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# The Old Run

Journal of the 1758 Middleton Railway Trust, Leeds



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**Journal of the 1758 Middleton**  
**Railway Trust, Leeds**

# The Old Run

EDITOR: B. W. ASHURST, 18 INGLEWOOD DRIVE, OTLEY, YORKSHIRE

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## STEAM GALA

***All enjoyed happy time  
at Middleton's annual 'do'***

To the loud and ornate strains of "Blaze Away" the Middleton Railway's third annual Steam Gala got off to a stupendous, rip-roaring start on that never-to-be-forgotten 2nd of September.

Booming red, white and blue sounds, showering richly-carved, gold-leafed music, the mighty Gavioli fairground organ overwhelmed visitors as they entered the main gate into Clayton's Yard. Many were so entranced by the glorious sound and dancing figures they were in serious danger of getting no further than the gate - thus missing all the fun and games awaiting them further on.

The organ was worked by electricity from a dynamo driven by a light steam traction engine. This was kept sizzling quietly along by straw-hatted and contented-looking Mr. Coles, sitting happily astride one of his many vintage vehicles.

Several steam rollers - two owned by MRT members - and another traction engine were puffing up and down to the general admiration, while in the sports field preparations were in hand for the afternoon's spectacular - the demolition of the cricket pavilion by two steam wagons from Castleford.

Through the window holes and round the steel supports were wrapped wire hausers which were then attached to the back of the lorry. Cheers went up as the steam wagon gave a great heave - to stand with wheels spinning on the grass. Eventually, after a few more attempts, there was a splintering kind of a crunch, like

Continued overleaf.



a glacier breaking up, followed by more cheers, and the roof caved in.

It was the last little bit that proved the trickiest, and before the walls could be persuaded to yield, Fearnley's second steam wagon had to be hitched on the first. Even then it took a few pulls for the drivers to get co-ordinated enough to give the coup de grace.

When it was all over, and a sorry pile of rubble was all that remained, few of us spared a thought for those sunny days when the coal wagons meandered down from Broom Pit behind Blenkinsop, steam mingling with cricket flannels and whistle applauding Clayton's No. 1 bat's hearty six.

It was that kind of a breathless day when everything that happened was tremendous fun - the kind of day grandfathers have in their minds when they say, "Ah, yes! Those were the days!"

Remember all the juggling and shouting as Peter Nettleton edged the B a g n a l l O-4-OST up to one of the steamrollers till they were standing neck and neck, bumper to bumper, so the Evening Post man could get his picture of the two drivers shaking hands?

Then there was the Pier Pavilion type humour as John Bushell and helpers urged selected passers-by over the public address to stop and buy an ice cream - obviously imported straight from Great Yarmouth!

They do say that more than 1,000 visitors came during the afternoon. Well, I wouldn't know about that, but what struck me was the interest shown and the o b v i o u s delight at seeing the results of so much hard work displayed for inspection and photos. All the working engines were clean and sparkling. It was a great pleasure to see the Sentinel back in such good form, and the Y7 complete with NER lettering (finished actually the day before).

Those who took advantage of the guided tours found much to interest them which was not obvious to the others - such as the broad gauge fittings on the steam crane, and the Mersey Docks engine's bell.

A popular gathering place was the shed, labelled "Museum" for the day, in which the working model layout as used at exhibitions was running and a display of literature, souvenirs, and railwayana attracted a more specialised interest.

Once again we were surprised at the distances some people had come to be with us. One family who had driven from Manchester had taken more time trying to find the railway than they had getting from Manchester to Leeds! One hopes they found it all worthwhile nevertheless. Another visitor was from Portsmouth, but perhaps he doesn't count as he was attending the British Association meeting anyway!

Hands up all those who are on the edge of their seats waiting to hear how much money we made! The answer is we took about £80 including sale of stock, and covered our expenses by a handsome margin. Not enough to justify the Steam Gala as a money-raising effort; but then, it isn't, is it?

## Lost - three miles of railway every day!

BR route mileage has fallen by 6,000 (30 per cent) since 1948. This is shown in figures provided by the Ministry of Transport in answer to a Parliamentary Question in February 1967.

In the first 14 years mileage fell by just over 2,000; but a marked difference can be noted from the post-1963 (Beeching Report year) figures, when pruning advanced at about 1,000 miles a year - three miles a day!

Under the Ministry of Transport's White Paper on the future pattern of transport, the railways are given a basic route mileage of at least 11,000, as compared with the Beeching Report's 8,000.

The figures below are reproduced from Hansard:

Year (31st Dec.)	Passenger Route Mileage	Freight Only Route Mileage	Total Route Mileage
1948	N.A.	N.A.	19,631
1949	N.A.	N.A.	19,598
1950	N.A.	N.A.	19,573
1951	N.A.	N.A.	19,471
1952	N.A.	N.A.	19,276
1953	N.A.	N.A.	19,222
1954	15,099	4,051	19,150
1955	14,801	4,260	19,061
1956	14,672	4,353	19,025
1957	14,622	4,343	18,965
1958	14,454	4,394	18,848
1959	14,063	4,502	18,565
1960	13,865	4,504	18,369
1961	13,697	4,517	18,214
1962	12,915	4,556	17,471
1963	12,631	4,351	16,982
1964	11,670	4,321	15,991
1965	10,884	4,036	14,920
1966*	10,165	3,556	13,721

N.A. - not available.

\* Provisional.

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## Dawdling through

# DERBYSHIRE

## by train and tram

Promptly at 8.45 on April 22, 1967, three car-loads of prospective dawdlers successfully faced the temptation of breakfast at 21s. 0d per head in the Queens Hotel, Leeds, and turned instead to the concourse of City Station, where enthusiastic Middleton member Mike Crew was already plying the itinerary of the Derbyshire Dawdler at 2s. 6d. each.

That piece of literature was to be their companion for the next 204½ miles, faithfully recording each point of interest on the route and acting as courier, so that no matter how many junctions and collieries were met, reference to its exhaustive contents quickly restored the erring mind to a restful state of security. Anyone who has ever tried to disentangle the loose skeins of railway left lying about in South Yorkshire will join in congratulating John Bushell and Andrew Naylor for a first-class job. Motive power for the first part of the trip was not the advertised Great Marquess, which was suffering from a constricted coal bunker, but an old friend, Jubilee 45593 'Kholapur', accompanied by another old friend, Geoff Lee, who had been up until all hours cleaning it the night before. One can truthfully say that the side of the engine which was visible on platform 9 did him credit.

It was not long before the eight-coach train was rolling gently out of the station, across junctions and round crossovers, squealing and flexing and doing all the things a proper train does when it sets out on an exciting voyage of discovery.

At Garforth Kholapur gaily flung convention aside and took the long, long right hand curve on to the 7-mile branch through Kippax to Castleford. Simultaneously 32 windows slid down on eight coaches and the top halves of 32 variously clad railfans emerged, cameras poised to record the moment for eternity.

At Bowers Colliery the train stopped, and there was a session of mutual appreciation with a smart blue O-6-OST labelled "COAL PRODUCTS No. 3" parked on an adjacent line. As with minor railways the world over, the crew included driver and two firemen, small boy, shunter, and Sam, who was checking the water level in the tank by the straightforward method of lifting the lid and looking in.

When the Jubilee moved off, there was scarcely a pause before No. 3, steam fussing round well-oiled motion, bumped and sizzled along beside the train for nearly a mile over a continuous series of ropy diamond slip crossings before parting company with a cheery wave.

On through the land of coal and liquorice progressed the stately Kholapur, followed by its train of undulating carriages. Beneath the running board dived the mottled brown gangers' way,

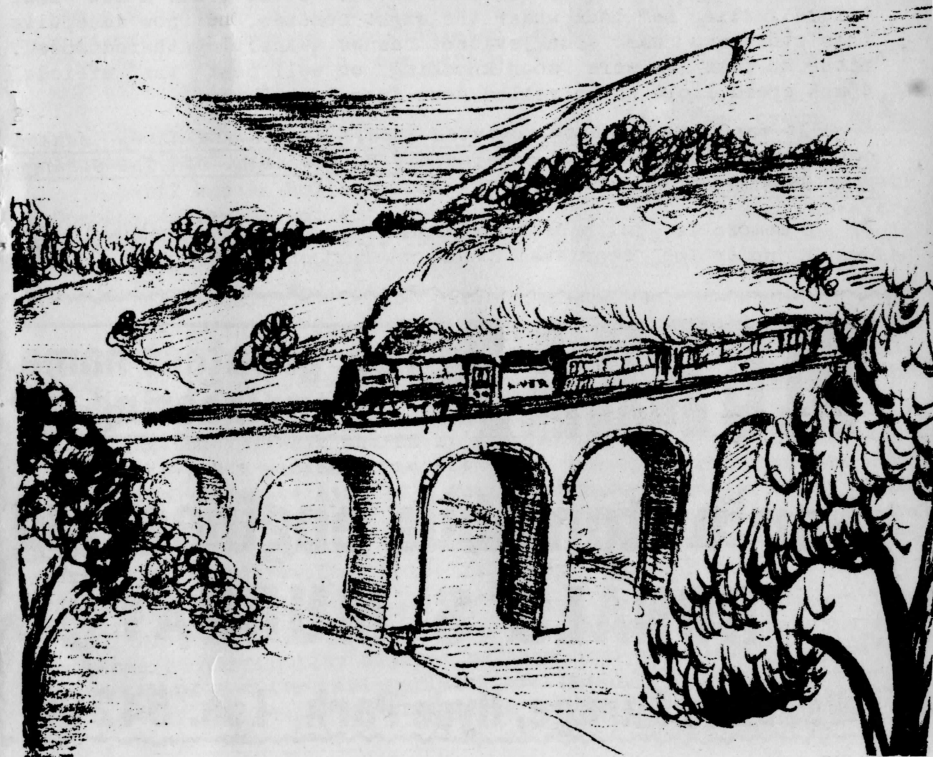
pathway of a million thoughtful feet since expansive times long gone.

Soon we reached Doncaster, where more passengers joined the train.

On through Loxborough and Rotherham Central our train ran, still keeping strictly to time, and still beneath a sunny sky. The journey alongside the River Don, the criss-cross of other railways, and glimpses into the steel works provided a constant source of interest until we reached the Nunnery Curve. Here more heads popped out as we stopped and eased slowly round and down to the Midland main line; but alas, there was no sign of any nunnery!

After Sheffield, where the last batch of passengers was picked up, the Jubilee got off to a fine start and we set off for the Hope Valley line - only to have our hope dashed when we came to a dead stand at Dore! What was the matter? After fifteen minutes everyone was beginning to be fearful of the photographic Stops at Edale and Chinley, and all ears were open when Norman Fearnley came down the train to announce that we were waiting for The Great Marquess, which had been delayed at Holbeck. It might be half an hour, said Norman glumly.

Hardly had he passed on down the coach, however, when there was a shrill, well-known whistle, and all turned eagerly to the windows as The Marquess ambled past on another track! What a sight for sore eyes - white smoke creaming from the polished





black chimney, caressing the shining green boiler; steam dancing on the motion; and three happy faces watching the train from the cab as she overtook us.

Well, after that nothing could go wrong! We climbed briskly up into Totley Hole and out again, up into wilder and wilder countryside where even the sheep spoke dialect. Clouds waited for us near the summit and pounced from Kinder Scout just as we reached our first photo stop at Edale. Here it was a case of out and straight back in again as we tried to make up some of the lost time, and a few blasts of the whistle and a scurry of rain soon brought everyone back on board.

It was fortunate that the Peak District was seen at its most characteristic. Rain and cloud lent a touch of drama to the train as it entered Edale Tunnel and a pall of sombre majesty to the hills. There was not enough rain to spoil the day, however, and by Chinley it had stopped and a pale sun shone across the acres of deserted platform. Here was a station that had seen busier days - there was more platform accommodation than at many important main line stations; yet Chinley itself is only a large village. The Midland must have been in an expansive frame of mind at the time.

At Chinley the Marquess had turned round and was waiting to back on to the rear of our train. Kholapur ran round to use the turntable as she did so, and after a few minutes break we left Chinley half an hour late.

The Marquess rolled back on the steep grade a few feet before getting her back under the eight coaches, but how deceptive this start was was soon evident as we quickly gathered speed. With no fuss we were soon knocking on well past the official 45mph speed limit as we rolled down from Peak Forest.

It was exhilarating to watch cows, horses and sheep shaken out of their dieselised complacency by the sight of the strange iron monster! Shades of 1812!

A memorable juxtaposition occurred as we approached the tunnel under the reprieved Stockport-Buxton branch near Chapel.

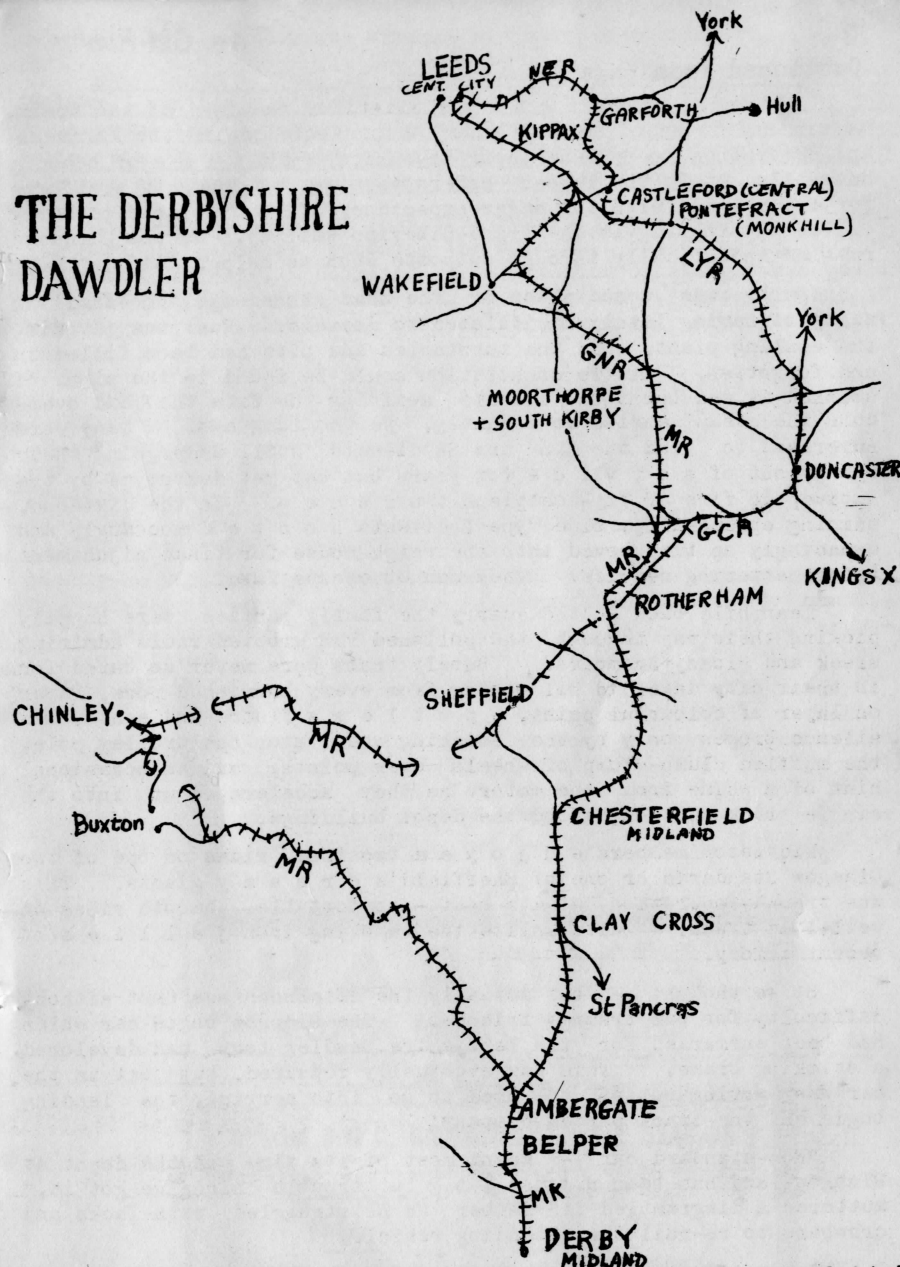
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## THE DERBYSHIRE DAWDLER



Coming to meet the Dawdler on a curve was a ballast train behind a Class SF, while above our heads on the hillside among the trees a green and white diesel m.u. was just pulling into Chapel en le Frith South station. A number of fellow-travelling non-railway enthusiasts were converted on the spot: "Sweet interchange of hill and vale" - Milton, thou shouldst be living at this hour!

Ambergate was reached about 10 minutes late and most passengers detained here to be whisked up in the luxurious new Trent buses to Crich.

Continued from page 7

However, some e i g h t y philistines remained on the train, determined to spend as much time as possible behind the Marquess, and determined to pursue their favourite p a s t i m e of beaming haughtily on to the lesser orders waiting on draughty platforms for their train with the eager expectancy of revolutionaries being exiled to Siberia via the Trans-Siberian Railway, as the Marquess rumbled majestically through outposts such as Belper and Duffield.

Derby was a sad place. The shed showed the too-familiar signs of having lately capitulated to diesels. Rust was invading the coaling plant, and the turntables and pits had been filled in and forgotten. Little consolation could be found in the sight of smashed-in and burnt-out diesels awaiting the fate that had overcome the steam engine so recently, yet so long ago. Many were surprised to find the LMS and SR diesels still undergoing their agony, out of s e r v i c e for years but not yet destroyed by the antiseptic fire of oxy-acetylene t o r c h e s. In the distance, shining ephemerally, blue Type L diesels h o o t e d mockingly and menacingly as they moved into the weigh-house for final adjustment before entering service. They cannot escape fate!

Meanwhile back in the quarry the family parties were happily picking their way through the polished TMS grooved rails admiring sleek and glossy tramcars. Surely trams were never so cared for in their city days! Oil oozing from every burnished pore, layer on layer of colourful paint, s p o t l e s s floors and seats, and silence broken only by the swishing wheel atop the trolley pole, the muffled clump-clump of wheels over points, and an occasional hint of a whine from the motors as they accelerated up into the single track section beyond the depot buildings.

Middleton members e n j o y e d two free rides on one of two Glasgow Standards or one of Sheffield's c r e a m y giants. This was tramway operation at its best - comfortable, smooth rides on well-laid track. Quite unlike the rumbling iron j e l l i e s of recent memory.

So we thought - but actually the afternoon was not without difficulty for our tramway friends. The Glasgow bogie car which had been earmarked for the Derbyshire Dawdler tour had developed a sticking brake. This was eventually repaired, but just as the car was moving out of the shed to go into service, the leading bogie and the track parted company!

"Non-standard car - spent most of its time in the depot at Glasgow and has been n o t h i n g but trouble since we got it," muttered a disgruntled TMS member as he struggled with jacks and crowbars to re-rail the offending vehicle.

Among acquaintances renewed at Crich was one with Stanley Swift, known far and wide as the expert on tram rails. Stanley's vast collection of rail sections contains labelled profiles of most of the systems in this c o u n t r y and many from abroad. Armed with hacksaw, he is a familiar s i g h t whenever pieces of rail are dug up in city centres. He has also been encountered at Middleton!

Most weekends visitors to Crich who w a n d e r up behind the main depot will see him in his familiar donkey-jacket, trundling

a wheelbarrow and sorting through his massive collection.

Rain began to fall in earnest as we waited for the train at Belper, and the 5 o'clock whistle of The Great Marquess as she came round the curve into the station was as welcome as a fire-side tea on a steamed-up Saturday afternoon. Thankfully we climbed on board and queued up for our buffet packs.

It must be admitted that the return journey was spent leaning back on the seats watching the rain fall on landscape not of the most inspiring. Occasionally a junction or sharp curve would send the photographers scurrying to the windows, hopeful that if they opened the aperture as wide as it would go, something might come out.

The route back to Leeds, after leaving Moorthorpe, was South Kirby Junction, Hare Park, Crofton West, Turners Lane, Normanton, and Leeds City. It was regretted that we were not able to have the p r i v i l e g e of being the last steam-hauled special to use Leeds Central; The Great Marquess did share that honour, however, with the Flying Scotsman a couple of weeks before, when another railtour had turned round at Leeds.

From Middleton's point of view the trip was a great success. A good profit went to The Great Marquess fund, and many compliments were received by the organisers on a well-run and interesting excursion. The Marquess consolidated its reputation as a lively performer and Middleton members were justly proud of the achievements of 'our' engine.

Apart from John, who did most of the organising work, and Andrew, who did most of the literary work, Middleton's thanks must go to Mr Barraclough of BR for his co-operation and help, particularly in providing a Jubilee when it was discovered at the last minute that the round trip was too much for the resources of the Marquess.

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# Meet two more MRT members

## Steve and Geoff tell all!

Lightning was flashing among the cranes and girders of Clayton's Yard, and thunder reverberated up and down the canyon between the steel plates of the stockpile and the heights of "John Alcock". On the mud flats below, a solitary figure waded through the down-pour clutching a soggy notebook and a piece of blunt charcoal. It was the Editor, looking for material for the next Old Run.

Seeking shelter in a derelict brake van, he grimly wrung out his dripping beret and peered round through the tropical gloom of the Hunslet summer. "Not much sign of a story out there," he thought. "Better get back to the office now the rain's eased off a bit."

He clambered down into the mud again and squelched off toward Clayton's Curve. But wait! What was that? Yes, it was movement! The doors of the stores shed were open and in the dim recesses of the old container could be glimpsed the feverish activity of two people at work! As the Editor drew closer they came to the entrance of the shed and he saw that they were two highly respected members of the Middleton Railway Trust, Steven Roberts and Geoffrey Ernest Duckworth!

Glad of a break from reorganising the tools, sweeping out the rubbish and puzzling over the spare parts, Steve and Geoff relaxed for a few minutes to chat about the railway and their private lives.

Steve is one of the most popular MRT members. He's always there - always been there since 1961, in fact. It is hard to imagine coming down to the line on a Saturday and not being greeted by his ready smile, yet members will have to get used to the idea - he hopes to go to Aston University this year and will naturally spend most term time weekends in Birmingham.

It was when he came on a visit to the line with Leeds Modern School, which he has just left, that Steven found himself agreeing with the aims of the MRT and promising to abide by its rules. He remembers his first job on joining was to help put the top loop point in at Moor End, and since then he has done his share of the p.w. work, although his prime interest is in the locomotives and mechanical engineering, which he hopes to "read" (if that is the correct term) at Aston. If all members were as willing to do any necessary job, however humble and unrewarding, how much less frantic would our civil engineer be!

Most members know that Steven goes off occasionally to the Talyllyn Railway, but these occasions are short-lived and he always returns to his true love after a couple of weeks. He finds the TR a refreshing change after Middleton. Beautiful scenery does, after all, do the heart good, and no matter how fond one is of Middleton's unique atmosphere, it is good to get away for a time to something completely different. The TR is the grandfather of

## The Old Run

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all preservation schemes, of course, and Steven finds its smooth running and well-organised work programme a challenge to Middleton - something which will one day emerge here, we hope!

In his spare time Steve is building an OO gauge model railway incorporating a narrow gauge section. Trying to combine Middleton and Towyn in one happy dream, perhaps!

His interest in railways dates back to 1956 (when he was 7 years old), when an aunt gave him a book on railways. In those days he used to live near the railway, and can remember "Blenkinsop" chugging up and down with the coal from Broom Pit. His aunt certainly deserves the thanks of all of us!

Geoff Duckworth is another useful member who has been helping actively on the railway since 1966. He is, he claims, normally known as "Er-you" when on the line, and would appreciate more positive identification. For the uninitiated, he is shorter than Steve, although two years his senior, wears glasses and short hair. So no more of this "all these Chinese look alike to me" business please!

When not helping with other jobs, Geoff may be seen trying to round up helpers to assist him in his official capacity of hand-crane engineer, which post he has held since the 1967 annual meeting. His aim is to overhaul all moving parts, both on the crane itself and the running gear. Of course, he would like to see his historic Midland Railway relic fully restored to match the work recently done on the Middleton locomotives, but, as he said, "You can't do much with one person." The plaintive cry of all MRT officials, Geoff!

Meanwhile, it is gratifying to note that the crane is in fairly regular use and saves much time and back-ache.

Geoff was on holiday from the Yorkshire Dyeware and Chemical Company, where he was doing research chemistry. He was, however, hopeful of a place at Hull University in September, where he would carry on with his chemistry studies. He obtained his HNC in the subject while at Leeds Central High School.

When he is not down at the railway Geoff indulges in photography, mainly of the railway variety. He develops and prints his own. He has been a railfan since he first went on a train at the age of five.

Another interest shared by several MRT members is steam traction engines, and he is at present helping member John Griffiths renovate his 1929 Fowler compound steamroller. He hoped this would make an appearance at the Steam Gala, but there was still some work to be done on it. The machine was bought from a Pudsey firm.

Middleton has always relied on the dedicated few rather than the lukewarm multitude, and when jobs get done they are done with someone's personality stamped on them and they last. Here's a training ground for enterprising craftsmen, and we can be proud that Geoff and others are following on in the Leeds tradition.

# Mallard never saw it

As she sped along, working up to her never-to-be-forgotten maximum of 126 mph, at Essendine in Rutland, 'Mallard' whirled past a forgotten railway, the Little Bytham & Edenham branch, sometimes known as the Earl of Ancaster's railway after the 21st Lord Willoughby d'Eresby who built it.

Many small lines which did not become famous were nevertheless well known to railway enthusiasts and historians: for example, the Manchester & Milford; the Alford & Sutton; the Haughley & Laxfield; the Garstang & Knott End; the Ellon & Boddam; and even some like the Harwich & Bristol which never screwed chair to sleeper. Not so the Edenham line!

## The forgotten Edenham Railway sleeps in obscurity

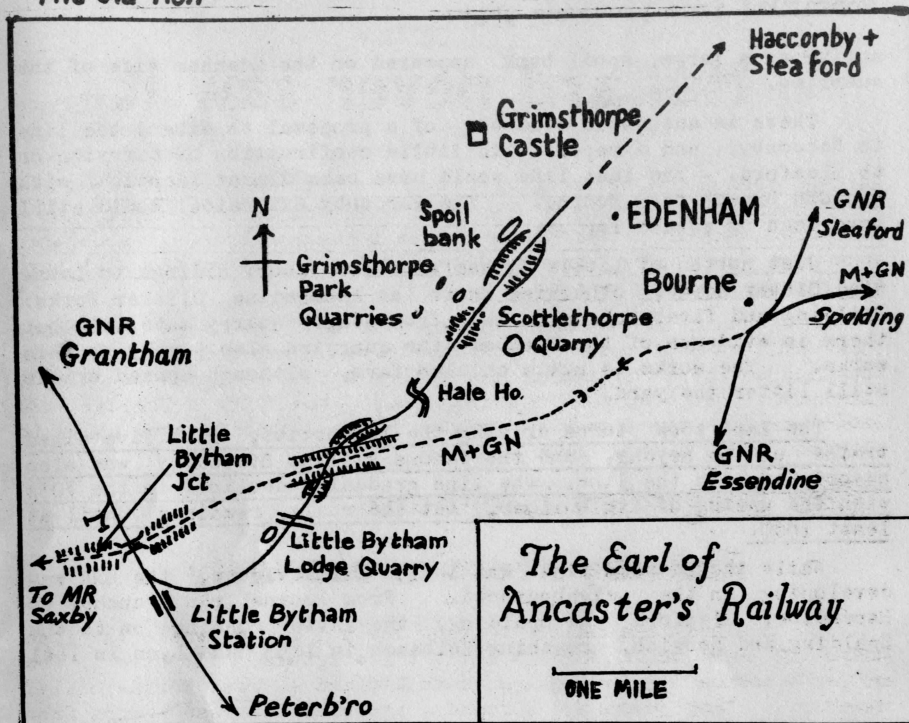
It is almost impossible to spot the place where the line turns off as we whirl through Little Bytham. It came to the writer's notice while looking into Midland & Great Northern Rly. matters. Many years ago I found a record of correspondence from Derby in connection with negotiations for "cutting across the Edenham Railway, and ascertaining whether the line may be regarded as completely abandoned." The Midland Railway history of 1877 even shows this tiny line on the map, well before the M&GN Joint Railway was founded, and before this railway had run through the area.

The Great Northern Railway was built later than most other trunk lines, and the loop via Boston preceded the main line via Grantham. The Edenham Branch was built in 1855-56. Edenham even today is a small village; even including the Grimsthorpe Estate it is much smaller than Bourne, two miles away, which might have been a more logical terminus.

The line was, however, on the Earl's private estate, and this probably accounts for it not going to Bourne. Legal aspects were also simplified by this, since an Act of Parliament was not required. This was well before the age of Light Railway Orders, and the line was built like a statutory railway.

Mineral traffic might be considered a legitimate reason for building the line, but we have to be careful of hasty premises, since the famous Northampton sand ironstone was not exploited until much later, even though the railway ran as far east as five miles on the Bourne side of the GNR main line.

There is, however, good building stone in the area, some from nearby Clipsham having been used for famous London landmarks. Similar stone was available in Grimsthorpe Park, with sand, clay and poor stone at Little Bytham Lodge quarry. The Earl built the



line not only as a hobby, but as a useful route for passengers and as an outlet for local stone.

It appears that Edenham and Grimsthorpe were relatively more important at that time than today, in the same way that Middlesbrough was almost unknown compared to Stockton in pre-railway days.

The branch turned off very sharply just to the north of Little Bytham station platforms, with a separate platform of its own. A long curve on an embankment (now tree-covered) took the line round to face north east, followed by an almost straight route of just over four miles in all to Edenham, where it ended just on the Grimsthorpe Castle side of the village.

A delightful three-arch bridge carried the Little Bytham to Witham-on-the-Hill road over the line, this bridge being still in excellent condition. The Lodge quarry was next to the bridge.

A shallow cutting followed undulating ground, and a little further on the Hale House road crossed over by a bridge on a sharp S-bend, the cart-track now following the railway and the bridge having disappeared. The only other earthworks were a short but high embankment over a stream, and a shallow cutting past the spoil bank.

Although by present day standards of open cast mineral workings, none of the quarries at the Lodge, Scottlethorpe Road, or Grimsthorpe Park were very large, they must have been quite

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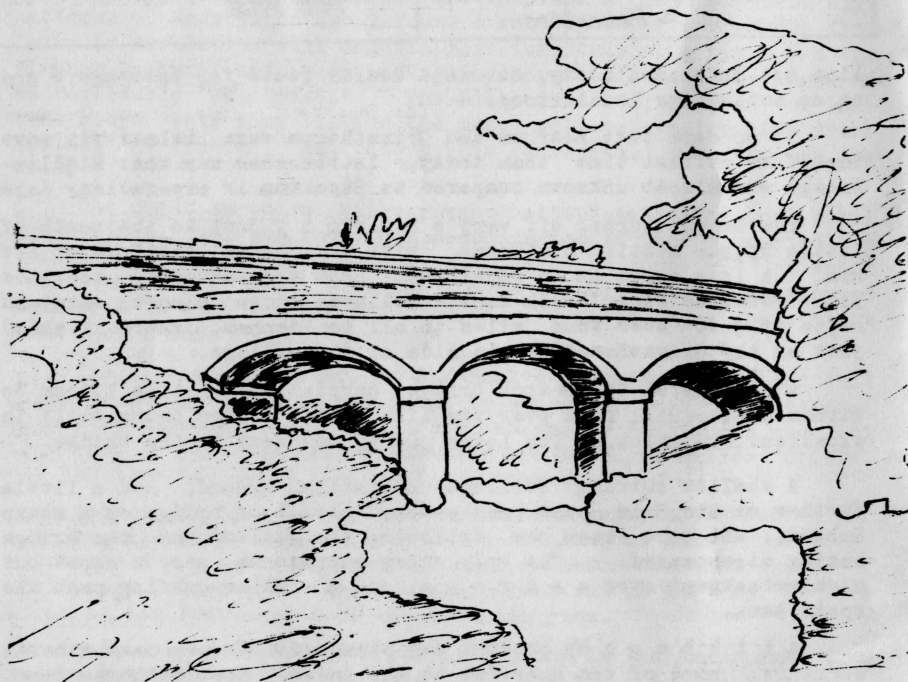
active as a large spoil bank appeared on the Edenham side of the quarries.

There is authentic evidence of a proposal to extend the line to Hacconby, and a report with little confirmation of carrying on to Sleaford. The last line would have been almost identical with the GNR branch from Bourne. The Hacconby extension would still have been on estate land.

Just north of Little Bytham were two short sidings to Lawnwood Sinter Works, otherwise known as Adamantine Clinker Works. Building and firebricks were made from nearby quarry material, but there is evidence of the Edenham line quarries also supplying this works. The works is now a chicken farm, although unused bricks still litter the yard.

The Earl took turns driving the locomotive, with five mixed trains at the heyday, and the famous William Stroudley was also associated with the line. The line gradually declined in the 70's with the ageing of its builder, but the rails remained until at least 1880.

While the Edenham line was in its first vigour, the GNR was developing in the neighbourhood. From Bourne ran branches to Essendine, Sleaford and Spalding, the latter running on to the Spalding and Norwich, reaching Holbeach in 1853 and Lynn in 1861



Bridge carrying road over Edenham Railway at Bytham Lodge. It is still in excellent condition.



Edenham Railway goods depot at Edenham terminus. Now used as implement shed and store on farm.

by the Lynn & Sutton Bridge railway. The lines from Bourne to Lynn were GNR operated.

The Midland operated a branch from Peterborough to Sutton Bridge, opened in 1863. Various other small companies ran on to Yarmouth, Cromer and Norwich. The Bourne to Lynn lines became the Midland and Eastern in 1866. The Eastern & Midlands Railway took this over in 1883, and the lines to the east coast in 1882. The Midland and the Great Northern Railways formed a joint company which took over from Bourne to Lynn in 1889 and to the east coast in 1893. The Great Eastern monopoly of East Anglia was well and truly broken!

Bourne was originally at the west end of a spur, the first Midland access being via Stamford and Peterborough to Sutton Bridge. What was more logical than to connect the Midland at Melton Mowbray with the Eastern & Midlands at Bourne? The M&GN connection at this point was to have an influence on the Edenham line. The new route was Midland single line from Saxby through Edmonthorpe, South Witham, and Castle Bytham up to the bridge over the GNR main line.

A curiosity of nomenclature was the Little Bytham Junction which was not a junction, but merely the start of a double track section which marked the boundary of the Joint Railway. Both the GNR and the Midland were keen on upholding their rights and dignity, and the boundary half way from Melton to Bourne was a tacit compromise. The Railway Clearing House and Ian Allan maps show the junction about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile east of the GNR, whereas the Ordnance Survey puts it just west of the GNR. In fact the earth-

Continued overleaf

works do widen out from single to double track width just to the west of the bridge over the GNR.

Although at Little Bytham (the GNR box is just "Bytham") the Joint line was high above the GNR and the Edenham, the M&GN was almost level from Little Bytham to where the Edenham crossed it. This is because, although the M&GN dropped at 1 in 100 all the way from Castle Bytham to Bourne, there is just this short stretch of level and uphill at the critical place. It means that at Little Bytham the M&GN was about 20 feet over the GNR and Edenham Junction. Two-thirds of a mile further east the M&GN was about 25 feet higher and therefore the Edenham about 10 feet over it, had climbed 20 plus 25 plus 10 feet, or about 1 in 65; steeper still as the first section was almost level.

Road bridges over the Edenham are shown as intact in 1903, but there is no sign of a bridge over the M&GN north of the Lodge. The reason is that the Edenham, on a shallow embankment, was not sufficiently above the Joint line route to clear it. Both bridge and level crossing were out of the question at that point; hence the Derby anxiety about the status of the Edenham line. As it needed no Act to authorise it, it was not clear where the railway was (legally speaking) dead or merely slumbering before reincarnation.

Derby, however, was adept at skillful manoeuvring in such cases, and by building some rather better than average bridges on the Grimsthorpe estate section, the Joint line got tacit consent to cut through the Edenham line. So, with the recent closure of the M&GN, there are two abandoned cuttings onw above the other, while to the east, Bourne lost the lines to Sleaford and Essendine GNR and the Joint line. Both Bourne and Edenham now slumber in a trainless atmosphere.

There is evidence that a "Royal Train" of sorts once ran close to Edenham, as a member of the royal family got out of an express stopped at Essendine by signals, thinking it was Peterborough. A quick-thinking stationmaster sent the detached royalty via Bourne and the M&GN train to restore him to the royal train at Kings Lynn en route to Sandringham.

The Edenham was therefore a branchline with a difference, having had a short life but a gay one. There is obviously scope for inquisitive railway historians if they happen to be in the area.

## Here's how to join the MRT

Membership of the Middleton Railway Trust is open to all who agree with the society's aims and pay the subscription of: Full, 21s 0d; Junior (under 16), student, and OAP, 10s 6d; Life, £15. Corporate membership can be arranged. Please write to Mr John Bushell, membership secretary, MRT, 12 Trelawn Crescent, Leeds 6.

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