

# The Old Run

Journal of the Middleton Railway Preservation Society

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## SWANSEA AND AFTER

Those members who came to Leeds during the week 18th - 25th June were rewarded with the sight of a reassembled, polished Mumbles train no. 2 full of passengers, being pulled up and down a short stretch of siding by the Hunslet diesel, 1697. Our first week of operation was a success but the story behind it is one of crisis after crisis.

On the night of Thursday, 9th June, Alex Brown and myself set out with Gerry Cawthray, in the latter's van, to Swansea, where we arrived outside the Mumbles Railway depot at about 3 a.m. the following morning. Thinking it was too late to go to the Barringtons', we decided to 'sleep' in the van. We 'slept' until 5 a.m. when we realised it had suddenly become Friday morning and time to remove the wire netting from in front of the depot, to enable the tractor which had been hired to pull out no. 2. When it arrived at 5.30, we discovered that the coach would have to be hauled out by winch as the tractor would not safely fit over the inspection pit. No. 2's brakes were released but she came forward making a horrible grinding noise. It was only when we tried to tow her round the curve (see diagram) outside the depot that we saw an enormous pit jack protruding from beneath the rear bogie, and a groove ploughed by it in the concrete all the way from the back of the depot!

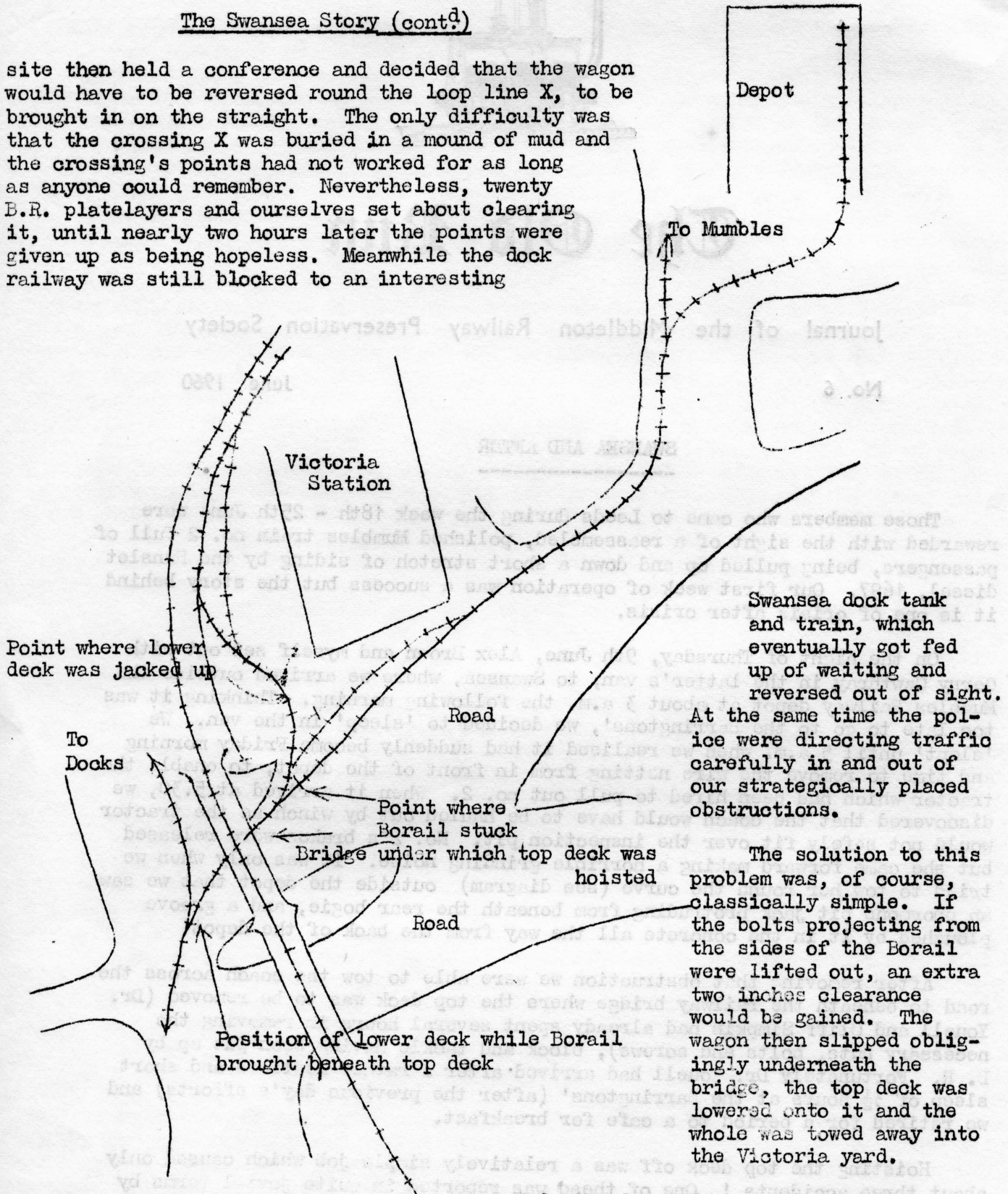
After removing that obstruction we were able to tow the coach across the road to beneath the railway bridge where the top deck was to be removed (Dr. Youell and Cliff Simpkin had already spent several hours in removing the necessary nuts, bolts and screws), block and tackle having been put up by B. R. Fortunately Dr. Youell had arrived after a rather restless and short sleep of 3½ hours at the Barringtons' (after the previous day's efforts) and we retired for a period to a cafe for breakfast.

Hoisting the top deck off was a relatively simple job which caused only about three accidents ! One of these was reported in quite jovial terms by the South Wales Evening Post which stated "....just before hoisting began, two blocks of wood being used as packing fell out, one of them bouncing on little Jacqueline ----'s foot...." Little Jacqueline was rushed to hospital where it was discovered that there was nothing wrong with her. The two blocks of wood had, however, in the process bounced off your editor's head, though this gallant action (and dangerous!) went unreported!

A B.R. tractor was then borrowed to push the lower deck back towards the depot to make room for the Borail wagon for the top deck. Unfortunately the tractor could not pull or push in the required direction and it was decided that we would have to block the dock road and railway for a short time by pushing it the other way while the Borail was brought underneath. We succeeded in manoeuvring the wagon half way round the curve out of the B.R. depot behind Swansea Victoria when it jammed against the bridge abutment because of its large overhang. The many B.R. officers who had by this time congregated at the

The Swansea Story (cont'd)

site then held a conference and decided that the wagon would have to be reversed round the loop line X, to be brought in on the straight. The only difficulty was that the crossing X was buried in a mound of mud and the crossing's points had not worked for as long as anyone could remember. Nevertheless, twenty B.R. platelayers and ourselves set about clearing it, until nearly two hours later the points were given up as being hopeless. Meanwhile the dock railway was still blocked to an interesting



Swansea dock tank and train, which eventually got fed up of waiting and reversed out of sight.

At the same time the police were directing traffic carefully in and out of our strategically placed obstructions.

The solution to this problem was, of course, classically simple. If the bolts projecting from the sides of the Borail were lifted out, an extra two inches clearance would be gained. The wagon then slipped obligingly underneath the bridge, the top deck was lowered onto it and the whole was towed away into the Victoria yard.

Only the lower deck and bogies now remained. The lower deck was to be raised with jacks to a height of 5ft 9ins., the bogies run out from underneath and a Flat-rol well-wagon pushed under in their place. While the jacks, which are the largest ones of their type in Britain, were being wheeled across from the Mumbles depot, one of them fell onto its side and broke a vital cog wheel. Whilst this did not put it completely out of action, it did slow up the raising operation considerably and made the job even more dangerous than it should have been.

After cutting off a protruding wooden bolster, the front end of the wagon fitted underneath and all was going well until the overhang (there was not a straight section of track in the yard) fouled the jacks! The front end of the lower deck was then lowered onto two hydraulic jacks, placed on the end of the Flatrol and thus taking the weight whilst the main jacks were moved sideways. A similar problem met with with the rear jacks was solved similarly.



By this time it was almost 11 p.m. and with the arrival of Mike Crew operation was adjourned until the following day. After a hasty five minute breakfast we returned to Victoria to await the arrival of the B.R. crane at 7 a.m. It was then found that the lower deck of no. 2 was overhanging one end of the Flatrol by about 18ins. This had to be reduced and it was some time before this ticklish problem was solved. Two hydraulic jacks were used to give a sideways push to the coach against the main jack. By this time yet another (and final) member from Leeds appeared to lend a hand, having travelled overnight. With this extra help the bogies were then soon loaded, the train assembled (not without some final defiant hitches) and all was ready apart from the spares, Their loading into no. 2 completed a week-end of hectic activity.

Unfortunately we missed the Saturday morning goods train but no. 2 reluctantly left Swansea on Monday morning at 8.05 a.m., accompanied by Michaels Crew and Harrison with special brake-van permits. The train arrived in Leeds the day after, at 3.30 p.m., only five days before we were due to start operations at Middleton. However, with a tremendous effort by all concerned, we were able to take the lower deck on its own wheels over the newly relaid junction at Balm Rd., followed by the top deck still on its wagon and the whole train towed by the immaculate ex-Works Hunslet diesel in which Dr. Youell had previously passed his driving test. A memorable sight indeed! The top deck was later slung beneath a convenient bridge and lowered onto the bottom half. It was finally secured for operation during the University Rag Week although the seats in the upper deck were reinstalled progressively throughout the week.

The most encouraging aspect of the Swansea loading (and Leeds unloading) was the enormous amount of help we received from all kinds of people. The whole of British Railways in Swansea came at some time during the loading - from the Manager downwards (hierarchically speaking), and all rolled up their sleeves and gave a hand. At least half a dozen students from the University College of Swansea came and put in a hard-working Friday afternoon and evening, and various other railway enthusiasts and other individuals gave considerable help. It is difficult to pick out any one of these for special mention, but Mr. Bill Pickard, the engineer employed by the South Wales Transport Company to look after the Mumbles coaches (tramcars or railcars, whichever you prefer!) was particularly valuable with his expert knowledge of no. 2. The whole proceedings was excellently covered in the South Wales Evening Post and we also appeared on the local BBC and ITA television networks.

Our first passenger service can be said to be successful, for we carried no less than 7700 passengers during five days (operating from 4.30 p.m. onwards every day except Saturday when we started at about 1 p.m.): of these, about 2000 made a contribution towards Rag funds. Such a low percentage is not really surprising when one realizes that most of the passengers were children having 'free' rides! During the week (and in the previous week, at Balm Road) we had enormous help from the youth of Hunslet, Belle Isle and Middleton, who quite cheerfully undertook much of the donkey work of cleaning, lifting, screwing, bolting and ensuring a most welcome regular supply of light refreshments: from the proceeds of empty bottles (donated to the Society) it is estimated that one member alone must have consumed 25 gallons of lemonade!

One hitch occurred during the week when a number of stones placed on the track, combined with youngsters risking their lives by standing in front of the moving train, caused the driver to brake rather sharply; this caused a certain amount of damage to the towing gear and we had to suspend operation on the Thursday evening while the necessary repairs were being carried out by the Hunslet Engine Company. Apart from one other incident where a youngster put his head through a window (obviously so clean so as to be invisible, thanks to our helpers) and sustained one or two minor cuts, the whole week was very successful and certainly enjoyable for all concerned. The week's running had started by conveying our first passenger, Mrs. Dora Langton, whose parents originated from Swansea and who vividly remembered having her first ride in a Mumbles car when aged about seventeen. She was presented with the first of a batch of specially printed 'Rag Railway' tickets and a photographic record of the occasion was also made by one of our members.

Finally we would like to thank again everyone who has helped to make this whole operation, from Swansea to actual running in Leeds, a success.

"Freight train, freight train,....."

At the time of writing, our Chairman, Dr. Youell, is undergoing negotiations with the B.R. District Goods Manager (Mr. Clegg) and his Assistant (Mr. Charlton) with a view to possible operation of a freight service on the line. Several firms on it have expressed great interest in such a facility and we await further developments with the hope that something to our advantage will materialize.

Goodbye, trans!

Sunday, 26th June, heralded a tour of the remaining lines in Sheffield by tramcar 517, prior to the complete abandonment of tramways in the area later in the year. The tour was voted a success by all who participated, although there were only just sufficient numbers present to pay expenses. It had been organised by our Joint Secretary, Mr. Peter Dean.

R.P.S. Visit

Mr. D. Noel Draycott, Secretary of the Railway Preservation Society, paid us a visit on 17th/18th June and was very impressed by our progress. He was shown round the Fireclay Works, in which it is hoped to establish our Museum, by the watchman. Before returning to London we had discussions regarding the role of MRPS in the RPS and he has promised to send written proposals for co-operation with MRPS soon.

New Arrivals

Glasgow tram 1055 (ex-Liverpool 'Green Goddess' 869) arrived at Clayton's siding on 10th June, transported by Guinness on behalf of the Merseyside Tramway Preservation Society. Because of its narrow, 4ft 7 $\frac{1}{2}$ ins. gauge we have so far been unable to remove the car to a safer place and as a result a number of windows have been smashed. Some of these, however, were to be replaced when the car is restored to its original Liverpool condition.

Leeds City Museum Horsfield tram, 202, arrived at Clayton's ON 18th June and was unloaded with the help of Society members.

On 21st June Pickford's delivered our Leeds railcar 601 free of charge as part of our Rag Week effort: it attracted a large number of visitors. We were not able to run the car, however, because of the extremely narrow tyre flanges on each of the wheels.

202 and 601 have since been moved, with Mumbles no. 2 to safer quarters with the Hunslet diesel. It is hoped that 1055 will soon be similarly moved. We would like to thank the firms who have helped in the transporting of the above trams, especially Guinness, Pickfords and Sellers for their generosity.

## Notes and News

We would like to take this opportunity of congratulating Dr. & Mrs. Youell on the birth of a daughter, Harriet Deborah Dorothy. We are sure that all members of the Society will join us in sending our best wishes. It is perhaps coincidental that membership of the Society has increased to such an extent that Harriet has been enrolled as our 100th member!

Your Editor is retiring after this issue and requests that all news and notes for inclusion in the next journal should be sent to the Editor elect, Mike Crew, 214, Headley Way, Headington, Oxford. All enquiries about the Society should be sent to Peter Dean, 24, Allerton Grange Drive, Moortown, Leeds, 17.

## New Members

100	Harriet D.D.Youell	21, Burley Wood Crescent, Leeds, 4.
101	Liverpool College	Mossley Hill, Liverpool, 18.
102	B. Spencer	101, Belle Isle Road, Leeds, 10.
103	D.E.Hastelow	221, Bradford Road, Stanningley, Pudsey.
104	Bernard Hallas	7, Lodge Lane, Beeston, Leeds, 11.
105	John M. Daykin	
106	D.T.Plummer	44, Broadgate Lane, Horsforth, Leeds
107	R.P.Lee	The Sycamores, Golcar, Huddersfield
108	Malcolm E. Bolton	80, Longroyd Grove, Leeds, 11.



### M.R.P.S. ON TELEVISION.

Not content with television appearance at Swansea, we traversed the visual ether twice in one day on the Thursday of Rag Week. Within 5 minutes of each other, there were appearances on B.B.C. and I.T.V. The B.B.C. showing was rather longer, and included Mike Crew in academic dress waving the "green" flag, a very grubby looking driver giving an acknowledging wave, a close up of the loco. wheels turning, the Mumbles train passing, children climbing aboard, and two very impressive shots taken from inside looking forward along the track. The I.T.V. showing included shots of loco and Mumbles train in action. A good photograph taken at the same time by Photopress of Leeds appeared in print, including the South Wales Evening Post, who have given us so much space already.

### CARS IN CLAYTON'S SIDING - IMPORTANT.

The Society is extremely privileged to be able to use Clayton's siding as temporary accomodation. It is essential that no nuisance be caused to Clayton's as a result of the presence of our rolling stock. Members are asked to observe the following requirements:-

1. Do not use the works gate or wander about the yard or works.
2. Enter by the railway, do not bring in bicycles etc., and leave everything tidy, putting all tools etc., away in cars after use.
3. A Senior member of the Society must be present, and only members actually engaged on work should be at Clayton's siding.
4. Members on guard duty should prevent unauthorised persons from entering Clayton's premises.

### WORKING PARTIES.

Maintenance of our stock and track repairs will be carried out every Saturday afternoon and evening, and on Sundays. During the Summer, it is hoped to have a Senior member present each weekday evening to supervise work. It is hoped to have details of work and activities posted on no. 601 L.C.T. Railcar, on the University Railway Society notice board and later other places to assist members.

### SWINEGATE YARD.

By the kindness of Mr. Knighton of British Railways, the Society has been loaned a key to Swinegate Yard so that we may have access to our museum cars there for maintenance and preparation for removal. Apply to the Chairman for use of the key.

### FIRST IN THE FIELD!

To our surprise, it appears that we are the first standard gauge preservation society to operate and carry passengers, albeit in a very modest fashion. This is a great achievement in under 6 months of existence. We have still a vast amount of negotiation and work to do before the Society's aims are carried out, so we must keep up the pace of our first half year.

### AT MUMBLES, SWANSEA.

A fund-raising sherry evening is being held at Pengroes, Mumbles Road, West Cross, by Mrs. V. Barrington on the 27th. July, 7-9 p.m. to raise money for the preservation of the Mumbles Train. Tickets are 2/-.

### AND FINALLY.....

Don't forget that N.R.P.S. needs MONEY to continue its activities. Any quantities, preferably large. Hands in your pockets, everybody. Donations to any Committee member. Recruitment of new members is also a must for all our present members.

University members are asked to send the Secretary their home addresses to facilitate delivery of "Old Runs" during the Vacation.