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The waiting area for the Santa Express Trains was on the mezzanine floor, and was approached through the conference room via this “corridor”, so this was a visitor’s first view of the decorations in the Engine House.

The Old Run

No. 257
JANUARY 2023

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The Editor welcomes contributions - photographs, articles, news items and letters - relating to the interests of the Trust and the operation of our and other Railways.

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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Our Chairman speaks:

First, I wish all members of the Middleton Railway Trust and other readers of 'The Old Run' a happy and rewarding 2023. Whilst we are all facing great challenges at present, hopefully as the year advances the challenges will ease and we can once again start to enjoy a 'normal' year.

The year 2022 ended extremely well with a very successful Santa season both in terms of numbers of happy customers and the income generated for the Trust. Without a successful Santa season the Trust's future would be very precarious and the Trust would not be able to carry out many of its charitable functions.

The Santa Specials do not happen by magic; they happen as a result of a lot of extremely hard work by a large number of our volunteers.

A huge vote of thanks goes to all those who made the 2022 season so successful: to Janet Auckland and her commercial team who planned the event, obtained the presents and decorations and manned the café and shop, to Steve Roberts and his engineering team who provided the locomotives and coaches, to the Traffic Department who crewed the trains and organised the passengers, and to the Santas, Elves and all the others who helped in myriad ways – from wrapping presents to putting away the decorations after the last Mince Pie Special ran. Their reward – helping the Railway survive and giving a lot of pleasure and joy to our visitors both young and old. Listening to the gasps of wonder as little children first saw the dark corridor lit by twinkling fairy lights which led to the waiting area was reward enough for getting out the lights and tinsel and putting them up.

Planning for the 2023 Santa season has already started. The Trust needs more

Our Chairman speaks, continued

volunteers to share the work load in all departments but especially in the customer facing roles. Santas are the stars of the show and it is a very rewarding role but it is also very demanding – being Santa is a performance, Santa is ‘on’ all the time they are in costume. The more volunteers able to help in this role, the more fun it becomes and the less like hard work. The Elves are almost as important – a good team of Elves engaging with the children and helping Santa contributes so much to the event. Any reader with a bright child who might want to add something different to their CV (“I was an Elf on the World’s Oldest Railway” gets you noticed!) should encourage them to apply. And behind the scenes more volunteers are needed to share in the work of putting up and taking down decorations, cleaning the engine house, printing stationery etc., etc. Now is the time to start thinking about the 2023 Season and how you might be able to join in the hard work and the fun.

The events for the 2023 season are agreed and we are looking to a very busy season with as many events as were held in pre-Covid days. The ‘old favourites’ will be there, such as Teddy Bears Picnic/Bluebell Walks and the Model Railway Exhibition, plus the Autumn Gala but we will also be developing new events. Children’s day in August which we hope will become a regular feature and a Halloween Event organised with the support of ‘professional’ children’s entertainers at the end of October.

There will also be two special events. On the 15th and 16th April we will be welcoming The Vintage Carriage Trust’s ‘Sir Berkeley’ back into traffic after overhaul. The locomotive will be resplendent for the first time in decades in what is believed to be its original livery. This event will be shared with ‘1310’, the Railway’s other Victorian engine, on what will probably be its last major event for several years because its ‘boiler ticket’ expires this summer.

On the 10th and 11th June the delayed event to celebrate the contribution of Leeds to the development of the diesel locomotive will take place. This will mark the construction in 1932 of the first diesel locomotive to be successfully employed and then purchased by one of Britain’s main line railway companies – our very own ‘John Alcock’ – and will also mark the role played by Leeds companies in the development of the diesel engine. John Fowler & Co. started to develop an internal combustion engine as early as 1902, while J. & H. McLaren were the first company in the British Isles to mass produce diesel engines, starting in 1926. ‘John Alcock’ is particularly appropriate to be the ‘star’ of the event because it was not only the pioneer main line diesel locomotive but it is also now equipped with a McLaren engine. The event will also include the Trust’s two other pre-World War II diesel locomotives, Hudswell-Clarke D557 ‘Mary’ and Hunslet 1786 ‘Courage’. Along with these it will feature the Foxfield Railway’s Kerr Stuart & Co. built diesel 4421 of 1929, whose design had a significant influence on that of ‘John Alcock’. This locomotive’s other claim to fame is that it was supplied new to the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway in Cumberland, for use on their standard-gauge line to the stone-crushing plant that was at Murthwaite.

Both of these events should be very enjoyable for all involved and should bring the railway some good publicity but, like the Santa Specials, they will only happen because of the efforts of the Trust’s volunteers. More volunteers with the skills to work in the shop, in the workshops, outside on track and grounds or on administration, will always be welcome so if any readers have a friend or relative

Our Chairman speaks, continued

they think might be interested in helping the Railway advance towards its fourth century, then please encourage them to contact the Railway and offer their services.

We are looking forward to seeing many Trust members, both new and long established, helping the Railway prepare for what promises to be a very interesting year.

Charles W Milner, Chairman



KS 4421 of 1929 in the museum at Foxfield, in October 2020. Since this picture was taken they have fitted it with vacuum brakes, so that it can take part in our event.

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Appeal

To display our LMS Brake Van more effectively, we would like to equip it with a mannequin dressed as a goods guard, and arrange that this will “speak” to visitors to explain to them the significance of the various fittings that are being installed in the van. We have a mannequin, but we still need some appropriate clothing for it to wear. Do any members have suitable work clothes from that period that they would be willing to donate? If so, please contact us via the editor.

Shop Notes

There is but one fit subject for discussion: the Santa Trains of December. All went smoothly. Given the complexity and the sheer scale of the operation - see below - , that last sentence is of significance.

We ran eight public days of eight trains each, and two school days, each with five, making 74 trains in all. On the public days, there were no fewer than 18 roles to fill!. There were people in the brake van with the presents, people meeting and greeting, others serving the drinks and the mince pies and clearing the tables afterwards. The tickets had to be dished out to the correct parties of visitors who, when the time came, had to be shown to the train. On the train, the elves had the crucially-important job of ensuring that Santa and the right presents arrived at the right family-group at more or less at the same moment. Down in the shop, someone had to staff the tills and take the money and do last-push bookings (yes, there were some). We had some new faces in the team this year, which is most heartening. On top of the 18, the trains each needed a guard and two footplate crews, one for the working loco and one for the Thunderbird. Here I need to mention the shunting (two rounds) each day.



Thankfully, one thing we did not have to worry about was the central character. The old scene-stealer rolled up on the right days on his sleigh from Lapland, chatted to the youngsters, dished out the presents (having first weeded out the undeserving of course), then flew off with Rudolf, Donner, Blitzen, Comet, Vixen and the rest.

The weather probed our defences. The waiting-area - the mezzanine floor - was cold on some days during the Very Cold

Week, particularly first thing. Then one afternoon, black ice formed at Park Halt, covering the platform. Santa needed the firm, not to say muscular, support of Mrs Santa to get from one carriage to the other without disappearing down the gap between the train and the platform. Thanks to her, the old codger made it.

The work on the operating days was, of course, just the final effect. Much effort had been expended before December. Bookings - now on-line as well as in person and by post - opened in August and were nearly sold out by mid-November. (It is worth noting that usually there was just a tiny, tiny bit of space left even when it seemed all seats had been sold). At an early stage in the proceedings, the presents - there must have been well over 2,000 of them - needed to be selected and ordered - a big job. They arrived in October and had to be wrapped - a big collective effort, which someone had to prepare - the boxes of presents, tape, labels and paper all had



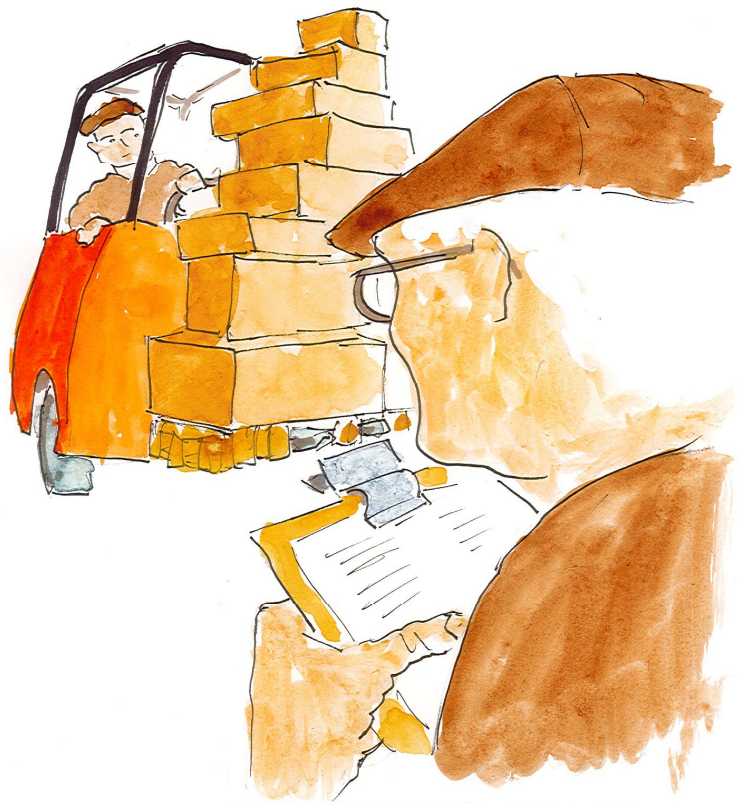
Shop Notes, continued

to be got out. How many acres of wrapping-paper did they take? How many miles of tape? Every present needed a label of course. Where did the 2,000-plus labels come from? Unfortunately the Lapland Elves do not seem to be in the business of wrapping and labelling presents. Thinks: must ring Santa, what IS the code for Lapland?

In November the decorations went up in the shop / cafe, the waiting-zone, the hall and platform and of course in the carriages. Santa needed a grotto with a rocking-chair. On operating days the working loco had to be provided with its "Christmas Cracker" headboard.

Much work also went into preparing the bundles of tickets, family by family. Each bundle needed the correct tickets for travel and - vitally important - the right laminated cards for presents. No present-card, no present! It would be just as bad to have the

wrong present-cards! A little-recognised job was that of working out the presents needed on the coming day's train and re-stocking the brake van every morning accordingly. A job that few know about - vital though it is - is that of cross-checking the numbers of presents after the big initial delivery against the flow of bookings, to spot any shortages that might appear due to, say, an influx of three-year-old girls. New supplies would have needed to be got! Also, someone had to order and collect the many, many, many mince pies (and the biscuits for the youngsters). It's just as well we were not baking them ourselves! Then, when all was done, it was all to clean, take down, tidy up and put away while the money had to be reckoned up. None of this happened by magic, and just attempting this description has tired me out, so I will stop.



Richard Stead

Ashford to Leeds

Shortly before Christmas 2022 a friend gave me an envelope which she had found in her loft. The envelope contained pictures taken by official photographers in and around Ashford Railway works. Her husband was an auctioneer and I expect that he found these pictures during a house clearance in Ashford. Among the pictures was this one of an unusual diesel shunter. I recalled seeing another picture of it somewhere around Leeds, so searched through my collection of books about railways in Leeds. I eventually found a picture of 11001 at Stourton in 1952 in "*Return to Leeds*", published by Bellcode books in 2009.



Ashford had a large railway works beside the main line to Dover. It was built in 1847 for the South Eastern Railway. It had locomotive, carriage and wagon shops until the 1930s, when the carriage works was closed. Steam locomotive construction finished in 1943 but repairs carried on until 1962. Ashford works was the major employer in the town; in 1947 over 2300 people were employed in the works (about 10% of the population).

Diesel locos were built both before and after WW2. Between 1949 and 1952 twenty six 350hp diesel electrics appeared; these became BR class 12. At the same time 11001 was built. It was designed by O V S Bulleid and powered by a 500 hp Paxman engine. The transmission comprised a Vulcan-Sinclair fluid coupling and a synchro-self-shifting Powerflow gearbox. This provided three

Ashford to Leeds, continued

forward and reverse gears in either high or low range, with top speed ranging from 5 mph in 1st gear, low range up to 36 mph. It had Bulleid Firth Brown wheels.

I believe it was designed to be able to carry out trip working as well as shunting, so was more powerful and faster than the 350 hp machines. In 1952 it was sent to the Hunslet Engine Company of Leeds for repairs. It then spent some time shunting at Stourton before being returned to the Southern region.

I posted a picture of the loco on the Ashford railway history Facebook site and this drew some very interesting comments. The young man on the left in the photo has been identified as George Stanton and the man in the trilby as Wilfred Wright, the erecting shop foreman. George Slingsby also commented that later on the gearbox was stripped down and the bearings were found to be “shot”. The engine was then towed out of the erecting shop, minus the gearbox, and scrapped in 1959. I suspect that the trip to Hunslet was for gearbox repairs, but that the design had some problems.

Do any of our senior members recall seeing this loco?

Richard Linkins

The editor’s assistant comments: another source (“The Diesel Shunter”, by Colin J Marsden), confirms that for much of its life 11001 was based at Norwood Junction shed, and worked mainly to or from Redhill yard, or shunting in that yard. This source also confirms that it was regarded as being too high-g geared for shunting work, but too low-g geared for main-line running. Unfortunately this source does not give any information about why the locomotive spent time in the Leeds area, and it makes no mention of any repairs being done by Hunslet. It simply suggests that it only worked here for “a short time”, so “senior members” would probably have to be well over 70 years old to remember it!

Gearboxes and transmissions were well-known weak points of early diesel locomotives. As described in our Chairman’s notes, in June we shall be staging an event to celebrate the success of John Alcock’s design for Hunslet 1697, and a major part of this success came from the clutch and gearbox being able to stand up to the rigours of a day’s shunting. So Richard’s article is a very timely reminder of one of the less-successful attempts: we would welcome more items about the early history of diesel locomotives over the next few issues!

John King & Co.

Last summer my wife and I visited Perthshire, principally for a friend's golden wedding anniversary. Having driven all that way, we extended the trip and made a short holiday. On our final morning, we had a brief walk along the River Almond and came across a cafe, *The Tickled Trout*. This had originally been a water mill operating as a Beetling Mill. This is a mill rather like a Fulling Mill, where wooden hammers are used to beat cloth to produce a softer surface. The difference between the two is that Fulling is associated with Woollens whereas Beetling is associated with Linen.



With my interest in industrial history, and being of a curious disposition, I decided to have a wander around, as many artefacts remained. You can imagine my surprise when I found the large cast iron gear wheel with the words JOHN KING LEEDS cast into the face that is pictured here. I immediately realised the significance of this find, as I remember well John King's foundry adjacent to Dartmouth yard, where the early Middleton railway had established a base.



John King & Co., continued

At this point I must confess that I knew very little about King's foundry.

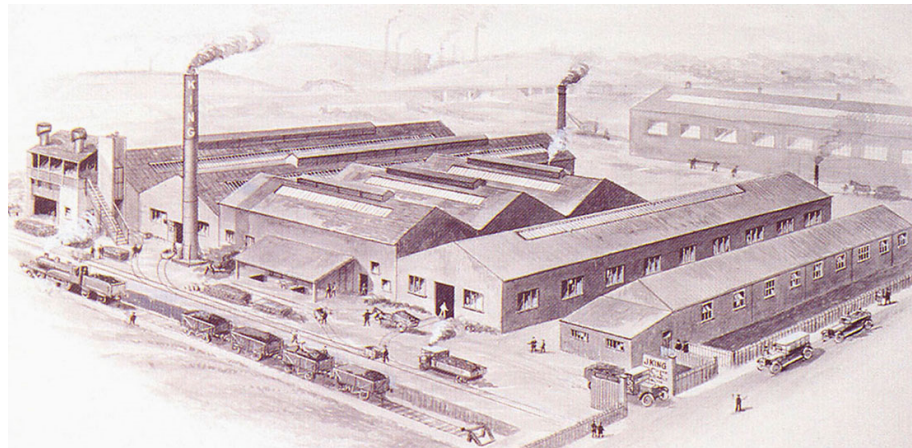
Some days later, on returning to Leeds, I set about doing some research and discovered that King and Co. still exist as a manufacturing company. This must be one of the very exceptional companies that still survive from the heyday of Leeds engineering.

The enterprise began in 1926 by producing plain pedestal bearings for coal mining pit tubs. Expansion came with the rapid mechanisation of the collieries and the need for chain conveying equipment. The company's web site claims that by 1930 its foundry had grown to be as shown in this engraving, but this looks like a much larger site than the one on Garnet Road. That is pictured on the previous page, where it is viewed from the adjacent Dartmouth Yard with our Sentinel in the foreground, and behind it in the corner of the yard the wooden hut

which acted as our first workshop.

On the other hand, the Garnet Road foundry certainly was the company's headquarters in 1960, as shown in this advertisement that is reproduced from Grace's Guide.

Today the company is an international business, still principally involved in manufacturing heavy duty chains and sprockets and associated components, but its headquarters are now on an industrial estate in Sherburn in Elmet. The mining industry continues to be a major client but other industries include, timber, biomass, energy from waste, cement,



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John Pease

The MRT Youth Team

This is the first of what I hope to be a regular column about the MRT Youth Team, to keep readers informed about what we are getting up to. The youth team has the important role of passing the valuable skills of the railway onto the younger generations, ensuring a secure future for this very historic railway. With several new members in the team and various projects in the planning, this year will see a regeneration of the youth team.



Over the past couple of months the youth team have been busy working in various roles, whilst also helping out in the workshop. Throughout the operational season you can often find members of the youth team working on the train as travelling ticket inspectors (TTIs) and locomotive cleaners. At other times the youth team are found helping out in the workshop, or working as a team to complete jobs such as line clearances and cleaning the locomotives in the engine house. These are all important jobs which help improve the experience for visitors.

The Youth Team, during their workshop day. From left to right: Joel Leverton, Ned Lane-Barry, Soheil Flynn, Geordie Brown, Steven Wild.

© John Linkins, 2023.

On January 14th, we held our first team workshop day of the year, which was

a tremendous success and was a great start to the year. Despite the cold weather we completed the winterisation of 'Brookes No.1' and 1310 in what I've been told was record time. It was great to see everyone working together, with the experienced volunteers guiding the team on the best ways to tackle things. After much persuasion with several spanners, Joel managed to remove both gauge glasses and most of the washout plugs, in the process getting a rather dirty shower of boiler water! In a surprising 50 minutes, I managed to remove the fire bars from 'Brookes No.1' and from 1310, before giving the fireboxes a thorough clean. Ned and Soheil worked to clean out the smokeboxes and boiler tubes of both 'Brookes No.1' and 1310, removing the layers of ash which had clung to the walls.

The MRT Youth Team, continued



The Youth Team Workshop Day: Geordie Brown in the firebox of Brookes No. 1, removing the firebars.

© Steven Wild 2023

It is hoped that we can make these team workshop days more regular especially whilst there are no services. Following our day in the workshop, the first team meeting of the year was held where we set out some aims for the year and outlined some possible projects that we could undertake.

I look forward to sharing some of these projects along with more news and updates from the youth team in future issues.

Geordie Brown



*The Youth Team Workshop Day:
Ned Lane-Barry and Soheil Flynn cleaning out the smokebox of NER 1310.*

© Steven Wild
2023

The Tala Tank

On a recent tour of India, the Leeds contingent of the group (Andrew Johnson, John & Dorothy Knapton and myself) used a bit of free time that we had in Kolkata (which was previously spelt Calcutta) to visit one of the lesser well known sights of the city, the Tala Tank. About a 15 minute walk from the Shyambazar stop on the city's Metro system, the tank is the worlds largest overhead water reservoir, capable of holding 9 million gallons of water.

The connection to Leeds is that it was constructed in 1909 by Clayton, Son & Co of Leeds: a firm that was also an important part of the railway's history. Claytons specialised in building gas works and producing metal pipes, they also made boilers for local steam crane manufacturers and for Yorkshire Patent Steam Wagon Co steam lorries, a firm that were part of the same group of companies.

The Yorkshire Post Leeds Tercentenary Supplement, published in July 1926, mentioned Clayton's work on the Tala Tank 17 years earlier: "A recent product of Moor End was an elevated steel reservoir, constructed and erected for the Corporation of Calcutta. The Reservoir was actually a steel tank, 321 feet square and 16 feet deep, supported on a veritable forest of steel stanchions, the total height from tank top to ground level being 110 feet. The tank was divided into four independent compartments, and had an overall capacity of 9,000,000 gallons or 40,000 tons. 7,000 tons of steel were used in its construction, and it was erected in only fifteen months, three months within the time specified by the contract."

The Moor End works was one of a few sites which were operated by Claytons in the Hunslet area and was situated along our Balm Road branch, where the retail park is located now. Other sites were located on our Dartmouth branch, and on Pepper Road. Steel plate for the tank was produced at Middlesbrough and in Burma, with the final assembly in Calcutta undertaken by Clayton engineers.

More information about the company can be found at

<www.leedsengine.info/leeds/histclayton.asp>.

The tank is still in use today, and still holds its record as the largest such tank. We had hoped to get to the foot of the tank and look for any plates from Claytons, but like everything in India this would have involved a large amount of paperwork to be filled in with the relevant authorities. By the time we had attracted the interest of security guards, though, we had taken photos of the tank, and so had to be content with these.

Kris Ward

The Tala Tank, continued



The Tala Tank, viewed from the far side of the metro station.

© Kris Ward, 2022.

In Memory of Michael Garbett

Andrew Parsley has sent us the following notice.

Unfortunately I have to inform our readers that Michael Garbett passed away on Friday 9th December. Michael had arrived at the railway when he was 11, full of enthusiasm and raring to go, working in the engineering side of things. There weren't any particular jobs he loved or hated: he enjoyed them all, from needle gunning, painting, repairing the fleet to later being part of the crew.

Michael started his first job at Braime Pressings on Hunslet Road as a Technician repairing the presses. But after an accident they had to let him go. He then found himself at Hunslet Car Auction as a valet and never looked back. He went from company to company working as a valet, eventually ending up at Luscombe Suzuki where he worked until too ill to do so.

Although Michael had not been to the railway as a volunteer for some years he was always on the sidelines, taking photos or talking to staff. He took great pride crewing on two steam engines, Sir Berkeley and 67. Both engines always looked great when he was cleaner on them.

In February 2022 he had been diagnosed with a failing liver, and when he turned 40 on the 30th October he hoped that soon he would be well enough to start at Middleton again, but sadly he passed away with his dad by his side. He will be greatly missed.

Then and Now

CONFLICT BETWEEN A STEAM ENGINE AND A DONKEY !—On Monday last, an unfortunate donkey, heeding not the notice to trespassers, had strayed on to the railway near to Hob-Moor, at the time of the approach of a train; the engineer of which, perceiving his critical position, gave him ample notice of their approach by the shrill whistle; but *Neddy*, being inclined to set at defiance his approaching foe, maintained his position until the engine neared him, when he turned round, and fired a volley with his heels at his iron-hearted antagonist, in doing which he was slain on the spot, the wheels running over his hind quarters.—*Yorkshireman*.

Leeds Railwayman Killed By Engine

William Bapty, a 43-year-old railway worker, of Laburnum-street, Hunslet, was killed instantly when a shunting engine knocked him down at the L.M.S. Railway goods siding in Balm-road, Leeds.

Bapty, who leaves a widow, had been employed by the railway company for

more than 20 years. This was the first accident in which he had been involved.

He was educated at Quarry-mount Elementary School.

In 1914 he joined the Royal Field Artillery and served throughout the war without receiving a wound.

He was a keen Rugby player formerly. He was given a trial for the Hunslet team shortly after the war, but was so severely injured that he had to give up the game.



WILLIAM BAPTY

Should these two newspaper cuttings be published with "trigger warnings"? They certainly indicate a marked difference from modern attitudes to aspects of health and safety!

Our thanks to the contributors who spotted and submitted them.

Top, Malcolm Johnson (from the Leeds Mercury of 10th October, 1840). What is not clear about this story is whether it actually involves the Middleton Railway, because the last of the rack locomotives was withdrawn in 1835, and Manning Wardle did not build "Blenkinsop" until 1866.

Left, Pat Benatmane (probably from the Yorkshire Post of 2nd November, 1939).

Behind the Scenes: The Santa Express



Left: The man himself, about to board the train at Moor Road.



Right: Santa giving away a present, with Tommy Morley-Yates as the attendant elf.

Trains December 2022



Above: Tommy Morley-Yates as an elf, loading a box of presents onto the train.



Above: Chris Hardy as the train manager and Tommy Morley-Yates as an elf, organising sets of presents in the NE Brake Van.

Right: The café area ready for the next train-load of visitors.



All © The Morley-Yates Family, 2022

MOOR ROAD HAPPENINGS

With the Santa season now well behind us we have a few weeks of being able to relax a bit with little pressure of things having to be done immediately. There's still much to do, though, and to get everything done that needs to be done before the start of 2023 running at the beginning of April will be a challenge, one to which I'm sure our loyal volunteers will rise.

LOCO NOTES

No. 6

The last Old Run gave a detailed account of the problems with the left hand coupling rod bearing and the work that had to be done to overcome these problems. It concluded that the work was complete and the loco only needed a steam test. This was duly carried out and it was found that the new bearing was running warmer than was acceptable. The bearing was stripped down once more and cleaned up and re-fitted. A subsequent steam test during the first weekend of the Santa Specials showed that the bearing remained cool to the touch and all was deemed to be satisfactory.

Up to the point of the conclusion of the bearing saga there had been no further instance of the loco sticking in mid gear. The loco was not used for the Santa services, being kept as standby to HE 2387. However, No.6 was given a run out on New Year's Day and the same problem occurred once more. This required a diesel to move the loco slightly and, once this was done, it was possible to put the reversing lever into full gear. The loco was able to complete the rest of its day's running without incident, but the instruction had to be given to leave the reverser in either forward or reverse and not put it in midgear which, in the long term is not a good approach. We are going to look at the possibility of fitting drain cocks to the steam chest to try to overcome this problem.

The loco is now due a boiler inspection and all the various jobs associated with preparation for this are nearly complete, the only outstanding task being to wash out the boiler, plans to do this being thwarted by the extremely cold weather we are currently experiencing.

1210 SIR BERKELEY

The last Old Run was optimistic in saying that, apart from painting, the loco was essentially finished and simply required a steam test to set the safety valves and check that all was OK. If only that were true. Mention was made of a leak between the balance pipe and the tank, which took three attempts to finally seal. Worse was to come, though, as once the water level reached the nameplates, some significant leaks were found. To some extent this was not unexpected, for

Moor Road Happenings, continued

reasons that go back to when the tank was made a good number of years ago. Inside the tank there are two lengths of steel angle which act as braces to stop the tank bulging under the pressure of water. These go across the tank and are welded to the tank sides. Whoever fitted the nameplates quite sensibly decided to place the nameplates in the middle of the tank sides. The only problem was that, when the holes were drilled for the nameplates, they were drilled in the exact spots where the braces were so it was impossible to put nuts on the bolts holding the nameplates in position. It seems that the holes were sealed with a liberal amount of silicone sealant and this is something that we have tried to replicate, but without the success of the original. We have managed to get the holes almost watertight but there are still signs of a slight dribble staining the paintwork, so further work is still required with this.

Having managed to get sufficient water into the tanks it was possible to give the completed loco a steam test. This first test got no further than 60 psi as there were significant leaks from two valves where they screwed into the boiler. Getting these to seal satisfactorily took several attempts. The root cause of this was that, when screwed up tight, the valve spindles had to align with the operating rods and, unless they were tight, they leaked. The valves are sealed to the boiler using copper washers and the copper washers that we had were all of a similar thickness as they are to the British Standard. Attempts to file the washers to the required thickness failed, as did the idea of using a double thickness washer. In the end we obtained some special washers from Dobson Gaskets and that solved the problem with the valves. However, more problems were to come as, on the next steam test, the gasket on the whistle valve mounting was found to have failed. Replacing this was a relatively simple job, but all these jobs can be done only when the loco is out of steam, so the whole saga took a good deal of time.

At last the day came when we were able to raise steam without any problem and it was possible to set the safety valves and take the loco for a trial run up to Middleton Park and back. On its return, it was found that all was well apart from the front right axlebox which, although not hot, was warmer than expected. Back in the running shed, the loco was jacked up at the front and the oil pipe feeding the axlebox was removed. Operating the mechanical lubricator by hand showed that the 'box was not receiving any oil. This was exactly what had happened when the loco went to the Bluebell Railway in 2007, and on that occasion the problem was traced to a seized non-return valve in the axlebox feed. Suspecting a recurrence of this, the non-return valve was stripped down but found to be in order. Subsequent investigation established that there was an air lock in the feed pipe and this was preventing the pump from delivering oil, as all that was

Moor Road Happenings, continued



MW 1210 "Sir Berkeley" at Park Halt on its first steam test, 15th January 2023.

© Steve Roberts, 2023

happening was that the air was being compressed and not allowing the oil to feed properly. A new length of pipe was made and fitted and this was painstakingly filled with oil and everything tried again, this time with success. The only problem with this design is that you have to dismantle everything again to fit it, so we cannot be certain that we haven't got more air trapped and that it will work. We shall have to await further testing to establish whether this is the case.

At the request of its owners, the Vintage Carriages Trust, the locomotive is due to be formally re-commissioned on the 15th April. Unfortunately, this coincides with the day its boiler inspection becomes due so, rather than wait till nearer the day, we have decided to bring it forward and the boiler has been prepared for its inspection, arranged for early February.

No. 11

Still nothing positive to report.

No.1310 (NER H)

It was decided to put 1310 into service at the beginning of September and rest HE 2387. The prime reason for doing this was to avoid HE 2387 running up too many days in steam and becoming due for a 'C' exam and boiler washout during

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the busy December Santa season. The loco has been running well and gives no indication of its need to come out of service. The only slight problem is with the pressure reducing valve on the steam feed to the vacuum ejector, which is not working properly. This means that the shut off valve is having to be used as a pressure regulating valve and has to be carefully set by the driver each time the ejector is turned on, and also has to be adjusted as boiler pressure fluctuates.

The loco has currently been drained and winterised. Its boiler certificate expires at the end of May and we will not be seeking any further extension to this, as it will have had 12 years of continuous service.

SENTINEL No.54

The Sentinel has spent virtually the whole of 2022 on display in the Engine House. Lack of action to sort out the various problems has been almost entirely down to the amount of work needed elsewhere and the lack of volunteers with the knowledge to sort it out. Hopefully, time will be found to do this in 2023.

HE 2387 BROOKES No.1

The loco was used for the Santa special services and worked all of the trains without any problem. However, it became obvious that the injector steam and delivery valves were once more starting to leak, and they will require further attention during the closed season. At present it has been stripped preparatory to a boiler washout and its annual inspection.

HC 1544 SLOUGH ESTATES No.3

The frames were shunted into the back road of the workshops during November, enabling the overhaul to progress at a faster rate, and it is currently going satisfactorily. Once inside the brakegear was quickly removed so that it would be possible to jack the frames up. The brakegear appears to be in reasonable condition and hopefully requires little work, although the various parts are still to be measured up for wear. The brake shoes are, however, needing replacement and we will have to make a pattern to have some cast. With the brakegear and a few other items removed it was then possible to jack the frames up sufficiently to allow the axleboxes to be removed. Initial inspection of the bearing surfaces shows them to be in reasonable condition and it is hoped that they will not require any remedial work. The same cannot be said for the axleboxes themselves, though, as it was already known that they were very loose in the hornguides and would require significant work. We have currently set up the necessary

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equipment to carefully measure everything up as a precursor to establishing just what work is required with the boxes. However, before this could be done, several days had to be spent on grinding the hornguides to get them reasonably flat and parallel to each other.



As part of the overhaul, it was deemed sensible to remove the pistons to establish the condition of the cylinders and pistons. Unfortunately, the design of the loco means that the pistons cannot be removed without first removing the front buffer beam and associated triangular gusset plates. Once these were removed it was a fairly easy job to remove the pistons. Fortunately the cylinders themselves were found to be in reasonable condition so that is one less thing to worry about. This wasn't the case with the piston rods and piston rings, though, both of which were found to be worn and in need of attention. The piston rods have now been machined in the Swift lathe (as shown in the picture above, with Malcolm Johnson in charge of the work) and are once more parallel. However, both rods are now down to scrapping size so next time this becomes necessary, it will require new piston rods. Hopefully not for many years to come, though. The left hand piston was machined fairly easily but this was not the case with the right hand one as it was found that the end of a centre drill had previously been broken off in the end of the rod, making it impossible to properly support it in the lathe. After several

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attempts to overcome the problem we eventually managed to get it to run true between the lathe chuck and tailstock. As the piston rods have been machined down in size we will now have to make some new neck rings to suit this smaller size.

It was already known that the footplate in the cab area was quite badly corroded and would require replacement. The many rivets that held this in place have now all been drilled out and the corroded plate has been removed. The running plate, which runs along the side of the loco, is generally in much better condition and will be retained. It has, however, suffered from corrosion between it and the supporting angles, resulting in it becoming quite rippled. This is slowly being attended to and we are hopeful that it can be returned to something like reasonable without having to replace otherwise good material.



The front of HC 1544 "Slough Estates No. 3" with the bufferbeam removed, showing the cast frame stretcher which will almost certainly need to be replaced,

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Mention has previously been made of the poor state of the cast frame stretcher between the valve chests. This has a substantial amount of cracking in it and it

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is also quite badly corroded on its upper surface which forms the bottom of the smokebox. Again, as mentioned previously, this area had a significant amount of concrete in it which had to be chiselled out. At first we could not understand why this had been done, but now it has largely been removed it is almost certain that the concrete had been used as a form of repair to hold it all together and stop leakage.

Its condition means that there is probably no alternative to replacing this stretcher, and work in recent weeks has included the significant task of removing the forty bolts that hold it in place, bolts that have probably not been removed since the loco was built. This has been a difficult task as, although those outside the smokebox area have given up the fight fairly easily, those that have been under the concrete have been a much harder task as they were badly corroded and have had to be drilled out. Limited space meant that you could only use a hand held drill to do the job of drilling the $\frac{3}{4}$ " diameter holes through 2" of metal. At the moment we are exactly half way in completing the task so there are a few more days of fighting still to come.

Work has also been ongoing in needle-gunning the frame plates preparatory to them receiving their first coats of paint.

Fowler 42200033 HARRY

Available for use but, apart from the occasional shunt, has seen little activity.

Peckett 5003 AUSTIN'S No.1

We have now had several attempts to solve the problem of the chattering air unloading valve, but with no success. The valve is currently sat on the workbench awaiting stripping down for the fifth time.

D2999

Has been in regular service when required. A recurrence of the speeder valve not operating occurred during the Santa specials, but now we know what the problem is it was quickly fixed.

Currently available for service, as required.

D577 MARY

The modified brake pull rods have been welded together but still require non-destructive testing to prove that they are fit for purpose.

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HE 6981

The loco has sat with a partly assembled bonnet for several months now, the major missing bit being the bonnet top. This was somewhat distorted and there had been some doubt as to its suitability for further use. However, after some more straightening it was deemed suitable for, at least, a trial fit and, after a bit more adjustment was deemed to be suitable for permanent re-fitting. Another missing part of the bodywork was the cover plate over the vacuum exhaust. This was a new bit as the loco never had an exhaust in industrial service. The cover plate was drawn up and the required bit made for us by Ashfield Sheet Metal.

D631 CARROLL

Available for traffic but has not been used since September of last year.

L.M.S. 7051

Available for use, if required.

D1373 MD&HB No.45

Available for use when required and seems to be the preferred locomotive for shunting and train operations. New brake blocks have been obtained for the loco, but have yet to be fitted as there is still a bit of life left in the existing ones.

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

CARRIAGE & WAGON NOTES

The three coaches have continued in service, as required. Periodic exams were carried out during November preparatory to the Santa season.

COACH 1074

During October, rainwater started to come in through the roof. Investigation showed that the roof sheeting had split again. This had occurred last year and a repair was made at that time. As the coach was wanted for the Santa specials a temporary patch was applied to cover the tear. Fortunately, this repair managed

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to last over the busy Santa period. Plans are now being made to replace the roof covering over the winter shutdown and, hopefully, give the coach an external repaint ready for the start of the season.

PMV 2223

After a lull over the Santa period, work has continued apace on the conversion of this coach. All the timber framing has now been installed on the coach sides with only the ends requiring doing at the time of writing. Installing the framing has been a slow but steady task for the very small team involved; often just one person. Completion of the timber frame will allow a start to be made on panelling of the exterior, a task that will hopefully be much quicker than installing the frame.

The new roof covering has now been fitted to the roof although trimming of the sides and ends still needs to be done, as does painting. The covering is the traditional waterproof canvas as used on most timber bodied vehicles on the railways. Applying it involves putting the canvas on the roof and centralising it and smoothing out any kinks, etc, as best as can be done. The canvas is then folded back on itself over its longitudinal seam to expose half of the roof. A canvas bedding compound is then applied to the exposed roof in liberal quantity (it takes six 5 litre tins to do one of our coaches) and smoothed out before the canvas is unfolded and bedded into the compound, again taking trouble to smooth it out. Once one side has been done, a similar exercise can be carried out on the other half of the roof. Although the canvas is waterproof the roof covering will receive several coats of paint to protect it and give it a longer life.

NE BALLAST BRAKE VAN

As with the coaches, the ballast brake van had a periodic exam prior to the start of the Santa services. The van is an important part of our operation as this is where the presents are kept and where Santa's helpers beaver away getting them ready for Santa to give out. However, on examination, it was found that the vacuum brake, although working, was leaking off too quickly to be acceptable. This would be very important in the (albeit unlikely) event of a broken coupling. As overhauling the brake cylinder is not a five minute job, the van was simply marshalled at the south (uphill) end of the train, where a broken coupling would not be anything other than an inconvenience.

After the end of the season the van was shunted into the workshops and the cylinder removed for overhaul. Upon dismantling it soon became clear what the problem was likely to be, as it was full of rust. This has now all been removed and the various parts of the cylinder and reservoir have been cleaned and given a coat of paint. At the time of writing, the overhauled cylinder has still to be re-

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assembled, along with new seals and rubber rolling ring, and so it still needs testing, but it is hoped that the problem will be solved fairly easily.

AROUND AND ABOUT WORKSHOP TOILETS

Work has continued on improving the workshop toilet facilities. A new and more efficient heater has been installed both to make people more comfortable when using the facilities and to safeguard against frozen pipes in cold weather. A vanity unit has been installed under the sink and shelving and a seat have also been provided. A rather fancy new tap provides instant hot or cold water at a temperature that the user can select.

WATER SOFTENER

New water softening equipment has been installed to provide us with softened water. The existing resin vessel and brine tank have been retained but the vessel has been provided with new resin. The new equipment is much simpler and is generally automatic in operation, unlike the old one which required the refreshing to be done manually. However, things didn't get off to a good start as it was soon found that the softener was not producing softened water. The suppliers came on site and, after dismantling the head unit found a trapped seal in one of the pistons which was effectively jamming everything up. This has now been sorted and we have softened water again.

Why do we need a water softener? Soft water is important for boilers as, otherwise, a scale coating would build up on the boiler plates with consequent problems, especially with the firebox. Hard water has magnesium and calcium salts in the water. The water softener works by removing these magnesium and calcium salts from the water as it passes through. The water softener has a resin vessel containing thousands of tiny resin beads that hold electrically charged ions. At the start of a cycle, when freshly regenerated with salt water, the beads become full of sodium ions from the salt. Then, as hard water passes through the water softener system, the calcium and magnesium ions are attracted to the resin beads. There, sodium ions are exchanged for the hard water ions. The softener system then delivers soft water for use in our locomotive boilers.

RUNNING SHED

The recent high winds have unfortunately dislodged two of the 'chinaman's hats' on the top of the smoke vents in the roof of the running shed. The prime cause

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has been corrosion of the fastening struts, not helped by the corrosive atmosphere created by the smoke. As the likelihood of the other two failing similarly is quite high, it is likely that all four will be replaced with similar ones made out of stainless steel.

New lighting is currently being installed in the running shed pit. These are LED tubes and will hopefully be more robust than the previous lighting. However, to give them added protection it is planned to fasten steel angle above them, as otherwise they are unfortunately too handy as a foothold for people climbing out of the pit. It is also planned to paint the pit walls white to give added reflection.

COLD WEATHER PROBLEMS

Recent years have been relatively frost free whilst we were operating trains and we quickly forget how difficult it can be to operate steam locomotives in freezing conditions. The two recent spells of cold weather have unfortunately taken their toll. The first spell occurred whilst we were running the Santa trains and on the Saturday (10th December) we arrived to find both the water tank and the water crane frozen up, meaning that we could not water the locomotive. Fortunately the loco's tank was full so we were able to start the Santa service as normal whilst we set about unfreezing things. First, we set about unfreezing the water tank and the supply to the water crane. Once we were satisfied that this was okay attention turned to the water crane itself. It was soon apparent that the riser pipe inside the column was frozen solid so a propane heater was left to work its magic on this. The steam loco was now on its fourth trip to Middleton Park and the driver had said that he had insufficient water for another trip. Then, as the train was actually running into the platform there was a gurgling noise followed by a good stream of water coming out of the hose on the end of the column. A close shave indeed. However, all was not good as there was also a steady stream of water coming out of the column elsewhere, indicating a leak out of sight. This was not something that we could deal with whilst the Santa services were running so we had to live with this leak, fortunately not too severe.

A second cold snap shortly after the New Year also did some damage, this time to the valve controlling the loco supply at the water tank which now leaks quite badly and will probably have to be replaced before the start of the season. We have also been frozen up in the workshops but seem to have managed to get away without any further damage.

THE WATER CRANE

The water crane at the north end of the Moor Road platform was installed in time for the 2008 season. At the time it was made to suit the locos we had in service

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and, as such, it proved to be satisfactory for filling the tanks on those locos. At the time there was good reason for not making it any taller. With the entry into service of HL 3860 though, problems have arisen with getting the delivery hose into the tank as the hose was not really high enough to enable this to be done easily.

It was always envisaged that, if necessary, we could easily increase the height of the crane by simply extending the top part upwards by about two feet and this was to be part of the winter works programme if time allowed. However because of the leak that had come about due to the frost damage this work became a priority and was brought forward. The water pipe was lifted out using the Smiths crane and taken round to the workshops for attention. Initially, we could not see any problem so we unscrewed the downpipe from the crosspipe and, after standing it on a piece of thick rubber to provide a seal, we poured water into the pipe to fill it. The result was almost immediate and showed a split about 8" long along the seam of the pipe, about one foot up from the bottom.

Whilst we had originally intended just to extend this pipe and to weld up the crack it was decided that it would be much simpler if a complete new piece of pipe of the correct length was used, so the old pipe was removed from the bearing that allows the arm to swivel and a new length of pipe of increased length was cut and duly fitted in. At the time of writing the water crane still needs rebuilding but this should be a simple task to complete.

Steve Roberts

Letter to the Editor

Hi, another interesting Old Run, thank you. It is good to have a 16-ton wagon, there were certainly lots of them on the railway back in the day. It's a shame we can't have more, I'd love to see again three loaded, loose coupled with 'Sweet Pea' in charge, though it wouldn't be allowed now.

When it comes to building replicas, Jenny Lind would be attractive, but if we were to construct anything surely it would have to be a 'Salamanca.' Of course it wouldn't pull regular trains, but imagine it on a demonstration track.

Best wishes

Gordon Crapper

The editor's assistant replies: I remember working loaded 16-ton wagons with Sweet Pea (HE 1786), and I'm not sure I share Gordon's enthusiasm for the idea! One might be OK, but three would be a lot too close for comfort to being uncontrollable.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor:

I was interested to see in OR 256 the feature about sixteen-ton mineral wagon B154977. You mention investigation and planning work: in which connection may I please point out that I see three things wrong with it that could be attended to. These concern the inscriptions.

First, the lettering itself. It may have been easy for whoever did it to use Letraset stencilling or transfers (rather than by hand), but it is in a modern typeface and is incorrect. The picture on page 17 shows the correct sans-serif style. Looking through the pages of British Railways Illustrated shows slight variation between different wagons, no doubt depending on which works, or signwriter, did the job; but the general style is the same throughout, so I wonder if there was an official BR specification for “Numbering and Lettering of Goods Wagons”? If so, it would be interesting to see it.

Second, the black rectangle. In every wagon view I have seen, it is tucked neatly in the bottom left corner of the left-hand panel – not floating around someplace in the middle. Again, page 17 shows it correctly placed.

Third, an omission: The tare weight of the wagon at bottom right: a vital piece of information for wagons in daily use, which every one of them had, enabling the weighbridge operator to determine and record the weight of the contents. On page 17, B227009 has it on a small black rectangle, neatly tucked in the bottom right corner, though B91552 in “real-life” service doesn’t.

Another omission could be the white inverted V at the foot of the side door, which I distinctly remember, though I suspect it was discontinued latterly; neither of the wagons on page 17 have it.

These faults do not reflect favourably on the standards of authenticity of whoever it was did the paint job on your wagon, the Great Central or the MMOSI (must be some little time ago, judging by the traces of rust beginning to show). You will agree that above all, a museum should have its exhibits correctly portrayed as they would have been at the period represented; though sadly, not all do.

Yours sincerely, Chris. C. Thornburn (Mr).

The museum manager replies: yes, these are all points that will need correcting. The fault was with MMOSI’s team of railway volunteers (which has now disbanded), but dates from before the current curator of engineering was in post. The GCR’s “Quorn and Quorn” wagon group publish a lot of useful information about liveries, etc., some of which probably has come from BR specifications, but it is not clear which bits. Lastly, my recollection of shunting wagons into Robinson & Birdsell’s yard is that their weighbridge operator insisted on weighing them both empty and full, and would not have dreamt of relying on the painted tare weight panel.



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The Next Train Departs ...



“Brookes No. 1” sets off for Park Halt. with another Santa Express train. Chris Hardy is on duty in the NE Brake Van, which was acting as the mobile present warehouse. And yes, it was every bit as cold on the platform as it looks!

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