

THE OLD RUN

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Years of Train Travel
Since 1825



The Old Run

No. 265 Winter 2025

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

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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, post, CD or USB stick

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Editorial



Thanks for the mostly complimentary comments about the last issue—my first as Editor. It makes the effort very worthwhile knowing that it is appreciated. I also hope that I have addressed the few issues that were pointed out this time.

It's fair to say that the Editor's role is relatively straightforward as long as the content is received on time and there's plenty of it. Well, I'm pleased to say that most of what I have received for this issue has been submitted on time. It is also good to note that amongst all the busyness that the Santa season brings, some new people have taken the time and trouble to submit items and photographs. Thank you all!

A lot of the magazine is current news from the Railway itself in one form or another but it would be good to read of either tales from earlier times or of other Leeds related items. It's a sad fact that those who can remember the very earliest times at Moor Road and Dartmouth Yard are getting fewer with each passing year. Could you share your memories with the current membership, to whom the Engine House, Running Shed and carriage shed (luxuries!) are the norm?

This issue contains quite a lot of Santa content, this may be because it's a key part of the railway's year, and certainly the most financially beneficial, but hopefully it also shows the way in which a relatively small bunch of people come together to deliver an experience that delights our many visitors. Please consider helping next season, whether for Santa or at other times—it's really rewarding!

Ian Dobson

Front cover: Local Councillor Paul Wray sounds Sir Berkeley's whistle at Moor Road on 1st January 2025 to celebrate the start of 'Rail 200', which marks 200 years of the modern railway. (Photo: IRD)

Back cover: Same time next year, Santa? Taking a break with Brookes no.1 at Moor Road on one of our very popular services in December (Photo: Ross Needham)

Whistle Up success

Wednesday 1st January proved to be a very successful day for the railway. Our “Mince Pie Specials” were hauled by the VCT’s “Sir Berkeley” which has become something of a tradition whenever the locomotive has been in service. Our crews are a hardy lot and like to brave the chilly temperatures! Driver Mark Calvert and Fireman Joel Leverton had done a great job cleaning the engine, aided by cleaner Theo Rickerby and the engine was much admired by our many visitors on the day.

This year saw something unusual – a “Whistle up”. This is a railway tradition dating back over 100 years, used to celebrate something both unusual and worthy. In this case it was to celebrate the 200th anniversary of the opening of the Stockton & Darlington Railway back in 1825 and to herald the start of a year of celebrations. Now, Middleton is somewhat older and of course our steam locomotives, designed by John Blenkinsop and Matthew Murray, very much influenced Mr Stephenson and in recognition of this fact, the loco crew displayed our “Middleton 250” headboard to emphasise our seniority!

Local councillor Paul Wray was invited to blow the whistle at 12 noon, following a very short speech outlining why we were doing this and also Middleton’s contribution to the development of the S&D. Following the initial “Whistle up”, Diesel MD&HB No 45 exchanged a whistle/horn salute as Sir B left for Middleton Park with Cllr Wray on the footplate. The event was covered by South Leeds Life, and ITV Yorkshire included film taken by Andrew Gill on its website. Both Heritage Railway and Railway Magazine had representatives present so we will appear in those magazines in due course. The Railway 200 organisation also has copies of these films and they were very impressed since the Middleton Railway was one of a very few to actually introduce the event and put it into context. So, a highly successful introduction to 2025 and we hope our other “Railway 200” events will be just as good!

Ian Smith



*Later on 1st January Sir Berkeley approaches Park Halt with a Mince Pie Special service.
Photo: Ryan Milne*

From the Chairman

First, I will start by wishing all members of the Middleton Railway Trust the very best possible 2025.

2024 ended on a very positive note. The Railway enjoyed another successful Santa Special Season which attracted a lot of very positive comments from our visitors. The trial of a children's entertainer on the alternate coach to the one in which Santa was distributing presents worked very well and we plan to make it a feature of the 2025 Santa Specials. The year also saw some new Santas joining the ranks of volunteers willing to take on this critical role – one of whom was a bit shocked to suddenly find himself thrust into the role but found it surprisingly enjoyable – which bodes well for the future. What the Middleton railway offers at Christmas is not a carefully choreographed Hollywood production number but a traditional family centred experience; a “Reet Yorkshire Christmas” with all that that implies.



I write this, or something similar, every year but it remains a truth which should never be forgotten. Santa Specials only happen because a small number of volunteers put in a huge amount of work organizing and preparing for them - selecting and buying presents, developing train crew and shop/café rosters, provisioning the café and shop, preparing traffic notices etc., etc. These are tasks best done by small disciplined groups but help from those willing to work within such groups is always welcome.

A huge vote of thanks goes to all those volunteers who ‘went above and beyond’ to make

Santa's Grotto in the Engine House is a highlight of the Santa Experience.



the 2024 Santa Specials such an enjoyable experience for all the visitors who rode on them. This includes not just those who worked ‘front of house’ in the cafe and shop, in the trains and on the platform but also those who worked behind the scenes to provide and keep the trains running, provide a safe track on which the trains could run, and put up and take down decorations, clear away the rubbish and the myriad of other tasks without which the Santa Specials could not happen.

With Christmas 2024 now part of our past we can look forward to the 2025 season. This will see a mixture of new events including a re-vamped Children's Day and the return of Star Rails, Classic Car Sunday and ‘A Taste of Yorkshire’ after their successful relaunches/

launches in 2024. Also included are well established favourites including the Model Railway Exhibition, Steam Punk Market and our Community Day.

The 2025 season will also see a number of events which link into 'Railway 200', the national celebration of the 200th anniversary of the opening of the Stockton & Darlington Railway. Currently the Trust is working on a series of events which will focus on the pivotal role played by the Middleton Railway in the run up to the construction of the Stockton & Darlington Railway. These will focus on two aspects of the history of our Railway. First is the precedent created by the Railway's 1758 Act of Parliament which simplified and made much more certain the process of securing a right of way than having to negotiate wayleaves with each landowner whose land lay in the path of a new railway. Second is the proving in 1812 that steam traction could be used successfully and reliably to power a railway, coupled with the very significant advances in steam locomotive design introduced by the locomotives designed for the Middleton Railway by Matthew Murray and which were adopted by George Stephenson and others. Planned events include a series of evening talks about the Railway and its history supported by a buffet and a train ride together with a gala event at the start of September focussed, if sponsorship can be organised, on the contribution made by the Railway to the development of the steam locomotive. One event has already taken place, 'Whistle Up' which occurred on 1st January 2025 and helped launch 'Railway 200'. Unlike similar events on other heritage railways, ours involved the press and was introduced by a short talk highlighting the importance of the opening of the Stockton & Darlington Railway and Middleton Railway's role in that event, which generated some useful publicity .

One event is already fixed in the calendar. This is the relaunch of 'Courage' in its 90th year restored as far as is practical to its 'as built' condition. This is scheduled for 19th July 2025. The overhaul and restoration of this locomotive is very much the project of Geordie Brown, one of the Trust's younger volunteers. It arises from Geordie's carefully researched history of the locomotive. The relaunch is planned to feature Brake Van Rides behind 'Courage' with 'John Alcock' handling the service trains - the two oldest Hunslet built diesels working together.

For details of the 'Railway 200' and other events please look at the Trust's website and Social Media pages.

In addition to the above, 2025 should see the completion of our fourth coach, 2223, and the return to service of 'Slough Estates No.3' – looking better and being in better mechanical condition than for many a long year.

Running these events as well as the regular weekend train services and overhauling rolling stock and maintaining track and other fixed assets involves a lot of hard work – work which is best done by large teams of volunteers so that individual volunteers are not over-burdened.



Courage on the Balm Road branch in August 2004 starring in a Diesel Gala. Photo: Howard Bishop

If any readers have not volunteered before why not give it a try? However, a word of caution; come down and join us if:

- Your prime motivation is to help our precious railway continue into its third century,
- You wish to continue seeing steam locomotives climbing the bank to Middleton Park,
- You wish to tell its story or
- If you want to ensure that our visitors have a great experience.

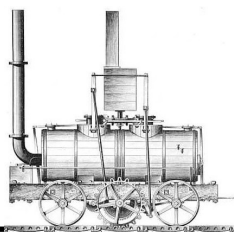
But please don't expect to be always told what to do because our current volunteers are already very busy - you will generally be left to work unsupervised. You could offer to give volunteers a lift of something, offer to sweep up and dust, clean pits and toilets or tidy things away. These are tasks that always need doing. Please be available and prepared to graft and build up a reputation as someone who will work hard for the Railway. Then, more and more opportunities will open up for you. It may seem a bizarre analogy but getting involved with the Middleton Railway is a bit like taking on a rescue dog; you have to win its confidence and trust and then good things happen. It is well worth taking a leap into the unknown and making the effort to join: you will hopefully be pleasantly surprised, as was one new Santa in 2024!

Charles Milner



It's not all about operating trains, engineering and dealing with the public...

Volunteers in action wrapping presents for the Santa Trains in the conference room. You can gain skills and experience in many areas at the Middleton Railway.



From the Membership Secretary

For those members who pay their membership subscription by Standing Order, please remember to change the amount for 2025.

Adult is now £29.00

Senior (67+) £27.00

Family Member £8.00 each.

Junior membership of the Association remains at £16.00

For those who pay by bank transfer, please use your membership number (just the numbers) as the reference and PLEASE let me know you have paid that way. Thank you.

Sue Gill

From The Secretary

Now we are past Christmas and the New Year holidays, the railway goes into its maintenance period. It is now time to reflect on the Christmas Express Trains.

The bookings for the trains were slightly down on 2023. These were mainly the trains at the beginning of December 2024 that still had seats available. We did have an entertainer on the train entertaining the children in the carriages with stories this year though. According to the parents of the children this was well received.

In 2023, volunteers constructed a new prefabricated Santa's Grotto - this was in action again this year where children could have their picture taken with Santa.

Most of the trains ran to time, although some trains were slightly delayed, due to circumstances beyond our control.

At a meeting to review the event, it was said that we were understaffed in various places including serving refreshments in the café, and with helping distribute presents to Santa on the train. Suggestions to improve the 2025 Santa Trains were made including having our publicity out earlier, a better decorated train, having refreshments available upstairs at our waiting room on the mezzanine floor.

Many thanks to everyone who helped with the event (too many to name individually) but we must thank Janet Auckland and Fran Bailey who take all the bookings, produce train lists, and fill in the ticket details.

John Holmes

At the end of a busy day on the Santa trains on 8th December 2024 both Sir Berkeley and No.6 take a rest from their labours. Thanks to all who helped with these trains in any way. They remain the single biggest annual source of income for the railway and have been enjoyed for several generations of our visitors.

(Photo: Matt Berry)



Shop Notes

Ah, the Santa trains, the Christmas trees, the fairy-lights, the miles of tinsel, the hectares of pristine wrapping-paper, the presents, the vast acres of flattened cardboard, the many, many mince pies, the hectic atmosphere, the fun and the rewarding compliments.

The big difference this year was the story-teller. This lady, sometimes accompanied by her bear (!) but sometimes not – travelled on the same train as the main man but in the other coach. They swapped at Park Halt, She (often plus bear) told her stories and kept the visitors entertained while waiting for, or recovering from, a conversation with you know who. This all seemed to have gone down rather well. So too did Sue's wonderful tombola.

All teams ebb and flow. This year saw some welcome new arrivals (including to the first team – you know who I mean) and some people stepping up into more demanding roles – great! - but also some losses, so that filling the roster was not easy. The customers ebbed and flowed as well this year – ebbing away from some dates but flowing mightily into others.

Richard Stead in pole(!) position at the till in a quiet moment on 14th December 2024.



What about the composition of the parties on any given train? The Train Manager - he with the clipboard - knows how many people are, or should be, on each train - and so can

A well trimmed Matthew Murray & Mary share the Christmas limelight in the Engine House (Photo: Ross Needham)



inform, roughly, the bloke with the beard. With say 56 passengers, there'd be 28 per coach. The north coach might have four parties of seven, each composed of four grandparents, two parents and one child. The other coach might have Bagheera and 27 Rainbows.

While numerous on paper, the first team. suffered its misfortunes. On one occasion, the rostered person rang in (in decent time) to say he had been marooned at home by trees having been blown down in a storm. Stand-ins were found and the show – of course - went on. (He then asked for a big chain-saw for Christmas.) This, haplessly, was not the only time that such events

transpired (though for quite different reasons). Again, emergency stand-ins were deployed and all was well – the railway was saved by a thin, red line!

The other incident of note was when a party of five adults – I say again, five adults – contrived to walk past the notice on the door of the lift that reads “three people max” and set off for the first floor. They nearly arrived, but not quite. The happy ending is that they were saved and indeed got their train but only after the front-of-house team underwent a hands-on “where-does-this-key-go?” course in lift rescue.

Richard Stead

TOMBOLA CHRISTMAS 2024

Just to say a massive thank you to everyone who supported the tombola which was held every day of the Santa Specials. We raised over £1000, which is £100 more than the year before. Brilliant.

As many of you know, I also volunteer at St Gemma's and they donated many, many gifts for our tombola stall. We have therefore donated £200 to St Gemma's from the tombola money. The £800+ for Middleton Railway has been gift aided, so the railway will be able to claim back the tax on the £800, so bumping the figure back up.

However, we did run out of prizes on Christmas Eve lunchtime, so please can I ask you all to bear this in mind throughout the year. If you have received any unwanted Christmas items, toiletries, or the inevitable Christmas mug, I would be so grateful to receive any donations, you can hand them in to the ticket office at any time during the year.



Sue Edwards

From The Volunteer Manager



A huge thank you to all working members who give so much of their time to benefit the railway over the course of each season. Both those who are on site and those giving many hours at home, unseen and often unappreciated (such as our Old Run editor!). We all know how busy life can get but PLEASE do renew your membership in a timely fashion, it is important all volunteers are paid up members so that we have the relevant details for you on file, so that you receive working members' emails and the relevant benefits card. Details are given above and we continue to explore ways in which you can pay at the click of a button via the website.

In my role as volunteer manager I am not on site as often as I would like due to family commitments, however I am still available via phone and email to talk about any matters pertaining to volunteering. If you have comments or suggestions I am happy to hear them. If you are new to volunteering and/or want to get more involved, I can help to facilitate that too. My email is jlinkins87@gmail.com and if you need to reach me by phone, drop me an email for further details. Thank you.

Volunteer's Forum

The eagle eyed amongst you will note that we did not hold our traditional volunteer's forum in autumn 2024. This is usually an opportunity for updates about the Trust's activities and to recognise the long service of many volunteers. This has been both an important and enjoyable feature of our calendar for many years now. Details will follow about when this will return, hopefully just before we reopen later this year, so we can continue this important tradition and share important information ahead of the new season.

John Linkins

Why Get our Museum Accredited?

Various articles in the Old Run during 2024 described aspects of the work of our museum, and several of these referred to the topic of accreditation of the museum, and an expectation that we were likely to have to re-apply for this before too long. This duly happened at the end of June, when we received an email from the Arts Council advising us that the next schedule for such re-applications had just been published. We downloaded the schedule, which contained a list of 69 museums that were due to submit their re-applications at the beginning of January, February or March 2025, and we found that we were in the January group.



This was not a surprise, as the last accreditation of our museum had been in 2014. Not long after that the period between such exercises had been extended from three years to five years, so we should have had to apply for re-accreditation in 2019, but changes to the overall arrangements for accreditation had resulted in this being postponed. Specifically, a new version of the requirements for accreditation was issued in November 2018, followed in March 2019 by the official guidance on these requirements, and then by various meetings later that year to publicise the changes that had been made. In the light of this a schedule was published for when museums could now expect to have to apply for re-accreditation - but then came CoViD, and all official work on re-accreditation ceased. By the time that this work restarted, towards the end of 2021, it was very obvious that we could expect to be invited to re-apply before too long, even though we were not in either of the two batches of museums that were given deadlines in 2023.

So the museum committee had been planning for this, and it had become apparent that there would be a lot of work involved, particularly in updating relevant documents. Indeed, there was so much work that at various points people had asked questions like "Is it worth all this effort?". Such questions are relevant far more widely than just the museum committee, which is why this article is being written, but to try to answer these questions we need to look at just what is involved in getting a museum accredited.

This process is governed by a document known as the accreditation standard for museums, which is issued by the Arts Council for England, who now operate the accreditation scheme. This standard identifies 9 different areas of a museum's work, and specifies between one and

three requirements for each area, giving a total of 21 requirements. The nine areas split into three groups of three, which cover respectively the health of the museum organisation, the way in which it manages its collection of objects, and the kinds of experiences that it provides for its users. While it is obvious that these are all important, it is not so obvious that they all relate directly to what a typical visitor to a museum might see, and so we need to look a bit more closely at these various requirements.

Indeed, for the first group of three, the areas seem to have little to do with the experience of a typical visitor. They cover the governance and management of a museum, with requirements concerning the legal constitution of the body that runs it, the management structures, planning for the future, ensuring financial sustainability, and managing risks and security. Most of these requirements were carried over from the registration scheme that had existed before accreditation was developed, such as the exclusion of museums that were privately owned by individuals. This would not normally be relevant to a visitor, unless they were thinking of donating important objects to the museum's collection, in which case they might well want assurances that the donated objects could not simply be sold off for the benefit of the private owner. A few of the other requirements are more relevant to the ordinary visitor, such as the one that a museum should have a clear and workable emergency plan, although it is to be hoped that an ordinary visitor would never need to see this being put into effect.

The second group of three areas is concerned with how a museum manages its collection of objects, both ones that are on display and ones that are in store (where most museums, including ours, have nothing like enough space to display everything, and so have far more items in store than on display). The requirements here cover having policies for what objects will be collected and what will not, for what information the museum will hold about each object, and for how objects will be cared for and conserved. Again, while these are important, they will not necessarily be obvious to a casual visitor, although it probably would be obvious if these requirements were not being met. For instance, a visitor is unlikely to be impressed by a random collection of unrelated things, with nothing to explain why they might be of interest; and they would be even less impressed if the objects looked dirty, dusty or untidy. But just having policies or plans is not going to ensure this: what is also needed is putting effort into actually implementing the plans, and the accreditation process does not involve any assessment of how this is being done.

The last group of three areas is concerned with how a museum actually engages with its visitors, where the three areas focus respectively on how accessible the museum is to its visitors, on its understanding of who its visitors are, and on what activities the museum actually provides for its visitors. For some museums, and particularly those in old buildings, physical access can present very real problems. On the other hand, the accreditation requirements are simply that a museum must have in place a policy for access and a plan for implementing this policy, but again there is little emphasis on how well the plan is actually being implemented.

Audience engagement? A crowd has gathered to watch Sir Berkeley at Park Halt on 1st January 2024.



Similarly, understanding who the visitors to a museum are (commonly referred to as its audience) is obviously important, and is not easy to achieve, particularly because the

accreditation requirements also include understanding who does not visit the museum, and why. In our case we do have some information about why people do not visit us, and for the most part it is because they have never heard of us, even though they live in Leeds and we have now been operating in the city for over 60 years! We also know that, when people do visit us for the first time, they are generally very impressed by what they find, which is encouraging. But the accreditation process hardly makes any attempt to evaluate this.

The nearest that the process gets to this is in the last of the areas, where the requirements are that a museum should “provide stimulating learning and discovery activities” and

“communicate effectively with users and potential users” (where the term “users” implies that a museum should be encouraging its visitors to do more than just casually look at stuff). Here, one of the questions that is asked in the application form is about the range of activities that the museum provides for its visitors, where we were able to tick five out of the twelve options that were listed. This very clearly relates directly to the quality of the experience that visitors gain. Also, the application form asks about how the museum publishes information for potential visitors, and out of the 15 options that it lists we were able to tick 8 (although having done so it was noticeable that currently our web site only provides links to one of the five social media where we have sites, and so links to the other four will need to be added). Again, though, having this information readily available clearly does contribute directly to the quality of the experience for potential visitors.

So, one conclusion from all of this is that actually a museum is a bit like an iceberg, in the sense that there is far more to it than would be seen by the casual observer or visitor.

Another conclusion is that, while a lot of the activities that are relevant to accreditation (such as the creation of policies and plans) might become visible to a visitor if they are not being done - for instance, if there are no plans for keeping things clean and tidy - but the accreditation requirements that relate to these activities only cover part of what is needed. In particular, accreditation does not try to assess how well plans are actually being carried out, although the variety of museums is so huge that trying to do this could well be an almost impossible task.

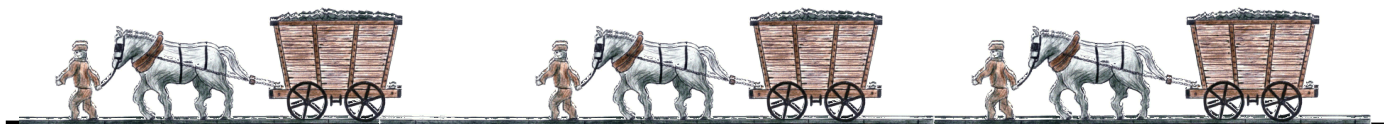
Given all this, therefore, now that we have submitted our application for re-accreditation, was it all worth it? The work that had to be done to update all the various documents was certainly worthwhile, as we now have descriptions of how the museum should operate that relate to the circumstances of 2025 rather than 2014. This does not, however, mean that we can sit back and be complacent about the future: there is still a lot of work to be done to improve our museum further, so as to make the experience of visitors even more satisfactory over the time (probably five years) until the next re-accreditation.

Tony Cowling



Does the museum measure up to standards? Could you help?

This is preparing for the Model Railway Exhibition in 2023..



Special Events 2025

These are the special events planned for this year. If you would like to help with the planning of the event or at the event itself please contact

volunteer@middletonrailway.org.uk

and we'll put you in touch with the right person

5th April: Community Day, Stalls from local Community Groups

19th to 21st April: Easter Weekend, Children's games and Easter Egg Hunt

4th & 5th May: Teddy Bear's Picnic & Bluebell Walks

24th to 26th May: Spring Bank Holiday Weekend

1st June: Classic Car Sunday

14th & 15th June: Model Railway Exhibition

5th & 6th July: Steam Punk Market

19th July: Sweet Pea's 90th Birthday

2nd & 3rd August: A Taste of Yorkshire

16th August: Children's Day

23rd to 25th August: August Bank Holiday

6th & 7th September: Autumn Gala

13th & 14th and 20th & 21st September: Heritage Open Weekends

28th September: Star Rails

Santa in December (6th/7th, 13th/14th, 20th/21st and 23rd/24th)

We look forward to seeing you at one or more of these events, whether as a visitor or volunteer!

A day in the life of a Santa Train Manager

There's more to running the railway than a Driver and Guard, but please don't let them know as the shock may be too much for some of them. Volunteering is both fun and rewarding and this is especially true during December when the Santa Specials are running and there are a diverse range of volunteering opportunities. One such role is the Train Manager, a role which I kind of fell into one day. A bit of a weird title as it does not involve getting on any trains and there's certainly no staff to manage. So what happens? Stay tuned and find out.

I like to be on site early, to check the passenger list for the day and be prepared in case there are any special requirements or requests. With eight trains a day and up to seventy passengers per train that's a lot of checking, best have a brew with this one. Oh yes folks, it's time for putting the tea in Train Manager, Ba-Dum Tish!

Just after 9:00 pick up my walkie talkie, put on my Christmas bandana and I make my first



The peaceful, but beautifully decorated, Engine House before the crowds arrive. (Photo: David Dixon)

trip out to the platform. This will become a familiar route as I see every train go out and see every train come back in, I can't tell you how many ... oh sorry, wrong report. First train of the day is a great time as I can hear excited chatter of the early passengers arriving but a time of trepidation for the Train Manager. As I wander to the platform to meet the Guard for the morning. Oh I do hope it isn't the grumpy one! You know the one who knows all the rules and loves to enforce them. Yes even the one about not allowing inflatable dayglo pink flamingos over eight foot tall in the carriage. Conditions of Carriage Rule 18 Point 4 subsection ix), look it up some day.

All is well, it's 9:10, the sun is shining, even the Guard is smiling, one problem - no Santa! Twenty minutes to departure and still no Santa, eek, that is cutting it a bit fine. It is not until 9:25 that Santa has been seen and will be with us - wow is this man busy at this time of the year - we only just get this train out on time. The next two trains go without incident until the Guard

informs me he's left his sandwiches at home. I'm not sure what I can do so fake a concerned look. Evidently it is the duty of the Train Manager to fetch comestibles from the shop, news to me but off I trot for a Mars Bar and a bag of cheese and onion crisps. A bemused passenger sees the confectionery and offers to add a sausage roll to the Guard's dinner. Now, I think to myself, how did this lady happen to have a spare sausage roll with her? What was she going to do with it? Ho hum, some mysteries are best left unsolved. *(The guard concerned was very grateful though—Editor..)*

The 12:00 train is ready to board, one problem - no Santa! Minor delay and then he emerges, but something strange has happened. He's still dressed the same with a sack full of toys, but somehow different. Leaner, more jolly and his wellies don't look to fit him any

more. How can this be? Like a scene from Doctor Who, Santa has undergone some sort of regeneration.

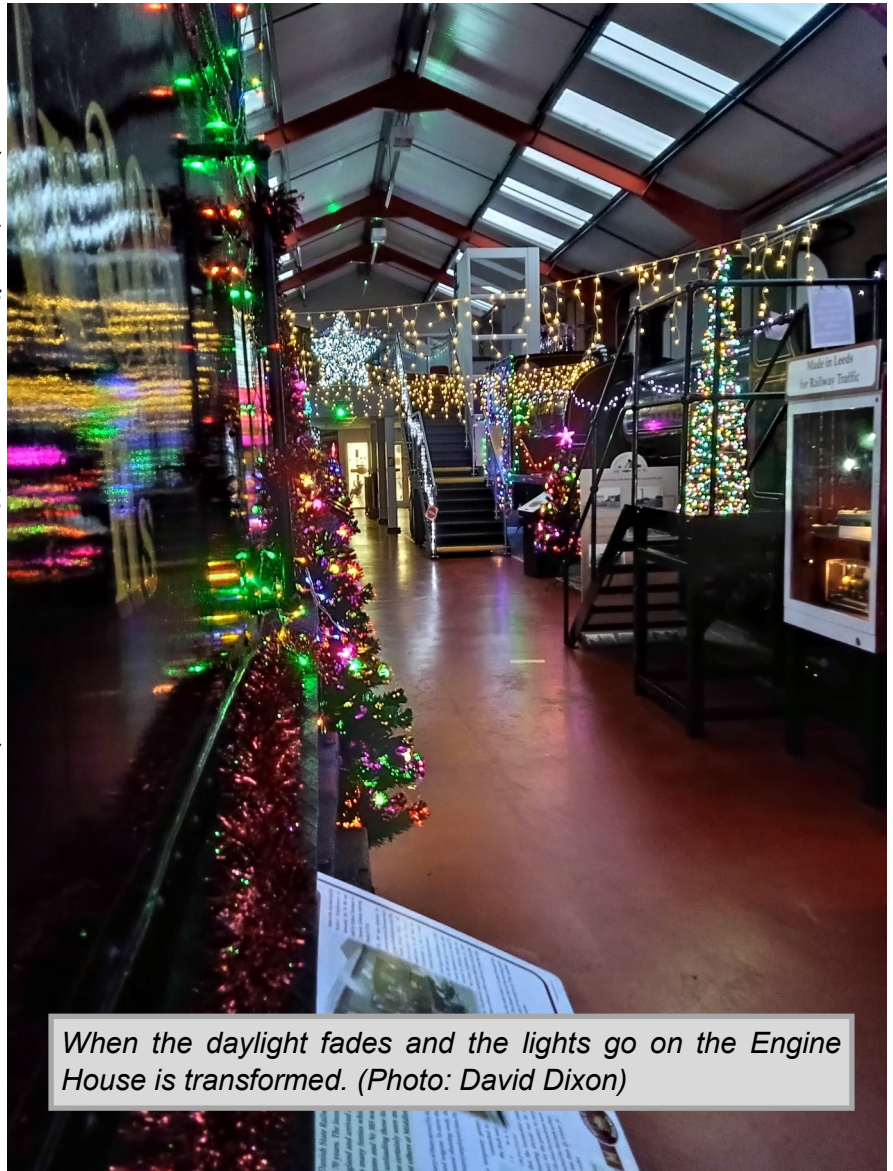
Had a wonderful dinner break sat out on the platform in the bright sunshine, only the whiff of floral cigarettes and constant thrum of the M621 to remind me I'm still in Hunslet. First train of the afternoon and guess what - it's happened again - another 'regeneration'. Are we up to Jon Pertwee now? Wow this one is tall. Delays to most trains this afternoon, 14:15 is seven minutes late due to Santa having a trouser malfunction. Soon fixed with a bit of string and some gaffer tape, all in a day's work for a Train Manager, we have stuff like that just laying around.

By the 15:00 departure it's looking particularly gloomy but I can tell it's happened again - new Santa, posh accent but back to badly fitting wellies. Particularly busy train this one and Santa looks to have been run ragged when it returns from Park Halt. I ask if he wants anything fetching and only get a one word answer "whisky", unfortunately there are some things the Train Manager does not have laying around!

Last train of the day soon rolls round, my favourite train of the day. Not because it's home time after this, not because the fairy lights look spectacular in the Engine House against the darkening sky. Oh no, once it arrives back at around 16:00 it is bin emptying time! I don't really feel fulfilled in a day of volunteering unless it includes emptying bins, picking up litter and generally walking around with a black bin liner.

So as the day closes I sit back (black bag still in hand) and think of all the great passengers I've met (over 500 on a busy day), the sixteen trips to the platform (and back), the camaraderie with the train crew, the banter with the Ticket Manager and of course all the cups of tea which the fantastic cafe staff have let me make. I think the two ends of the day are the best times as you get to chat with your fellow volunteers. Fancy giving it a go? You don't have to don the red suit ... but you are welcome to give it a go. In fact you don't have to wait until Christmas, just drop us a line or pop in and say hi, most of us don't bite. Everyone has a part to play in keeping this smashing little railway running, what is yours?

David Dixon



When the daylight fades and the lights go on the Engine House is transformed. (Photo: David Dixon)



News from Moor Road

Loco notes

HL3860 'No.6'



The loco shared the Santa Special services with HE 2387 and performed without problem although there are a couple of niggling but minor faults which require rectification over the winter period. The front damper has become seized. This damper is only used when removing ash from the ashpan as it makes it easier to do. It cannot be opened fully as it fouls on the eccentric straps and there is a stop on the linkage to prevent this from happening. The steam brake lubricator continues to 'sizzle' when the brake is applied, despite our best efforts to solve the problem. It is likely that a new arrangement of lubricator will be provided. Apart from these two minor tasks, no other work is planned for the loco and it is currently being prepared for a boiler washout and annual inspection.

1210 'Sir Berkeley'

The loco was lifted during November to investigate the ongoing problem with the right hand leading axlebox running hot. Although the bearing was found to be in reasonable condition it was scraped in against the axle journal and the oil lubrication pipework and fittings were all cleaned down and checked over for any blockages. Nothing was found so the loco was returned to its wheels and prepared for a steam test which was carried out on the 15th December. The loco was initially put on a Santa train with HL 3860, which proved to be satisfactory, so it then did the last train on its own. This also proved to be okay. As has now become customary, Sir Berkeley was used on the New Year's day Mince Pie specials, again without any problem.



Sir B up in the air on the new (to us) jacks in November. (Photo: Geordie Brown)

No work is planned for the loco over the winter, other than the inevitable packing of the glands and preparation for the annual boiler exam. The loco's owners, the Vintage Carriages Trust have had several requests to hire the loco during 2025. At the moment, it is planned that the loco will go to the Mid Suffolk Railway for Easter and will then travel on to Shildon for a few weeks. No other visits have so far been agreed.

Sentinel No.68153

The loco was used over the gala weekend but has spent the rest of the time since on display in the Engine House. The steam brake valve is still in need of attention, which will be attended to over the closed season. One of the blower nozzles appears to be blocked and this will also be investigated.



Now that the loco has once more proved itself to be capable of hauling two coach trains it is intended that it will see more frequent use in 2025. The current plan is to use the loco on the second Sunday of each month.



HE2387 'Brookes No.1'

Brookes No.1 worked the first few of our Santa services but the left-hand injector once more decided that it didn't want to play, and the loco was taken out of traffic for attention after its turn on the 7th December. The injector has been removed and the face where it is attached to the boiler has been carefully scraped in to give a flat surface. The mating surface on the boiler has also had some attention but, because of the difficulty of scraping this face flat, a different approach has been made. In this case a very thin layer of Belzona 1111 has been applied which will hopefully fill any

slight depressions and help provide a flat surface. Belzona, for those who don't know is a two-part repair medium for metal and is often used to repair pitting and other defects in steel. It has been used for similar repairs for many years where more traditional methods have failed. The loco has yet to be steam tested, something that is imminent now that the recent cold weather is behind us.

HC1544 'Slough Estates No.3'

Re-reading the last Old Run I realised that I had inadvertently said that the new frame stretcher had not been accurately drilled but this should have been a reference to the old frame stretcher and was the reason why the new frame stretcher came undrilled so that we could carefully mark them off and drill them. Apologies for any confusion caused in this.



With the frames now moveable and with all the valve gear coupled up it was possible to check the valve setting. We use a fairly simple method of checking the valves on locomotives fitted with Stephenson's link motion and that is to set them to give equal port openings at both ends of the valve. Checking this involves placing the reverser in full gear and moving it over a full wheel revolution in both directions. Once the port openings have been measured, any discrepancies have to be sorted out by adjusting the lengths of the valve rods and the whole process repeated. Fortunately, the check on the valve setting showed that the port openings were very close, so it was deemed that no adjustment was necessary, saving quite a bit of work. Final fitting of the pistons allowed the front buffer beam to be refitted, along with the buffers. This more or less brought work on the frames to an end with just the new brake shoes to fit and a few minor jobs to do. The brake shoes had been awaiting the finishing off of the pattern as we did not have a suitable one in our pattern store. Once complete the pattern was taken to Batley Foundry where they were soon cast. Each brake block weighs going on for 100 lbs, so they are not light things to

move around by hand. Each brake block then required setting up on the radial drill and the hole for the support pin drilling. Once done the six blocks could be fitted and the brakes adjusted as best we could. There is a means of adjustment to take up wear but there is no means of adjustment for each of the individual blocks so with new blocks it is a case of they touch where they touch. This is not an uncommon arrangement with older steam locomotives, and we mustn't forget that the loco is now 100 years old.

Expanding the new tubes in the boiler was a slow but steady process as holidays and the need to crew trains often got in the way and it wasn't until the beginning of November that all the tube expanding was completed. The next task was then to bead over the tubes at the firebox end, a slow but steady task using a pneumatic riveting hammer fitted with a beading tool. The tube ends are beaded over to protect them against the burning action of



the fire which would otherwise take its toll on the relatively thin tube. The beading over was completed over the Christmas break and attention has now turned to the various other outstanding tasks necessary to get a watertight boiler. Next on the list was the refitting of the dome, which should have been a simple job. However, the boiler inspector required the bolts replacing and these turned out to be spot welded in place, so the welds had to be ground off to get them out. We also discovered that the existing bolts were metric and, although it would be cheaper to replace them with more metric bolts, we have a policy that imperial (BSW) nuts and bolts should only be used on items that were originally built with them. This is for safety reasons as mixing metric and imperial fittings can lead to the two being mixed up and inadvertently assembled with (say) a metric nut on an imperial bolt, something that is quite likely to happen with inexperienced volunteers. And the last thing we want to happen with a boiler.

Attention has currently turned to the washout plugs, of which 1544's boiler has twenty-eight. Here, another screw thread problem reared its head when we discovered that seven

of them were screwed at a 1 in 8 taper and the remainder were screwed at 1 in 16 taper, the latter being a standard taper thread used on pipework. Now, one thing you don't do is have different taper threaded washout plugs on a boiler as it has the potential to be very dangerous if they get mixed up. This led to a lot of thinking. Do we make them all 1 in 8 or make them all 1 in 16 taper. The latter had the advantage of much less work and would have been acceptable. However, we know from experience that this can lead to problems as the threads wear (HE2387 has these) leading to frequent replacement. In the end, it was decided to go for the 1 in 8 taper, re-cut the threads in the boiler and have all new plugs made. 1 in 8 would also have almost certainly been Hudswell, Clarke's choice when originally making the boiler. The new plugs cannot be ordered until all the holes have been re-tapped as the size of each will vary and we may need several different sizes.

As mentioned in the last Old Run, the water tank has been away to contractors for repairs. It was returned

during October with the new pieces welded in. However, the contractor did not have any welder sufficiently small to fit inside so the welding has only been done on the outside. Because of this and the general pitting of the old tank caused by corrosion there is no guarantee that the tank will be completely watertight without further work. We will initially fill the tank with water and check for leaks and work out a plan of action if we find any. The inside of the tank will also be coated with Belzona 1331, a 2-part epoxy coating intended to give a corrosion resistant coating which should give a long life. Fortunately, we have a couple of slim volunteers who can squeeze into the tank to do the job. They are just banned from biscuits and other treats until the job is done.

The cab has also been receiving attention. A new cab roof has been fitted; of slightly different design to the original as it is in one piece, instead of two. Attention is currently focused on the bunker, which has significant corrosion in places. Hopefully, this can be repaired without too much problem, but we have yet to get down to the detail of the job.

Finally, ever since 1544 arrived at the railway (and before) there has been adverse comment about the style of chimney fitted. We have always intended fitting a new chimney cap along the lines of the one originally fitted to the loco and have recently had one cast.



All we need to do now is fit it.



Fowler 4220033 'Harry'

As mentioned in the last Old Run, the vacuum exhaustor was re-fitted and run up but with no success, so it has been removed and dismantled once more. On this occasion it was found that there was significant scoring on the cylinder walls so this will have to go away for repair.



Peckett 5003 'Austin's No.1'

Available for service whilst it awaits its time in the workshop for a repaint and other minor works. Has recently undergone a 6 monthly exam.

Brush/Beyer Peacock 'D2999'

Currently available for service and has recently had a 6 monthly exam.



Hudswell, Clarke D1373 MD&HB No.45

In service and running satisfactorily with only minor routine attention such as greasing of moving parts being necessary.

HE6981

Work has continued fitting a new silencer which continues to be a challenge, albeit one that is being overcome. The chances of the loco being ready for Easter are somewhat fading, mainly due to pressure of work on other projects.



Courage showing off her Neville Hill style bling shortly before moving into the Workshop.



HE1786 'Courage'

During a grand shunt in November the opportunity was taken to move the loco out of the Engine House and into the old workshops to enable its renovation to begin with the object of having it complete and the loco repainted in time for its 90th anniversary in June. This project is being led by Geordie Brown, who has taken a great deal of interest in the loco and has done much research on it and its life and times at Courage's Alton brewery.

Work so far undertaken has been the removal of the brake gear to allow various components to be

*Courage with cab roof alongside in the Workshop
(Photo: Georgie Brown)*

straightened, cleaned and painted, all of which is now done. New brake blocks are required so we will have to make a pattern for them. The two engine bonnet doors have also been receiving attention to straighten out creases and fill minor holes with weld. This work is ongoing. The rear sandboxes, for which the operating mechanism has long been seized, have been removed and the mechanism made to work. They have also been cleaned and painted ready for re-fitting. The cab roof has also been removed for minor repairs but principally to get



at and rectify the significant corrosion between the roof sheet and supporting angles. The angles have now been needle-gunned to remove the build-up of corrosion and given an initial coat of grey primer.

D631 'Carroll', D577 'Mary' and LMS 7051

All currently on display in the Engine House and available for use if required.

All other locos are stored, either on display in the Engine House or awaiting overhaul.

Carriage & Wagon Notes



Final coat of paint going on the roof of 2223. Photo: Ross Needham (with all appropriate safety equipment in place)

Coaches 1074, 1867 and 2084

All three coaches are currently in service, and each had a 3 monthly 'B' exam at the end of November in readiness for the Santa train services.

Coach 2223

Work continues on the conversion of this vehicle to a coach, and the end is finally coming into sight. All the windows are now in place, including the opening droplights and quarterlights. Fitting the former has allowed the door panelling to be completed and the only outstanding work is the fitting of the door handles, something that will be left until the painting and varnishing is finished. Work has now turned to the assembly of the seats. The basic parts for all these were cut right at the beginning of the project and they have been in store ever since so we are hopeful that this will be a relatively quick job to complete. The one major job to still undertake is the cleaning and

painting of the west side of the frames as it has been found to be impractical to do this in the workshops due to limited clearances on that side. The coach will probably be moved into the Engine House for these final works. There is every chance that it will see service at the start of the season in April and that is the plan that we are working to.

Around and About

Volunteer numbers

It is pleasing to report that, in general, there has been an upturn in volunteer numbers on Sundays and Wednesdays. Not by much, but by sufficient to be noticeable. Against this, though, volunteers on most Saturdays have dropped off now that we are no longer running a train service. There is so much to do that needs to be done in the closed season, as ever. If you possibly can, please get down and lend a hand.



74059 safe inside the new shelter—from which it has ventured to Park Halt recently. Photo: Steve Roberts

Permaquip Ballast Packer Shelter

At long last we have been able to move the ballast packer into the new shelter and the packer is now easily accessible for use when required. That is something that has not been the case until now as, if it were left on the rails, it would have been in the way and also very vulnerable to being damaged in any shunting being carried out if left at the end of a siding. We still need to do some work on the doors to improve them as we have discovered that they tend to twist when being opened, something not taken into consideration when they were designed. Blame me for designing them that way!

Level Crossings

The ORR came to look at and inspect the work that we have been doing on the two footpath crossings at the end of October and appeared satisfied with what they saw. They also took a look at both Moor Road and Beza Road level crossings. Their opinion was that Moor Road would definitely need some form of traffic control, but it was likely that Beza Road could simply remain an open crossing with suitable warning signs. The decision on what to provide would essentially be ours but would have to be supported by risk assessments which would form the basis of our proposals. These would then be subject to an approvals process.

Middleton Park Halt Platform

On Wednesday 4th December emergency repairs were required to the platform at Park Halt as one of the platform coping stones had fallen on to track. Between Santa trains Steve Roberts, Andrew Littlewood, Mick Jackson and Jack Auckland attended and fitted a new stone.

Coal

At the beginning of January, we received an e-mail from a person offering us a quantity of coal, free for the taking. The coal was in the basement of a house in Hyde Park area of Leeds and had belonged to a person who had recently passed away. With the house now

being cleared the coal had to be moved. A visit to view this was arranged and we were surprised to find about three tons there. The only problem was going to be uploading it and moving it out of the basement. A plan has been hatched to do this by shovelling it into contractors buckets, carrying it up the stairs and loading it into a 3½ tonne tipper truck, the use of small buckets being deemed easier than larger containers which would require two people to carry. At the time of writing, we have yet to put the plan into operation.

Shortly after receiving this first offer, we were offered another load of coal although we have yet to go and look at it to see if it is suitable. Now that it is not possible to burn coal as a means of heating (heritage railways excepted!) this may become something that we get further offers of. We'll just have to wait and see.

Steve Roberts



*Emergency repairs at Park Halt on 4th December. See opposite.
Photo: Andrew Littlewood*



***Left:** Coal for the taking in a Hyde Park Cellar. Extraction is now expected in early February.
Photo: Steve Roberts*

***Below:** Santa has his feet up for a well earned rest and Santa's helpers are clearing up ready for the next day. As dusk falls the coaches are about to be put away by MD&HB 45 while the steam crew top up the loco coal. Another successful day of Santa trains is over on 7th December 2024.
Photo: IRD*



Handover Ceremony for Hawarden

On Saturday 26th October 2024, “Hawarden” was officially handed over from the National Trust to the Bahamas Locomotive Society (BLS) at Moor Road. As befits such an important occasion, there was a large VIP presence and of course our members were all invited to attend.

Our Principal Guests were The Lord Mayor of Leeds, Cllr Marshall Katung; The Lord Mayor of Bradford, Cllr Beverley Mullaney and Mayor of Tameside, Cllr Betty Affleck. The Mayor of Bangor had also hoped to attend, but sadly was ill with Covid. Local Councillors Paul Wray and Rob Chesterfield also attended as guests. The National Trust was represented by Richard Pennington, Senior Collections and House Manager at Penrhyn Castle and his colleague Ceri Williams, the General Manager there. Bahamas Locomotive Society Chairman, Hon. Alderman Keith Whitmore represented that organisation, with Middleton Railway Trust Chairman Charles Milner and myself representing MRT.

Other guests included Vintage Carriages Trust Chairman Trevor England attending his last engagement as chairman before retiring after 30 years in the job, and historian and author Mark Smithers, who presented a nameplate and worksplate earlier in the day.

Charles opened the ceremony by welcoming everyone to Moor Road and was followed by Ceri who officially handed the locomotive to BLS. She mentioned the reason for removing exhibits from Penrhyn,



which was that the National Trust wanted to concentrate on the area's slate heritage and many of the exhibits at Penrhyn had in fact been acquired in an “ad hoc” way and thus weren't representative of the activities of the area. The Trust therefore had decided some time ago that some exhibits needed new homes and as BLS had already been looking after 0-6-2T No 1054 for some years, that organisation was deemed as suitable to receive two locomotives in addition to No 1054. Ceri then mentioned that she was delighted with the way “Hawarden” was being displayed and particularly liked the lights in the smokebox. She pointed out that this was exactly what the National Trust had hoped would happen when they were re-housed.

BLS Chairman Keith Whitmore responded by thanking Ceri and the National Trust for donating the loco and said he was pleased that “Hawarden” was housed near its birthplace as part of a very important collection of Leeds built locomotives. In his speech he also announced that it was intended to donate “Hawarden” to the MRT in three years time, so it will become part of our collection in due course.

Following the formal part of the ceremony and various photos, the guests and members then had a ride to Middleton Park behind vintage Hudswell Clarke “Mary”, with part owner Richard Pike as driver, before returning to Moor Road for refreshments, ably provided by Janet Auckland and Fran Bailey. The event was a great success and everyone went away with a good impression of our historic railway.

Ian Smith



Above: In the last issue there was only time to include a couple of photographs of the handover of Hawarden so thanks to Ian Smith for providing a fuller account of the event. He also provided a rather nice photograph of Hawarden in the yard at Moor Road shortly after arrival in January 2024. There was no name on this side as whilst at Penrhyn the other side was on display. Roger Walton has since added the name to this side of the tank as this is the side on display in our Engine House! Photo: Ian Smith

Below: No.6 at Park Halt in 24th December 2024 with an impressive sunset. Photo: Geordie Brown



The People Page

As briefly mentioned in the last issue, representatives of the Railway visited Sheila and Colin Bye at home to present them with a Richard Stead drawing of Peckett 2003 'John Blenkinsop' in recognition of their long service to the railway. Sheila was a schoolteacher in her working life and had contributed half the purchase price when P2003 was bought by the Railway. The locomotive arrived at what is now Middleton Park Halt on 17th November 1972 and was quickly fitted with a plaque in the cab which read "Sheila's half / Our half".

Thank you Sheila and Colin for all you have done for the Railway over the years, whether as a guard, in the shop, editing the Old Run or as part of the Education Team.



Left: Charles Milner presents Sheila and Colin with their drawing.
Photo: Tony Cowling.
Above: Sheila on the footplate of P2003 on arrival in 1972.
Photo: Ian Smith



P2003 in what is now the Moor Road car park in June 1990. The loco is currently at the Ribble Steam Railway in Preston. Photo: IRD

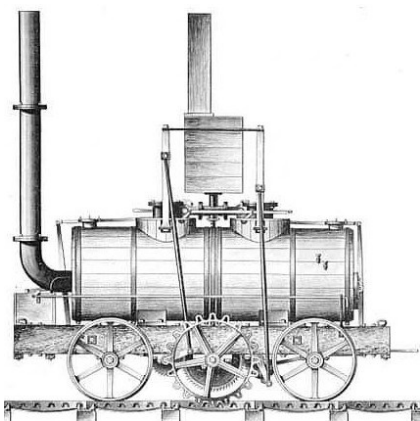


Above: A pointing Sheila explains the contents of 1310's smokebox to a party during a schools day around 1994.

Photo: IRD

Right: Sheila with Denis Caton (artist of the Salamanca painting in the shop) at the unveiling of the Railway's Leeds Civic Trust blue plaque in March 2004.

Photo: Howard Bishop



200th Anniversary of Middleton Gosforth Pit Disaster

On the 12th January 1825 in Middleton Gosforth pit, a miner screwed the top off his lamp and attempted to light his pipe and this ignited methane gas in the mine. The resultant explosion and fire killed 25 people.

200 years later, to the day, St Mary's Church, Middleton, held a short commemorative service. A candle was lit for each of the victims and a plaque unveiled naming them. The Church itself was not built until around 20 years after the explosion with funds from the mine owners and miners, some of whom gave labour to build the church.

The church altar cloth depicts both mining activities and the Middleton Railway. Thanks to the Friends of Middleton Park who arranged the service and to Kris Ward (photos) and Steve Roberts who brought my attention to this.



The Leeds Mercury, Saturday, 19th February 1825

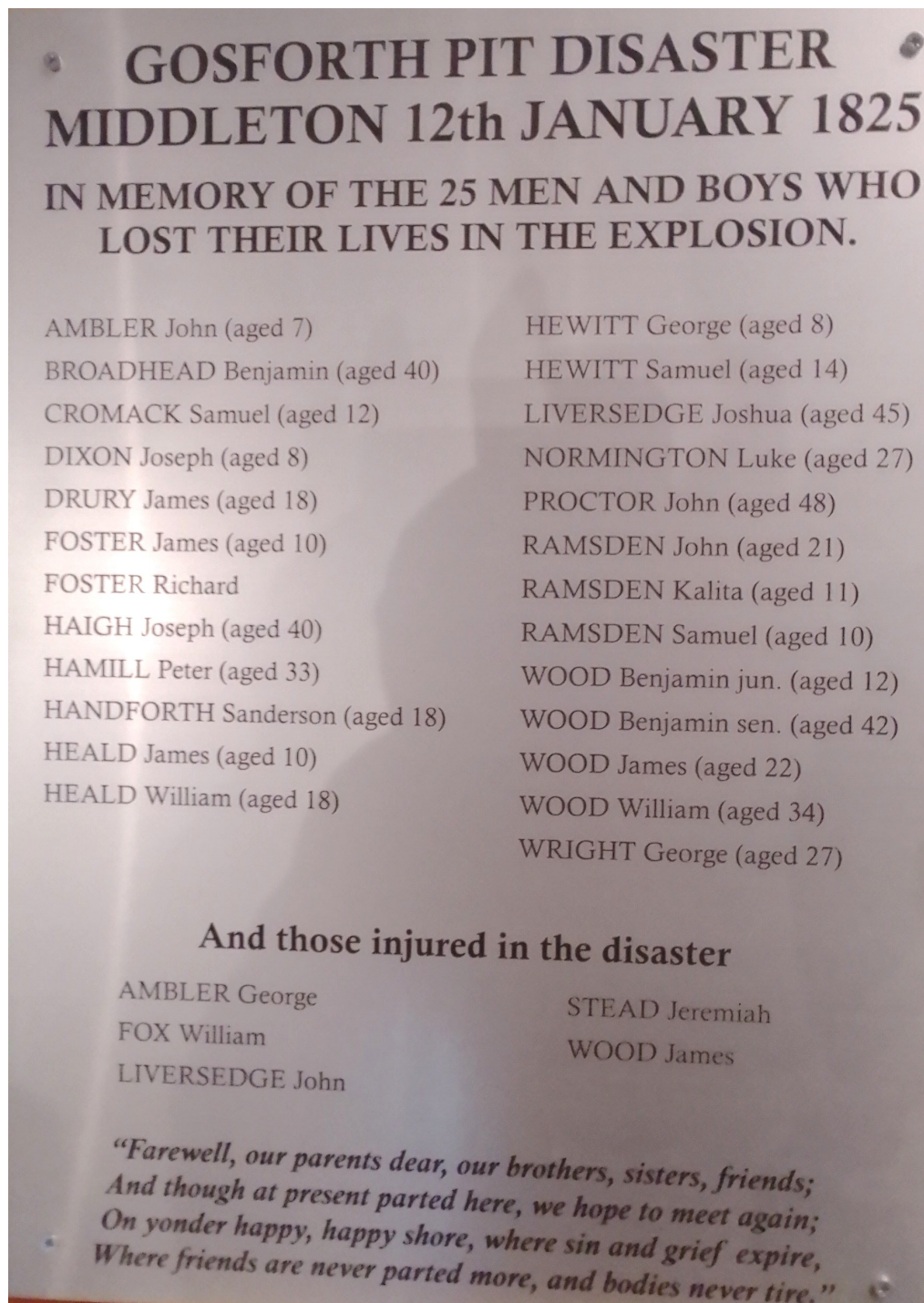
MIDDLETON COLLIERY

The melancholy sequel to the tragedy at Gosforth Pit has now been performed. Soon after midnight last Sunday, Mr. Blenkinsop and Mr. Bedford repaired to the spot, attended by a number of the work-people, and descended into the pit. The avenue wherein the explosion took place had been fastened up with boards, covered with earth; into which a tube six inches diameter with a cover, was at the same time introduced. On removing the top of the tube, the carburetted hydrogen gas rushed out with so much force that the persons in the pit were obliged to retreat for nearly 150 yards towards the mouth of the pit to find a breathable atmosphere. They then quitted the pit, leaving the process of ventilation to go on till Tuesday evening, when they still further promoted it by such means as they judged necessary. On Wednesday morning, the air was sufficiently pure to enable them to remove the covering, and to commence the search for the two bodies that were missing. The body of Joseph Haigh was found almost immediately, with his hands over his face, as if attempting to prevent suffocation; but that of John Ramsden was sought for a long time in vain; at length it was discovered by the accidental removal of a piece of timber; his death had no doubt been instantaneous and his body could scarcely have been more dislocated if he had been shot of a mortar. The first care of those engaged in the search was to take the remains out of the pit, but so rapid had been the process of putrefaction that it was only by their clothes that they could be recognised by their friends. The same day the Coroner held his inquest upon them, and the particulars of the search are described by Moses Roberts, the only witness examined on the occasion, in the subjoined deposition:- Moses Roberts, who is a bottom steward, and one of the witnesses sworn on a former inquest. He deposed that the pit was opened early on Monday morning, before which time, he did not consider it at all safe to attempt. Indeed it was then opened sooner than it otherwise would have been had not the bodies been in the pit. They got down to the bottom of the shaft on Tuesday, but could not possibly get to that part of the pit where the bodies were found till yesterday (Wednesday). Every means were used by deponent, Thomas Bedford, and eight other men, under Mr. Blenkinsop's directions, to find the bodies. They went along the centre board gate, and in the first bank in the north division of the workings, the bank next to that in which he was employed at the time of the accident, they found Joseph Haigh. He [deponent] has no doubt he died from the effect of the explosion. Haigh belonged to the second shift. The corpse is in such a state that he cannot say whether he was burnt or suffocated. At the time of the former search they could not proceed so far down the banks

as where Haigh was found, on account of the sulphurous state of the mine. Ramsden was found in a board-slit leading to the south part of the workings, opposite the north division. He appeared to have been driven with great force, and was nearly covered with rubbish. The body bore marks of great violence. They had been round it many times before they could find it, owing to its being buried in the dirt. Thought it was not at all safe to go down before, lest the pit should be fired. To a question put by a juror, witness replied that he did not know that any of them were in the habit of working with their lamp tops off.

The Jury without hesitation returned a verdict - Died in consequence of an explosion of carberrated hydrogen gas in Gosforth Coal Pit, on Wednesday the 12th of January, 1825.

Kris Ward's photo of the anniversary plaque is below. The victims were aged from 7 to 48...



And finally: Top Secret modelling at Middleton

Having reached the last page of this issue hopefully that will have got your attention...



Some of you will be aware that our former Traffic Manager Andy Hardy is now the UK General Manager of Rapido Trains, who produce OO model railways with a bias toward industrial railways. The model railway market is quite a secretive place where new models are concerned but in early 2023 we were told in strict confidence that Rapido were planning to produce a NER Y7/class H and a Manning Wardle A class. These would be available as 1310, Sir Berkeley and Matthew Murray. Whilst this was great news for the modellers amongst us Andy wondered if he could come and record 1310 and Sir Berkeley to provide authentic noises for the sound fitted versions? A cunning plan was hatched and on Tuesday 30th May 2023 both locos were in steam and a brake van provided.

Several trips up and down the line followed, together with some strange requests at Park Halt including clanging the Firehole door, the water filler cap, blowing off at the safety valves and lots of whistles...

All went well and the only risk of a leak was when recording Sir B at Park Halt was disturbed by the arrival of a Leeds City Council van to empty the bins. They didn't seem particularly interested though, and they certainly didn't look like spies from Hornby or Bachmann...



The models of 1310 arrived in the shops recently and what a superb little beauty it is! Andrew Johnson photographed his on the real 1310 and I've also provided a 'studio' image of mine. Now for the Mannings..!

Ian Dobson

In the next issue: A ghost story and the tale of a model much earlier than these, plus all the usual reports - and possibly that article that you have always been meaning to write?

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THE CHRISTMAS CRACKER

