from subsidence have now been packed with the reclaimed ballast. Only about one tenth of the ballast has been reclaimed so far though, so there's plenty left for any of you who would care to help!

Ballast Brake-Van Reclaiming After many months of work, our second brake van is almost ready for use, and should go in to service early in the season. The joinery team are to be congratulated on their superb work on what seemed like an impossible old wreck when it was delivered to us. Seats have been added along both sides, gates at each end, and a sliding door at the brake end, and it is now being painted peacock blue outside, "brandy gold" walls inside, and dark brown seats. Members in dirty work-clothes will certainly NOT be allowed in this palatial vehicle, and anyone caught in there wearing dirty boiler-suits etc. will meet with a terrible retribution (like having to repaint the thing for instance!). Actually, we're wondering whether or not to allow any visitors to ride in it.

Easter Egg Special The start of this year's Visitors Service Season once more will be celebrated with Easter Eggs being given to children travelling with adults, and we hope for a record weekend like last year's - though Easter is earlier this year. Many thanks to Keith Hartley, who has donated some of the Eggs for the second year running.

Help Needed Although this newsletter is too late to appeal for help at the Easter weekend, help will be needed all through the Season - engine crew (see Jim Lodge at the line if you can drive or fire or would like to train for these jobs), guarding (see me at the line if you would like training for this), shop sales assistants, stewarding on the train or platform on busy days (usually Sundays), and ticket clipping. A new leaflet of Instructions for Guards and Train Staff is being produced, comprising relevant extracts from the Rule Book and general advice and instructions. Copies will be available for all members who work on the visitors' trains as guards, clippers or stewards.

EXHIBITIONS The following exhibitions and rallies will be graced by the presence of our sales stands this year, and if you can help with transport or sales please contact Dave Watson (sales) or Derek Plummer (transport):

1 June: Rotherham Vintage Vehicle Rally.

21/22 June: Metro '75 show in Roundhay Park, Leeds.

30/31 August: Harewood Traction Engine Rally.

12/13/14 September: Huddersfield Railway Modellers Exhibition.

Additions to this list will appear with the Summer Old Run.

As 'The Old Run' has unfortunately been delayed by a mishap at the typesetter's and then by the Easter holiday, here is some further news.

MORE PAINT The club part of the hut in Dartmouth Yard is taking on an olde Elizabethan look at the hands of a small gang of M.R.A. members who are painting it white with black lath-etc. and yellow seats.

VISITORS The new season started with a good weekend, despite the cold weather - or more likely because of it (we find that nothing brings the visitors so much as a dull, cold ~~morning~~ morning with the sun coming out at lunchtime when it's too late for them to set off for the dales or the seaside). Total takings for Easter weekend were just over £130 and consisted of £78.09p tickets, £45.68p shop sales, £6.44p secondhand sales and donations for information sheets. The Peckett was kept ~~very~~ very busy, and worked well apart from a recurrence of her hot axle-box ailment after the rather wet winter. At the beginning of the season at least, only two locos - the Peckett and the Bagnall - will be in use.

AMONG OUR VISITORS: a group of railway enthusiasts from the Ashford area of Kent, two football fans from Surrey, and a secondhand shoplifter (when challenged, she hotly denied the charge of pinching a 10p extended play record, but unfortunately she was a rather scrawny kid and couldn't satisfactorily explain the peculiar large square ridge down the front of her trousers!).

1975 PROMOTIONS This year, we have arranged to take part in two promotions: the British Tourist Authority's 'Ticket to Ride' scheme and 'Drive' magazine's 'Ticket to Yesteryear' scheme. The former entails American tourists buying a ticket entitling them to free travel on a selection of about 19 preserved lines. After the B.T.A.'s expenses are deducted, the residue of the ticket money will be shared between the participating railways according to their takings during the year. Our share will be very small indeed, but sales should prosper if any of the American visitors come our way, and our illustrated appearance on the associated map which is being sold in Britain is very good free publicity. The second promotion, by the Automobile Association's 'Drive' magazine, with a circulation of about 5,000,000, involves the publishing of a ticket in the July edition which will entitle readers to fare reductions on a selection of preserved lines, and again we get some very good free publicity. (Let's hope all 5,000,000 don't come on the same day!)

WASTE PAPER Like most groups collecting old newspapers etc., we have now had to stop - temporarily at least, as the price is so little it's not worth the considerable effort involved in sorting and bundling. Many thanks to the members who collected paper for us during the last year: it was lucrative while it lasted.