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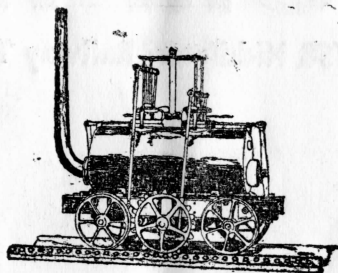
The Old Run

Journal of the 1758 Middleton Railway Trust, Leeds



The MRT's natural local:

THE ENGINE INN



Our best beer exploded your First
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One of TETLEY'S houses
Foot of Old Run Road

The Old Run

Journal of the 1758 Middleton
Railway Trust, Leeds

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

VOLUME 6

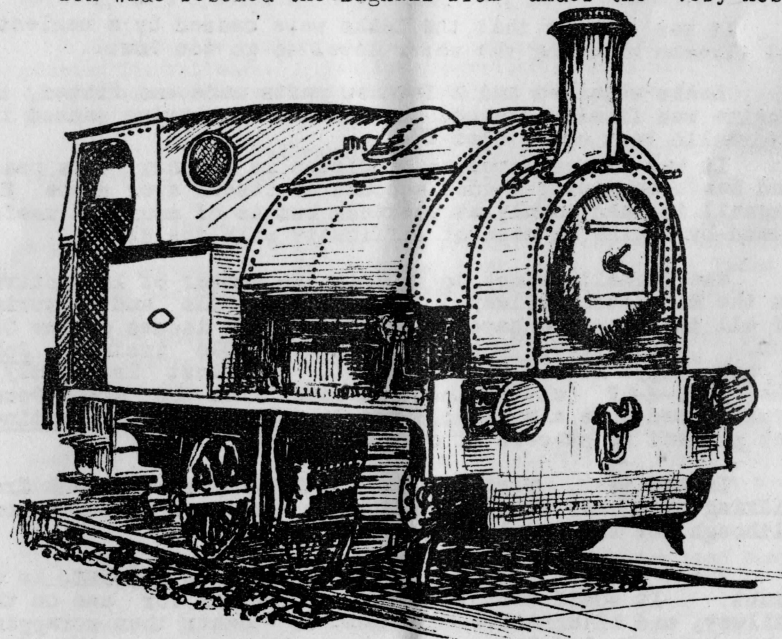
NUMBER 52

SPRING 1966

THE LITTLE RED ENGINE

The Bagnall 0-4-OST (No. 2702) is now regularly at work on the Middleton Railway, as members of the MRT will know. The locomotive was purchased at scrap price from George Conen (Machinery Merchants) Ltd, Stanningley, using the proceeds of the sale of two surplus tramcars. All who have seen it will agree that the engine, although not of great historic value, fills a big gap in the line's motive power roster.

Ben Wade rescued the Bagnall from under the very nose



of the scrap torch, and persuaded the helpful management at Cohen's to let the MRT inspect it and attempt restoration.

The engine is the smallest on the Middleton Railway, and, incidentally, the newest (built 1943). When parked beneath the beetling brows of the John Alcock it looks tiny indeed. It weighs 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ tons, its wheelbase is 5ft 6in, and the 2ft 9in wheels look like piano castors. Only the valve gear and connecting rod betray that the frame and wheels are really part of an engine and not some engineer's trolley holding up a spare boiler.

Having thoroughly insulted the engine, I should add that in performance it surpasses many of its burlier cousins! The wheelbase and diameter, of course, make it i d e a l l y suited to Middleton's sharp curves and stiff climbs, and it presents a truly inspiring sight and sound as it roars over Moor Road with a load of plates.

An examination of the working parts of the engine at Cohen's showed that it had been well looked after in its 22 years. The only real snag which appeared - and one which required many hours of laborious and painstaking work by several MRT members to set right - was a leaky boiler. As fast as one leak was plugged, two others started, or the one repaired the day before opened up again - and so on for six months!

It was thought that the leaks were caused by a neglectful fireman allowing the water level to go too low.

Leaks repaired and a few new parts made and fitted, the engine was finally steamed on November 20, having passed its hydraulic test on October 28.

It was transferred to Middleton in January this year, and has been giving a good account of itself ever since. The Bagnall is used mainly at weekends but is of course a useful stand-by engine in case of difficulty with the diesel.

The Bagnall brings up to six the number of locomotives on the Middleton Railway. Technical details and histories of all the engines have appeared in past issues of The Old Run. Locomotives which are serviceable include: John Alcock (1932 Hunslet 0-6-0 diesel, used most frequently); the Y7 0-4-0T (ex-NER loco on loan from the Steam Power Trust, used once a month); the Bagnall; and the Sentinel (at present in process of overhaul and repainting).

In addition, Windle (the 0-4-0 Borrow's well tank from Pilkington's) may be steamed under c e r t a i n conditions, although not for regular service.

The f u t u r e of Swansea, the Avonside 0-6-0ST, is in doubt. It would cost too much to restore for use on the railway, and alternative arrangements - other than scrapping - are being looked into. Whatever happens, it is hoped to find Swansea an honourable resting place.

Down at Grass Roots

It is a cold winter morning. The Y7 is gently simmering amid gusts of strong, wet wind. Sitting in the brake van waiting for steam pressure before taking out the Saturday train from Clayton's are three Middleton stalwarts - young men with an air of easy expertise, known for their sheer dogged endurance in the face of the biting, tear-jerking, merciless Hunslet climate.

Who are these splendid heroes of the steel rail, their countenances weathered in the struggle to maintain and operate the

Meet the Men who run the World's Oldest Railway

oldest railway in the universe? In charge is strapping Jim Lodge-24, white and m a r r i e d, to use his own tight-lipped, heroic expression. Jim wears his hair long, modestly claiming that he is only waiting for the warm weather before having it cut. No mention of Samson here, but the thought readily comes to mind!

Jim fills in spare time down at British Railways, where his rugged outdoor qualities are put to good use in maintaining the Company's outdoor machinery. Always a man for the percussion section, Jim's speciality is looking after giant mechanical hammers.

Jim and wife Pauline have a son, James (3), who shares Dad's passion for railways. Pauline, regrettably, does not. Jim has been interested in railways since the age of 3, when he saw a L&Y "Radial" tank on the Ilkley line.

Apart f r o m railways, Jim is attracted by anything unusual that moves in a mechanical sort of way.

His official duty at Middleton is Permanent Way Engineer - a post for which it would be hard to find a keener and more hard-working occupant. He loves his work, but urgently lacks the necessary assistance, especially on Sunday mornings at 10.30.

Jim's most memorable week was when he and two others, without any help mechanical or human, replaced three 60ft lengths of track, using only one small jack and some crowbars.

After a hard day's mechanical labour, Jim loves to relax and play the tenor sax, clarinet or slide whistle in the Oddfellows Jug Band. He collects jazz records of all kinds and has a wide taste in other music.

Reading voraciously completes his list - "I once read Dante's Inferno," he told me, "- just for the Hell of it!"

Famous Barry Wood is the second member of the trio. His tanned face and searching gaze belie his tender years, for he is

Down at Grass Roots

Continued from previous page

but 14. The quality and regularity of his work at Middleton show that he has beaten the demon Apathy, and indeed his own motto, hung in silent tribute on the brake van wall, reads: "My bed's in the locker."

On reckoning up, Barry finds he has been coming to Middleton nearly every week for three years - "Time goes that quick here!". He is well known and well loved for his cheerful expression, and his resilience under adversity is certainly needed.

Barry's main interest is the Sentinel loco, of which he is the official engineer. Reminiscing about the six months of hard service done by that engine, he thinks the Sentinel "just about did everybody in", but it saved the railway. His most alarming experience was one occasion when "Nelly's" boiler pressure rose 10 lbs above danger level.

At present, he reckons the engine will be out of service until at least July. The main requirement is a firebox, but as always at Middleton it is not that the jobs needed to be done are too difficult, but that they are too numerous and help is too scarce. Whatever is keeping the railway operating gets top priority, and everything else, no matter how urgent or worthwhile in itself, must wait.

In the time Barry has left over after being at Middleton and at Matthew Murray School, he is building a free-lance model steam locomotive, roughly based on a Stanier Black 5. All his life he has been interested in railways, and graduated to Middleton from trainspotting.

Another popular Middletonian is Peter Nettleton, celebrating his 17th birthday - "and many of them!" I wished him. "With care you should live to a Ripe Old Age. Just watch your shunting."

Peter has also been coming down for three years, having started when he was at Cockburn High School. He now works for the Yorkshire Electricity Board as an apprentice engineer.

Helps with John Alcock

Although he dislikes nasty British Railways diesels, Peter has a strong affection for the John Alcock, and helps in maintaining it. He was one of those nearly "done for" when the Sentinel was in service, too, not only plugging leaks but also acting as impromptu fireman.

His main interest in railways is on the technical side, and he is also a would-be modeller - planning to start his own TT layout any day now. Like many enthusiasts, Peter is also a good photographer and does his own developing - though he rarely gets a chance to take photos down at Middleton. Who does!

The hovertrain experiment

How long before the steel-wheeled railway becomes obsolete? Not for many years yet, by all accounts; but, from the way things are moving in several parts of the world, the children of the next century may well be asking what railways themselves - and not just steam engines - were like.

The successor to the railways will, of course, be the tracked hovercraft - not the motorway, as certain quarters would like! Progress towards a practicable hovertrain system is necessarily slow and unspectacular, though things are now at last beginning to reach the test-bed stage.

The French, in their constant search for "gloire nationale", appear to lead the field, though it may simply be that they make

Who will be first to unveil the railway's successor?

more noise about their achievements than anybody else. Certainly, Paris-Match pulled no punches when it described the tracked hovercraft as "une formidable invention française" - though the principle itself is about as French as les Beatles!

The cause of all the fuss was the decision in mid-1965 that the French Government would finance the construction of a prototype "Aerotrain", a model of which had been operating for some time. Running on a concrete track of inverted T-shape, this vehicle will be designed for a top speed of 250mph, though, with complete elimination of friction between train and track, this is by no means the maximum attainable.

Meanwhile, across the water in Anglo-Saxon territory, there is at least as much activity, if not so much talk. Hovercraft Development Ltd, at their headquarters near Southampton, have carried out exhaustive research and development, and seem all set to embark also on the construction of a full-size prototype. Five miles of disused railway are to be made available to the company by BR for the purpose of testing.

British Railways themselves, of course, have a vital interest in this potential successor to their own network, and are in close touch with the developments. On their own account they are perfecting, in a joint effort with Manchester University, the linear induction motor - an electrical propulsion device which has no moving parts. This motor, work on which moved to Derby when Gorton Works closed down, would be the natural motive-power for a tracked hovercraft.

And what of the rest of the world? The only other country known to be developing this sort of system is the United States, but their business secrets seem even harder to obtain than their military ones. Several firms appear to be working along the same lines, and none of them wants to let the others know how well (or badly) it is doing. We shall just have to wait and see.

'The Settle & Carlisle Railway'

The Story of the Settle-Carlisle Line, by Frederick W. Houghton and W. Hubert Foster. Huddersfield Advertiser Press, 30s Od.

The re-issue of this classic, originally published in 1948, will be welcomed by railway enthusiasts and anyone who sees the fascination of railway folk-lore. At a time when so many glossies are being produced in the name of railway history, this book has the genuine ring of a work undertaken for love - love of the stately viaducts and the rough-hewn countryside that figure so prominently in its splendid photographs.

No-one can read this book without being uplifted by the heroic scale of the Settle & Carlisle railway. Here is the story of how a railway should be run - fully integrated with the communities it touches as well as fulfilling an important national need.

All the ingredients of a railway are here. Operation, history, locomotives, rolling stock, signalling, weather conditions, structures, permanent way - and mishaps - all are described in various chapters. But above all the book tells the story of the relationship between the railway and the countryside - a mutual trust and respect which has grown strong over the years. This is what makes the book memorable, and makes one wish for more enterprises of this kind.

Many of the legends which grew up around the railway are recounted, now so much a part of local tradition that it is difficult to determine their accuracy. An example is the story of the old stockaded turntable at Garsdale:

"Many years ago during a gale - runs the story - an engine was being turned on the Garsdale table when the wind took it for a plaything and sent it round and round and round as interminably as the sails of a mill. The frantic efforts of the crew to stop this new-style roundabout were unavailing until they hit upon the idea of shovelling ballast and earth into the pit. After that particular contretemps the Garsdale turntable received its protective stockade."

I can thoroughly recommend this book as an example to would-be railway authors. It will be treasured by all who receive it, and the Advertiser Press is to be congratulated on its enterprise in producing it.

EXCURSION

Unseen, unheard, yet close in time and space,
The last great steam train thunders on apace.
The pistons chime, the wheels spin strong and free,
The whistle sings a glorious jubilee.
The sparks fly high, the exhaust blows,
And in the cab a white-lipped furnace glows.
Along the track the signal lights are green,
And we must pass them, while they may be seen.

O friend will you be on that train that day?

A trip through the Marches in the days of Dean Goods

WHEELS OF BYGONE WALES

Leaving Stockport at 1.15am was a weird experience. The train, one of many portions of the "York Mail", was nearly an hour late from Leeds, but that was immaterial at this time of the night. Gusts of November wind blew little eddies of dust round the iron pillars, and the only activity visible was an occasional train of derelict goods wagons such as are only seen by night.

The York Mail was composed of two excursion coaches and a mixture of mail and parcels vans, hauled by the expected Black Five. The passengers were three anglers, three railway enthusiasts, and a soldier. We settled down to the beginning of our night watch.

We changed at Crewe and, after $\frac{3}{4}$ hour, boarded a train for Oswestry, passing through Whitchurch and Ellesmere. For most of the way this cross-country line is single track, giving the impression that the railway is somehow less established in that district than elsewhere, and trains discrete intruders. Perhaps that explains the stealth with which our train crept across from Cheshire into Shropshire. Dark fields, steam, trees and stars wheeled by in solemn splendour, while our three suburban coaches sang a slow and measured song to unseen foxes, hunting owls, and silent poachers.

Five o'clock and Oswestry, where the refreshment room was just open. Here Kappa, not to miss anything, disappeared in the direction of the loco shed, while Whippet and I enjoyed tea and sandwiches.

The first train to Machynlleth was our next conveyance. We decided to try and sleep on this, but for me it was impossible. Visible through the windows (we had removed the bulbs) was the silent majesty of the heavens, obscured only in patches by full-blown clouds and whiffs of steam drifting past from the Standard Class 5. How different it looked from this viewpoint and at this time in the morning!

So the journey continued, until after leaving Newtown we roused ourselves to get out in another few miles at Caersws. Here it was still dark, and the stationmaster was surprised when passengers got off at his remote platform at such an hour. He invited us to share his breakfast tea and afterwards put us on our road to Moat Lane. There was a station there, but the train had not stopped.

Moat Lane Junction is about two miles down a hedge-lined winding road. Only the milkman was about to wish us good morning as we passed along, just beginning to gain our second wind thanks to the tea and fresh air.

Soon the sweet-smelling air carried another sound - the gentle hissing of steam and the clank and scrape of shovel in coal. This was Moat Lane shed and we nipped over a low wall for a quiet, nefarious look round. Two or three not very exciting goods engines were steaming up, but we enjoyed our contact with them as much as a boy enjoys apples taken at risk from an orchard.

Eventually we arrived at Moat Lane station, where we waited for a train back to Welshpool. By 7.30 or so, when it arrived, it was beginning to get light. To our delight, the engine of the train was the last remaining Dean Goods O-6-0. These were famous engines, and as we set off from Moat Lane I soon found out why. The acceleration and nippiness of the handsome and antique-looking loco was fantastic!

As we sped along through the undulating countryside, the sun rose and silhouetted the train against passing hillsides, and I will never forget the exhilaration of watching the Dean's shadow race along a cross hedges, sheep and all with sharp, decisive exhaust and an occasional cheerful whistle. If they have trains in heaven, may they be like that one!

Too soon we reached Welshpool, where it was still early enough to carry out an extensive and undetected search through the luggage label racks in search of rare labels - and the search was fruitful. Our main purpose in coming to Welshpool, however, was a trip on the narrow gauge, which at that time was still operating a goods-only service under the old (Western Region) regime. The stationmaster at Welshpool made out indemnity forms for us, and there was a small fare to pay.

Although tracks came down into the station yard, the starting point for the Welshpool & Llanfair Railway trains was some distance away near the railway's headquarters and depot. We walked up to it and I was surprised to see how un-narrow gauge the line appeared, with bull-head rails and wagons that looked very much like their big brothers.

"The Earl" was the only engine in service, and after photographs we climbed in the guard's van for the run through Welshpool's back streets and laundry. Never had I seen such a railway, so obviously in the wrong place and yet so cheerfully accepted by those who were inconvenienced by it. Perhaps, after all, the charm of the railway had won their hearts. Or, more likely, we were just lucky in who we met that morning.

There were no springs on the guard's van, and the track was short of East Coast standards, so the journey was not very comfortable. But comfort was far from our thoughts as we climbed out of the town and crossed the road for the cross-country journey. The rails were often barely visible in the grass and undergrowth, but the driver was obviously familiar with every joint, and knew the exact discrete speed at which to approach any given obstacle.

At Castle Caerinion, where there were a passing loop and gates to be opened and closed, I had my turn on the footplate.

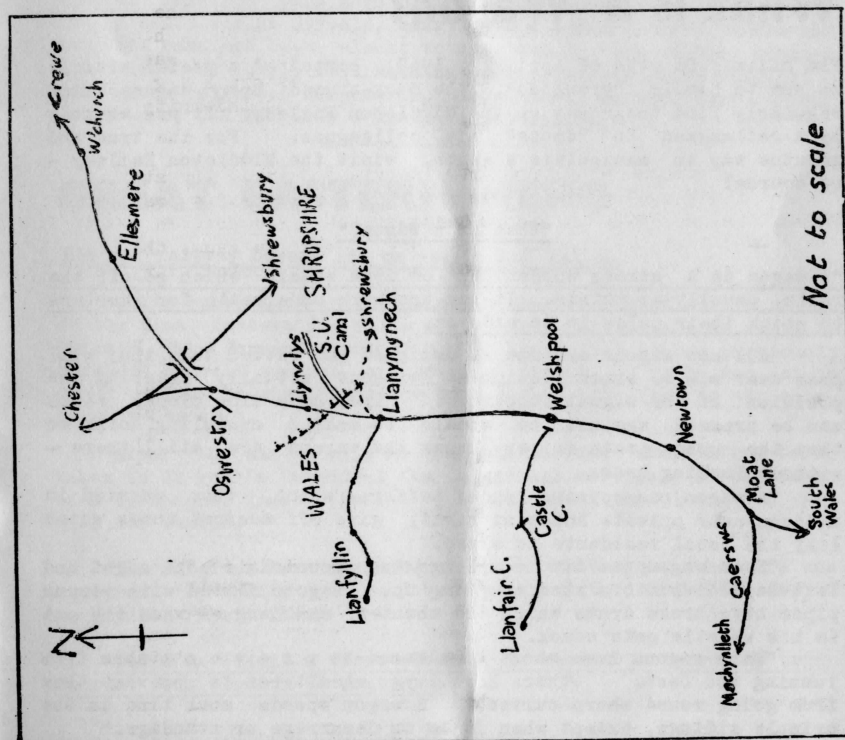
This moved in many directions simultaneously in an alarming but stimulating manner. It was surprising how much room there was on a 2ft 6in gauge engine, and the three of us on the footplate managed to keep out of each other's way, most of the time.

Finally we arrived at Llanfair Caerinion, where it was market day - hence the train - and went to buy refreshments while the train was shunted and prepared for the return trip.

The returning train was longer, as the journey was downhill, and the run was accomplished in shorter time.

This trip had been the highlight of our day, but it was still morning and we decided to go on to Llanymynech to "do" the Llanfyllin branch. Llanymynech is a double junction, with the south facing branch going to Llanfyllin, and the north facing one, long closed, to Shrewsbury. There was some confusion of platforms until the train finally arrived from Llanfyllin. It was a two-coach train hauled by a Standard, I think class 4.

We had an interesting companion on this trip - a native who told us all about the places we passed through, their meaning, folk-lore, associations with ancient Welsh kings, and present status. Llansantffraid, Llanfechain (long way from the village,



Continued from previous page

this), Brynwyn (Offa planned his Dike here) and Llanfyllin (Oh, going back to Llanymynech on the same train are you? Well, look me up next time you're here!)

From Llanymynech we took a train a couple of stations up the line to Llyncllys, which is in Shropshire. Here, in the middle of a cold and showery November afternoon, we set out to walk two miles to the quay on the disused part of the Shropshire Union Canal where a mineral tramway of ancient lineage had once come down from the hills. Where was the bustle of those days? All that now appeared was sloping ramps of earth, disconnected pools of water slopped by the cattle, and the towpath, preserved because it was a right-of-way.

So our day in the Welsh Marches ended on a pensive note. We walked silently back to Llyncllys station in a bitterly cold wind spattered with rain, and eventually returned to Stockport at an equally unearthly hour to that at which we had left, thanks to another portion of the ubiquitous York Mail.

I spent the next three days in bed with flu! But I consider the time was well spent. The jewels of this country are treasures buried in a field, and we must sometimes make sacrifices if we are to find them.

What is a Wagon?

The Railway Gazette of April 12, 1963, contained a useful article on how to handle "gremlins", the much-abused open wagons which regularly find their way up the Middleton Railway. It was written by a railwayman to "amuse" his colleagues. For the true and genuine way to manipulate a wagon, visit the Middleton Railway - of course!

"What is a Wagon?"

"A wagon is a strong wooden box on iron wheels which go off the rails, usually at points. It has ironwork underneath for shunters to stick their poles in to ride on."

"All new wagons are now so designed and fitted that they will pass over a.w.s. track equipment without actually altering the position of the signal concerned. They have iron blocks which can be pressed against the wheels to make a squealing noise so that the goods train driver knows the wagons are still there - without looking back.

"A wagon has spring-loaded buffers which, when shunted in sidings near private homes at night, give off musical tones which lull the local residents to sleep."

"Each wagon has two couplings to accommodate both right and left-handed shunters when coupling up. Wagons fitted with vacuum pipes have brake drums which the shunter can bang on when the pea in his whistle gets stuck.

"Many wagons have short wheelbases to prevent them from running too fast. Others have long wheelbases to prevent them from going round sharp curves. A wagon spends much time in the cripple sidings, except when it is on demurrage or standage."

The Old Run, Spring 1966

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Edge Hill postscript

BY
MERVYN LEAH

Things rarely stand still, even on a line that has been closed for 40 years, and the following notes are a sequel to my article in the September, 1964 Old Run, which seemed to arouse the interest of many readers.

On the Edge Hill site itself, the unfinished bridge with the parapets at field level was demolished early in 1965, presumably because it had become unsafe (45 years old, with never a train passed under it!) There is also talk locally of erasing the remaining earthworks, on the grounds that they are an eyesore. (They wouldn't be if people didn't use the cuttings as a rubbish tip!)

Down below, Burton Dassett, originally the junction of the Edge Hill Light Railway, is now the terminus of the truncated remains of the SMJ, retained to serve that infamous WD ammunition depot. The withdrawal of through trains between Stratford on Avon and Woodford Halse (part of the GC closure scheme) brought the axe upon the remaining parts of the SMJ in April 1965. But perhaps you read that in 'Modern Railways'.

The only lasting success in the SMJ's desperate quest for mineral receipts (the Edge Hill project shows how desperate it really was!) was at Byfield, near Woodford Halse, where the quarries remained open almost to the last. One of the engines from there - a lovely 1891 Manning Wardle called 'Sir Berkeley' - has since migrated northwards, and is now in the care of our neighbours, the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway.

GREAT EASTERN HERO

Not all railway heroes are on wheels and rails.

Fifty years ago, in 1916, Captain Charles Fryatt was in charge of the Great Eastern Marine steamship "Brussels", en route to Holland. The Germans captured him and said that he had previously defended himself against a submarine attack. As he was not in naval uniform he must therefore have been a spy, and he was sentenced to be shot.

After the War in 1919 he was disinterred and, after being taken to St Paul's Cathedral for a special service, he was taken back by special train (hauled by a Claud Hamilton class) to Harwich for burial.

The Belgians have remembered him at Zeebrugge, where he was captured, by naming the road between the station and the "Mole" as Capitan Fryatt Laan.

There is still a first-class G. E. Marine service of train ferries from Harwich to Zeebrugge.

The Marquess goes to Newcastle

By
John Carr

At 7am the Middleton Railway Trust's Great Marquess cleaner-in-chief, Geoff Lee, arrived at Neville Hill to put the finishing touches to the work that had been going on for the previous fortnight. The Marquess shone as she left the shed and crossed the main line to pick up the stock of the RCTS "North Eastern No. 2" railtour from the carriage shed.

Two hours later a large crowd of railway enthusiasts and members of the public were congregated on Platform 12 at Leeds City watching for the puffs of steam that would herald the approach of the Marquess. Bell clanging, she rounded the curve from Marsh Lane and slowly ran in with one young member of the crowd proclaiming "The Flying Scotsman!"

After a quick look at the engine everybody climbed aboard and punctually at 9.38 the tour was off! The train proceeded with care over Whitehall and Wortley Junctions before the glorious song of a Gresley was heard as she pounded up to Headingley, passing it in 9 minutes - a good time considering the slow start. Unfortunately the diesel train preceding the tour had not cleared the section and the Marquess was checked by signals to such an extent that the train was four minutes late passing Harrogate.

The next scheduled stop was Northallerton, and the special reason for wanting to be early there was that 4472 "Flying Scotsman", fresh from Darlington works, would be leaving for the south two minutes before the Marquess's scheduled arrival. The Scotsman was taking a special for the men who had worked on the overhaul.

Timings were just too tight

Unfortunately timings were fairly tight for a loco limited to 45mph and, despite a really exhilarating run, Northallerton was reached just as the Scotsmans was disappearing down the main line intent on a fast start.

Passing the site of the old Northallerton shed, the Marquess swung right, under the main line, and came to rest in Low Gates goods station, still 4 minutes late. Low Gates was the original Leeds Northern station at Northallerton and the old buildings still stand.

From Northallerton there was a run across the flat country of North Yorkshire to Eaglescliffe, where the Stockton and Darlington route runs parallel to the Leeds Northern.

On arrival at Stockton station, a mass of photographers encircled the Marquess, and those not carrying cameras were able to buy MRT postcards of the engine at Pickering

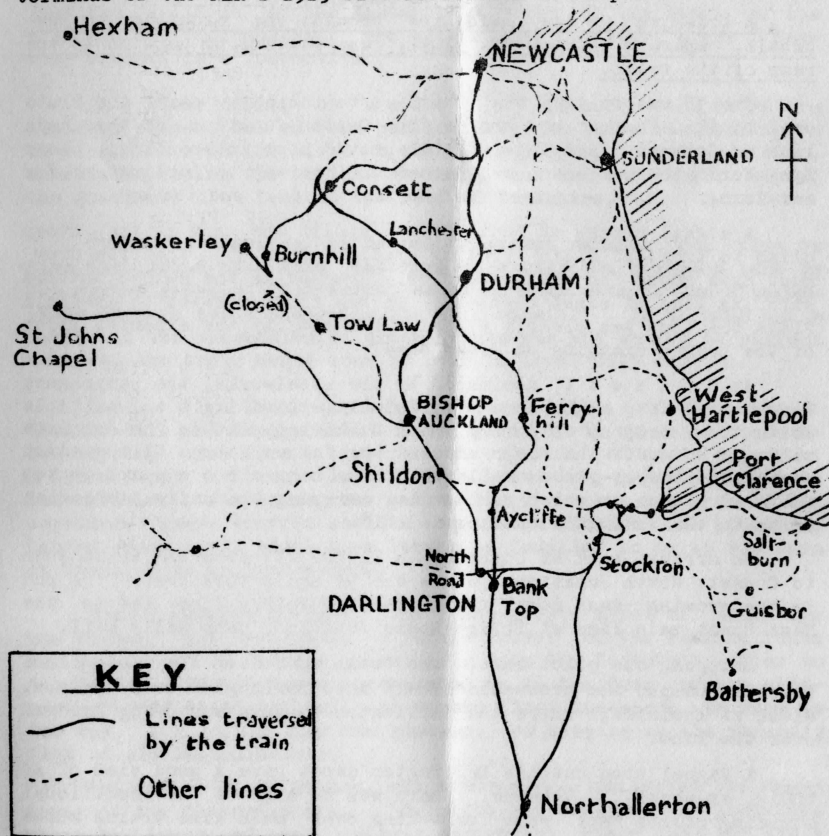
Off once more, the excursion gently crossed the tortuous curves of the Beck branch through a hive of North Tees-side

industrial activity and came to a stand on the Port Clarence line of the former Clarence Railway. Here the Marquess was detached and ran to Port Clarence, and then back to Haverton Hill where she turned round on the triangle enclosing the derelict engine shed.

Soon after setting off again from Haverton Hill the train was halted. Anxious heads were poked out of windows, and the cry went up, "They're looking under the loco!" What was this? Had the Marquess come to grief?

Fortunately the answer soon came as the train set off again past Billingham and back to the Stockton and Darlington line, which was followed to Bishop Auckland, the trouble having been a sticking brake. At Darlington the train crossed the East Coast line on the flat crossing known as "S & D Crossing", stopping right astride the main line as the signalman gave the driver a "Proceed with caution" notice.

Climbing vigorously up to North Road, the Marquess passed her birthplace -- Darlington Works -- and everybody settled down for lunch on the comparatively quiet stretch of line to Shildon, terminus of the NER's 1915 electrification to Newport.



Outside Bishop Auckland signals held the train up and there was then a long wait while the Marquess took on water. The result was a 29 minutes delay in starting for the run up the delightful Wear Valley branch to St John's Chapel. The sun was out and some lovely views of the river and moorland opened out.

All the way up the branch people turned out to watch the progress of the first passenger train for many years - the line was closed to passengers in 1953 - and it was good to notice how well preserved the stations were: at Walsingham, where the stationmaster was on the platform, the clock was still going and showing correct time!

The Marquess ran round at St John's Chapel and then, tender-first, retraced her steps to Bishop Auckland, where she stopped some distance from the station. A long pause ensued, and further examination revealed that the engine had disappeared! However, it soon came back, having run round the triangle at Bishop Auckland, and set off through the mining districts of central Durham to join the East Coast route at Relly Mill Junction, just south of Durham.

A brisk run up the main line brought the excursion to Newcastle, where a shining 9F, 92097, was waiting to back on to the rear of the train.

The 9F was to take the train up to Consett, using the route used by the famous ore trains from Ouston Junction on the main line to Consett, and this stretch proved most interesting. Near Tyne Yard the Marquess was passed on its way to Darlington for servicing.

A signal check at South Pelaw spoilt the run at the steep climb to Annfield Plain (ruling gradient 1 in 35) that the crew must have hoped for and speed slowly dropped as the 2-10-0 battled with its load of eight coaches. On the final stretch to Annfield Plain the loco was clearly winded, but luckily the expected groan of the brakes dragging on never came.

At Consett, dominated by the steelworks, the passengers transferred into eight cars of original Derby diesel multiple units for a trip up to Burnhill and Waskerley, out in the desolate wilds. En route the train crossed the famous Holmes Gill viaduct where the steeply-graded valley had once been crossed by two inclined planes on which ran cradles carrying the railway vehicles prior to the viaduct's opening in 1858.

On arrival back at Consett, a K1 (62027) drew the train down to Consett North Junction, where the 9F again took over. A run in the growing dusk down the Lanchester Valley line led to the East Coast main line at Bridge House Junction, near Relly Mill.

Dropping the pilot here, the train sped down the main line, touching 66mph, and proceeded slowly into Darlington over the p.w. slack at Aycliffe, where the Darlington by-pass was being bridged over the line.

A signal stop outside Darlington depot gave a good view of A4 60019, ex-works. However, there was no sign of the traditional standing pilots kept only for taking over main line trains whose engine had failed.

A Frenchman looks at the Midland

By Maurice Maillet
(Vie du Rail)
Translated M. Leah

The night was black as ink, though streaked with glowing cinders which the exhausts of three cylinders working at full throttle had torn out of the firebox. In the cab of "Cameronian" the darkness was almost as intense, for in England engine-cabs are not lit up. There was just an oil lamp giving out its weak glow on to the glass where the water was quivering at the halfway mark, and, lower down, a lamp on a level with the steel floor, a thin, vertical stripe - orange-coloured, nearly white - the glare of the firebox escaping through a gap between the firedoors.

The bark of the exhaust, six beats per revolution, rang through the cluster of tubes above the brick arch, burst out of the twin nozzles of the double chimney, then shrank to nothing in the depths of the shadowy heathland. For miles around there was just the solitude of the Westmorland moors in the heart of the wild and ancient Pennines, one of the most desolate areas I have ever crossed in a locomotive.

On a clear night, or under a full moon, the moors are sinister places, but on that particular night there was nothing to be seen, not even the mists on the upper slopes, sometimes static, sometimes racing the trains as they twist and turn their way up the gradients that lead to the roof of Yorkshire.

There was nothing to be seen, except perhaps from time to time the lights of a farm nestling on a hillside stripped bare by the winter gales. That night, as on so many others, the Glasgow-Leeds express was approaching Ais Gill summit. In an hour and a half, if the succession of green lights was not broken by yellows or reds, the train would come to rest in Leeds City station.

Leeds, like Rome, is built on seven hills, of which two - Neville Hill and Copley Hill - have given their names to locomotive depots, once upon a time the strongholds of rival concerns. A third depot, Holbeck, is still the servicing point for Midland locomotives. Its lines, its paths, its workshops and the corridors where traffic notices and union affairs are pinned up behind glass - all these have become as familiar to me as the ones at Tours, Ales or Lyon-Monche.

Once I entered Holbeck, the first person I met or asked for was Thomas, the caretaker, a former driver on the Pennine route who was forced to retire prematurely from the footplate after an accident. If he always accompanied me to the door of the shedmaster's office it was not, as on the first occasion, to show me the way, but rather for the pleasure of keeping up the friendly chat of old acquaintances.

The office of Mr Gibson, the shedmaster, reflected the austerity of the Victorian era. Opposite the desk was a fireplace, where big lumps of coal, glowing brightest where they had split

open, were burning in the grate; on the mantelpiece was a clock; above that a wooden frame hanging on the wall contained a sepia photograph of the late lamented No. 990, one of the 4-4-0s built specially for crossing the Pennines; and, with a severe-looking cupboard and three chairs, that was, I think, the total furniture.

Mr Gibson himself was a tall, well-built man; he had a white military moustache, a ruddy complexion and kindly blue eyes which could, unless I am very much mistaken, take on the sparkling hardness of steel when circumstances demanded.

He was, of course, informed of my visit by official channels. He greeted me with that affability which is more than mere courtesy, and with which the English alone know how to treat their guests from the moment of introduction. After only my second visit we were on christian-name terms.

My conversations with the shedmaster were those of two locomotive enthusiasts. He told me all the main things that had happened in his depot in the last year: the three-cylinder Compounds had been relegated to local stopping trains, and if they ever came to leave for Carlisle, particularly on the "Thames-Clyde Express", it was on a day when this train arrived from London too heavy to get over Ais Gill without assistance.

The Scots - "Cameronian", "Duke of Wellington", "Royal Engineer" and "Welsh Guardsman", to name just my favourites - were still hard at work. Before long the permanent way authorities would grant permission for them to work over the St Pancras route and, with this in mind, two new ones had arrived fresh from a "general" at Crewe. There was also talk of having some Britannia Pacifics. On the other hand, three Jubilees had left during the winter, transferred to Chester.

There were new gaps in the ranks of the veterans; some of the 4-4-0s and 0-6-0s had departed for Crewe on their last, one-way journey. Their tenders, now redundant, would linger on for a while in some forgotten siding, those in best condition finding further use as mobile water tanks. In the end the day would come when they, too, would be dismembered - cut up in the oxy-acetylene flame which, in every country, deals the same death to the Old Faithfuls of the locomotive world.



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