

THE OLD RUN

The Journal of the
Middleton Railway Trust Ltd.
No. 270 Spring 2026 £3.00



The Old Run
No. 270 Spring 2026

Editor: Ian Dobson, 21 Harper Grove, Idle, Bradford, BD10 8NX

Email: oldrun@middletonrailway.org.uk

Grateful thanks to all who have provided copy and images for this issue

The Old Run is published quarterly by The Middleton Railway Trust Ltd.

Intended publication months are February, May, August and November

Deadlines for contributions are 1st July, October, January and April

The Editor welcomes contributions relating to the interests of the Trust and the operation of our and other Railways, especially if Leeds built equipment is in use. Items for publication, including images (please send in resolutions higher than 1Mb) are acceptable in any format and may be sent via email or by post.

Opinions expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the Middleton Railway Trust Ltd. or the Middleton Railway Association

© The Middleton Railway Trust Ltd.

Editorial

Spring appears to have arrived - we are running trains again and asking for volunteers to help in all Departments. Some things never change! One thing that has changed in recent years is the capability to work remotely and this is actually quite useful. People can join Committee meetings from wherever they are in the world and a number of tasks can be done from home. Apart from taking some photographs that I thought might be useful when at the Railway, the Old Run is created entirely at home and then electronically transferred to the Printers. The Model Railway Exhibition is also entirely planned elsewhere and nothing really happens at Moor Road until the Thursday of the event itself. So, if you can't make it to South Leeds, please consider if there is anything you can do where you are. If you 'do' social media you can do your bit by reposting or sharing the Railway's posts - every little helps!



I have had some comments that people like the larger font size which is good to know. It's always good to get feedback - even if you don't like something. I can't fix something that I don't know is broken. I have a reasonable stock of items for future issues but always happy to receive more. Even if you have an idea but not sure how it would translate into content please ask. I don't really want to have to write everything. Hope you enjoy this issue, Ian

Front cover: *Did you know that we have just passed (on 15th April) the 20th anniversary of the first trains to use the 'new' site layout? At the time of the rebuilding the site was stripped almost bare, but since then it has matured as if it has always been like it is now - as this view from 17th September 2023 shows.*

Back cover: *385 continues to be on display in The Engine House but possibly not for much longer. During the post Community Day shunt she briefly felt the sun on her face again. Saturday 18th April 2026.*

From the Chairman

On 7th March 2026 at the Heritage Railway Association (HRA) Annual Awards ceremony, Fran Bailey was awarded the 'Innovation of the Year Award'. This award is a recognition of both Fran's foresight, together with that of Janet Auckland and Jenny Cowling, in recognising the need for the role of Almoner and of the exemplary manner in which she has developed the role. The Trust could not have a better person than Fran to fill this important role

At the same Ceremony, whilst Geordie Brown had a very good claim on the 'Diesel or Electric Locomotive Award', the 7th was not his night - but he has the satisfaction of having made a distinctive well researched and well written addition to the canon of industrial railway literature, and was highly commended for his work. Both Fran and Geordie and their teams are to be congratulated on their success in the HRA Annual Awards.

The Winners! From left: CEO of Merac, who sponsored the award, Ian Smith, Janet Auckland, Fran Bailey and Geordie Brown are seen at the HRA Awards in Llandudno.



This time last year when I wrote these Notes I quoted Joseph Chamberlain's phrase of 1898, "we are living in most interesting times" in relation to the succession of once near unimaginable events we had lived through in the last decade. Sadly, to the litany of events I then recounted must be added a war in the Middle East which at best will cause short term harm to our living standards and may yet result in the destruction of a proud and ancient civilisation and massive long-term disruption to the global economy with incalculable consequences for our small railway.

To survive, as I wrote last year, the Middleton Railway has to be resilient and adapt

to new norms and new realities. Fortunately, resilience and adaptability are built into the Middleton Railway's DNA: if it were not so it is very unlikely that there would still be steam locomotives climbing the bank from Moor Road to the Middleton Plateau.

The year 2026 marks the 200th anniversary of the death of perhaps the greatest figure in the Middleton Railway's history and one of the greatest of all the Georgian

Engineers – Matthew Murray. He was a man with a brilliant but restless mind – always seeking to better what had been done before. His interests ranged from engines to power ships, flax spinning machinery, fireproof mill buildings and hydraulics. He also sought to make the manufacturing process in his Round Foundry as efficient as possible by careful design. Most importantly, his practical skills and sound understanding of engineering principles allied to John Blenkinsop's inspired notion to employ the principle of the rack and pinion to overcome the limitations imposed by the brittle cast iron rails of 1812 led to the development of the world's first practical steam locomotive which enabled the Middleton Railway to survive the disruption caused by the Napoleonic Wars and cemented the Railway's place in history.



Still towering over the symbols of modern Leeds - Matthew Murray's obelisk in Holbeck, seen in 2025.

Matthew Murray the Trust will stage an exhibition curated by Anthony Dawson, the Trust's new Museum Manager, on the Mezzanine Floor which will speak primarily of his contribution to the development of the steam locomotive and will include a digital representation of his first locomotive 'Salamanca' at work on the Middleton Railway. The exhibition will also feature the four 1/8 scale models of the Murray Blenkinsop locomotives built to Science Museum drawings between 1910 and 1938. This will be first time that four locomotives of this design have been present and complete on the Middleton Railway since that unfortunate incident in 1818 when an unusually obdurate 'loiner' managed to blow up 'Salamanca'. This exhibition is planned to open in early July after the Model Railway Exhibition.

In addition to this, three Saturday afternoon talks will be held in each of June, July and August covering different aspects of Matthew Murray's work and legacy - details are available on the Trust's Website.

Finally, and very fittingly because Matthew Murray was a convivial sort, the Trust will have a 'bit of a do' on Sunday June the 21st to name the most modern diesel locomotive in the Trust's collection, Hunslet Engine Co. 6981 of 1968, after Matthew Murray's first steam locomotive. The naming ceremony will be carried out by Lord Faulkner, president of the Heritage Railway Association, and he will be accompanied by the Lord Mayor of Leeds, Baroness Blake of Leeds, Anthony Coulls, (Senior Curator of Rail Transport & Technology at the National Railway Museum), John

McGoldrick (newly retired Curator of Industrial History Leeds Museums and Galleries) and other dignitaries from the political life of Leeds and the heritage railway community. An event like this could not pass without a guard of honour for the guests and this will be provided by re-enactors dressed in the Napoleonic era uniform of His Majesty's 33rd Regiment of Foot – a Yorkshire regiment. The re-enactors will also put on displays of armour handling and period crafts such as spinning. June the 21st will also see the first public appearance of HE 6981 since overhaul and repainting in 'as built' livery so this promises to be a very special day in the Railway's history. Details of this event will be provided on the Trust's website and hopefully many 'Old Run' readers will take this opportunity to pay their respects to the great man.



Capitalising on its history is one way in which the Middleton Railway can increase its resilience. The Railway lies in the heart of a community of over 2 million people and by revealing its history in an engaging and informative manner and linking this to the experience of travelling in 19th Century style coaches behind a veteran steam or diesel locomotive the Trust offers an affordable half day's entertainment even in these difficult times.

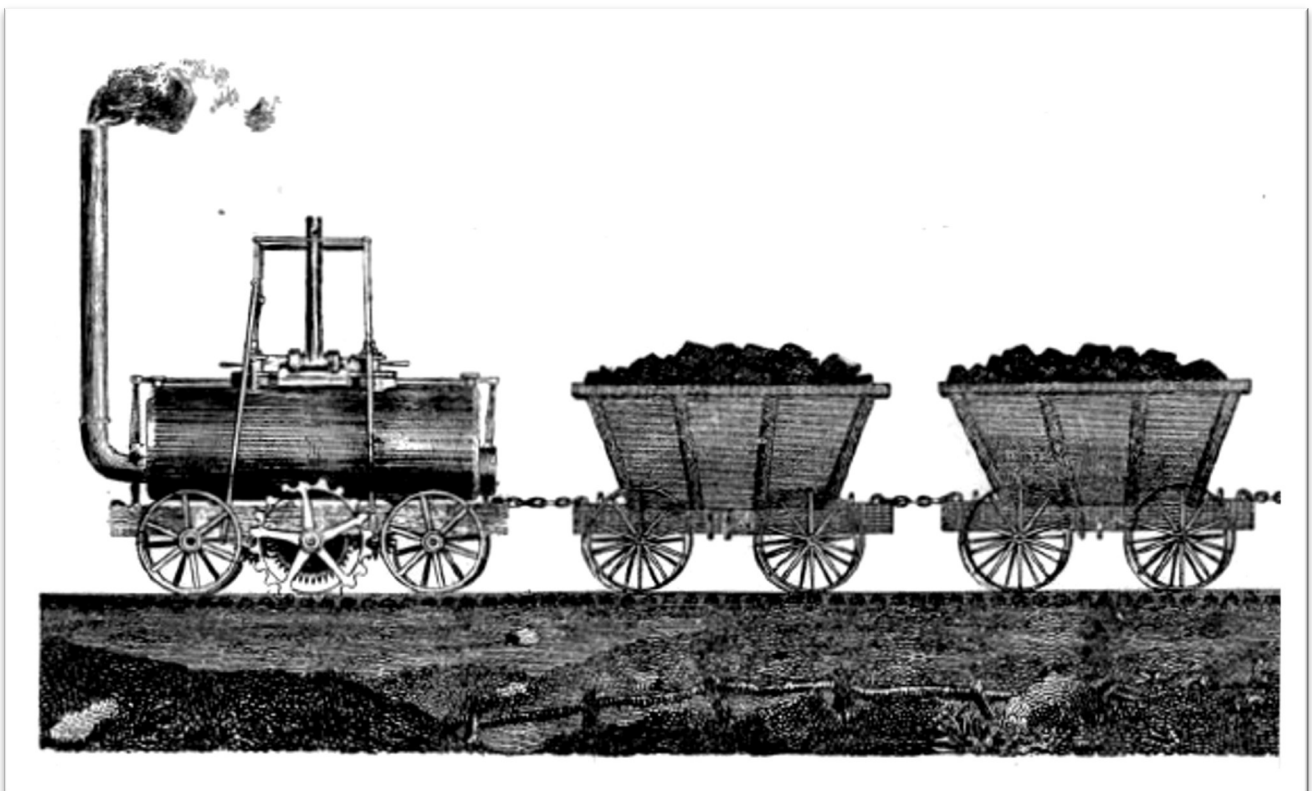
Resilience and adaptability also mean changing to meet changing realities. The cost pressures on many families can only increase as a result of the War in the

Middle East and the Railway cannot assume that charges can be increased every year without making a visit to the Railway less affordable to more and more potential visitors. Squaring this circle dictates that the Railway constantly has to achieve better value from its expenditure and minimise waste. Over the last few years, the Treasurer has done a lot of work to reduce cost of insurance (without compromising cover) cost of utilities and cost of financial audit whilst also prudently investing funds earmarked for future projects thus protecting their value – changes which would not have been made in more comfortable times.

Included in these changing realities is concern for the environment. Numerous surveys indicate that a majority of the British Public are concerned about the future they will bequeath to their children and are not comfortable with the 'Drill Baby Drill' sloganizing of the 'Big Oil' lobby. It is notable that in the last few years the Trust has failed to get Leeds University Business School students engaged in Trust projects because they perceive the Middleton Railway as celebrating the burning of fossil fuels without thought to the consequences. Perhaps a small sample but a warning about future trends the Trust should not ignore. Attracting visitors in the future may require the Trust to both demonstrate that it is maximising use of energy from renewable resources where possible and provide a robust justification of its continued burning of fossil fuels to provide visitors with a visceral experience - sights, smells, sounds - of the past.

The one certainty in an increasingly turbulent and unstable world is that survival requires constant change. That is something that Matthew Miurrayt who lived through the age of the French Revolution, the Napoleonic Wars and the birth of industrial society would have well understood. So perhaps in celebrating the life of Matthew Murray we are celebrating the life of a man for our own times.

Charles Milner



The People Pages

Issue 268 of The Old Run contained an article regarding Sheila Bye receiving a proof of Volume One of the Middleton Railway History - a book for which Sheila was almost exclusively responsible. Recently Fran, The Almoner, and friends visited Sheila to present her with a copy of the finished book. Tony Cowling has written about his involvement with the process of producing it...

Sheila Bye carried out the research and wrote the full manuscript for Volume One of the Railway's history. My role was simply to prepare her work for publication and ensure it matched the style of Volume Two, which for various reasons had been published first.

This included creating an index, adding brief biographical notes where helpful, and expanding the final section so the story linked smoothly to later events covered in Volume Two. I also selected and standardised the images, improved captions, and sourced a few extra illustrations, particularly historic maps that clarified the route of the 1755 waggonway. An appendix on earlier editions of the history, including a facsimile of the 1958 bicentenary pamphlet, was also added. After a final check at the printers and some small corrections, the finished book was ready.

The real credit belongs to Sheila; my contribution was simply to help present her research clearly and consistently.



Above: Tony Cowling, Colin Bye, Sheila Bye and Fran Bailey present Sheila with her copy of Volume One of the Railway history - still available in the shop...

Left: Sheila enjoys the fruits of her hard work.

Photos: Jenny Cowling

Further proof that The Almoner role is both active and effective came from Vic Johnson...

Dear Editor

I would like to say thank you to the railway for sending me a get well card after my recent total knee replacement.

I am pleased to say everything is going well and hope to be up and running soon.

I would like to like Fran for the work she is doing as Almoner - it is a lovely thing to know that even though I am not an active member now I am not forgotten.

The innovation award from the HRA was well deserved and I think Fran will be a big inspiration to other railways. I wish the railway all the best for this coming year.

Staying on the people theme, Bob Cooper has also been in touch...

I read with interest the obituary for Jim Lodge in the last issue of the Old Run and would like to add how, if you took interest in the jobs he was doing, he was always keen to pass on his knowledge.

I learnt as much from Jim as I did

from my college industrial placements. One particular memory was his designing and manufacturing of an Automatic Pneumatic Brake and Bell System for when the passenger trains were propelled up to Park Halt. I met him a couple of times since he left the railway and he was enjoying a less arduous job repairing Almex ticket machines whilst being able to listen to music on the radio.

Members may also be interested to know that during a retirement holiday to the Southern Hemisphere we were able to call on Malcolm Midgley then Rupert Lodge who both send their best regards to the railway. Thanks to Malcolm and the archive I attach a photo of the Bagnall which includes Jim & myself (*above*).



Mervyn Leah

We are sorry to inform members of the death of Mervyn Leah at the age of 80. Mervyn was an early member who spent his working career with BT. He became Editor of Old Run in the spring of 1971 [Old Run 71] and continued until Spring 1980, with issue number 98.



He moved to the Coventry area with his job and joined the infant Iron Horse Railway Society, that later became the Leighton Buzzard Narrow Gauge Railway, of which he eventually became Chairman for eight years. He was a qualified Guard and would often be found doing that job at the railway until the onset of Parkinsons Disease made it difficult to continue.

Although based in Coventry, Mervyn continued his membership of the MRT and remained interested in what the Trust was doing although he was rarely able to visit Leeds in later years.

We are grateful for his work as Editor and his continued membership and interest over the years and send condolences to his family.

Ian Smith (with thanks to LBNGR for the photograph)



A school party at Middleton Park Halt on Wednesday 22nd April. These visits - part of our Education Programme - are key to engaging our future visitors and telling our story. Do you know any school or have other Group contacts who may be interested in visiting?

Moor Road Happenings

The closed period between New Year and Easter is a time for catch up and to do all the jobs that cannot be done during the running season. Or so it should be. This years closed season has been characterised by a distinct lack of volunteers turning up to help out. The few who have done this week in, week out, know who they are and many thanks for them in so doing. On paper, we have lots of volunteers, probably more than we have ever had but the reality is that we have very few giving the much-needed time to help the Railway to survive.

It had been expected that 2026 would be a year where we had five steam locomotives and five diesel locomotives available to choose from. The reality so far has been that this is very far from the case and, at the time of writing, we only have one operational steam locomotive and two operational diesels. The situation will become more obvious as you read these notes.

Hawthorn Leslie 3860 of 1935 'No.6'

This loco has spent virtually all winter snug in the Running Shed. The only work of note has been the re-packing of the piston and valve glands. It has had a steam test in preparation for the season but has not so far been used. It is currently being prepared for a washout ready for its annual boiler inspection, the first part of which is scheduled for May 5th.



Manning Wardle 1210 of 1891 'Sir Berkeley'

Sir Berkeley has also spent the winter in the Running Shed. The drivers side injector had been booked for not picking up cleanly and wasting a lot of water so it was decided to send it to South Coast Steam to have new cones fitted. This was done and a subsequent steam test was successful.

The Vintage Carriages Trust had been approached by Beamish Museum to hire the loco once again during the

early part of the year. Because our expectations were to have five steam locomotives available this year, we were happy to release the loco for

this purpose and the loco was duly picked up by Martin Soames using his low loader on the 25th March. It was steam tested a few days later but it was found that one of the tubes was leaking badly. This was very much unexpected as the tubes are only 4 years old and it is normal to get a full ten or more years out of them. After some discussion, it was agreed that Beamish would blank off the rogue tube, which they did. The loco was steam tested once more and another tube failed. Obviously, this has caused concern with both us and the VCT, as well as Beamish. The VCT are currently looking at options for a complete re-tube. We don't currently have the resources to do it ourselves in any acceptable time scale and certainly couldn't undertake it unless the loco came back to Moor Road.

Sentinel no. 68153

The Sentinel has generally spent the winter in the workshops during which time a few jobs have been carried out. One of these has been to change the boiler gauge glasses as they tend to thin at the top of the glass over time. In theory that should be an easy job to do and so it is. However, this has not proved to be the case this time. Following changing of the glasses, the loco was stripped and washed out for its annual inspection by the Boiler Inspector on the 19th March. On



putting it into steam for the required hot inspection it was found that the left hand gauge glass was leaking badly and was found to be broken at the top. It proved impractical to replace the glass whilst in steam so the inspection had to be abandoned. The glass was subsequently replaced and another steam test carried out. This also resulted in a similar happening, as was a third attempt. We are at a loss as to why this was happening as nothing has changed that could have caused it. However, in an attempt to overcome the problem we have fitted the gauge glass with new (second hand) nuts and sleeves that we had in our stores. We have also used a softer seal packing and this appears to have been successful for reasons we do not fully understand - or just good luck! The gauge glass fittings are those that came with the loco from B.R. and could really do with replacing. However, as far as we are aware, new traditional fittings cannot be obtained certified for the required 275lbf/in² .

Along with the work on the gauge glasses we have been working on the loco's injectors. These have started to waste quite badly when in operation and this was put down to wear of the cones. Now, back in 1961 when we bought the loco from British Railways, we also purchased a lot of spares from Darlington Works and amongst these were quite a few injector cones, which have sat, unused in our store since then. The left hand injector was removed to fit new cones but when we did this we found that the spares that we had, although similar, were subtly different and wouldn't fit so that idea had to be abandoned. However, in the process of doing this, it was found that the valve that closes off the overflow pipe when the injector is operating did not have the necessary packing in it. This

was replaced and further investigation showed that the other injector similarly lacked the necessary packing so this was also attended to. Whilst doing this work it was discovered that the screw thread of the shut off valve of the injectors which attaches to the steam pipe was in poor condition so this was attended to, which, in the end, involved making a new valve seat, union nut and lock nut. Once all this work was completed another steam test was attempted but this time the blower didn't work so again had to be abandoned as insufficient pressure could be raised. This was traced to the holes in the two blast nozzles being effectively blocked. They are only 1/8" in diameter and there are four to each nozzle. Cleaning them out involved rotating a 3mm drill between the thumb and forefinger to clear away the build up of scale as that was the only practical way of doing it without recourse to dismantling the whole chimney and blast nozzle arrangement. Once this was done and things were put back together yet another steam test was carried out. This time all was successful and we managed to reach full pressure and check the safety valves. The injectors were also tested and found to work well with no wastage of water. All was now set for the Boiler Inspector's visit on April 22nd and we're pleased to say that it passed with no problems.

Hunslet 2387 of 1941 'Brookes no.1'



Brookes has spent most of the winter tucked up in the Engine House but was brought into the Running shed during March to prepare it for the start of the season. The piston and valve glands have been re-packed, an ongoing task with this loco. A steam test before Easter proved to be satisfactory although the fireman's side injector continues to leak steam through the clack valve and shutoff valve. It was

decided to use this loco for the start of the season and, at the time of writing has been used on four days. However, on the 12th April, the fireman reported a significant leak had appeared in the water tank was causing problems. The simple and quick solution was to hammer a wooden plug into the hole, which allowed the loco to complete the day. During the week, the tank was emptied and the area around the hole was cleaned to provide a suitable surface for a coat of Belzona 1111. This is a 2-part repair composite for metal repair and resurfacing based on 100% solids epoxy resin reinforced with silicon steel alloy and is our usual first choice to solve problems like his. The repair has proved to be successful in stopping the leak. Readers of the Old Run will know that we had a similar problem with this water tank last year and both holes are in essentially the same place but on opposite sides of the tank. It is essentially where the strainers that supply the injectors sit. These are of copper and it is likely that we are getting some galvanic action between the steel tank and the copper strainer being in contact and causing the tank to corrode at that point.

The loco is due its annual boiler inspection during June and will shortly be taken out of service to prepare for this.

Hudswell, Clarke 1544 of 1924 'Slough Estates no.3'

Readers with a good memory will remember that the last Old Run said that we had to remove the safety valves to fit the cab. That was not entirely correct; what was removed was the easing lever which protrudes into the cab and enables the crew to ease the valves if they have become stuck for any reason. The Old Run also said that the valves would have to be re-set, which was duly done. However, when the Boiler Inspector came to examine the loco in steam on the 19th March, he was rightly concerned that although starting to blow off at the required pressure, it was possible to beat the safety valves and pressure climbed to 180 lbf/in² with a heavy fire and, as a consequence failed to pass the boiler for service. Later investigation found that, when the easing lever had been refitted to the valves, it had not been seated properly in the front valve and this was causing an uneven loading on the valves. This was subsequently attended to and a further steam test showed that the valves were working satisfactorily



When we test steamed the loco to set the safety valves, there was a small leak of steam coming from under the safety valve bonnet. As all had been fine before we fitted it, there was an assumption that it was coming from the regulator lubricator which could only be fitted once the dome cover was in place. To overcome the problem, the dome cover has been slightly modified to have a larger hole complete with a small slot to enable it to be lifted off without disturbing the lubricator. All now appears to be well and when the Inspector returned to Middleton on the 22nd April all was found to be well so the loco is technically available for service.



*Steam at the safety valves on 5th April.
Photo: Andrew Johnson*

The remaining fittings and pipework have all now been fitted and the loco is essentially complete again. The two missing items are the loco couplings. When it came to us the old three

link couplings had been removed and replaced by some screw couplings from (we understand) a Class 37 diesel locomotive. These were very long and somewhat loose and have been discarded. We are going to replace them with a smaller screw coupling of the type that we have in general use. However, there is a problem with that as the coupling hooks do not have a gedge slot and only a hole. Our solution is to remove the long shackle that fits in the gedge slot and replace it with two links and a pin to go through the hook, an arrangement that is quite common. The new parts have to be made from a particular material and, after taking advice we have opted for S355 steel, which is a 1.5% manganese steel and the equivalent of the old EN14 standard. These are currently being machined out of round bar as this material is generally only available in this section. Once made they will require proof testing to ensure that all is well. If necessary, the loco can be used without these couplings as we generally use the coach couplings on our trains.

A start has been made on making the new timber floor for the footplate. The various pieces for the frame have all been cut but the floor planking remains to be done. The timbers will be treated with two coats of wood preserver before a final coat of stain.

Painting is the last link in the chain and has been progressing, but not without problems. Our painter (Neil) was not happy with the finish obtained with the paint being used and requested a new tin, which was duly procured. However, despite being the same colour specification, there was a slight difference in shade, resulting in more work. Painting started at the bunker to enable lining out to be done as the work progressed. However, the person who was doing this got called into hospital for an awaited operation on his right hand. At the time of writing, his hand is strapped up and he cannot do the lining and lettering and this will have to await his hand recovering before this progresses.

John Fowler 4220033 of 1965 'Harry' (right)

The Clayton Dewandre vacuum exhaustor has been re-assembled and the loco started up but there is still a problem in creating vacuum so further investigation is required.

Peckett 5003 of 1961 'Austins no.1' (below)



Available for service and used as required.

It is in need of new brake blocks. A drawing has been made but the necessary pattern is still to be made. A key was recently broken in the lock and, as this had to be drilled out, this became unusable. However, by



chance, we happened to have a suitable replacement in stock with exactly the same key and this was fitted. Two new internal handles have also been made and fitted, allowing the doors to be closed without the need to lean out of the window to then open them.



**Brush/Beyer Peacock 91 of 1958
'D2999'**

The loco has been used as required over the winter and was used on passenger services on the 11th April. However, it was failed with a suspected hot box prior to the last train. Investigation found there were no problems with the lubrication and no indication that there had been one. It was used for shunting on the Friday before the Community Day and gave no

problem so it was decided to use it on the passenger service and keep a good eye on it. The first couple of trips went without incident, but the sanding valve was accidentally operated and this stuck in the open position, resulting in a loss of air. The crew managed to get the train back to Moor Road but the loco was a failure and MDHB 45 had to take over. The problem still awaits investigation. This loco is also in need of new brake blocks.

**Hudswell, Clarke D1373 of 1965
'MD&HB No.45' (Right)**

Currently available for traffic and is the usual choice for the passenger service.



**Hunslet 6981 of 1968
'Salamanca' (left)**



The loco had its diesel tank emptied, as prophesied in the last Old Run. This enabled the tank gauge to be removed for repair although the gauge has yet to be replaced. Pioneer Diesels came to site during March and started work on

the locos repaint. They have generally only been working on a Wednesday to suit our needs for people to be present to open up and liaise with them. At the time of writing, most of the painting has been done with only the black to be applied. This leaves the wheels and running plate to do. Once the painting is complete the loco will be shunted onto the workshop's through road to enable the electrics to be installed and any other work to be completed.



Hunslet 1786 of 1935 'Courage' (left)

Currently on display in the Engine House but remains available, if required.

LMS 7051 'John Alcock'

Currently not serviceable due to several of the head gaskets leaking and it has simply been on display in the Engine House. However a new volunteer with an interest in old diesel engines offered to look at the problem with the cylinders and leaking head gaskets. At the moment the number six cylinder head has been removed, revealing a damaged head gasket which requires replacement. A sample has been taken to Dobson Gaskets in Keighley so that we can have new ones made. Whether all six gaskets need to be replaced remains to be seen.



7051 awaiting assessment by our diesel experts on Sunday 19th April. Photo: Ian Smith

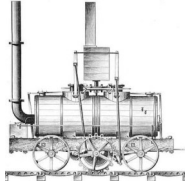


Hudswell, Clarke D577 of 1932 'Mary'

Like LMS 7051, this locomotive is on display in the Engine House awaiting shed space and time for the repairs to the cooling system. It is hoped that the shed space can be found in the next week or so.

Hudswell, Clarke D631 of 1946 'Carroll' (right)

Currently on display in the Engine House. No time has been found to investigate the problem with the gearbox.



Carriage and Wagon Notes

Coaches 1074, 2084 and 2223 are currently available for service. All our coaches have now been fitted with an alarm system that will alert the guard in an emergency. The system has been installed to comply with clause 4 of the Railway Safety (Miscellaneous Provisions) Regulations 1997 which states:

“The operator of a vehicle which is being used for the carriage of fare paying passengers shall ensure that there is provided and maintained on such a vehicle suitable and sufficient means whereby passengers can communicate with a person who is in a position to take appropriate action in the event of an emergency.”



*Charles Milner at work on coach
1867 on 11th March*

We had an exemption from this regulation but it was only for two coaches, which was all we had back in 1997. When we asked for the exemption to be increased to three coaches the ORR weren't keen and suggested that a member of staff riding in the third coach would effectively comply with the regulation. This was tried but it was a waste of a volunteer, not to mention boring for that person so was only used on the odd occasion when we actually needed three coaches and we reverted to two coaches for normal use. It is mostly

required when we have a birthday party and the balcony brake (No.2084) is in use as that vehicle does not have disabled access

The system installed is not a version of the chain alarm system found on Mark 1 and earlier coaches which applies the brake but is electronic with push buttons in each coach sounding an alarm which the guard can then react to.

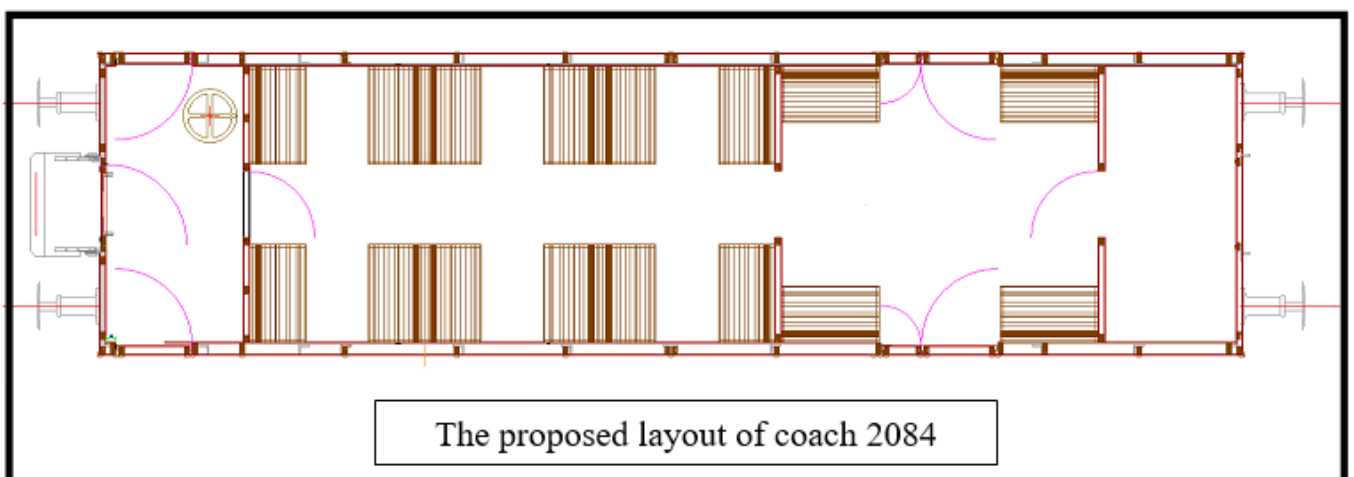
Coach 1867

Our expectations that the coach would be finished by the start of the running season have not been fulfilled. However, it is now close to being finished with the whole of the coach body now in undercoat and almost ready for application of the top coat with just a bit of rubbing down to do to get rid of any paint runs or other imperfections. It probably needs about four man days of work to finish, but these days need to be by people who can paint without creating brush marks, runs or getting paint on other surfaces!. That's something we (sadly) seem to be very good at.



Coach 2084

Once coach 1867 is finished it is planned that this coach will come into the workshops for a major rebuild. This coach was built over forty years ago and has stood the test of time. It was built 'on the cheap' often using second hand timber that we had to hand for the framing and cheap plywood for the panelling. Over the years, much has been replaced but quite a bit still remains, especially on the east side which isn't subject to the prevailing weather. As mentioned above, this coach does not have disabled access which can present problems if it is in use on two coach trains. Council have now agreed to a basic plan for its rebuild. The balcony will be retained as it is very popular with our visitors. However, in order to include the disabled access and not reduce its seating capacity the balcony will not be as spacious as the present one.



Around and about

Water Tank

As mentioned in the last Old Run, the water tank was craned down from its supports for a repaint during January. It was moved into the workshops to enable this to happen. Initially, we started sanding down the paint but the red dust from this got everywhere and we decided to use a needle gun instead. In hindsight, this was probably for the best as the needle gun soon created some large holes in the steel platework where it had become very thin and this probably wouldn't have happened using a sander. There were two main areas, one each at the bottom of either end of the tank where it was obvious that it had once rested on the timber supports of the wagon when in service. There was no choice but to cut out these badly corroded areas. The original thickness had been 3/8" but one piece cut out was so thin that you could flex it simply using your hands. We initially thought that we may need a completely new tank, which was costed at £8,500, but, as we cut out the bad metal it became clear that the corrosion was relatively localised and the bulk of the tank was fit for further service.

Cutting out the corroded steel did have the advantage of making access very much simpler. The inside of the tank was cleared of all the accumulation of sludge then needle-gunned prior to the two new patches being welded in. Once this was done, to doubly ensure that the welded seams were water tight, they were then given a coat of Belzona 1111. There was one other small area where a hole was found and that was where a patch had previously been fitted to cover a disused outlet on the side. The patch was removed and a new patch inserted into the opening and welded up. Finally, the inside was given a coat of rust converter before finishing off with coats of paint. Hopefully this will keep internal corrosion at bay for a while longer.

Externally the tank was given a coat of red oxide primer followed by a coat of our standard maroon – actually RAL 3004 Purple Red. Once all this was done the tank was lifted back into place with the crane on the 11th March. Unlike lifting the tank down, doing this was not a five-minute job as the tank had to be positioned exactly to align with the flange of the existing outlet pipe so there was no room for error.



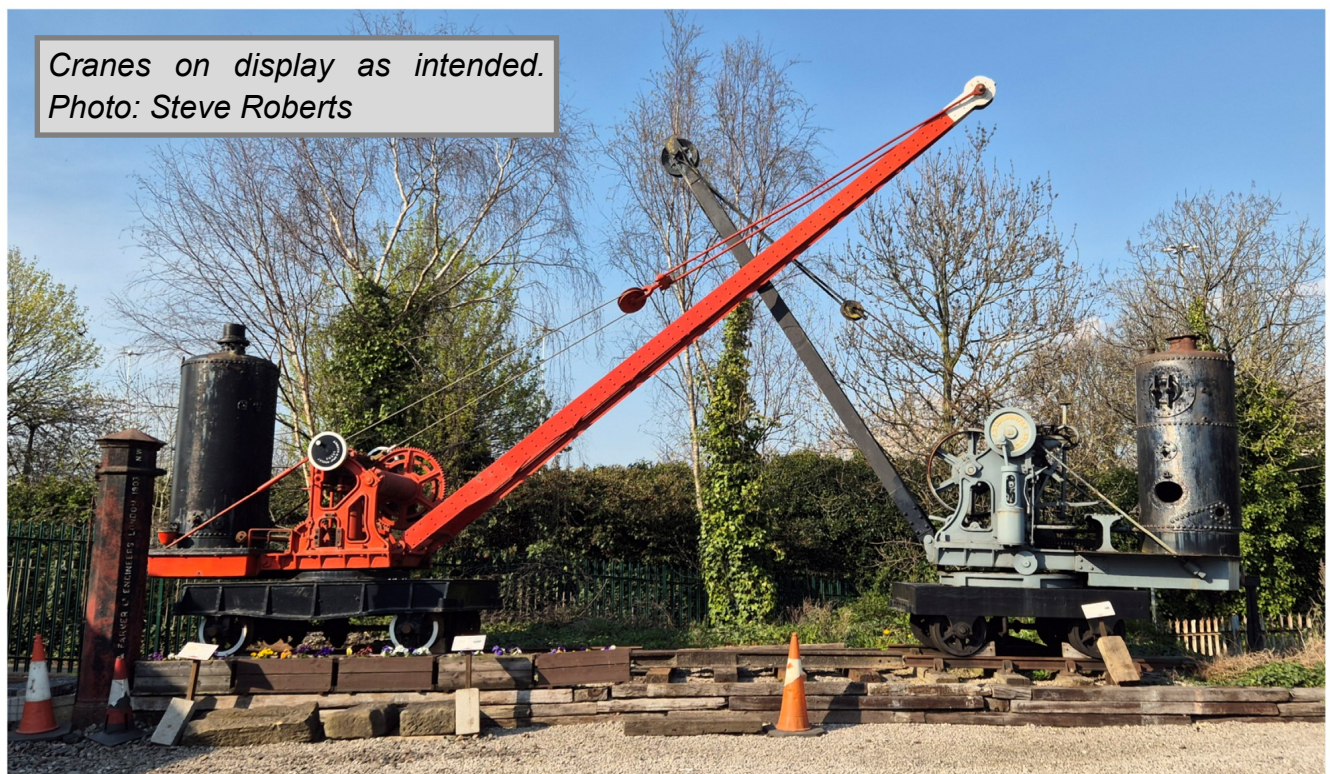
As well as the repairs to the tank, it was necessary to replace a length of 2" pipe that was corroded through. This pipe feeds the loco tank water supply adjacent to the ashpit and also the boiler washing out pump.

Boiler Inspections

We normally like to do our annual boiler inspections during the closed season as this means that our locos are all available for the start of the season. However, because the water tank has not been available, we have not been able to wash out the boilers, something fundamentally necessary as part of the inspection process. In theory, this shouldn't have been a problem as the boiler certificates for MW1210 and HL3860 run out in May and those for 68153 and HE2387 in June and we also expected to have the services of HC1544 by Easter or just after. This would have given us at least two locos at all times and three for most of the time. Unfortunately, this has not been the case. Stripping and preparing a loco for a boiler examination is not a five-minute affair, nor is putting it back together afterwards. Added to this, the Boiler Inspector is not readily available due to commitments elsewhere. We have had to plan this well in advance as a result. Currently the inspector is coming to do a cold exam on HL3860 on the 5th May. We then have eight days to put it back together again and test steam it before he returns on the 13th May. Once this has been successfully achieved we can stop HE2387 and prepare that for a cold exam, which is scheduled for 21st May and the hot exam on the 3rd June. All in all, this leaves little time for rectification of any problems found during the inspection or with the in-house steam test that we conduct to make sure all is well.

Booth Steam Crane

When, back at the beginning of 2017, we craned the Booth and Isles cranes into their current resting place at the end of the car park, the Booth crane was without its jib. The intention was to fit this shortly afterwards. For various reasons, this didn't happen. Prime amongst these was the fact that a



fundamental mistake was made when the plans for display were made and not realised until the cranes were dropped in place. The intention was that the two cranes would face each other with the Booth crane being slightly north of the Isles crane and the two jibs would be arranged so that they effectively crossed each other. However, what had not been taken into account was the fact that the jib on the Isles crane was at an angle to the track that it was sat on and effectively occupied the space that the Booth crane jib should have occupied. Attempts to straighten the Isles crane came to nothing when it was found that it wouldn't move easily and the frame was also cracked so any undue force would probably destroy it. Short of hiring in another large crane and re-positioning them, the only real solution was to move both cranes by jacking the two tracks to new positions with the cranes still on them. The tracks were eventually moved sufficiently to do this but then the project stalled as there was always much more to do. Recently, it was decided that the remains of the tram crossing that we have should be put on display between the two cranes. This required the Booth crane to be moved further west and, to do this, it was thought the easiest way to do it was to lay some additional sleepers and jack up one side of the crane at a time and replace the existing short rail with a longer one. This was relatively easily achieved and the crane moved to its new position.

Once these preparatory works had been done, it was a relatively easy task to pick up the crane's jib and attach it to its carriage. A new jib rope was attached and secured after which the jib was carefully lowered until the jib rope was taking the load. The two jibs now cross each other, as originally intended.

Break ins

This is something that we don't like talking about but we have suffered these twice in the last month. On the first occasion, which we think happened overnight

*Picton Shelter 22nd April.
Photo: Steve Roberts*



on the 10-11th April, the culprits managed to force open the emergency exit door at the north end of the workshops. However, there was no sign of them actually entering the building and we are surmising that they left due to the alarm going off. Repairs took most of the Saturday to effect, which is not the best use of our volunteer labour

The second break in took place overnight on the 21st-22nd April and this time the target was the Picton shelter. It appears that they tried to gain entry by forcing the corner flashing away from the cladding on the south west corner of the building. However, there was quite a bit of equipment stacked in this corner on the inside and they don't appear to

have used this to gain entry. Instead, they turned their attention to the emergency exit at the north end of the building and managed to smash the lock

away from the door. They appear to have taken a tool box that was in the mini-digger and the log-splitter that we use to split large pieces of timber for use when lighting up locos..

The mode of entry into the site was the same in both cases with the palings of the site fence being forced of the horizontal rail at the bottom. The place where entry took place and where they attempted to enter the buildings are all in areas where there is no CCTV coverage. As a result, we are urgently re-assessing our CCTV coverage and PIR activated lighting to better cover these blind spots. More work for our small team!

Besides these two acts, we have also had some vandalism to the footpath crossing where the timber between the rails was ripped up and carried away. This obviously proved too heavy for those involved as it was abandoned about 20 yards away. We were able to recover this and rebuild it all so it is just time and effort that we have lost.

Steve Roberts

A more constructive use of volunteer time was in early March when a new Foundation Block - or 'Horse' was cast for the Loop Points at Moor Road. That's the concrete pad next to the fence that the point rodding compensators are on. A job that is essential to keep the service running - but will be unnoticed by many. Photo: Tony Cowling



New Volunteer Needed: Financial Comptroller

There is grant funding available which would help further the Trust's long-term ambitions. Seeking out this funding and then carrying out the work to see if the grant funder's objectives match what the Trust is planning to do to maximise the chance of a successful application for funding takes time.

Similarly, there are opportunities to reduce Trust costs by better purchasing of bought in services and by improving control of utilities usage and investing in batteries to enable best use to be made of the output from the Trust's solar panels and off-peak electricity. Converting these opportunities to realities also takes time.

The Trust's Treasurer does not have enough time to take on this vital long-term work whilst still looking after the day-to-day financial affairs of the Trust.

It would greatly help the Treasurer in the short term if he were to have a deputy, a Financial Comptroller, who would specifically look after some of the day-to-day financial matters so that he could spend more time on long-term projects.

Looking forward, the occupant of this role would be in prime position to become the future Treasurer of the Trust – one of the most important roles in the Trust.

Specific responsibilities of the Financial Comptroller include:

- Maintaining and reconciling the Shop/Café cash float.
- Banking cash
- Entering invoices onto accounting system - including coding to department
- Preparing lists of creditors for payment.

Delivery of this role means coming down to Moor Road at least once a fortnight during the operating season; other work can be done from home. If any reader would like to take on this vital role please contact the Treasurer at treasurer@middletonrailway.org.uk and arrange to talk through the role with him



Kingy the Lion (Mascot of Hunslet RLFC) certainly enjoyed himself at the recent Community Day - as did many other local groups. Hopefully links were forged with pride by all the participants. That's the mane reason for holding the event...

Photo: Anthony Dawson

Letters to The Editor

Just the one this issue, but it's nice to be appreciated - especially by Graham Findley, a former Old Run Editor no less..

I enjoyed reading the Winter 2026 Old Run; I was in the happy position of being able to read it from cover to cover in the bath whilst on holiday in Falmouth! That's a great image on the back cover, in fact, lots of images throughout. I also thought the bigger font size is easier to read, and of course, that means you don't have to have quite so much copy!

I've long thought that the inside back cover needs sorting out - it's been like that for many many years and I think it's largely redundant. Half a page is all that's needed to publish the names of the principal characters, but all those email addresses can go!

Maybe just run the copy over from the previous page? Or have a new feature, based on the "And Finally" idea, such as a cartoon. I'm sure Richard Stead has the ability to produce four cartoons a year - there are lots of ideas on the internet.....

Thanks for the magazine!

Some interesting thoughts and suggestions from Graham, although I don't really want to start a "where do you read yours?" feature if Graham is typical. Ultimately, the magazine is only ever as good as the content an Editor receives, all contributions are welcome. Personally I have no strong feelings either way about the 'officers' page - what do others think?

Shop Notes

The main item of interest on the shop side is that Penny our story-teller and children's entertainer has inaugurated her Creation Station in the cafe area. She has been and will be engaging with the under-35s with puzzles, games and crafts. On Community Day, for instance, she hid little paper rabbits in the locos in the display hall for the youngsters to find.

The next dates for Creation Stations are 14th/15th May (Train Robberies), 13th/14th June (Green Christmas) and 18th/19th July (Picnics). See the Railway Website for further details - they are ideal for families with arts and crafts activities - please tell your family and friends!

Richard Stead



Cyril Street on tour

Like many others at the Railway I wear more than one hat and in addition to putting together this magazine I am also mostly responsible for the Model Railway Exhibition. When John Taylor, one of last years exhibitors and avid Old Run reader, offered to write an article about his experiences I gladly accepted. Thanks to John and all the other Exhibitors for their efforts...

A brief ramble on travelling with a vintage Hornby Dublo 3-rail train set.

All being well we have been given a few months notice of the forthcoming show and it's hopefully dog friendly or we can kennel the hound in a timely manner. Then we relax and then go into denial about the deadline (everything is fine, what could possibly go wrong?) About a fortnight before the show reality kicks in and a list is prepared, covering in no particular order:

- 1) unfinished jobs
- 2) minor scenic tidying
- 3) pack the on the road tools and spare pieces of track (no use going to a trader for a long obsolete 3-rail point on the day)
- 4) start sorting stock out, checking for indifferent running, bent couplings, coupling heights and any other niggles.
- 5) before strip down have one last running session *(then restart list at point 1 - Editor)*

When the layout is stripped down, it's carefully laid out in sequence of loading (very important this). Loading is carried out in a relaxed manner in conjunction with tea - and on no account profanity or harsh words.

After a last check round and we've got EVERYTHING, it's off to the venue. Cyril Street takes about three hours to erect and place stock, so it can be a long day. Come show time, hopefully the layout is where we left it, and all that remains is to plug it in and play trains for a couple of days.

Then Sunday evening arrives and a more hurried reversal of all the above takes place because some impatient soul wants to fill our nice exhibition hall with his poxy full size trains. *(Mea Culpa - Editor, although it's only because I want get home too after three 10 hour (minimum) days..)*

John Taylor





New or returning for 2026

*Seen at Moor Road on 25th April 6981 'Salamanca' is at an advanced state of painting.
(Photo: IRD)*



*'Slough Estates no.3' passes a boiler test after overhaul.
22nd April (Photo: Ian Smith)*

That AsdaTram

One thing I have discovered whilst editing The Old Run is that there is a huge pool of knowledge for the history of the Railway and its surroundings. It is very good to document this knowledge whilst it is available. If you can cast your mind back to the tram featured on page 26 of the last issue...

The previous issue of the Old Run included a display board that had been observed in the local Asda, and which included a picture captioned "Leeds Tram No. 161 at Middleton Colliery circa 1959", to which the reaction had been "Where's the colliery?". This was a perfectly reasonable question, since the picture did not show either the Middleton Railway or Broom Pit, but there is actually a good answer, which these pictures (which were all originally posted on Flickr, in a pool entitled "leedscitytransport") will illustrate.

The first picture (below) was posted by a user called jsb303. It shows the same stop on the tram line as the Asda picture, and the same kind of tram (a 'Horsfield' car): indeed, it may even have been taken by the same photographer. The vantage point for both was obviously the bridge (known as Parkside Bridge)



which carried the BR branch line (built originally by the Great Northern Railway) from Beeston Junction to the Goods Depot known as East Hunslet. This bridge ran roughly south-west to north-east, and in the Asda picture the camera was pointing almost south, towards Broom Pit. In this picture the photographer has moved a bit further west along the bridge, and the camera is now pointing in a more easterly direction.

The second picture (below) was posted originally by a user called John Law, and is taken from the tram stop itself, looking northwards. It shows four of the spans of the bridge, being approached by a northbound Horsfield tram.



The third picture (below) was posted by a user called I.K.Brunel (*Not that one presumably - Editor*). It is taken from a bit further south, looking in a

north-easterly direction. As well as the 'Feltham' tram heading south, having come under Parkside Bridge, it also shows the eastern span of the main Parkside Bridge, and then (about 100 yards further along to the north-east) the two-span bridge (which was also known as Parkside Bridge) that carried this branch line over the Middleton

Railway. This was at a point that would now be a couple of hundred yards north of the modern road bridge which carries the road called 'John Charles Approach' over our railway.

Just behind the tram is part of the footbridge (known as the



'Cuckoo Steps') which crossed the branch and the exchange sidings for the Middleton Railway. The other significant feature in it, though, is the colliery headgear that is visible to the right of the tram. This headgear was for New Pit, which had been sunk in 1868, along with Broom Pit, as part of the expansion of the Middleton Colliery that followed its purchase in 1865 by Francis William Tetley. By the time of this picture, the shaft was only in use for ventilation. Even so, it is the existence of this headgear that justifies the caption to the Asda picture describing the scene as being "...at Middleton Colliery", even though Broom Pit (by this time the main site) was another half-mile or so further south.

Tony Cowling

Train ash used to seal leaky canal lock gates

There's nowt new under the sun. Nice to see the Railway taking part in this scheme. Ironical that our ash ends up at Dobson Lock (no relation - but just down the hill from your Editor)! I'm also recycling this story from the BBC & CRT...

A centuries-old method of sealing gaps in lock gates lives on across West Yorkshire thanks to a partnership with heritage steam railways. "Ashing up" dates back to the 19th Century when heavy boat traffic meant water was often in short supply. Lock keepers would float coal ash, from nearby steam railways, on the water's surface overnight which would then be drawn into gaps in the gates and form a bung.

The Canal & River Trust (CRT) is working with the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway, Embsay & Bolton Abbey Railway, and most recently the Middleton Railway in Leeds to use their ash.

Darren Trolley, the CRT's team leader in Yorkshire & the North East, has decades of experience using the technique along the Leeds & Liverpool Canal. He said: "The process of ashing up is a simple, cost-effective solution that reuses a byproduct of the heritage railways. "We pour a small amount of ash into the canal just above a lock, and the flow of water draws it into the gaps in the gates, forming a completely watertight seal.

"It's amazing to see this technique in action and to think it's still being used centuries later." Over the years, rubber and polymer sealants, soaked sawdust, wood chips and even natural clay have all been tested. But the CRT said none matched the effectiveness of railway ash in creating a reliable, watertight seal.

Tom Jefferys is a waterways operative for the trust based at Dobson Locks in Apperley Bridge where the ash is stored. He said, "Apparently the way they found out... lock keepers, back in the day, when they had their coal fires they just dumped it out and they realised it was sealing the gates. "Whether or not that is true, I don't know, but somebody discovered it." "We go and collect it from the heritage steam railways now. It's a by-product for them, but we can use it and it's brilliant."

Ian Smith, vice-president of Middleton Railway, said "This really is a win-win for ourselves and the Canal & River Trust. "We have a responsible way of disposing of our ash, and the trust can use it to repair locks and keep another heritage operation running for many people to enjoy." Trolley said: "Sometimes the old ways really are the best when it comes to working on the canals and it's great to see Yorkshire's heritage railways and canals supporting each other."



And finally - the bits that won't go anywhere else...

Firstly, an offer from Artist in Residence Richard Stead - he has a British Rail Guard's jacket, medium size, grey in colour. It can be collected from Richard at Moor Road. "Free to a good home" he says.



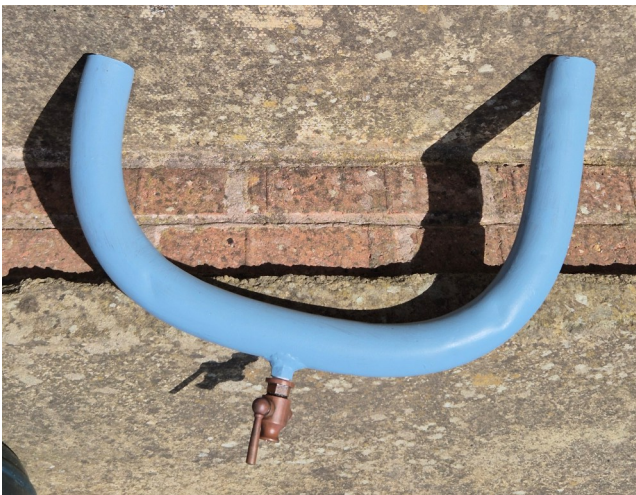
Next, you may remember our former Traffic Manager Andy Hardy who left us to go and work for the KESR (which is apparently somewhere South of Northampton). He is now the UK Manager of model manufacturer Rapido Trains UK who are making quite a name for themselves in the Model Railway Market. Andy clearly hasn't forgotten his

Middleton roots, if the photo he sent me recently is anything to go by. It features 1310, Matthew Murray and Sir Berkeley, all as seen at Moor Road. They really need some coaches to haul though - four wheel former PMVs perhaps?

Staying on the modelling theme, we have commissioned UK Manufacturer Peco to produce a limited run of OO-9 scale narrow gauge wagons. These have recently been delivered and are selling well at £25 each. There are two



running numbers available, 1879 and 1968 the opening and closing years of the Colliery. There may not be many left by the time this magazine reaches you, but we might order more if you ask nicely.



And lastly, to those who ask when Olive the Railbus will run again I can tell you that an overhaul of bits of the engine cooling system is underway in my garage and whilst it's not driven me completely round the bend, at least it now has a new brass drain tap fitted...

Ian Dobson

The Middleton Railway Trust Limited

(Limited by Guarantee and not having a share capital)

Registered Office: The Station, Moor Road, Leeds LS10 2JQ

Registered Company No. 1165589 Registered Charity No. 230387

Accredited Museum No RD2114

Telephone 0113 271 0320 (Office) & 0113 270 6162 (Workshop)

Email: info@middletonrailway.org.uk Website: www.middletonrailway.org.uk

President: Rt. Hon. Hilary Benn, MP

Vice Presidents: Ian B Smith, Don Townsley

Chairman: Charles Milner, email: chairman@middletonrailway.org.uk

Secretary: John Holmes, email: secretary@middletonrailway.org.uk

Treasurer: Philip Calvert, email: treasurer@middletonrailway.org.uk

Council Members

Janet Auckland, Matt Berry, Geordie Brown, Mark Calvert, David Hebden,
Andrew Johnson, Mel Jones, Richard Pike, Steve Roberts

Other Officers

Sheila Bye, Honorary Archivist, Sue Gill, Membership Secretary

Membership Subscription Rates from 1st January 2026

Adult Membership (FT).....£30.00

Junior Membership (of MRA).....£16.00

Family Associates of Trust Members (in same household)..... £8.00 per person

Life Membership (LT).....£600.00

Useful Email Addresses

Administration (Chairman/Secretary)	admin@middletonrailway.org.uk
Almoner	almoner@middletonrailway.org.uk
Commercial	commercial@middletonrailway.org.uk
Education (Schools programme)	education@middletonrailway.org.uk
Engineering (Mechanical Engineer)	engineer@middletonrailway.org.uk
Finance (Treasurer)	treasurer@middletonrailway.org.uk
General Enquiries	info@middletonrailway.org.uk
Medical Officer	medicalofficer@middletonrailway.org.uk
Membership Secretary	membership@middletonrailway.org.uk
Model Railway Exhibition Manager	middletonmre@middletonrailway.org.uk
Museum Manager	museum@middletonrailway.org.uk
Old Run Editor	oldrun@middletonrailway.org.uk
Safeguarding Officer	safeguarding@middletonrailway.org.uk
Safety, Health & Environment Manager	she@middletonrailway.org.uk
Staff Rosters (Roster Clerk)	roster@middletonrailway.org.uk
Traffic Manager	trafficmanager@middletonrailway.org.uk
Turnout (Working Members Newsletter)	turnout@middletonrailway.org.uk
Volunteer Liaison Officers	volunteering@middletonrailway.org.uk
Young Volunteers	youth@middletonrailway.org.uk

