

## THE OLD RUN NEWS

Newsletter of the Middleton Railway Trust

Number 16 June 1966

### Production of the Newsletter and other Documents

An overworked Secretary, an ex-Operating Superintendent and the Chairman have literally churned out duplicated material in a number of evening sessions. The machine, providentially acquired from a surplus disposal, is hand-operated. It tickles the Chairman pink (or should it be Ultramarine) by being made about 30 yards from the G.E.R. at Tottenham, and bearing the magic name GestEtneR. To get the ink on the paper but not on hands, face or typewriter, needs rather careful permanent way work!

### Beeston G. N. R. Developments.

Owing to an incorrect publication coming into our hands, the closure of Beeston STATION signal box appeared as the closure of Beeston Junction in our Newsletter. The junction in fact is open and likely to remain so despite having lost its Tingley loop for good. We are indebted to Derek Plummer for the information that the Middleton Colliery traffic runs exclusively via Parkside and Beeston Junctions. The section to the East of Parkside is closed, precisely the part that will be overwhelmed by the motorway. Hunslet East N.E.R. and G.N.R. yards are gradually being run down. The few through trains from Beeston Junction to Neville Hill have, of course, been diverted.

### Rules and Regulations

All members have received copies of the rules and regulations. This is in no way 'rules for the sake of it', nor dictatorship of any kind, but the minimum needed for safety, and to show interested parties that we run on a proper basis.

Our omniscient Permanent Way Advisor quotes Brunel on the subject of Rules: 'For the obedience of fools and for the guidance of wise men.' It couldn't be put better! The Rules follow closely the current B.R. Rules, but we are happily exempt from worrying about Rule 55A, non-observance of which has caused shocking accidents such as Colchester and Hawes Junction. We are not likely to be affected by the rule about running short wheelbase goods wagons at less than 60 mph. All the Rules we MUST observe have been abstracted by the Rules Sub-Committee but this doesn't exempt operational members from perusing a current B.R. rule book to get the whole story. We have included certain other rules to cover our own special conditions, Limit of Shunt Boards or red painted sleepers now indicate how far sidings may be filled WITHOUT fouling the main line or giving rise to a risk of trapping a shunter between wagons. Single Line Limit Marks are now up, beyond which no vehicle may pass without the single line token. We know that in old Middleton Colliery days, more than one train DID run at the same time on the single line without protection, industrial

railways have a disconcerting habit of being a law unto themselves. Efficient operation can however be carried out with - out any risks to safety.

A final thought on the new Rules and Regulations - We have the most difficult conditions of ANY amateur operated railway under which to work. How many other amateur lines have no fenced protection over part of their route? How many have to work non-fitted goods trains of great weight on gradients of steeper than 1 in 50 on wet rails and in all weathers? How many have to run on track that was old even by industrial standards when we started? How many have an ungated level crossing over a busy 'bus route?

Middleton Railway has a clean history in accident records, let us keep it good.

#### Green for lost

Mr. J. Dushell, 12 Trelawn Crescent, Leeds 6 would like to contact the owner of a short green woollen scarf which he accidentally removed from the brake van some time ago.

#### Brush up your Welsh at Talylllyn

A Trans-Pennine stock train will form an excursion to Towyn for a trip to Abergynolwyn, coach to Machynllech and train back to Leeds. Date - Sunday JUNE 12th. Departure about 8.50 am from Leeds.

#### Mapping it out

Not content with marathon efforts on Permanent Way, Jim Lodge has with help from some others produced a 10 inch to the mile map of every Middleton Railway Line traceable on maps, some of considerable age. One ancient Waggonway appears to have run from near Tramway Crossing site to Beeston Colliery before the G.N.R. branch was built. We are having copies made of this very useful effort. Does Jim ever sleep?

#### Welcome Assistance

An enthusiastic party of the Wakefield Model Railway Society spent a hot afternoon on the line on May 1st. They have very kindly offered to make up an OO gauge model of a representative part of the line, probably the section from Moor Road Bevel Crossing to the Balm Road loop showing the Moor End branch and with a connection tucked away behind a sales stand so that a goods train can run round and round without being too out of character. The 'backcloth' would be the GASHOLDER STREET scenery

so typical of our surroundings and with a name so incredible but appropriate for a road to a Gas Engineering Factory. This isn't the only case of queer names near a railway, for example the Tilbury Railway started from Gas Factory Junction next to a Gas Works, and the West London Railway actually went in for North Pole Junction! So do not let us laugh at Gasholder Street, it may not be with us when the South East Motorway ploughs its way through.

With almost the smallest membership of any active operating Society and heavy demands made on operating and rebuilding work, we have such a small reserve of man-hours for exhibition work. Bitter experience shows that the best static display ( as we put on at the Harrogate Easter show ) just does not attract the public as a train moving on a track. Our thanks go to the W.M.R.S. for such helpful interest in a most practical form.

### Future Prospects

For a very long time, there has been uncertainty about the future of our line, arising from several bodies owning the land on which it runs, and the older track being of varying ownership as well as our own new track. Our Chairman had two interviews with the City Engineer of Leeds and his Chief Assistant, with others present as needed, our Chairman being accompanied on one occasion by a National Trust Representative.

Although it would be improper to publish facts that are still under consideration, it is pleasant to record that a very great deal of progress was made. Neither we nor the National Trust wanted to obstruct local developments including the South East Motorway, purely for the sake of doing so, and at the same time it was clear that the City did not want to demolish any relics unnecessarily if they were of historic value. We and the National Trust made it clear that we were most interested in all historic relics even though they did not come in the National Trust protected area.

The original motorway plan involved two close bridges, one over our main line opposite Samuel Denison's works, and one over the headshunt near the Tramway Crossing. This would have meant very hazardous working having bridges so close to a junction on which shunting is to take place. It was pointed out that although our main line is partly 1758 and partly 1881, the headshunt is of very little historic importance, dating from 1919-20 only. It may therefore save both expense and working hazard if some realignment of the 1920 branch is carried out.

It is now possible to state that there is no prospect of any part of the line we operate or maintain being destroyed or drastically altered, it also appears that our rights as the

recognised operators of the line will be respected and we shall be kept informed of developments. The Civic Hall meetings did produce helpfulness in both directions, we are glad to say! The Motorway Map shows us as 'Middleton Light Railway'. This of course is not us but the Tramway to Middleton Park. As the abandonment or major alterations of a Statutory Railway (as we are) involves different procedure from that of a Light Railway, the early correction of this error may have averted a technical hitch on the legal aspects of the motorway at a later date.

We should realise that a major development of this kind, involving demolition of private homes with all this implies, diversion of the G.N.G. branch traffic, realignment of all trunk and access roads in the area, and other matters, together with the involvement of national, local, and private bodies, does present the City Engineer and his Staff with prolonged and complicated problems. On top of this we are an 'Outstanding Historic Relic' protected by the National Trust, and with Statutory Authority that predates all the normal Railway Laws, and another Trust operating it. The detailed discussions that took place at the Civic Hall were helpful in many respects.

Whatever else lies in store for us in the future, we are happy to know that there is no risk at all of our line on which we have lavished so much work, being steamrollered out of existence.

### Puff-puff Pastry

On Wednesday 11th, May, Mr. Richard Hearne and a film company visited us to film a television commercial of 'Mr. Pastry and Golden Wonder Crisps'. Mr. Hearne had to fit this in between appearing at Keighley in a circus. Our hero was Ben Wade. It had to be a steam locomotive of course for such an auspicious occasion, and the Bagnall was turned out resplendent in clean polished livery. Ben was on duty at 5.30 am., our Chairman turned up at 9 am. to act as fireman and the University Operating Assistant, Don Agus with G.C. Bird turned up as shunters after lunch.

We had to give the impression of Mr. Pastry being nearly run down by a train while he was eating crisps on the three wheel velocipede. To do this without risking injury was very difficult, but a helpful photographic trick was to shoot the locomotive puffing away from Mr. Pastry who was right at the front buffer beam. By reversing the film, this appears as a locomotive tearing up and stopping at the last possible moment.

At lunch it was discovered that Mr. Hearn was a Norwich man so that he, Don Agus (making Lowestoft noises) and the Chairman (making Beccles noises) had more or less to be dragged apart by non-East Anglicans. Mr. Pastry left for Keighley at 3pm. but sound and film recording went on until 7pm. and the daily goods train had to be run. Ben arrived home at 9pm. after an Olympic Gold Medal performance.

The commercial should start to be shown on ITV in July.

## Jim on Y our Tracks

Our Civil Engineer has the delightful habit of producing major repairs one after the other with apparently little help and with a complete absence of fuss. In the last few weeks, a long length of the Tramway Crossing-Headshunt Turnout section has been resleepered and rechaired, the old sleepers being in the worse than firwood state in many cases. The left wing rail at Whitaker's Junction turnout split and has been repaired. A rail in the Moor End branch split its webbing and was replaced, like much of our equipment its life being expired.

In an afternoon three people dropped in two 60 footers at Moor Road level crossing as part of the track modernisation programme. As these things weigh getting on for a ton a piece and a normal p.w. team is of 6 or more, this shows we have a Civil Engineer with plenty of know-how. Why not turn up and help him on Sundays ?

## Locomotives and Rolling Stock

John Alcock, the diesel, is at the moment handling all traffic, allowing plenty of time for Bagnall maintenance. The Hunslet patent gear change is working even though not normally used above a slow speed gear. Someone has suggested that the inscription LMS 7401 might legitimately be considered for the sides of John Alcock but this of course is purely a suggestion at the moment.

The Bagnall's tank was drained and the injectors cocks reground to prevent leaks thus curing trouble caused by water getting into axleboxes. With the new firebars now happily settled down, the steaming is extremely good. One almost throws in a shovel full of coal and jumps back quickly before the safety valves blow! This tiny slogger-on-wheels has even produced a rise of pressure to blowing off point while running uphill loaded with the injector on, a thing which usually only happens with oil-firing. New brake blocks are being fitted and part of the brake rigging straightened.

The Y7 is running well although it still has no power brakes. Some of this class in N.E.R. days had Westinghouse brakes. Repainting in N.E.R. livery has started.

The velocipede has suffered much damage from vandals lately and a frame member, outrigger and axle have been repaired.

The Sentinel's bunker has been restored to a plane surface thus removing the effects of a slight disagreement with an overhanging steel plate on a wagon some time ago. A complete replacement of boiler studs has been made and the boiler is now together and being tightened up. Jacks and timbers were used to lift the firebox side up to the main boiler section.

Interior redecoration of the brake-van has been started.

## STEAM GALA

2.30 p.m. Saturday July 2nd.1966

As announced earlier, an open day with a difference has been planned. All locomotives will be moved down the line to places suitable for photography and they will be joined by three or four traction engines and steam rollers belonging to members of the Leeds Traction Engine Club, the latter being situated probably near the Tram Crossing.

Admission will be free so to make ends meet and to publicise the Railway to the maximum we must sell lots of our wares. Something new will be badges for lapels depicting Salamanca and costing 6d. A great deal of preparation has been done already but there remains much to be done on the day. As well as preparation of the yard in the morning members will be needed to act as salesmen for literature and refreshments. If you can help in any way please contact Susan Youell, 5 North Grange Mount, Leeds 6.

A large wooden building is in the process of being erected and members working on it are determined to have it finished by THE DAY. It is hoped to house historic relics and the refreshments and provide a headquarters much needed.

Enclosed with this Newsletter for members living in and around Leeds will be one or two foolscap posters. PLEASE do try and get them displayed in a strategic position. Even if you can't help us on the day, it would help us more than a little if a dozen members of the public responded and visited the line. Also available is a limited number of car stickers and larger posters 15" by 20", the latter being designed to accompany existing posters displayed in the West Riding. They can however be displayed alone. The car stickers and posters are available from John Rushell, 12 Trelawn Crescent, Leeds 6.

WE WANT TO MAKE THIS DAY A GREAT SUCCESS  
PLEASE DO HELP US .

This Newsletter was written by the Chairman.