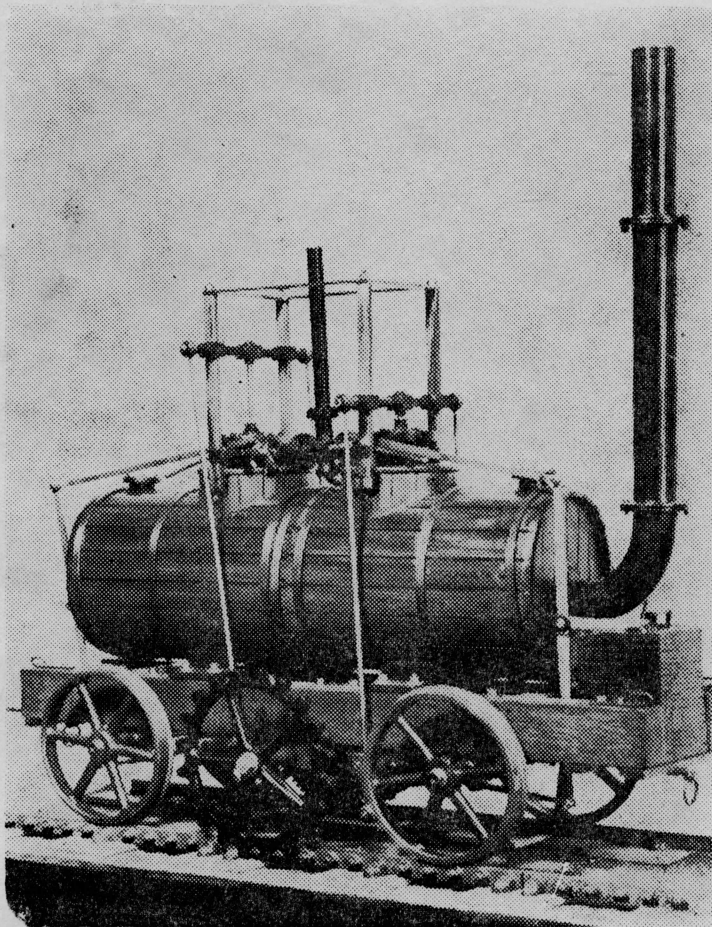


The Old Run

VOL 4 NO 38

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1758 Middleton Railway, Leeds



First Steam Locomotive

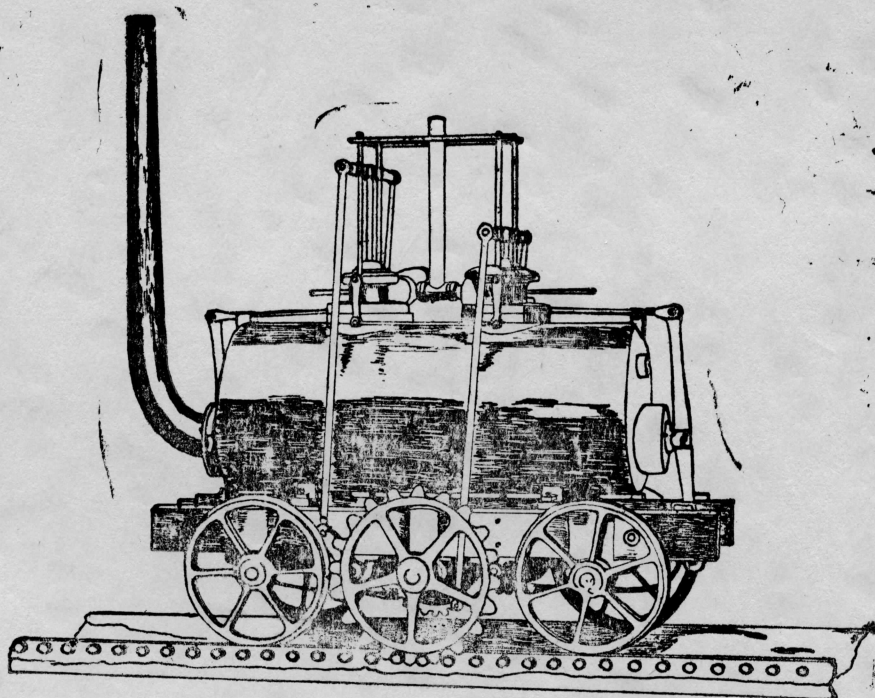
SALAMANCA 1812

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Journal of the 1758 Middleton Railway Trust

Editor- B. W. Ashurst, 18 Inglewood Drive, Otley,
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Steam and Water Carriage and Coach.

Was Middleton first with passengers too?

Was the Middleton Railway the world's first steam passenger railway? This question was asked seriously for the first time early in June, when the accompanying illustration was discovered in a book published in 1824 (one year before the Stockton and Darlington Railway was opened).

The book, by T. G. Cummings, is called "An Illustration of the Origins and Progress of Rail Transport". The picture shows a Matthew Murray engine pulling a tender and converted stage coach, and it is the frontispiece of the book.

Correct side

An examination of the picture reveals that the driving seat and the figures on the coach are additions by an artist to an engraving. Unlike many illustrations of Murray engines, this one shows the rack wheel on the correct side of the frame for operation on the Middleton Railway. (The Newcastle colliery railway, which also used Murray engines, had a rack on both sides.)

The chimney is three feet too tall, but otherwise all the details shown are to scale. To give some idea of this, the stage coach would be about 12 feet long by 8 feet high.

Although there is no record of passenger operation at

Middleton, it is obvious that the possibilities of steam passenger trains were realised there, and the illustration could be the outcome of experiments on the line.

Unfortunately there is no reference to the frontispiece in the book, which tells us nothing we do not know from other sources. Further investigation may bring more information to light.

Meanwhile, the book is still of exceptional historic interest, and the MRT may consider publishing a facsimile edition of this fascinating treatise.

MRT asked to help in industrial archaeology survey

A nation-wide survey of industrial archaeology is now being carried out by the Council for British Archaeology, with attention being concentrated on features earlier than 1850, unless there is a strong danger of demolition.

The Council has sent details of the survey to the Middleton Railway Trust, and it is hoped that members will want to take part in this important and almost untouched field of research.

The survey will include transport relics and buildings, including early stations, warehouses and railway offices.

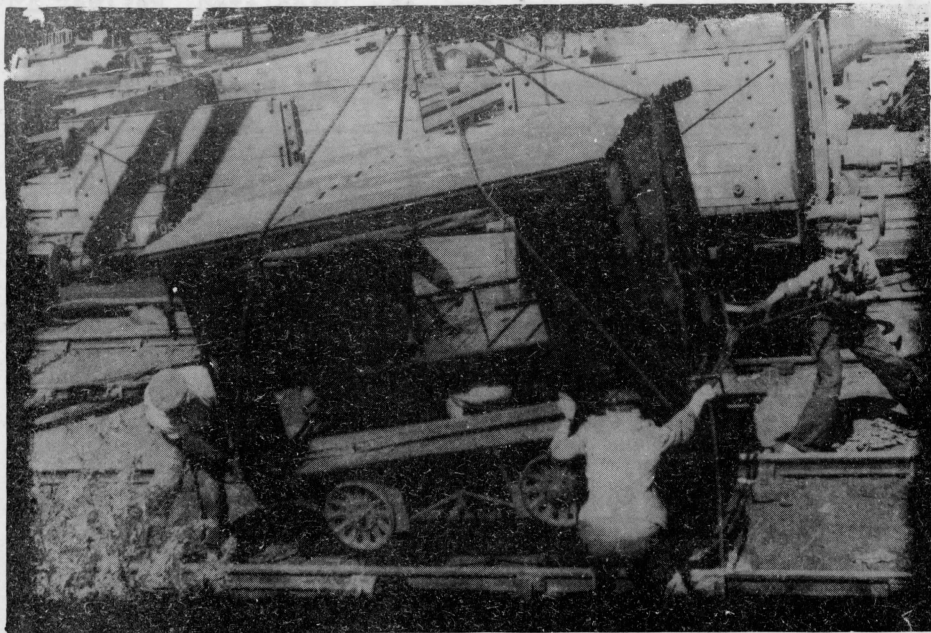
The "danger of demolition" clause will, of course, include post-1850 relics affected by the Beeching Plan.

Those interested in the scheme from the point of view of canals and railways should write to the Railway and Canal Historical Society (44 Radcliffe Square, London SW 10) for further details.

Petrol trolley arrives at Middleton

Latest arrival on the 1758 Middleton Railway is the ex British Railways Wickham petrol trolley pictured here on its arrival in July.

Although it is not one of the MRT's most historic vehicles, the trolley will be in great demand for permanent way work and light internal freight duties. It is



considerably cheaper to run for such purposes than the John Alcock, the railway's diesel.

To ensure economic operation, the trolley's engine runs at a constant speed, and the drive is through an infinitely variable gear. Top speed on the railway will be 8 mph.

The trolley weighs about 10 cwt. and is fitted with a device for quick railing and de-railing of itself.

Mr Blenkinsop's patent rack rail

By
M. D. Crew

A number of references to the Middleton Railway appear in an interesting article on "A History of Early Waggon and Railways" by R. M. Bleasdale in the November, 1931 Railway Magazine.

There was considerable evidence, Mr Bleasdale states, that the wrought iron in use for plateways prior to 1750 was of foreign origin but that in 1754 Abraham Darby, proprietor of Ironworks in Shropshire, built additional furnaces at Horsehey and connected the two works by a wagon way using plates of wrought iron prefabricated by a new process developed at the former works.

Similar plate rails, presumably of wrought iron, were

made at the Hunslet Foundry for the Middleton Railway in 1758.

Mr Bleasdale mentions that the railway ran from the wharves at Kidaore and Great Wilson Street to the colliery, a distance of $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles. It was the first railway to receive the sanction of Parliament and is notable for having been relaid in 1812 with rack rails for the Blenkinsop locos.

Later in the article Mr Bleasdale refers to the track changes which took place in 1811, prior to the use of Prince Regent and Salamanca. The gradients on the line averaged a fall of 1 in 440! John Blenkinsop was convinced that smooth wheels could not maintain sufficient grip on the rails for a steam engine to draw an appreciable load.

He thus drew up, with the aid of a Mr S t r a k e r, a specification for a toothed-rack rail and wheels having teeth. Patent No. 3431, dated April 10, 1811, was obtained "embracing certain mechanical means by which the conveyance of coals, minerals and other articles is facilitated."

First clause relating to the rail road was as follows:

"Firstly I do construct, place and fix in and upon the ground or road over which such conveyance is to be made, a toothed rack or longitudinal piece of cast iron or other fit material, having the teeth or other protuberances or other parts of the nature of teeth standing either upwards or downwards or sideways in any required position, and I do continue or prolong the said toothed rack or longitudinal piece by the addition of duly placing of other like pieces all along or as far as may be required upon the said ground or road."

The actual rails used were fish-bellied edge rails cast at Hunslet Foundry. They were in lengths of 3 feet, each length having cast on its outer side six crescent-like teeth into which the driving wheel cogs of the engines engaged.

Which gauge?

At this point Mr Bleasdale is in disagreement with other writers in that, while he agrees that "the rails were keyed to chairs which, in their turn, were spiked to cross-sleepers", he states that the gauge of the line was 4' 2". It is generally accepted, though, that the true gauge was 4' 1", even though some authorities quote 4' $1\frac{1}{2}$ ".

The article also says that, although a similar rack rail system to the Middleton one was laid at the Kenton and Coxlodge collieries, north of Newcastle, the line was not a success. Why is not recorded.

HANDLE WITH CARE

(Part 1)

Railway history holds key to dilemma

By William Stocks

If Dr Beeching has achieved nothing else, he has rescued the railway system from the pernicious fate of being taken for granted and crippled by constant public criticism.

But the challenge laid down by his report, if it is to be met in a way that will not be regretted later, calls for a public with more interest and understanding than that of today. It is not enough to resist closure of the local line or station without thought for the larger issue, nor is it sufficient to be enraged because the railway has been useful in the depths of a hard winter.

Vast resistances to line closures are building up all over the country - but are they sincere and valid unless backed by countless personal decisions to give the railways new use and appreciation? The lack of just this went far to spark off Dr Beeching's work.

Is resistance practicable?

How far is it practicable to resist Dr Beeching's proposals as the nation goes about its traditional process of forging an ideal compromise out of an ideal conception?

Railway history offers a partial key, at least. Over a century ago a period developed now known as the "Railway Mania", when schemes for lines were presented to Parliament

(Continued on page 6)

S & M train may leave Middleton

The last train from the world's oldest passenger railway (the Swansea and Mumbles, opened in 1804 and closed 1960) is to be offered on permanent loan to any museum with the space to accommodate it.

The train is the 106-seat double-deck electric rail-coach No. 2, at present stored in the open by the Middleton Railway Trust. Twenty tons of soot fall on each square mile of the area every month, and this is causing a worrying deterioration in the vehicle's fabric.

Reluctant though the MRT is to part with its cherished "Swumbles" (which it saved from the scrap-heap in 1960), it was felt that, if the train was to be restored, action had to be taken to get it indoors, or at least out of the Hunslet atmosphere.

in hundreds. Of those sanctioned to proceed, it was not unknown for bankruptcy to overtake some before the opening day! The better founded tended to absorb their less prosperous fellows.

Eventually Great Britain was served by an extensive network of railway systems, each related intimately to its own territory economically, physically and, as years passed, psychologically.

Besides this was a strong element of competition where lines invaded another's territory, especially in the central industrial areas. A glance at the varying density of traffic on the present railway map illustrates the results.

The seeds of the present trouble were set in the course of this kind of evolution, and the situation became acute when lines which had never been laid out for unity were actually unified, and this at a time when they were physically worn out following the war.

Opportunity to create

In short, we have never had a true British railway system - only a collection of British railways. The Report offers a first rate opportunity to create a unified system, which must not be wildly uneconomic in its central parts or too limited in its extremities.

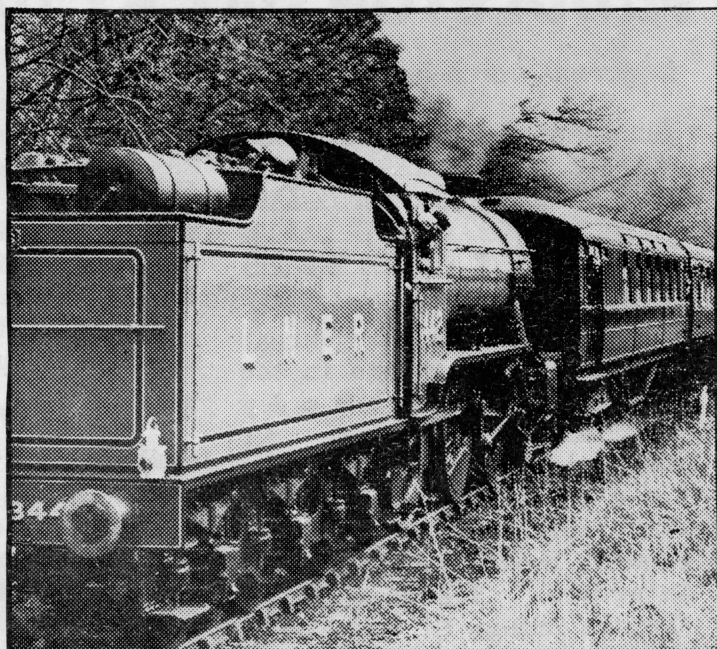
While the system must use buses widely as feeders, as Dr Beeching stresses, it must avoid making an hour by train into two by bus. Those who speak glibly of "alternative transport" have evidently not had experience of waiting for a country bus, perhaps with a tired young family, and then found the bus full and a further hour to wait.

Doctrinaire application

I do not like a doctrinaire application of accountancy to such useful lines as those which serve the Manchester area, connect Liverpool and Southport, run to Whitby or Blaenau Ffestiniog, to Stranraer, or provide the main links in the Isle of Wight.

The more prosperous and efficient a truncated railway became, the greater would be the division in economic prospects and social services between areas it served and those it did not. In an area bounded roughly by straight lines drawn between Blackpool, Hull Weymouth and Folkestone I suggest the Plan has much to offer, but outside this, we ought to be very cautious.

Photo courtesy
Halifax Courier
and Guardian



'Great Marquess' transformed

The Great Marquess, Lord Garnock's preserved K4, has just received a complete clean-up and a coat of varnish from members of the Middleton Railway Trust, of which Lord Garnock is president.

In square feet, tons of dust and man-hours the job looked a lot - and it was a lot. To make the LNER green ready to receive the varnish that was to keep it perfect and easy to clean the whole locomotive had to be scrubbed, inside and out, five times over. Most of the work was carried out by the MRT vice-chairman, Dr Lawrence, with the help of the chairman, Dr Youell.

The skilful varnishing job was done by professionals, who also touched up the numerals with gold leaf.

The New World bell (it was presented to Lord Garnock by the Pennsylvania RR.) was fixed to the front buffer beam and made deafening Wells Fargo noises at the slightest provocation. The clapper has since been muffled, however, and "dings ain't what they used to be".

The Great Marquess has a long waiting list of special excursions to take out. To keep the engine perfect - and no other standard is possible - MRT members are asked to phone Dr Lawrence (Leeds 664756) after each trip and offer their help in wiping off the travel-stains.

The next excursions will be on Sunday, September 8, and Saturday, September 21.

MIDDLETON DAY BY DAY

A journal worth buying

The Leeds University Railway Society journal for Summer, 1963 may now be bought from R. G. Mitchell, Cliffestone Terrace, East Morton, Keighley.

Articles in the journal include a masterpiece in the art of that high comedy peculiar to railways, in which incident follows grim incident slowly and inexorably, while the human element looks on, helpless to intervene. The tame title, "London Bridge in the 80's", should not deter the reader!

There is a most interesting account of a visit to Leeds City Transport HQ.

LCT has the most modern traffic control system in Britain, and its fascinating intricacies are described in this clear article.

Other items included a trip from London to Zurich, "East Side Story", and an explanation of the mysterious behaviour of railway mileposts - all in all, an excellent 1s. 9d. worth.

Why you were waiting

Owing to a sharp fall in MRT income this summer, we regret that it has been necessary to send out three Old Runs

The MRT membership secretary is M. D. Crew, 214 Headley Way Headington, Oxford.

together

The fact that the printer who runs off The Old Run has moved premises has also meant that there has been some delay in the date of publication. The date should return to the first few days of the month in the next few issues, however.

A helping hand

Members of the MRT wish to thank RCTS member Mr Ted Barrington for his technical assistance and advice in the varnishing of The Great Marquess.

Population explosion latest

Stephanie Ashurst, the MRT publicity officer, gave birth to a baby girl on June 28. Stephanie (who is married to the Old Run editor) says, "It's my best production so far!"

Articles please

The editor of The Old Run welcomes any articles or news items for inclusion in the MRT's own journal.

Glossy en-print size photos are also welcome, but they cannot be returned.

Please keep articles short, or be prepared to let the editor shorten them for you!