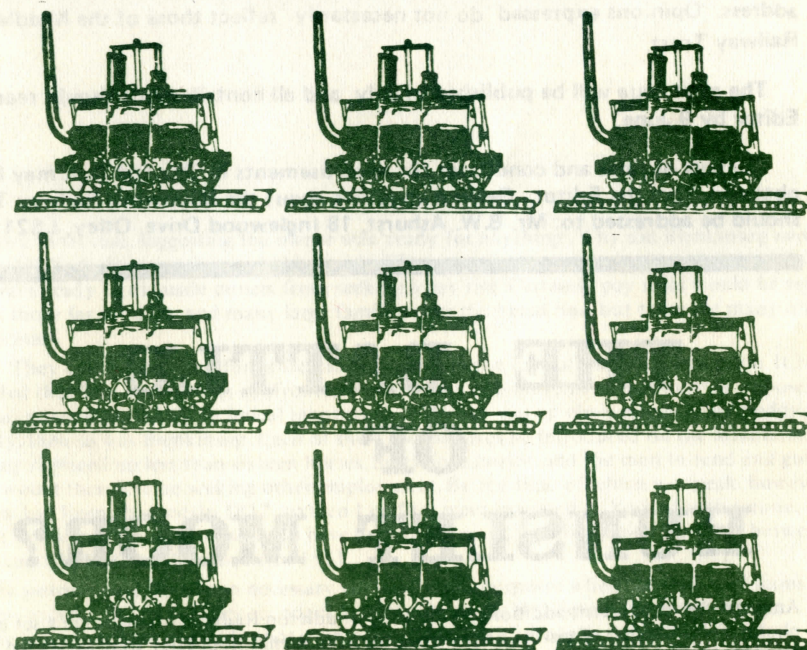


SPRING 1975

THE OLD RUN



JOURNAL OF
THE 1758 MIDDLETON RAILWAY
LEEDS

THE OLD RUN

VOLUME 11 NUMBER 4 SPRING 1975

EDITOR: Mervyn Leah, 134 Frobisher Road, Bilton, Rugby, CV22 7HS.

The Editor invites all readers to contribute articles, news items, letters, photographs and drawings. All contributions should include the reader's name and address. Opinions expressed do not necessarily reflect those of the Middleton Railway Trust.

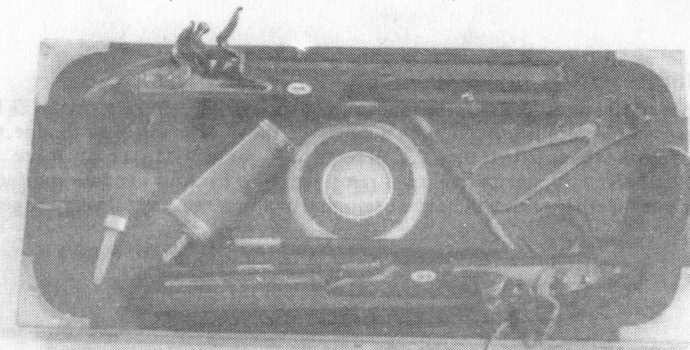
The next issue will be published in July, and all contributions should reach the Editor by 9 June.

Details of rates and conditions for advertisements in The Old Run may be obtained from the Editor. General enquiries about the Middleton Railway Trust should be addressed to: Mr. B.W. Ashurst, 18 Inglewood Drive, Otley, LS21 3LD.

THE BATTLE OF HUNSLET MOOR?

Amongst the most recent additions to the 1758 Middleton Railway Archives, are a set of photographs of a pair of pistols, once owned by John Blenkinsop. They were presented to the Trust by Mr. J. L. Brown of Bromborough, Wirral, who now owns the pistols, which were featured in 'Collectors World' on television in 1972. The Colliery/Railway links with the North East are indicated by the maker, G. D. Davidson of Alnwick. It is possible therefore, that they were purchased by Blenkinsop before he moved south to take the position of 'agent'—or manager of the Middleton Collieries for Rev. C. J. Brandling. They are Manton Style Duelling Pistols.

When they came into the possession of Mr. Brown, one of the pistols was loaded and at



half cock in its case, suggesting the owner was 'ready for anything'. Why did Blenkinsop need to be armed? Various suggestions could be made. The present owner suggests that they could have been ready to dissuade miners from seeking a pay rise. Certainly pay rates would be very low in those far off days, and many large families near the bread line, but there are many other possibilities.

They could have been for protection purposes in the case of Luddite opposition. It is recorded that Mrs. Murray was confronted by members of a movement that fiercely opposed the redundancy caused by technical innovation. If Murray was an obvious target for Luddite activity, then so was Blenkinsop. Each of the 4 locomotives he introduced on the Middleton Railway replaced no less than sixteen horses. Sixty four horses, and the men to tend and guide them would therefore be seeking other employment. By the time of which we speak, however, the law had been changed (in 1812, sixteen Luddites were executed at York). Furthermore, labour relations at Middleton seem to have been quite good, no strike being recorded between 1819 and the death of Blenkinsop in 1831.

The pistols could have been necessary for protection purposes when carrying large sums of money—income from coal sales, or wages for the miners. As Middleton was a small village remote from the town of Leeds, (not even possessing a Parish Church until 1845) it is unlikely that even the simplest banking facilities would be available. The protection of pistols was essential for security.

No, certainly no 'Battle of Hunslet Moor'. Could it be in fact, that there is an even simpler explanation still. Now, John Blenkinsop was very fond of Rabbit Pie!

John Bushell

OLD RUN NEWS

Goods traffic fluctuates

Goods traffic returned in October after the temporary interruption, with 39 loaded wagons moving over our lines. In November, however, the number declined to nine, with a similar total during the first two weeks of December. We were not to see any more traffic until mid-January, since when it has remained steady at between two and four wagons per week. Perhaps this will be the beginning of a more successful year for goods traffic.

Chris Rogers

On the line

The boiler inspector has made satisfactory thorough examinations of P2003 and WB2702, and these locomotives will be serviceable for the 1975 season. The insurance company has unexpectedly requested removal of the tank and lagging from HL3860, which will cause something of a motive power shortage.

S8837 has been dismantled to a state where the firebox is ready for immediate dropping, which will take place after the engine's participation in the Stockton & Darlington 150th anniversary celebrations later this year. All the boiler tubes have been removed from HC1309. New tubes will be ordered subject to satisfactory internal boiler examination and availability of funds. Work on the LNER ballast brake has reached an advanced state, and the vehicle is expected to be in service this year.

On the permanent way side, a quantity of sleepers has been renewed on the line to Middleton Park, and the section of track from Beza Road to just short of Moor Road is in the process of being rerailed. Two complete turnouts and a number of sleepers are being obtained from the Market Overton preservation site, and working parties are currently travelling down to dismantle and load them.

Jim Lodge

Membership notes:

We extend a warm welcome to the following members who have joined recently: Christopher Goodhill, Leeds 6; Andrew Oldfield, Leeds 15; David Hill, Leeds 6; Philip Hobbs, Usk; G. Lambert, Leeds 6; Roger and Robert Crossley, Rothwell; Robert Leah (with congratulations to the Editor of The Old Run and Mrs Leah!); Norman Fearnley, Doncaster; M. Parker, Horsforth; Denise Liley; C. Firth, Leeds 8; Mrs Jane Parkin; and Mr Frank and Mrs Rosemary Allsup, Judith and Jonathan, Leeds 8.

Norman Fearnley is, of course, an old member who has 'returned to the fold' after a number of years when pressure of work prevented him continuing with the railway.

We hope to see many of these new members actively helping at the railway this year.

At the time of writing, renewals for 1975 were still being received. If your s is due please don't make me have to write to you—send it straight away. If you have lost the form the

subscription is £1.50 (full); 75p (MRA - under 18); or 25p for family corporate members. Address on inside front cover.

I hope to move house before the next issue of The Old Run but if that happens, letters will be forwarded from the present address.

Brian Ashurst

End of stamp collection

Roger Bareham, who for several years has been collecting used postage stamps and selling them on behalf of the Trust, advises that he has now terminated this scheme. He is planning to devote more of his time to other equally worthwhile causes, and we wish him well with these.

Outing cancelled

The MRA trip to Dinting and Crich on 30th March has unfortunately had to be cancelled because the coach firm was unable to carry out its commitments. Apologies to all who had been looking forward to participating in this visit.

David Bushell

Calling all photographers

The Editor of The Old Run is giving an illustrated lecture about the railway to a group of enthusiasts in early May, and would welcome the loan of further colour slides. All loans will, of course, be treated with scrupulous care, and will be returned immediately after use.

Herm mystery

On holiday in the Channel Islands last summer, I was surprised to find an ancient piece of Leeds engineering on the tiny island of Herm.

On the quayside at Herm was a length of track, which impeccable sources inform me was of 4'5½" gauge, the remains of a short line which once served a stone quarry. All that now uses the track—and that very rarely to judge from its condition—is a wagon with a crane mounted on it. The crane, although probably not the wagon, was the product of the Leeds firm of Bray Waddington, which went out of business in 1854. When and how the crane arrived on Herm is a mystery to the Channel Island's railway historian, N. R. P. Bonsor, who recounted the little that is known about Herm's railway in his book 'The Guernsey Railway' (Oakwood Press). Any ideas, anyone?

Mervyn Leah

A COVENTRY INDUSTRIAL

M J LEAH

Never believe everything you read in the papers, they say, and certainly if your only view of Coventry was through what gets into the headlines, you might be forgiven for thinking that the city made nothing but cars—and that only on those days when the factories were not on strike or short time.

Not so. Although one industry may hog the headlines, it is but one of many and a good way of seeing the less famous side of Coventry is to take a ride on the Coventry-Nuneaton branch line, which is still possible on Sunday mornings when they divert the Birmingham local service that way.

Needless to say, passing through an area of heavy industry, this line was once fed by numerous industrial railways, large and small, most of which are no longer in use. Those which survive, serving Coventry Colliery and Newdigate Colliery, Bedworth, are, of course, diesel-operated, the former with a pair of magnificent Hunslet 0-8-0s which replaced a trio of ex-GWR pannier tanks, once the delight of local steam fans.

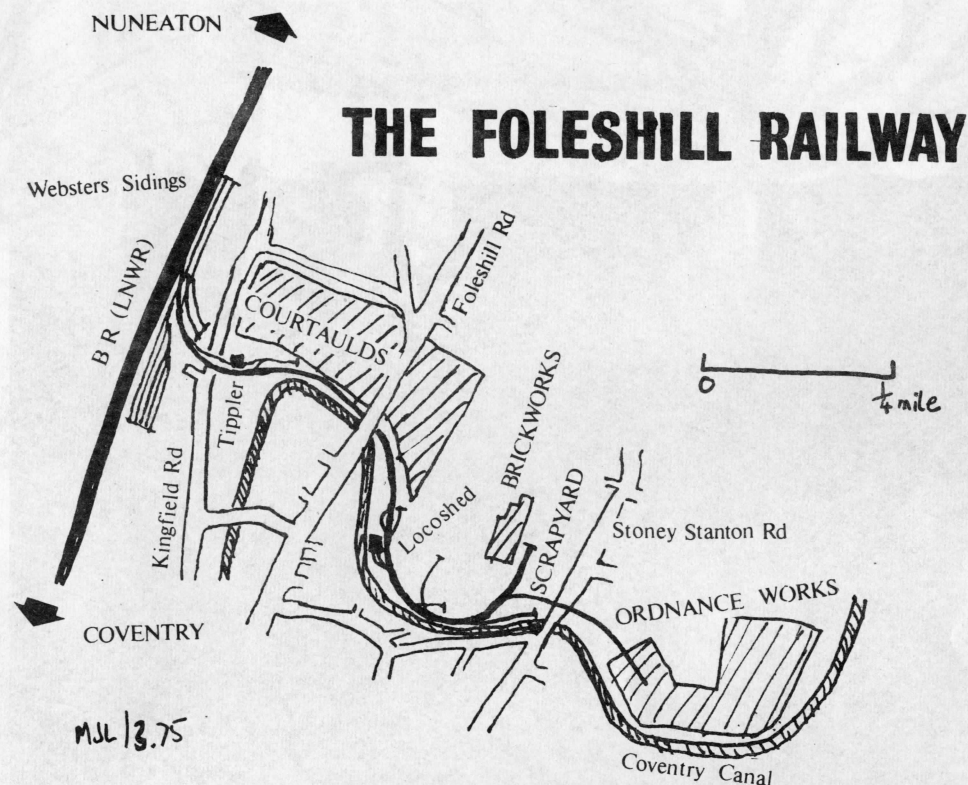
However, the line to be considered in this article is no longer operative, although a comparatively recent casualty. This was the Foleshill Railway, which, unusually for an industrial line, was the property of a company separate, at least nominally, from the company it served. In fact, for most of its career it served several companies along its length, so this was perhaps the reason for the arrangement.

The line started its career as Websters Brickworks Railway Co. Ltd., linking – surprise, surprise! – Websters Brickworks with the LNWR Coventry-Nuneaton line south of Foleshill station. It opened in April 1901, and in the following year was extended to reach its first new customer, the engineering firm of Mulliners Ltd. In 1905, Samuel Courtauld + Co. Ltd., established a textile works alongside the line near its junction with the main line, and further connections were laid to serve the newcomer.

A year later, Mulliners became the Coventry Ordnance Works Ltd, and began to ship out naval guns over the line, using special wagons and their own locomotives, which enjoyed running powers, assisted by Websters locomotive where necessary. The Ordnance Works closed in 1921, but the English Electric took over the site until 1926, when they too closed down. The site re-opened as an ordnance store, under the management of the Admiralty, in 1936 and use was again made of the Foleshill Railway until 1945.

In 1915, the line was transferred to a new company, Foleshill Railway Ltd., which was taken over by Courtaulds, now the line's major user, in 1922. A brickworks still exists on the site of Websters works, but all its output has long since gone out by road. The area between the brickworks and the canal wharf was occupied in recent years by the scrapyard of J. & H.B. Jackson, which was served by rail traffic operated by Courtaulds' locomotives. Jacksons had a small diesel of their own, a 1936 Hudswell Clarke 0-4-0 (D604), named 'Southam' after the location of the Warwickshire cement works where it formerly worked, but to my knowledge this never ventured out of its scrapyard.

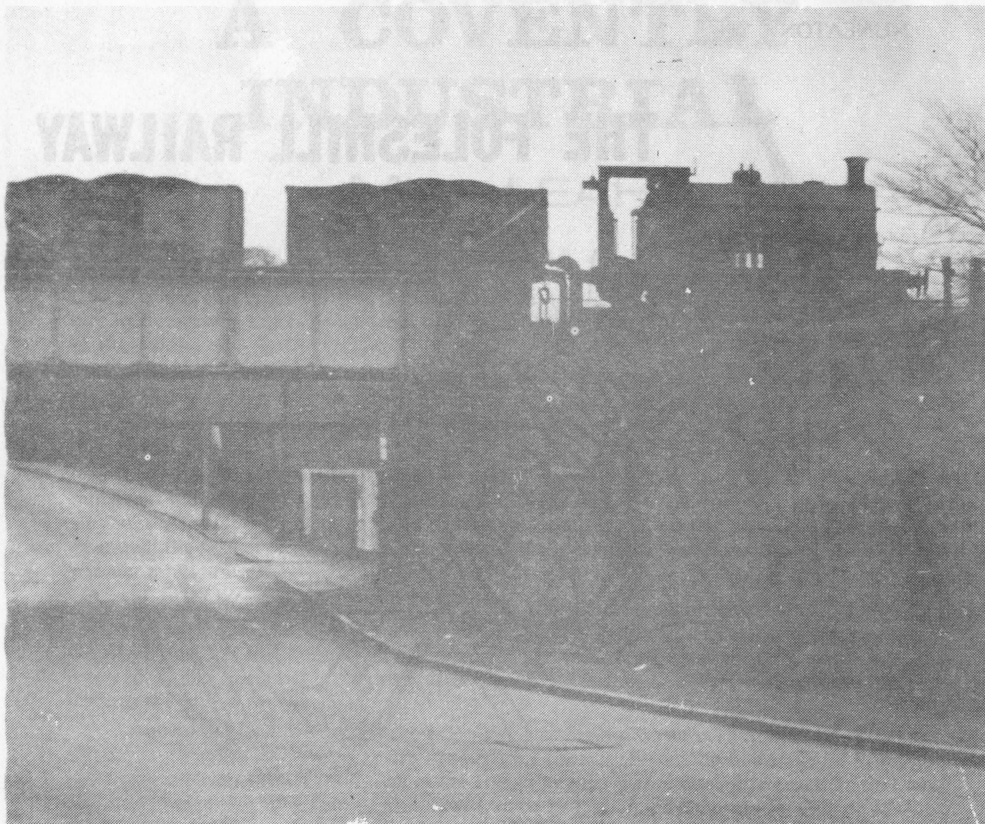
'Rosabel', an 0-4-0ST, was delivered new from Hawthorn Leslie to Websters in 1901, and remained the railway company's only locomotive until after the takeover by Courtaulds. Then two Pecketts, 'Progress' and 'Rocket', were delivered in 1923 and 1926 respectively, 'Rosabel' apparently going to the builders in part-exchange for the former, and ending up at British Celanese, Spondon. The Pecketts remained in charge for the next two and a half decades, except for the intrusion of a Baguley petrol locomotive at one stage.



'Progress' was sold back to Pecketts in 1952, and 'Rocket' was left to handle the traffic alone, supplemented by hired locomotives as required. These included another Hawthorn Leslie named 'Rosabel', from Courtaulds' Wolverhampton works and a Sentinel from their Flint plant. There were also periods when a BR locomotive was hired, and this was invariably an ex L + Y 'Pug', among them 51218, now preserved on the Worth Valley line. Latterly, another Peckett, No. 2085 of 1948 vintage, was transferred from Flint, and this was used interchangeably with 'Rocket' until closure.

Mulliners started out with 'Darfield', an 1876 Hunslet 0-6-0ST, formerly in use with a contractor, and took delivery of 'William Tell', also a Hunslet product, new in 1904. Coventry Ordnance Works bought two new Peckett 0-4-0STs, 'Kitchener' and 'Lady Godiva', in 1906 and 1915, and finally 'Peeping Tom', a Barclay crane tank, in 1919. All were disposed of before or during the 1926 closure; the 1915 Peckett (works no. 1370) was transferred to English Electric's Stafford works, being resold in 1932 to Yates Duxbury, of Bury, where, now named 'May', she was in regular service until very recently. The Admiralty bought a new Barclay 0-4-0ST, imaginatively named 'Coventry', in 1937, and a similar machine was transferred from Portsmouth in 1939, for the duration of the war.

The Foleshill Railway started at the appropriately named Websters Sidings about two miles north of Coventry station, and swept sharply away from the main line on to an embankment leading across Kingfield Road and into Courtaulds' factory. Two tracks entered



It gently propels a train of coal wagons across Kingfield Road Bridge.

In surprisingly sylvan surroundings, P2085 ambles back towards Courtaulds, having delivered a rake of wagons at the scrapyard.



the factory, and on one of them was located Courtaulds' coal tippler, which was the main source of the line's traffic in later years.

After passing the tippler, the through line ran down a rather dizzy incline to reach the level of the Coventry Canal, to which it ran parallel for the rest of its length. Indeed, to pass under Foleshill Road, the railway dropped below the water level, in a narrow, curving cutting overhung by offices and workshops. Regaining ground level, the engine shed and workshops—an asbestos-clad, two-track affair—were soon passed, and the line continued along the canal-side towards Priestleys Bridge Wharf, where Jacksons scrapyard was located, and where lines once turned away from the canal to reach the brickworks and, crossing Stoney Stanton Road on the level, the ordnance factory.

In its later years, when I knew it best, the railway was working daily, with one of Courtaulds' engines in steam to operate 'main line' traffic, 'Southam' being started up as required to shunt the scrapyard. Most of the steam engine's day, of course, was spent shuttling rakes of coal wagons to and fro on the short length between Websters Sidings and the Courtaulds tippler, with one or two return trips per day sufficing for the scrapyard.

The railway became redundant when Courtaulds replaced their coal-fired boilers with natural gas equipment early in 1972, and the closure was in fact brought forward by a few weeks because of the miners' strike then in progress. The scrapyard alone could not support the railway, and the last train ran in February 1972. There was a brief revival one murky Saturday in April, when the Industrial Railway Society descended upon the place to pay their last respects, and to witness 'Rocket', in steam and well groomed as ever, officially handed over to the museum at Tyseley, where she now resides. The other Peckett lingered in her shed for a little while longer, but can now be seen in the more rural surroundings at Embsay. 'Southam' remained longer still, and indeed was still present, in its usual position on the canal bank when I last visited the line in mid-February. However, cutting-up was in progress on the rake of internal-use wagons nearby, and the locomotive will probably have been similarly dealt with by the time this arrives in print.

The track was taken up a few months after closure, of course, and the trackbed of the 'sub-aqua' section now serves as an internal road, joining the two halves of the Courtaulds works, which are bisected by one of Coventry's main links with the M6.

In conclusion, I should like to acknowledge the assistance given in the writing of this article by the historical notes prepared by Michael Lee for the I.R.S. last-day celebrations.

(This article is the first in what is hoped will become a series on industrial railways, past or present, which are particularly well known to individual readers. Contributions to this feature, preferably illustrated, will be most welcome. —THE EDITOR)

Letters to the Editor

Sir,

May I, through The Old Run, appeal for more members to come down to the line on Monday to Friday evenings, for the purpose of running goods traffic. At the time of writing (Jan. 1975), the service is being run by less than FIVE people, and these people would gladly appreciate any help.

The work usually starts at 6 p.m. at Garnet Road yard, and at the very most does not take more than 1½ hours. Anyone interested should phone Mr. J. Lee (Leeds 630229) between 5 p.m. and 6 p.m., on the day in question to ascertain if there is any traffic to be worked.

Woodlesford

David Bushell

A station for Balm Road?

The Middleton Railway were contacted recently by the Secretary of the West Yorkshire Divisional Group of Transport 2000. This body is a consortium of environmentalists, conservationists, ramblers and railway supporters who have a common interest in seeing the development of public transport, as well as reducing the harmful effect of transport on the environment.

Transport 2000 therefore wishes to see development of the local rail network with strategically placed stations around Leeds to link up with bus services, thus making the railway accessible to most of the Leeds population for local use. Such a station to serve Hunslet and South Leeds would be situated at Balm Road. As the group is seeking to achieve improvements for pleasure use as well as for commuters it is logical, in view of the nearness of the Middleton Railway to suggest some sort of link up. The suggestion put forward was that if the Middleton Railway passenger service could be extended over its freight only tracks to a new terminal at Balm Road, then it would be much easier for people arriving from south of the conurbation to visit the railway. As rail, bus and the Middleton Railway would then have a common interchange point, this would be to the benefit of all.

After discussions with the Middleton Railway Council the general view was that, while this could not be ruled out in the long term, the suggestion could not be considered for some time because of difficulties with the condition of the track, level crossing requirements and a shortage of volunteer staff. It is recognised though that operation as suggested would greatly improve the attraction of the railway by being a three station, longer railway with level crossing, tunnel, curved section of track and a terminal adjacent to British Rail.

Irrespective of Middleton Railway developments the Transport 2000 Group have put the case for a British Rail Station at Balm Road to the West Yorkshire Transportation Study now in progress. However the view of the group is that if the Middleton Railway were to be developed as suggested along with a museum, so that the public can look round the Trust's collection of locos. and rolling stock, then the Middleton Railway would move into the big league of preserved railways.

A. Haigh

(Mr Haigh is Secretary of the West Yorkshire Divisional Group of Transport 2000, further details of whose activities may be obtained from him at: 2 Foster Close, Morley, Leeds LS27 9NH.)

Book review

'The World's Oldest Railway' by John Bushell. Published by Turntable Publications, Sheffield. Price 70p.

'The First Locomotive Engineers: Their Work in the North East of England' by L.G.Charlton. Published by Frank Graham, Newcastle-on-Tyne. Price 80p.

It is indeed a pleasure to review a new book on the Middleton Railway, and in particular a new work by the Trust's Archivist and Historian, John Bushell. John has updated and revised the 'History', which was produced very early in the Trust's life, and has given us a proper historical paperback which is rather more worthy of a railway as important as ours.

The changing fortunes of the line and its immediate environment are traced through from the first recorded coal extraction at Middleton in the thirteenth century, right through to the present day, with a suitable mixture of fact and anecdote. John has clearly been using material from his conversations with former employees, and has amply exploited contemporary documents to give a little local colour to the periods which are now beyond human recall.

There are ten photographs of twentieth-century Middleton Railway scenes, with sketches and diagrams illustrating the pre-photography era; a sketch of the Matthew Murray memorial tablet forms the frontispiece, and a pull-out map of the railway concludes the book. It is unfortunate that most of the lettering on the map was done by hand, however neatly, since this detracts somewhat from the professional finish of the rest of the book, and one is also a little concerned over some inaccuracies in the appendix giving details of MRT locomotives, in particular the total lack of mention of No. 6.

However, John is to be commended on producing a publication which will provide a very worthwhile publicity platform for the Middleton Railway and, being produced by an independent publisher who will presumably give it suitable promotion of his own, should win the Trust many new friends. Dare we hope that, some time in the future, we shall be treated to a full-length history of the line, on a par with the much-praised David + Charles book on the Welshpool + Llanfair?

Mr. Charlton's book, one of his publisher's rapidly expanding list on the history and folklore of the North East, brings together a lot of material on the early development of the steam locomotive, particularly as working machines on the Northumberland and Durham wagonways. The work contains the results of some of the author's own researches on the subject and the contribution of each of the locomotive engineers concerned is lucidly set out and impartially assessed—which, apart from anything else, sets the Stephenson in their true historical perspective! Matthew Murray happily receives a fair share of the honours although most of the narrative deals with the Coxlodge locomotives but Mr. Charlton confesses surprise that Murray and Blenkinsop should have seen fit to use a rack system when Trevithick had already demonstrated the viability of adhesion using simply the weight of the locomotive. The answer given in John Bushell's book is that Murray's engines were intended to be working machines rather than one-off experiments, and a rack was necessary if such small locomotives were to be able to maintain an economical load.

Mr. Charlton has, however, produced a very interesting and enlightening work, and one which deserves much success in this year of the Stockton-Darlington anniversary.

MJJ

WHITEHALL ROAD VETERAN

I was born in the May of '92, a timid infant who until roused by the whistle of a hired Fowler traction engine in the December and with its assistance generating for the first time, I became a power station.

My consumers, three in number, a Milliner, now C. & A., a manufacturing chemist, then as now, Reynolds & Branson and a wet fish shop, until recently, Mac Fisheries, with the addition over the December period of the City Square Christmas Tree lights.

I was initially equipped with three Babcock & Wilcox boilers, fitted with Bennis Stokers, three Fowler horizontal double acting steam engines coupled with multi-rope drives to 2 x 240kW and 1 x 120kW alternators, generating at 2000v 2 phase. It was because the boilers were not completed that a temporary drive from the engine was fitted.

At the age of one year when I was thriving and operating with base load characteristics, plans were mentioned for me to have my first attack of growing pains. By the April of 1900 I had been added to, Willans and Bellis & Morcom units were installed. Indeed the two engines of the last maker I still have, Siemens and Ferranti had left their mark with switchgear and transformers, cables snaked to all parts of the City and by 1903 I had a new building and my first turbine. I, just like Topsy, grew. Twenty two years later I had fifty four boilers and my latest turbine was numbered twenty-six although 13A, 15A, 17A and 19A were extra to this total. A few years later at the age of thirty five my area was found to be insufficient to include any other plant, my offspring at Kirkstall was born.

I remained with a capacity of eighty-four megawatts, I think, for a few years but by 1936 my decline started, my first forty boilers and all but the three newest turbines were removed. My control room was moved, I had a little new switchgear installed. My capacity of 35MWs remained until finally, in the March of 1968, I generated my last commercial unit. The end was here, I was run down, overshadowed and far too small by present standards to continue. But further events proved me incorrect, my boiler and engine room operators in the last few months were of a new breed, 'Junior Operators' a possible use, had I known this at the time, was to be my future. I remained quietly rusting for a further year; the end had come. Then young men, the shoulder flash of 'Trainee' evident, came on site armed with equipment. Other old friends arrived and work started.

I wasn't really sure when they would stop, my older boilers disappeared, one turbine disintegrated under the breakers hammer, my ash hopper and exhausters vanished in sparks & dust, chimneys were cut down and the roofs capped, people looked, inspected and commented. I still had five boilers and two turbines, my engines were intact, circulating water pumps were still in position; my three lifelines to Kirkstall were severed but a new cable and switchgear were installed. My switch-houses were cleared, workshops took their place, new things arrived every day,—lathes, drills, cranes, hoists, feed heaters, burners, tanks and spares. I was to be a Training Centre, but with a difference. I am again to be productive although small in capacity I am able to look my colleagues in the eye. Reconstruction is progressing, maintenance and rebuilding is being completed. Projects are in being, water and steam again flow through my veins. I am ALIVE. My proud boast is that I have some of the oldest equipment manufactured for power station use, still operational. My well maintained plant still enables me to raise steam and my new installations are superior to my newer brethren.

(This article first appeared in 'North Eastern Gen', local magazine of the Central Electricity Board, with whose permission it is reproduced.)



Causey Arch appeal

Durham County Council has launched a £100,000 appeal fund for the renovation of one of Britain's most important railway relics, the Causey Arch.

The Causey Arch has links with the very beginnings of railway history, and of the industrial revolution which was to spawn whole networks of waggonways like that at Middleton, before the evolution of the public steam railway in the nineteenth century. It formed part of a waggonway which was constructed southwards from Dunston after 1645, eventually reaching collieries on Tanfield Moor, and itself was built in 1727 by a local mason, Ralph Wood, who had also constructed its timber predecessor, the collapse of which led to the adoption of sturdier materials. It consists of a single stone arch, almost perfectly semi-circular, spanning over 100ft across the Causey gorge, and rising some 60 ft high. It is almost certainly the oldest surviving railway bridge in the world, and by all accounts still one of the most impressive.

The waggonway did not survive the eighteenth century, but the Arch, happily, did, and now carries a public footpath. Durham County Council assumed responsibility for it in last year's local government reorganisation, and the coincidence of the Stockton-Darlington anniversary and European Architectural Heritage Year in 1975 made the restoration of the Causey Arch seem particularly appropriate.

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