

OLD RAIL NEWS

Newsletter of the Middleton Railway Trust

Number 23, January, 1967 \

A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL OUR MEMBERS.

As we start the new year, the Chairman would like members to put on their thinking caps before the A.G.M.

We have always been handicapped by a smaller number of members than any other operating Society (and many NOT operating) We are also handicapped by a shortage of senior members for the vitally important supervisory and planning work.

At the moment the faithful few, very few, are tackling the intricate negotiations with the City Engineer re the S.E. Motorway; keeping good relations with our customers, British Railways and the National Trust; running the traffic ; repairing the Permanent Way and stock, and the hundred and one administrative jobs.

More often than not the work is done willingly but on top of fulltime work. Voluntary work is a pleasure in moderation but when one has to eat, sleep and work with a list of urgent M.R.T. jobs hanging over one it ceases to be so pleasant.

When our publicity officer resigned before Christmas his work was loaded onto already busy committee members. We still await the erection of an attractive display for visitors in our building which took us 5 years to get round to assembling. We held no exhibition to celebrate Matthew Murray's bicentenary.

Could I ask members therefore to ensure that the Committee elected at the coming A.G.M. will 1) try to make sure that each important task has a competent person in charge of it with an appointed deputy. 2) see that each officer has one major job AND NOT MORE THAN ONE. 3) ensure that we have fully trained and efficient train crews 4) appoint a permanent way engineer to lay in track due for renewal for 2 years and to lead a team of plate-layers for REGULAR WORK. 5) ensure that there is a willing squad of volunteers for help in printing, duplicating and carriage and setting up of exhibitions. 6) act with real determination to push our membership up to a more representative figure. We are the oldest firm in the business and the first to show that amateurs could run a standard gauge line successfully and safely.

The National Trust has honoured us with their support- let our work be worthy of this honour.

Recent events.

The Chairman had a long meeting with B.R. (N.E.) Officers at City Station on December 30th. During the course of a very helpful and cooperative discussion, the matters of quicker turn-round of wagons, closer tie-up with B.R. Goods Agents and the effect of the Motorway on all sections of Middleton Railway, were discussed. The ordering of wagons and records of movements is now done via the Balm Road sidings Goods Agent rather than the Yardmaster at Hunslet Down Yard.

Gipsies (moved on by Leeds Corporation from Pepper Road) descended on us at Burton Road crossing on 2nd.-4th. January. They stole and broke up sleepers and keys for firewood and lit fires a bare yard from the track. After being watched and cautioned by members of M.R.T., two senior members and four very large policemen from Dewsbury Road moved in to evict a vehicle parked dangerously close to the line. This sort of problem has been a nuisance to Leeds Police for thirteen years. Unless one catches the gipsies in the act they cannot be arrested, and if and when their case comes up they have disappeared. Lady members of the 'invasion' let loose a continual and highly coloured flow of abuse and accusation on us for most of the incident.

The Ministry of Transport have said 'No' to plans to divert the footpath between Moor End and Croydon works, the path that runs over our line by a bridge at the loop. This involves some Town Planning intricacies. The proposal would have amalgamated the Moor End and the Croydon works (burnt down) into the same area.

A.G.M. and evening.

As stated in the last newsletter, the A.G.M. will be held at 2.30 pm on Saturday, February 25th in the Houldsworth School of the University. Full details for getting there will be in the next newsletter.

In the evening we are to have a joint buffet with the University Railway Society. As many films as possible will be shown! It is to be held at Tetley Hall, just off the Otley Road. Time 7 for 7.30 pm. but as it is informal members will be welcome at any later time. Tickets will be 7/6d and can be obtained from the Secretary, 5 North Grange Mount, Leeds 6. Please send a S.A.E. with remittance. We hope to have several friends with us as guests. Do bring YOUR friends along too!

Marquess trip

The Marquess is taking us to Crich or Derby works (your choice) on Saturday April 22nd. Route- Leeds, Kippax, Nottingham, Doncaster, Sheffield, Hope Valley, Ambergate. Fare will be approx 35/-, departure approx 9 am. Certain number of juvenile fares. Greater detail will be available soon and in a subsequent newsletter. At Crich it will be possible to travel on a steam or electric tramway. The return will be by the Midland main line.

Want a Railway Holiday ?

During Whitsun Bank Holiday week at the end of May, John Bushell, our membership secretary is taking a party of boys to visit lines, engine sheds etc in Scotland. The party will stay at Youth Hostels and will travel by a rail-rover ticket. Cost should be about £10. If you are interested, and a Junior Member, please contact him at 12, Trelawn Crescent, Leeds 6. Tel Leeds 54282.

University Railway Society Meetings.

To which you are cordially invited.
Jan. 13th. Tallylyn Topics by D.J. Mitchell.
Jan 27th. The Hull and Barnsley by D.R. Smith.
Feb. 3rd. L.C.T. topics.
All meetings in the Houldsworth School of the University,
Clarendon Road, Leeds 2. at 7.30 pm.