

SUMMER
1966

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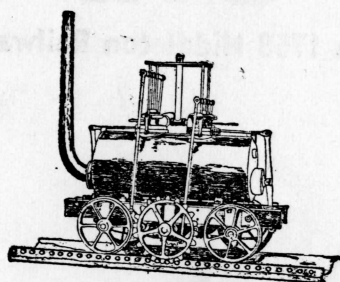
The Old Run

Journal of the 1758 Middleton Railway Trust, Leeds



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The Old Run

**Journal of the 1758 Middleton
Railway Trust, Leeds**

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

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How they built the Good Shed with Groans and Aches

By 61506

I sprang to the toolchest and Jim Lodge and he. I hammered, Jim
hammered, we hammered all three. "Speed," cried the committee,
just sitting in state. "Speed," echoed the thunder of steel
hitting plate.

Yes, the atmosphere of speed and hard work of the Browning classic were repeated in an effort to have a tidy covered building to house tools and historic exhibits ready and presentable for the MRT open day in July 1966.

Unlike all other amateur railway organisations, we started with nothing at all in the way of buildings, in addition to track to which the term "permanent" way was a misnomer. Quite clearly track restoration and efficient operation had to take the place of trumpet-blowing, museumitis, or other non-essentials. With a smaller membership than practically all other societies, we had to put business before pleasure, and it is only now that we have a roof over our heads.

It is useful though salutary to look at our own mistakes - provided we benefit from them. Our new museum building is a good example of how not to do a thing efficiently. In 1961 the building, 40ft x 18ft x 11ft, was offered to us by Harrisons, the Leeds constructional engineers. It took several months to get the committee's approval, by which time it had cost £55 to dismantle and transport the building to Farnley from the University, where

(Continued overleaf)

it had been used in the Physics and Chemistry extension construction work.

After two months, when the donors were wondering what we were up to, Ben Wade and the chairman dismantled it in a morning and it was transported to Clayton's depot. In 1962, Dr Youell single-handed put most of the walls up as a temporary shed for Windle, then about to arrive. Nothing further was done for months, local miscreants smashed all the windows, and the building was dismantled and left lying around in Clayton's yard again. Various pieces were purloined for temporary huts, shacks, and what-nots, and the shed qua shed had ceased to exist.

It was, however, clear that we could not expect to attract visitors or new members if we had no covered accommodation. With a miscellany of problems awaiting us, essentials had to come first and a roof over our heads would ensure that we should not have an open day (and our visitors) swamped by a downpour of rain.

The job was planned in stages, and every Sunday, civil engineer Jim Lodge, assisted by the chairman and George Taylor, slogged away at it. On Saturdays when more people were about, the larger jobs of the "brute force" type could be polished off quickly.

Stage one, clearing the site, was done with an engineer's level aided by picks and shovels. We found a splendid use for timbers which were too old for permanent way but had not reached

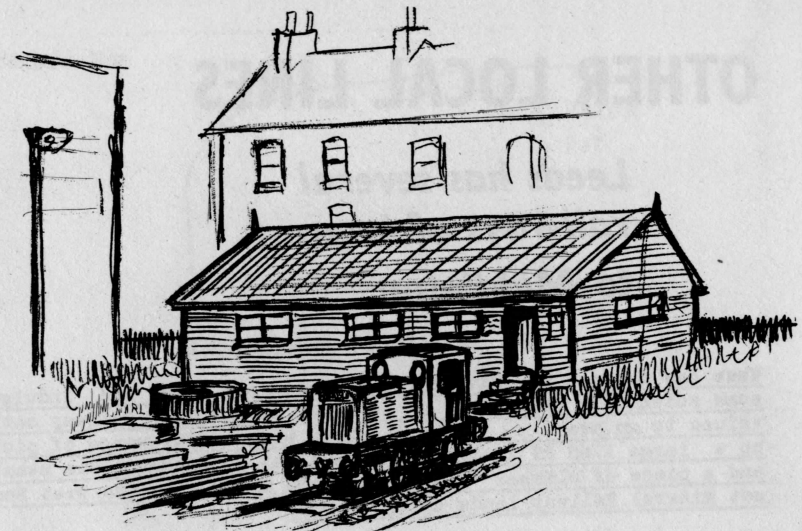
the firewood stage - as foundation! A wooden building well above the soil on a creosoted base is good in principle and in practice.

When we started to piece the bits together - then came the shock! After four years lying about, we were probably fortunate to find only one of the 56 sections lost for good. But many uncharitable words were used about the persons (unknown of course) who had wrecked 30 floorboards by lighting fires and lamps in the wrong places; about persons unknown who had driven rusty 8" nails through half-inch roof boards, needing sledgehammers, hacksaws and grunts to remove them; about the persons who had sawn a doorway in half, leaving one half as a temporary roof on a shed, and the other fixed to a wall section with solidly rusting bolts!

We were thankful that at least one of the original 60 windows was intact and in parts transparent. In Hunslet, this is miraculous!

Stage one was completed by laying in 16 floor sections, with new boards and joists where needed. For some unknown reason each section is 4' 11½" wide - almost as crazy as Stephenson's 4' 8½", and probably arising from the fact that Harrisons built a goods depot for the Ruritanian State Railways which of course had a 4' 11½" standard gauge.

Stage two was the erection of the wall sections, eight each side and three at each end with a triangular roof support thrown in for good measure. All bad or doubtful timbers and wall boards



were replaced, and dozens of nails, tintacks, clips, hooks, and whatnots removed to avoid damage to hands and tools. The entire end sections and triangles were hoisted up ready bolted, and held against a slight breeze by a dozen large members, while the wall sections were rapidly joined up to give lateral stability (in plain English, to stop it falling on our heads).

With engineering prescience Jim Lodge roped all the walls down to the sides to prevent wind damage until the roof was on. During this and succeeding stages, the chairman's garden, kitchen, cellar, and paths were occupied with spare timbers, tools and broken sections. The effect of creosote on a lawn is spectacular but hardly beautiful! Several cubic feet of spare wood can be carried in one motor-car plus 1 cwt of tools without the wheels falling off.

Stage three was the roofing work. After a weeks hard work of repair and sawing to size, 15 sections went up in an afternoon with no casualties. The next day, the brand new replacement section was cut, fitted and bolted up. The chairman retired to hospital for a complete rest three days later.

Stage four was the final detail work: doors, locks, windows, roofing felt and laths, and stretcher bars to prevent the weight of the roof spreading the walls wide to gauge.

Whether we call our first building the Matthew Murray Museum, the Visitors' Cafeteria, or Harrison's Benefice, it was ready in time for the July 1966 Open Day and our visitors. Historic relics and electric light will no doubt appear but these will be easy jobs compared with the main assembly.

The biggest thanks go to Harrisons of Leeds for the gift, to Jim Lodge, civil engineer, for well-organised supervision and for keeping the chairman under control, and to Headingley Woodcraft who provided spare wood (all of completely non-standard sizes) at short notice.

OTHER LOCAL LINES

Leeds has several railways of interest to Middleton

BY "RESIDENT MINERALOGIST"

When one decides to give railway matters a rest and indulge in some scientific research, it is amazing how the railway matters refuse to go away. How is it that, when on the verge of picking up a large lump of ironstone mineral at Goosemoor, one stumbles and a piece of sleeper and flat bottom track from the West Somerset Mineral Railway lands on one's foot?

How is it that, ploughing one's way to an ironstone adit in Farndale, the footpath suddenly becomes an inclined railway and one trips up over a chair which turns out to be a 60lbs. per yard bull-head version of about 1875 vintage from the Rosedale Railway?

How is it that, when rummaging over the weathered liassic ironstone in Warwickshire, a metal plate descends on one's foot inscribed "Limit of Shunt. GWR. Hook Norton"?

How is it....but I suppose ironstone minerals tend to attract railways as they are the cheapest way of carrying heavy minerals, and one simply cannot separate them.

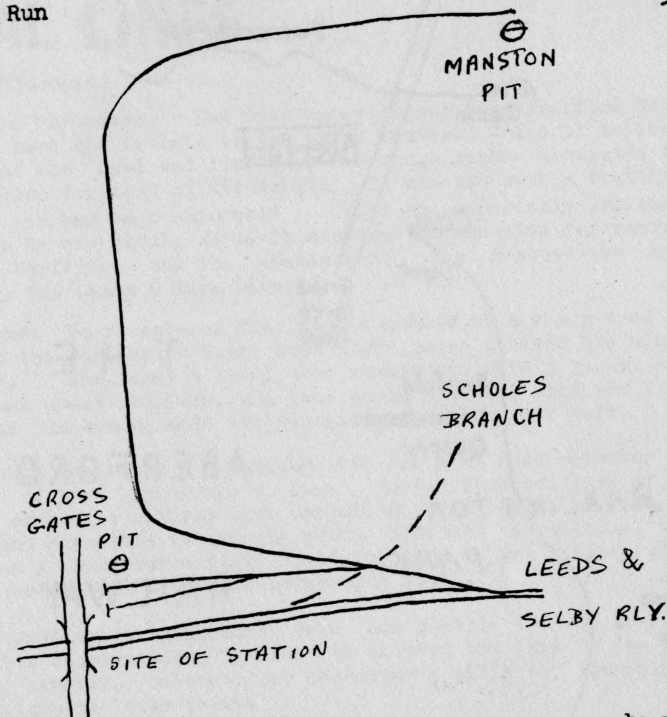
While browsing through a 6" to the mile geological map of the area east of Leeds, dating from the days of the Leeds & Selby Rly., I found some interesting evidence of early lines in the district. There were the Middleton Main and Beeston Hard seams with collieries in the Garforth area working them. From just east of Cross Gates was a branch to Manston Colliery and Cross Gates Pit. The layout of the goods sidings at Cross Gates station has been a mystery for a long time. With the main line in a cutting, why did the sidings run back from the Garforth direction, climb over the Scholes and Wetherby branch (now lifted) and terminate well above the station?

The early map shows Cross Gates Pit about 50 yards north of the present station entrance, and a fairly sharp curve to a line going north and then east to Manston Colliery. The station is not marked as such, and there are only two lines from Leeds instead of the present four. The Scholes branch was built much later, so the bridge must have been built to carry the branch under the siding, rather than the siding over the branch line.

Obviously the line to the collieries with the adjacent siding would be better at ground level rather than in a deep cutting. There is the apparent anomaly that Cross Gates sidings were older

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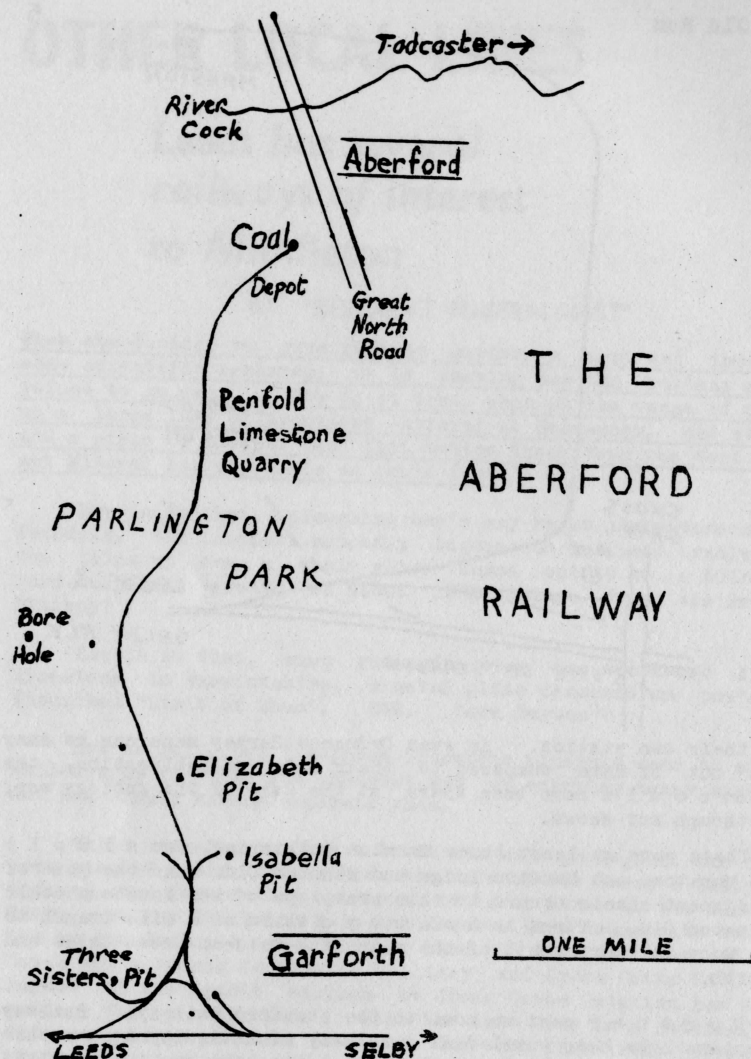
than their own station. As even Ordnance Survey maps can be many years out of date compared to their date of publication, the station could have been there at the date of the geology map, even though not shown.

There were at least three Manston collieries, two simply named Manston, and Manston Lodge and Manston Old. As the join of two adjacent sheets occurs in this area, one of the Manstons could be Manston Old. There is nearly a third of a mile branch to Brown Moor Colliery south of the main line between Cross Gates and Garforth.

Further east we come to the Aberford Railway. Railway historians have been puzzled at a railway of antiquity to a rather small place like Aberford. They say, with some justice, that it was hardly worth building a railway to carry coal to Aberford when if Wetherby and Tadcaster were the destinations of the coal, the railway could have gone all the way through. Historians say the line was not built as a colliery railway, and at present there is admittedly little evidence of major colliery working near the line.

However, in the early years of its life, what do the geologists say? We find "Garforth Colliery" written along much of the first mile of the line, with the Sisters Pit, Isabella Pit, and an unnamed pit all with sidings from the Aberford line! Further north is Elizabeth Pit, followed by "C. Pit" and "C. Staith", now well over half way to Aberford. There is also 450 yards west of the line "Bore Hole" right on a seam where coal

(Continued overleaf)



could reasonably be expected. Just beyond this site the line is captioned "Railway from Garforth N. Colliery to Aberford".

If this is not a colliery railway serving five pits, a staith and a bore hole, what kind of railway is it?

Further on through Parlington Deer Park, just south of the line, is "Penfold Limestone Quarry", then "L. Quay" about 300 yards before the coal depot at the Aberford terminus.

There was in the 1840's a plan to connect with the Leeds & York Direct Railway, the latter line running from Brown Moor near Barnbew, under Parlington Park and then down the River Cock to

LOCAL LINES

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(Continued)

Stutton and Tadcaster. Had this materialised, the Aberford Railway would have had outlets to two trunk routes. Could it be that, in view of the coal and limestone workings right alongside the Aberford line for most of its length, it was not such a fruitless endeavour as has been supposed? Could the apparently fruitless enterprise be the result of early closure of the pits far removed from the Garforth, and the abandonment of a prospective good neighbour, the Leeds & York Direct?

It must be remembered too that a change of heart of the owners of the Parlington Park area might have altered the mining prospects. The Leeds & York were encumbered with a rather awkward tunnel under the Park, and this would not have been the first time local landowners made railway pioneers tear their hair.

This is largely surmise, but one must also remember the incident of Lord Harborough's curve on the Stamford line of the Midland, where the railway were compelled to build an unnecessary tunnel, and when this caused the woods overhead to collapse, they had to run a sharp curve right round the edge of the estate, which remained until well after His Lordship's death.

The Parlington landowners were not hostile to the Aberford line on its construction; in fact it skirted the lake in the park. It might, however, be worth our historian's while to investigate the relations in later years.

ADDITIONAL NOTES FROM THE TYPIST'S LOCAL HISTORY SCRAP ALBUMS.

The Aberford line was built in 1835 by the Gascoigne family, owners of the Parlington Estates and - apparently - the local pits. The trains at first ran partly by gravity. A horse set the train in motion at Garforth and then mounted a low truck or "dandy cart" for the remainder of the journey to Aberford. It then pulled the train on the return journey.

In 1850, the railway commenced a passenger service using a four-wheeled covered wagon with a platform at each end. It had benches inside and small square windows high up along each side; the third-class return fare was 6d. This first coach, known as the "Aberford Fly" - a corruption of "High Flyer", was later replaced by a second-hand North Eastern Railway coach. The passenger service ceased in 1922.

In 1870, two locomotives were purchased to replace horse traction. These locomotives, Mulciber MW 319/70 and Ignifer MW 343/71, were both 0-4-0 saddle-tanks made by Manning Wardle of Leeds. In 1897, another Manning Wardle 0-4-0 saddle-tank was bought. This was Empress MW 1254/97, by far the most powerful and the only one of the three allowed to go on the North-Eastern Railway main line from the Aberford Railway to Trench Colliery on the Castleford branch line at Garforth. The railway ceased operations about 1926/7.

Eyes of transport world are fixed on this US project

'BART' MAKES PROGRESS

Three years ago The Old Run featured an article on the new San Francisco Bay Area Rapid Transit system (BART). As readers will know, construction of this is now proceeding apace and the first revenue earning train will run in 1968.

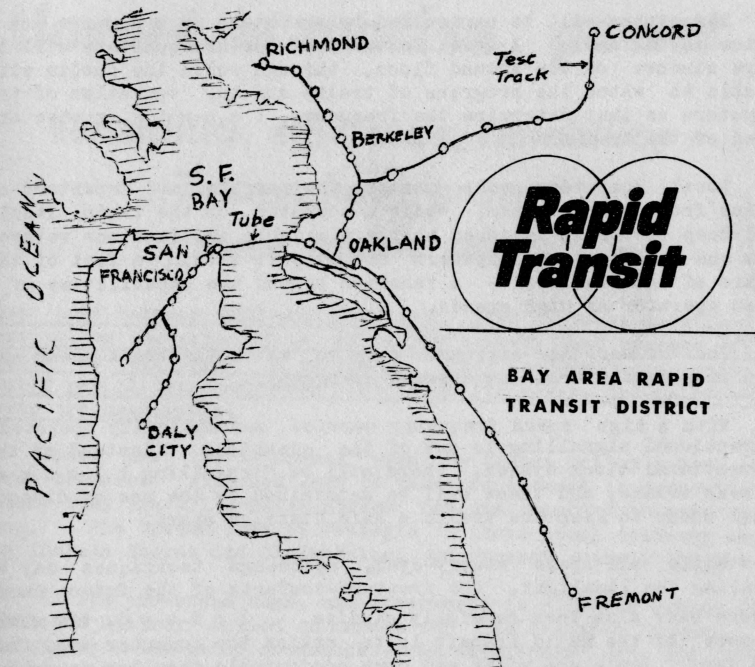
The first 75 miles of the network (that part shown on the map) are due for completion in 1971, but extensions which will more than double the mileage are planned beyond that date. At the time of writing, a pilot length of $4\frac{1}{2}$ miles of elevated track is in operation for test purposes and construction of other sections is going on at many fronts.

Financing the project, which is one of the largest non-defence projects ever undertaken in the United States, has proved more difficult than anticipated. Originally, \$200,000,000 of the initial bond allocation of \$792,000,000 was provided to cover inflation of costs over the period of construction. However costs have grown far beyond the initial estimate and Federal aid of a further \$80,000,000 has been called for to cover part of the additional expenses.

Originally large construction contracts have had to be quartered to allow more firms to compete for the work after bids for the large contracts had had to be rejected.

The track will be carried on an elevated concrete formation in the suburbs and open country; in subways through the city in the suburbs and open country; in subways through the city centres of San Francisco, Oakland and Berkeley; through several conventional tunnels; and through a 4-mile sunken tube across the Bay, construction of which has now begun. In San Francisco the RT trains will occupy the lower segment of a subway, the upper half of which is to be given over to the SF Municipal Railway (electric streetcars). A third storey of the subway will become a shopping precinct.

Perhaps the under-water tube is the major civil engineering feature of the line. This will consist of 57 sections, each about 350 feet long and weighing 10,000 tons, which will be made in a shipyard, floated into position and lowered into a trench dredged along the bottom of the Bay. The binocular-shaped sections will be connected together and covered with several feet of sand for protection.



The tube, designed to withstand the most severe earthquakes, will be 130 feet below the surface.

The furthest point on the line will be 33 minutes from San Francisco (including stops). A peak hour service at 90-second intervals is envisaged for the busiest sections with speeds of up to 80mph. ("Almost up to Great Eastern standards," I can hear someone mutter.) This will give a maximum capacity equal to five six-lane freeways.

With such a service the only conceivable motive power can be automatic electric trains. It is certainly significant that, after the fullest consideration, preference should have been given to the conventional railway rather than to the monorail or other hybrid breeds.

Testing of four different train control systems is now completed, and bids are being invited for production of the chosen system and its electronic equipment - estimated at \$20,000,000.

Other equipment being evaluated includes five electric propulsion systems, six brake designs, five truck and suspension systems, and seven wheel designs! When completed the system will use 450 cars, to be made up in trains of from two to ten cars.

(Continued overleaf)

The system will be controlled by computers in a central office in Oakland. A novel feature of the headquarters will be large windows on the ground floor, through which the public will be able to watch the progress of trains and the operation of the computers as they determine the frequency, length, routes and speed of the trains.

Local computers will control the arrival and departure of trains from each station, while a computer on the train itself will keep the train aligned to the timetable instructions relayed from the headquarters computers and stop it within a foot of the centre of the platform - a function beyond the capabilities of a human operator at high speeds.

The "driver" is employed only to watch the track ahead and stop or slow the train in case of emergency.

With a high speed frequency service automatically operated, conventional signalling is out of the question. Instead of the conventional block system, there will be "travelling blocks" between trains, and these will be maintained by the use of directional radar to keep the trains a safe distance apart.

While all these starry-eyed, space-age techniques may be stealing the limelight, the creature-comforts of the future passengers have also been carefully studied. Indeed, the whole purpose of the Rapid Transit is to entice the commuter away from his car. Seats are wider and more comfortable than bus seats and attractive designs have been produced.

A travelling exhibition (similar to the one run by British Railways to introduce its new blue coaches) solicited suggestions for improvements, but drew the line at including bar cars on trains. As one official said, "The BART bartenders would become known as BARTenders, and that would be just too much!"

The vehicles will be air-conditioned and fitted with the latest sound-damping techniques.

Fare collection will be from fully automatic machines which have been developed jointly in a research programme with London Transport, who are using the same system on the Victoria line.

With 31 miles of the track elevated, special attention is given to landscaping and structural design to ensure that the line will blend with its surroundings. Most of the 37 stations will have huge parking facilities.

Will the Bay Area Rapid Transit justify itself? A survey carried out early in 1966 shows a 2:1 ratio in favour of the system and there is little doubt that, for commuters particularly, it will be a very attractive alternative to increasing traffic congestion. The results of this exciting key project will be watched eagerly by traffic engineers and planners throughout the world.

Horses as motive power

**Versatility, efficiency, reliability -
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these equine assets**

They cost between £200 and £300 each, give 12 years trouble-free service for the price of 1½ cwt of hay a week, and operate efficiently in all types of weather. They produce more units of energy per £1 than any other form of motive power, and maintenance costs are negligible.

These are the 12 horses used by Joshua Tetley & Son, the Leeds brewers. Although some of them are entered in agricultural shows, they are all working horses and are expected to earn their keep. The breeds used by Tetley's in their local delivery service include Shires and Clydesdales, and crosses between the two.

In its pre-steam days, and afterwards to a lesser extent, the Middleton Railway relied on horses for its tractive power. It was simply a matter of economics - the Napoleonic wars had forced up the price of hay so much that the steam locomotive became a better proposition for a colliery company than horses. When the original Middleton engines wore out, the price of hay was reasonable and at that time (1840) there was no pressing need to replace the locomotives.

What was it like to organise a transport service depending entirely on horse power? We cannot know exactly how the Middleton Railway service worked 200 years ago, but horses have not changed much in that time and it is a fair bet that the problems faced by Tetley's today are comparable with those tackled in the 18th and 19th centuries.

The time the horses spend on the road is limited by the need to give them regular meals in familiar surroundings, so that they keep in good condition. Like many other animals, horses respond best to a regular timetable, and their days are planned accordingly.

As in public transport services, the work for each day is planned on separate duty cards, and these duties are allocated in strict rotation so that the work is shared evenly among the whole team. This also applies to the drivers, each of whom looks after his own horse. (Perhaps here is the origin of each engine driver being allocated his own locomotive in by-gone railway practice.)

The Tetley horses operate as eight units, comprising four single horses and four matched teams. Present-day wagons are

larger than those used about 50 years ago, which were often two-wheelers. Today the large team carts, or drays as they are called, can handle barrels weighing up to $3\frac{1}{2}$ tons loaded for a double team or $1\frac{1}{2}$ tons loaded for a single horse. With these loads journeys are naturally planned to be on the level as much as possible, and the bulk of deliveries are on the south side of the River Aire.

The day commences at 5.30, when two men lead out one of the horses and load up the drays for the first deliveries. The drays are brought up to the stables, and at 7.45 the other horses are harnessed up and attached to their carts. By 8.15 the last have left on their rounds.

The harness is kept in spotless condition - a difficult job in a Leeds winter - and some parts of it are over 100 years old. The special show harness, used on special occasions, takes two days to prepare and includes large numbers of fresh flowers!

On the showground, a judge may wipe his clean handkerchief over the harness to test it for dirt, and this again is reminiscent of old steam loco practice, when the driver would similarly inspect the work of his cleaner!

Deliveries are kept to within a reasonable distance of the brewery, and the furthest public house is about five miles from Hunslet Road.

After the morning deliveries the horses always return for lunch at times between 12 and 2pm.

Afternoon workings follow, and the last horse returns by 5pm. Each man removes the harness from his horse and feeds and waters it, and this completes the days routine.



The stables are kept spotlessly clean, and in fact repainting was in progress when I visited them. An interesting detail is that in summer the cobwebs are left untouched, as spiders are a great help in keeping down the flies which bother horses. A similar practice is followed at racing stables.

What sort of men are the drivers? Most of them have been with the firm a good part of their working lives, and there is no doubt that they are dedicated to their job and enjoy their work in spite of long hours and having to be out in all weather - without a protecting cab. They have to work hard, and a recently introduced bonus scheme does not leave any time to be wasted.

Who is going to carry on their work when they retire? Young men who are prepared to sacrifice more comfortable jobs in an area short of labour are hard to come by, but so far there has always been a replacement. Tetleys plan to keep up their stable and present scale of horse operation indefinitely, and it is to be hoped that there will always be suitable recruits.

On the walls of the harness room are sketches and paintings in various styles, all done by the present drivers. They are excellent pictures, many of them in the now fashionable "primitive" style. These portraits of the well-loved Shires and Clydesdales and scenes from their everyday work speak volumes for the pride of the men in their jobs.

In addition to the drivers, there is a foreman in charge of horses (Mr. Sam Stockill) who arranges the duty rota, supervises the care of the animals and is in charge of showing them. At the shows Mr. Stockill keeps a watchful eye open for likely young horses.

The "maintenance department" has some interesting historic equipment. Recently a 100 year old set of horse stocks was given to York Castle Museum. The stocks were a device for holding the horse steady while shoeing is in progress, and are thought to be unique today. The brewery has its own smithy, which also does repair work for the firm's other vehicles.

Incidentally, railway horses were always shod with circular shoes instead of the traditional horse-shoe shape. This was to avoid the possibility of a horse trapping its foot on rails or point blades with probable nasty consequences. So if anyone finds a circular piece of metal on the Middleton Railway, don't throw it away - it might be historic!

When one considers that horse transport systems have been organised now for many centuries, it is not surprising that modern practices, or practices quite recently abandoned, in public and private transport organisations can be traced back to the days when timetables and delivery schedules were yoked to the firm shoulders of the redoubtable horse.

I would like to thank Tetleys for the facilities provided for this article, and in particular Mr. C Lackey and Mr. Stockill for much information and help.

From Blakey Junction to Wheel Eliza

(PART ONE)

Railway history is full of stories of railways that never cut the first sod, or which never reached their original destinations, or which faded out after some brave efforts to keep them alive.

The Liverpool, Manchester & Newcastle Direct never got beyond the drawing board; the Manchester & Milfords ended up short of both targets; and the LD&EC never saw Lancashire, nor the East

'61506' explores the twilight world of mineral railways

Coast, and only just squeezed into Derbyshire. The GER's predecessors aimed at York via Cambridge and Lincoln, and at Norwich via Colchester and Ipswich. These two lines struggled about 50 miles, to Colchester and Cambridge, and then ran out of money.

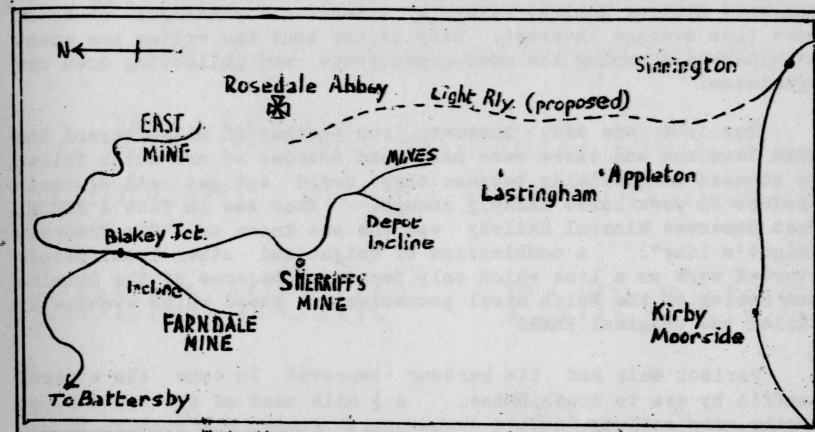
This of course happened in other parts of the world. The Grand Luxembourg Railway ended up as only part of its original route and with a cheap hilly line instead of a trunk main line standard. In the New World, several lines had "Pacific" in their title but never saw the water, the best example being the Atlantic & Pacific Railroad, which ended up as a few miles east and west of the Mississippi area! In Canada, a line which stuck rigidly to the west coast earned the title of Pacific Great Eastern Railway, due, it is said, to the influence of some East Anglian expatriate shareholders.

At home, potential main lines and the larger mineral lines like the Cleveland/Rosedale, Midlands Ironstone, and West Somerset Mineral Railways are reasonably well known. There are, however, some pleasant surprises for us in the field of lines that were well thought out but never completed, and which are virtually undocumented.

The railway politics in the North Riding in which the Stockton and Darlington, N. Yorks and Cleveland, Middlesbrough and Guisborough, and other lines battled for iron ore traffic are a classic illustration of how intense railway competition could be for heavy goods traffic of a type which even today goes almost entirely by rail.

One of the understandable but illogical consequences of this

North Riding free-for-all was the building of the Rosedale Railway. Certain people, such as Sherriff, had interests in the NER camp at York and also in the mining companies, and so grew a natural desire to bring them together.



The result certainly was to bring them together, but in an amazing way. The mines were not at the top of the valley sides, but the Rosedale Railway ran over the 1000-foot contour to get them there, after a long incline at Battersby. At Blakey Junction, one branch went off south west for Farndale Mine down a steep hill, another branch went north and then south east to the East Mines, and the main line went on to Sherriff's pit - reached by a deep shaft - the depot, and finally the two magnetite mines, again down a long steep incline.

Working this iron ore traffic involved therefore three inclines and a shaft, with difficult winter working at high level, and no passenger traffic possibilities.

Many years later the Rosedale Light Railway was planned to serve the area for passenger and goods traffic. Extra sidings were laid in at Sinnington on the Pickering-Helmsley-York branch to deal with expected traffic, and the light railway was to run north and then north west up the Severn Valley, passing near Lastingham, and ending at Rosedale. This line could have picked up traffic from the magnetite mines by chutes, as the mines were not much higher than the route of the line.

A similar access from the Sherriff Mine adit would have been possible, and the East Mines could have been served by an adhesion worked branch with a zig-zag.

Apart from Farndale, which was not a very productive mine compared with the others, all these outlets could have travelled by a low level line through to any "steel town" via the NER with no inclines or snowbound winter conditions.

Unfortunately the light railway was about 50 years too late.

After some preliminary discussion the scheme came to a standstill, and was never re-started.

Roger Sellick's excellent and accurate book on the West Somerset Mineral Railway covers a mineral and passenger route of more than average interest. Many is the hour the writer has spent at Minehead tramping the weed-grown route and collecting iron ore specimens!

The iron ore did, however, run another 20 miles beyond the WSMR terminus and there were many good sources of ore which failed to succeed commercially because they could not get rid of their product by pack horse cheaply enough. What was in fact a SECOND West Somerset Mineral Railway was the one known as "Sir Frederic Knight's line". A combination of Knight and other local people started work on a line which only foundered because of the humming and hawing of the Welsh steel companies, a sound which eventually killed the original WSMR!

Porlock Weir had its harbour improved to take the mineral traffic by sea to South Wales. A $\frac{1}{4}$ mile west of the harbour, at Worthy, the railway, double track narrow gauge, was to turn inland and eclipse Rosedale, WSMR and the Lynton cliff railways in length and rise. About 700 feet at 1 in 4, followed by a gently inclined centre portion, and then a 600 feet climb at 1 in 8, took the route to White Stones on the Porlock-Lynton road. This incline was apparently never built, but much of the trackbed south of White Stones was completed. Running on a fairly level route between 1300 and 1400 feet above datum, the line skirted the edge of the Lyn river tributary at Larkham Barrow and Toms Hill and then skirted the watershed to the Exe Valley near Warren Farm, just north of Simonsbath where Knight lived.

A rather steep descent and climb were needed to get across the Exe to Prayway, the watershed between the Exe and Barle, passing Ravens Nest open cast mine en route. Locomotive working was possible from Whitestones to Prayway Head. From Prayway, a section was started independently to the good ironmine at Cornham Ford on the Barle. This meant three miles down at about 1 in 50, alongside Dure Down and Tongs Bottom Valley. There were sufficient mines in the area to make a good traffic potential. The Hoard Water mine near the source of the Exe could have been connected at Prayway by cable or tramway in the same way as Kennesomes Hill or Galloping Bottom mines on the WSMR.

It is tragic that so much of the line was finished to the point of being ready for track to go in, and yet this was never done. Knight at least got his money back in damages from the steel companies and engineers who had failed to honour their promises. Cornham Ford mines and many more mines in the area, like Picked Stones and Wheal Eliza, lie abandoned and derelict as a mute testimony to the fate of first class ironstone without transport facilities. Much of the railway route can still be traced.

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