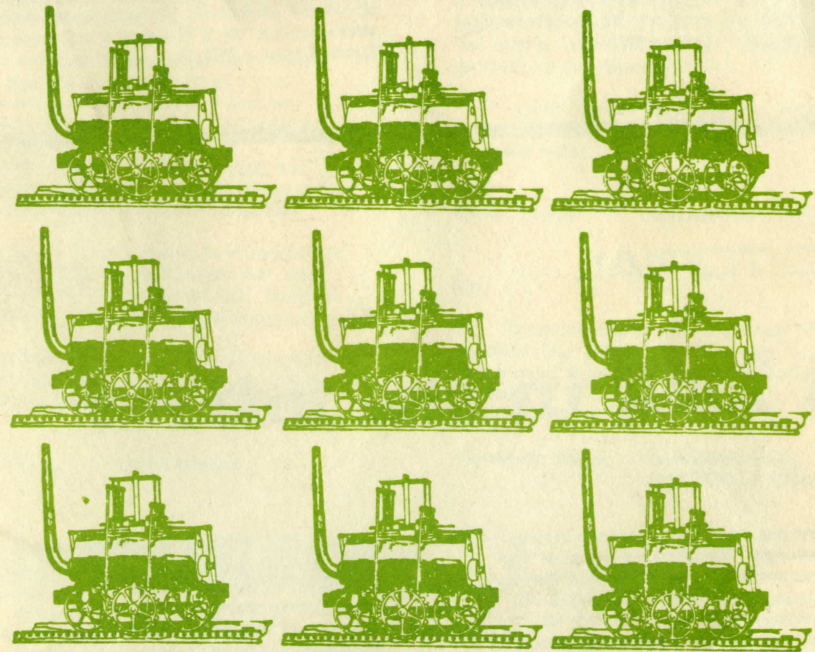


THE OLD RUN

AUTUMN

1971

12p



JOURNAL OF
THE 1758 MIDDLETON RAILWAY TRUST
LEEDS

THE OLD RUN

Volume 10

Number 3

Autumn 1971

The Editor invites all readers to contribute articles, news items, letters, photographs and drawings. All contributions should include the reader's name and address.

Drawings and maps should be on plain white paper, and should not exceed 6" x 9" in size. The same dimensional restrictions apply to photographs, which should ideally be on single-weight white glossy paper, and should have good contrast. It is regretted that, because of the printing process used, photographs and other pictorial matter cannot be returned after use in the magazine.

The Old Run is published in March, June, September and December, and all contributions should be sent to the Editor before the 15th of the preceding month. Opinions expressed by contributors and correspondents do not necessarily reflect those of the Middleton Railway Trust, or of the Editor.

Details of rates and conditions for advertisements in The Old Run may be obtained from the Editor. General enquiries about the Middleton Railway Trust should be addressed to: Mr B W Ashurst, 18 Inglewood Drive, Otley, LS21 3LD.

EDITORIAL

A look in the mirror

1971 would seem to be philosophising year at Middleton. The last two issues of The Old Run contained articles by leading members of the Trust about the future directions the Society should, in their opinion, take, and in this issue we have a third view on the subject. Although (inevitably) opinions differ as to which courses of action are practical or desirable, we find it encouraging that many of the one-time sacred cows are at last coming in for critical examination.

This is not to say that revolution is nigh, or even that it is necessarily appropriate. Any new directions must be carefully thought out, and agreed to by a general consensus of opinion, but it would be a very unhealthy

situation if in a changing environment — of which the physical impact of the motorway is a dramatic example, though not perhaps as important as changes in the less tangible commercial and social fields — people were not beginning to ask whether the values, objectives and policies of the last eleven years can and should survive intact.

There will not, we fear, by any easy answers to the questions, but instead a lot of hard thinking the sometimes bitter argument. For our part, we certainly have no 'magic' solution to offer, but, subject to considerations of space and relevance, will be very happy to continue publishing members' contributions to the debate.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

No metrics

Sir,

With regard to the above item in Old Run News (Spring 1971), I would like to point out that there is no official policy to change to the use of metric units.

All that has happened so far is that a private organisation approached a past Government with the idea of a change, without saying how it was to be financed.

An unofficial body was set up, but virtually all moves to use of metric units have been by Government-controlled bodies.

As far as British Railways is concerned, the Railway Regulation (Gauge) Act 1846 prescribes 4'8½" for Great Britain. Only on the authority of Parliament can this be changed.

The Middleton Railway Trust would therefore have been supporting unconstitutional action if it had proposed a change.

Hessle, Yorks. G STREETS

New Run

Sir,

It is a pleasure to write and say how much I have enjoyed the last two Old Runs. I must congratulate you on setting a very high standard which puts Middleton well in the lead as far as preservation society journals go (and we see most of them).

I think if enough are sold we may be able to justify the enormous bills we shall no doubt be faced with!

Otley, Yorks. BRIAN ASHURST

Sir,

Congratulations on the Spring 1971 number (Vol 10 No 1) of The Old Run. It is a most interesting and well-produced journal.

Newbury, Berks. AIR MARSHAL
SIR ROBERT SAUNDBY

Sir,

Congratulations and thanks on making The Old Run better than it has ever been, both in presentation and layout, and in balance of news and general interest articles.

Indeed, there are only two other changes that I would like to see, and they are both minor ones. The complete elimination of typewriter typeface would complete the 'sprucing-up' achieved, and consecutive page numbering from one issue to the next (ie continuing instead of starting again at 1) would help those wishing to keep, bind and index the copies.

Homebuilding

Sir,

I was interested in John Carr's article concerning the provision of basic facilities near the line, and I feel that a start should be made as soon as possible on this. For a start, how about buying a second-hand prefabricated building? It could be divided into offices, mess room, wash room, etc., and of course the total cost would then be kept to a bare minimum.

Leeds 3

R ASHWORTH

Leeds 6

J M HINDES

LETTERS (CONT)

Faulty Centrepiece

Sir,

The map published as Centrepiece in the Spring Old Run has served well in the past as a sketch to hand out to visitors, but to present it as a 'definitive' map was, in view of its inaccuracies, most unfortunate. Perusal of the relevant OS maps will reveal:

1. Dayhole End was just east of the incline headshunt, not at the 'end' of the line.
2. The claypit branch ran north to south, not south to north as shown (a moment's consideration of the gradients involved on the alignment shown will make the reason for this obvious).
3. New Pit was served by loops off the present alignment after the abandonment of the 4'1" alignment.
4. The 1758 and 4'8½" alignments do not coincide until the Whittaker's Staithe sidings are reached. To show these alignments coinciding at Burton Road is to claim that we use the original trackbed at our northern extremity when in fact we do not, and cannot do so.
5. The sidings shown at the gasworks are completely incorrect, and in any case belonged to the gasworks, not Middleton. The connection with Hunslet Lane goods yard crossed Kidacre Street north of its junction with Holmes Street, not south of it.

With regard to the Middleton lines shown as 'used', and the motorway alterations inset, the following facts should be noted:

1. We do not reach the country area, only the crossing to the park. The 'shed' and the 'museum' are now demolished. The line to the 'shed' was never built,

neither was the line through the colliery area relaid.

2. The line to Denisons is only a proposal. If Denisons do not require a service the branch will probably not be constructed.
3. The road system shown in the inset must be a figment of someone's imagination — it certainly bears no resemblance to the plans to which the motorway junctions are being constructed!

I certainly do not claim that this is a 'definitive' list of faults contained in the map, only that it is a large enough list to ask that more research is undertaken before such sweeping claims are made for a 'general arrangement drawing'.

Leeds 13

JIM LODGE



Explosion

It is said nowadays that it is safer to be on the working face of a coal mine than driving on a main road. 'Twas not ever thus.

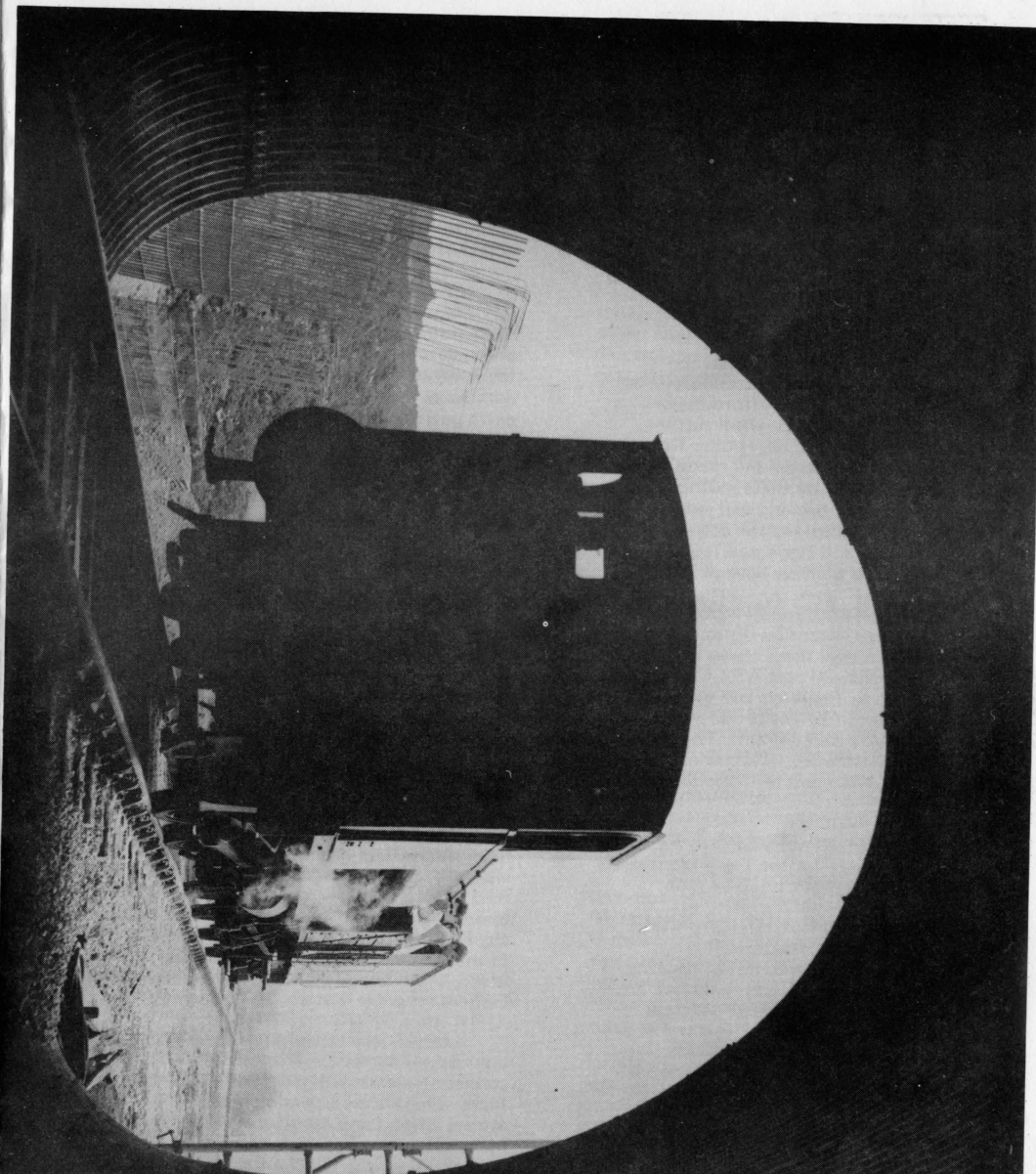
I came across a detailed report of the Explosion at Brandling Main Colliery in May 1812, in which the Vicar of Heworth gives the story of the death of 92 miners, and the raising of funds for the widows and orphans and the founding of a Colliers Hospital. The sad story is packed with details of historic aspects as well as those of the tragedy. (A Newcastle Chaldron, for example, held about 9¼ cwts of coal, a London Chaldron about half this amount.) It took four months to bring up the remains of the victims except one who was never found. By December of the same year, £2806.15.6½ had been subscribed to the widows and orphans fund. In those days this was a tidy sum.

R F YOUELL

Framed — a visitors' train, headed by No 6, approaches the motorway tunnel from Middleton Park.

(Photo by D Horner)

THE OLD RUN



BACK IN BUSINESS

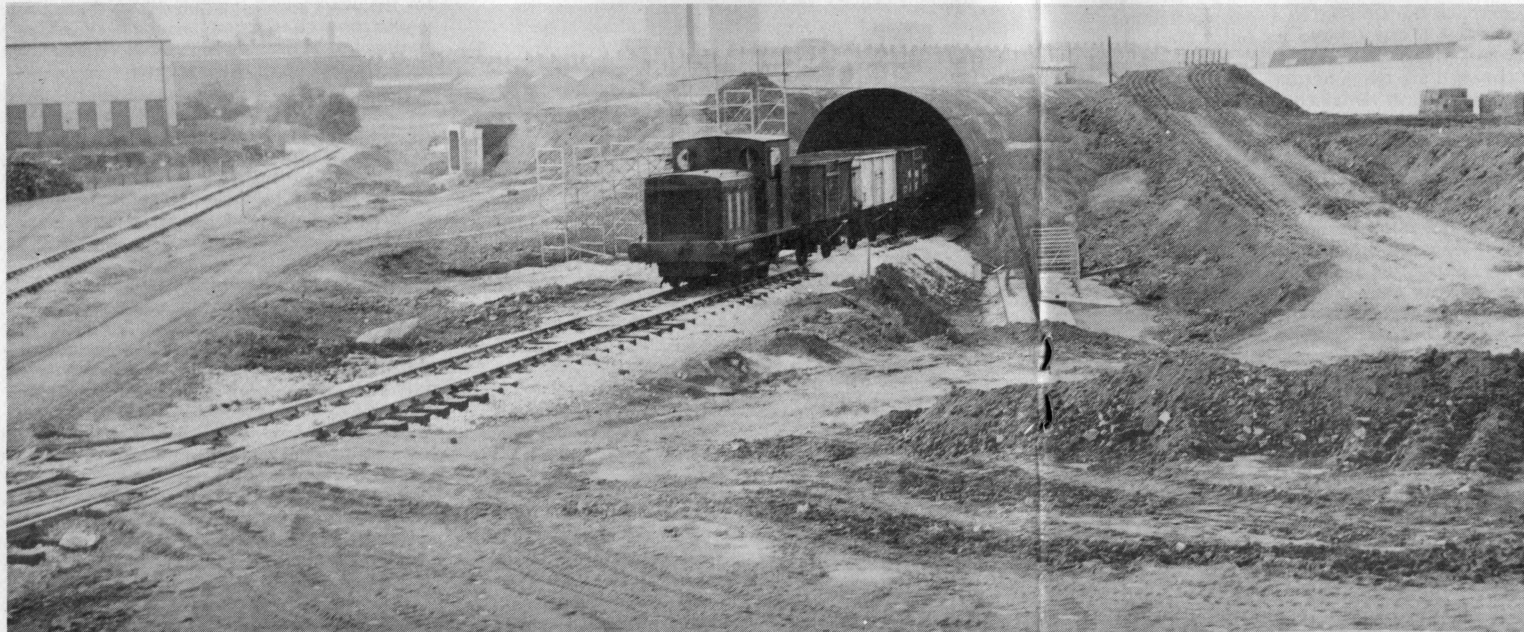


Construction — a view along the earthworks of the new line to Dartmouth works, before tracklaying commenced.

DR R F YOUELL

Completion — John Alcock emerges from the tunnel under the incomplete motorway embankment, with a train of empties for Robinson & Birdsells. The mouth of the pedestrian tunnel can be seen to the left of the locomotive, replacing the old cinder track to the rugby ground, which also carried part of our line to Dartmouth works, described in this article, is on the left of the picture.

(Photo by D Horner)



One of the secrets of first-class engineering work is to plan it well ahead and to worry away at the plans until one has the best solution to the problem. My first plan of a diversion line from Dartmouth Works to the main line was drawn in 1960. It is not all that different from the one I passed as fit for traffic today.

About four years ago the first planning of the Leeds motorway diversion started. I stuck to the principle of not asking for any ornamentation or frills of any kind, but instead a strict adherence to the rule book, replacement track up to the correct standard, and a safe layout. I am glad to say that I have achieved the greater part of what I asked for.

The hard bargaining with the Leeds City Corporation has produced a fair solution, with only one or two weak links. The original plan of a sharp drop from Dartmouth to the allotments, and an equally sharp rise to the main line, has become an almost dead level route, on the grounds that a few hundred cubic yards of earthworks were a drop in the ocean. The City Corporation must be sick and tired of the sight of me with my Permanent Way Institute manual and MoT Rule Book in hand as my Old and New Testaments. A great 19th-century scientist said: 'If you can measure what you are talking about, and express it by a number, then you know something of your subject.'

As part of the final agreement with the City, a contractor was to relay the main line from outside Bannisters, under the motorway and up towards Parkside, and also from Dartmouth Works to the main line, skirting the motorway. The tunnel on the main line had to be a special one with at least seven feet clearance for the shunters to walk safely beside the trains.

The old Dartmouth curve (as our train crews knew only too well) was steeply graded and sharper than five chains radius. I asked for nothing sharper than ten chains radius, thus avoiding the use of check rails, and we arrived at the compromise of about eight chains, with nothing sharper than seven at the most. The agreement included a requirement that we should tidy up the Dartmouth end of the new line, and first priority in this was the replacement of the old turnout.

This was a typical mineral line mixture, with short switches, sleepers in places rotten to powder, and very little that agreed with any known diagram. There was no room to prefabricate the new junction, so I marked out every component ready to go in. All the stock rail holes were drilled ready, the closure rails bent to the exact curvature, and the common crossing dismantled, overhauled and

reassembled to perfection. Regrettably, in the clumsy ham-fisted way some contractors have, this complete common crossing, assembled with timbers ready for use, was picked up by a crane and crashed down on to uneven ground, splitting the timber beyond repair under the A chair, and breaking the X, B and C special chairs. The cost of repairing this damage, in material and in (my) man-hours, was substantial.

The major realignment work was planned to start on Wednesday 16th June, and to be completed a fortnight later. Late on the Tuesday, when all traffic had been cleared and the Courage loco stored away at Moor End, we set to work. With fishplate bolts at about 10p each, we cannot afford to have contractors burning them off, so we worked through the night until we had salvaged valuable fishplates and bolts and nuts, and all keys back to the headshunt. I was assisted by the Civil Engineer and a university student.

On the next day, my student pw squad dismantled up to the top of Dartmouth curve. I'm very relieved to see that my first relaying job, dating from July 1960, of the ninety feet outside Dartmouth loading gauge, is still serviceable, though far from standard. It took me many weeks to do these three thirty-foot sections. We now work faster and to higher standards.

The old junction to Robinson & Birdsell was partly on a curve, and was approached on a steep gradient, so that locomotives easily stalled. The whole of the old junction therefore came out, and was replaced by an A and 6 turnout to LNER standard pattern. Queen Victoria didn't sleep here, but the Queen of Scots did run over part of this turnout en route to Leeds Central!

Piece by piece the jigsaw fitted together, and it was 'textbook'. Some inspired lunatic in the Trust, whom it would be improper to refer to by name, 'used a computer' on the layout, and the resulting mess was about three inches out of true, so I had to unscrew the numerous chairs affected, and relay them to the pre-computer 1938 LNER plan! Moor End works very kindly put the 1 in 23 kink in the curved stock rail, so that the switch rail went in to a perfect fit. I got more than one 45-foot rail in singlehanded with jack and crowbar.

The junction was finally completed, and Chairman Joe Lee and Traffic Manager Gordon Crapper helped me level the whole thing off, aided by engineer's level, jack, bricks and ballast. Although stone ballast is not as easy to pack as ash, it really looks Proper Railway. We had the junction in dead level a day or so

before the contractors were ready to begin work on the new line, starting from our joints as a datum.

The firm of Henry Boot of Dronfield did the job, and made a first-class job of it. Their Engineer was a Fellow of the Permanent Way Institute, and told me that only too often he has had to 'educate' local authorities or industrialists into what is the proper way to lay in railway track. No praise can be too high for the 'Inspector' and his eight men, who in a fortnight laid about half a mile of track, and a junction. This bears out what my voice in the wilderness has been saying for years, that given adequate support, I too could lay track at quite a rate of knots!

Quite a number of funny remarks came from MRT members when they found that the new junction and the Kings junction were about two feet out of alignment. I am however glad to say that I had all the plans ready tucked away in my desk at home! The old junction was another mineral railway freak, with short switches and nothing in the right place, and needed replacing. I decided that it was easiest to leave the timbers where they were and move the chairs.

On Sunday 27th June, I had the assistance of about half a dozen members, including the Secretary, on the task of replacing old chairs by new, and rotten timbers by good ones. Within the limits of available material, the junction was transformed to a near equivalent of an LNER A and 7. I had got rid of the worst bits of the old junction and left a safe gap between the two junctions. Those who had come to scoff remained to cheer, though I can make no claim other than that the new Seven Kings Junction is the best we could do in the circumstances.

With rather a childish giggle, one of our members (obviously thinking he had caught me with my pants down) said that the new line the contractors had laid in was two feet higher than our main line. But, as Sherlock Holmes said, 'You know my methods, Watson.' This was all to a plan I had made three years earlier. When Bill Barraclough and John Sugden surveyed the line, they revealed a gradient profile varying from 1 in 65 to 1 in 27 between Denisons and Parkside Junction. I had therefore planned a uniform gradient of 1 in 47.7 from the motorway to Parkside.

Both drainage and ballast are improved by lifting the track a foot or two, and as part of the motorway work I had a promise to clear away the pit shale alongside the line to make things easy for us. Taking the job a 60 or 45-foot section at a time, we can produce an evenly graded line all the way. We have to deal at the same time with the work of the

vandals who smashed or stole over sixty chairs from the track in the fortnight it was out of use.

The contractors were held up by another contractor (Tarmac), who had not got out of the tunnel in time to allow the permanent-way engineers in, and the timetable was over-run by three days. A further day was lost because the scaffolding holding up the concrete walls alongside the tunnel mouth was within the loading gauge opposite Denisons. One could hardly remove this obstruction without risking a Niagara of concrete on the ballast.

By Friday 2nd July, however, my work was complete except for a final inspection, and a 14'7" rail to replace one with a crack. I had put in 140 hours of hard physical work in a fortnight, and was just about exhausted. As there was nothing I could do until the contractors had finished, I went home for a quiet weekend, the first time for many months that my children have seen me on a Saturday at home!

Monday 5th July — a fine day with cloudless sky and blazing sunshine. Deckchair weather rather than engineering weather, but just right for a grand finale to years of planning and days of work.

At 12.30hrs the last closure rail was laid in by the contractors, and I ran over the line with the Wickham trolley, checking just about everything. It is normal practice for this last check to be done by the Permanent-Way Adviser and no-one else, and his word is law. All new track must be allowed time to settle down and have the packing and levelling checked. I was able to give a go-ahead for 5mph for all trains, except at the South

Tunnel mouth, where an alarmingly steep embankment side will need dead slow running until it has been packed up to a better standard. All the new switches had to be traversed at caution until they had settled down.

At 13.45 a visitors' train, hauled by diesel loco John Courage, was the first to use the new line except for my inspection trolley. With me walking in front with the single-line token, the train, accompanied by Chairman and Traffic Manager, ran steadily and faultlessly over the new line. We were open for business again.

In only a few respects does the final product not comply with my requirements. The City of Leeds failed to put in a catch-point on the siding to Dartmouth. This is obligatory where a siding meets a main running line on which visitors are carried, to guard against a runaway wagon fouling the main line. It is not too difficult for us to put

in the catch-point that I have already earmarked.

One rather alarming feature is the proposal to have two pedestrian level-crossings within ten yards of tunnel mouths. It is essential that there should be good visibility for pedestrian level-crossings, and advice from the highest possible level on British Railways is against any such feature, and has very strongly recommended a footbridge on the principle that it is wrong to save money at the expense of safety.

I only hope that many, or even all, of the detailed plans that have been ready in my desk for years will find fulfillment in a well-finished job. The reshaping of the line between the motorway and Parkside Junction, perhaps? The new branch to Robinson & Birdsell, with the prospect of doubling our traffic to that firm? A siding for occasional traffic to Denisons, remaking a connection with our most historic neighbour, the firm that cast our first iron rails for Murray? Realignment of the line between Moor Road and Beza Road, so that it will be safe for passenger traffic and easy enough not to need check rails?

Later on the opening day — the Glorious Fifth of July — we restarted goods traffic. John Courage assembled and weighed thirteen loaded 16-tonners — over a fortnight's output of R & B's — and John Alcock took them down to Balm Road. The movement of goods traffic 'for the benefit of the Citizens of Leeds', as prescribed in the 1758 Act, was back to normal. But with a difference. No struggling round the Dartmouth curve with slipping wheels — a nice level run on an easy curve instead. In fact, John Courage cheerfully propelled four loaded 16-tonners into Dartmouth as part of the assembly of our thirteen-wagon reopening train. We started at 17.00hrs, and Peter Nettleton was ready to take over with John Alcock at 18.30hrs.

I write this story on the evening of the same day, while the glory is still fresh. I am happy to know that every junction on our main running line is now up to textbook standards. Having had a hand in every one of them, I know that each job has been done better than the one before, and at last the need for high-class permanent way is being realised.

The effort of the last few years, in the proper planning and execution of this job, has been worth it. At least I can say that my last job for Middleton has been my largest — and my best.

Dr Youell recently retired as Permanent-Way Adviser to the Middleton Railway Trust.



Arrival — No 6 is unloaded on June 5th 1971, after its journey from Swanscombe, on to the headshunt, which has since been lifted in connection with the realignment project.
(Photo by John Edwards)

Will the real No 6 please stand up and be counted

Many members will by now be confused by the conflicting reports given in various sources about the Hawthorn Leslie works number of No 6. The Swanscombe fitters in the course of their repairs managed to get the bits of their six Hawthorn Leslie locomotives pretty thoroughly mixed up over the years, and the locomotive is probably best regarded as a cannibalisation.

It may help to know that the Swanscombe engineer regarded the boiler as the basis of the engine, and ensured that as boilers were exchanged, the works plates went with them. This would have the great advantage that boiler records and certificates were easily traceable. We can thus be absolutely certain that the boiler shell on our No 6 is that

built for their loco No 6, works number 3860, in 1935, and we have works plates and boiler reports which agree with these numbers.

As to the rest of the engine, most of the motion details are stamped 3716, though the r-h crosshead and piston are stamped 3717. For the frames, regarded by the locomotive record 'purist' as the basis of the engine, you 'pays yer money and takes yer choice'. 3716, 3717 and 3719 all appear as strong contenders, but as for those of us down at the line, we're too busy keeping a railway running to worry about trifles like a 'tolerance' of a hundred and fifty in the works number!

JIM LODGE

OLD RUN NEWS

Nature trail for MRT?!

The Middleton Railway recently became the unlikely scene of a small nature conservation exercise, with the discovery that a specimen of the rare lovage herb had been buried under rubble dumped by the motorway contractors on the old allotments by the rugby ground.

Representations on the herb's behalf were made to the Corporation by Dr G A Nelson, a local naturalist, and happily it was agreed that dumping on the site should cease, and that the rubble already covering the plant should be removed. It is hoped that the roots can be transplanted to a safer site in the autumn, and Leeds Parks Department have offered a home in one of their parks.

In a letter to the Trust, Dr Nelson points out other items of botanical interest alongside the railway, including an example of another rare plant, the giant knotweed, which stands eight feet tall. There is also a small area of boggy land, owned by the Hunslet Engine Co, and protected by the Leeds Naturalist Club on behalf of the Yorkshire Naturalist Trust, on which there can be found at least a thousand orchids of several different varieties.

Members who are interested in preserving plant life as well as railway engines are invited to contact Dr Nelson at: 37 The Crescent, Adel, Leeds 16.

MJL

If accidents do happen

Members will have seen in the last issue the article 'Accidents Do Not Happen', by Dr R C Lawrence. Dr Lawrence has been our Safety Officer for some time, but is now leaving Leeds and cannot continue in the post. We should like to thank him for his valuable work for the Trust ever since the line reopened in 1960, not only as Safety Officer, but as Permanent-Way Adviser and in innumerable other ways. We wish him a long and happy retirement.

Meanwhile, the responsibility for safety matters and accident reporting has been passed on to me. As far as general safety precautions are concerned, I wish for nothing more than that members should re-read Dr Lawrence's article and follow its advice, but I would like to outline here the accident reporting procedure.

Active members should be aware of Rule 4 regarding accidents, and it need not be

reprinted here. However, they may not know that many accidents have to be reported to the Department of Environment (formerly Ministry of Transport). In particular, serious accidents, especially those in which anyone is killed, whether visitor or member or any other person, have to be reported at once, BY TELEPHONE, with a written report following by the earliest possible post.

Of course, this means that I have to be informed immediately by telephone (645884) so that this procedure can be carried out, and if I am not available, some other committee member must be asked to take the responsibility of reporting to the authorities. It would be vital for the future of the railway that, if ever we have a serious accident, we should be seen to have fulfilled our responsibilities in the matter of reporting, as well as in more important things such as the summoning of emergency services if they are required.

GORDON CRAPPER

From the Membership Sec.

WE EXTEND a warm welcome to the following who have joined since publication of the July Newsletter: Mr Frank Brooke, Aberford; David Roberts, Leeds 10; William and Nancy Cooper, Leeds 16; Mr George Weston, Bradford; Messrs. Dennis and Brian Caton, Leeds 9.

Messrs. Caton, father and son, are responsible for some excellent drawings of Middleton subjects which are now boosting our sales receipts.

Renewals due on July 1st should be paid without further delay. Unless payment is received within a few days of receiving this Old Run, it will be your last communication from the MRT — an event not to be contemplated!

Apologies to members who have only just received their membership cards. Owing to a change in distributors it was not possible to send these out in July.

Holiday time appears to be a slack one in recruiting. Please plug Middleton to your friends, especially if they are skilled. Take

Loco notes

Swanscombe No 6 received a thorough boiler examination on June 21st, and has since been steamed on three occasions. Surprisingly few faults were found by comparison with other acquisitions. The saddle tank balance pipe and h (fireman's) side injector feed pipe were completely blocked with clay, the result of poor Kentish water. All cylinder and valve-chest drain valves were blocked, causing the engine to water-lock solid on the first steaming, two people being unable to move the reversing lever, even with the aid of a four-foot length of steel tube!

The regulator valve leaked through badly, and the result of this and the blocked drain valves was that the engine could only be reversed after a hefty push from John Alcock, and a burst of sooty water from the chimney-top. These faults have since been rectified, and the loco is now serviceable, along with 54, HC 1309, HE 1697 and HE 1786.

The Fowler diesel's repaint in orange and black will shortly be completed, and Carroll will then be taken in hand by the paint squad.

advantage of the passenger service to show them round.

Attention is drawn to Article 3 of the Constitution: 'Junior membership shall be open to those between 16 and 18 and others at the discretion of the committee.' Strictly speaking this means that all applications for membership from those under 16 must be considered by the committee. In practice however the signature of an officer of the Trust on the application form will suffice. All members are asked to try to see that this practice is observed.

I should appreciate hearing from members about births, marriages, changes of jobs and so on for occasional publication. This will help members to get to know one another better and weld the society together.

Finally, the committee hopes all members have enjoyed a refreshing holiday and that you will be able to spare some time to help clear the backlog of work that has accumulated!

BRIAN ASHURST

As a preliminary, the engine compartment has been dismantled for interior painting. Repair work continues on Windle and the Bagnall loco, the latter being nearly ready for the boiler inspector's visit. A trial pump-up to test pressure showed only a small number of leaks to be attended to.

Minor works on our stock have included the fitting of a wooden cab floor to No 6, the relining of John Alcock's hand brake, and the (repeated) renewal of the brake-van steps, due to the lack of forethought on the part of the motorway contractors, and carelessness on the part of members.

Repair facilities have been improved by the acquisition of a further container, now in use as a paint shop-cum-store, and a reorganisation involving turning the old container into a joiners' shop and concentrating all mechanical functions on the shed at the Garnet Road end of the yard.

JAL

Save the gas

For several years Messrs Robinson & Birdsell have supplied us with bottles of compressed oxygen and dissolved acetylene for burning and welding purposes free of charge, saving us a considerable sum of money. As this privilege has been abused in a number of ways in past months, we must tighten up on the use and method of collection of gas bottles, or the privilege will be withdrawn.

In future, only one bottle of each gas will be on loan to the railway at a time. When the bottles are empty, Robinson & Birdsell will supply full ones only to CME Jim Lodge in person, to prevent a repeat of the situation when there were SIX bottles of gas in Dartmouth Yard, all part empty. The

two bottles will not be taken out of Claytons Yard without personal permission from Jim Lodge, and they must ALWAYS be returned to the yard before nightfall.

No person may use the bottles, cutting gear or welding gear unless they have satisfied Jim Lodge that they are qualified to do so (by certificate of successful completion of an approved course under the various statutory regulations on the use and conveyance of compressed gas cylinders and equipment). Failure to observe these instructions will lead to R & DSC action.

JAL

A BAG BY ANY OTHER NAME...

61643

Members of the Society who cannot get down to the line may be under the delusion that the fine-sounding names on our locomotives are in daily use for identification purposes. Nothing could be further from the truth, for, like people, engines rapidly acquire nicknames.

Recently, a visitor was heard to ask one of the 'residents' a question about John Courage, only to be greeted with 'Yer wha?'. and a blank stare of incomprehension. Had he asked about 'Sweet Pea', or even simply 'Pea', he would have got an answer, for our smallest diesel is universally known to working members under this sobriquet, on account of its diminutive size, and the slanderous suggestion that it might run better on spinach.

Here follows a glossary of Middleton locomotive endearments:

1697: 'Ballcock' (obvious), or '97' (The Wreck of the Old 97, a folk-song reference).

Carroll: 'Dumbo', so called from its full frontal appearance with the engine compartment doors open.

Fowler 3900002: 'Flower' (obvious).

Windle: 'Swindle', 'Windlass' or 'Windless'.

Bagnall 2702: 'The Bag' (with heavy emphasis).

Sentinel: 'Sent' (again obvious).

The Y7 has never acquired a nickname, while Henry de Lacey is known just as 'Henry', for who could invent a more appropriate name for an engine? 3860, however, is almost certain to be known henceforth as 'Sooty'. Anyone present at either the first tube-cleaning or the first steaming will know only too well the reason.

Those who did not know of these names might like to continue where this article leaves off, and research into the ownership of the following 'noms-de-fume' (as it were) by COMING DOWN TO THE LINE. If you know the real identities of Gumley, Prentice, Ern, Tube-Brush, Oil-Rag, Boiler, Weed, Vermin, Gronk, Talcum, Dopey, Gasman, Steam-Pipes, T.C. or Robin the Bobbin, you must be one of the gang. If not, how about joining?

(This article was written by a well-known Chief Mechanical Engineer, who wishes to remain pseudonymous. For further identification, readers are advised to look up Class B17 in an old Eastern Region ABC book — EDITOR.)

Routes that never were

A high proportion of our members will of course know that the Leeds tram route to Middleton (the Middleton Light Railway) ran close to our line for about a mile.

A slight change in the course of events could have produced a very different picture. Instead of the sharp left turn on to Moor Road at Whittaker's Depot, the authority was obtained to continue northwards parallel to our line, cross over the Midland Railway on to Jack Lane and then run along this road to Dewsbury Road, giving a shorter route to Leeds and one with a higher proportion of private track.

At the same time, and long before the modern Belle Isle was built, authority was obtained to extend the Balm Road route, turning sharp right on to Moor Road, then cutting off a corner to run under the Great Northern bridge at the present Old Run Road, then known on the map as 'The Run'. The gradient under the bridge was quoted as 1 in 17. The trams would then have run along our pre-1881 route to the place where the cart track for Middleton Park turned off. The route then ran to the East side of the Colliery land, climbed the hill, and crossed Town Street near its junction with Middleton Road, swinging to the west and terminating at a junction with the route via Middleton Park near Hopewell View.

A connection a little over a furlong in length would take the tram route back to the Middleton Railway at the Middleton Park cart-track. This would have been awkward

to operate as the check flangeway on tramlines differs from that on railway lines, and normally the tram lines have to be laid narrower than 4'8½" gauge for a railway wagon to run on them, as happened in Glasgow. (That railway wagons did run on tram lines in Leeds seems to be undisputed. How they did it without upsetting the P.W. Engineer is not known.)

Contemporary with the plan for trams via the Old Run Road was another treat in store, trolley-buses across Middleton. Leeds pioneered trolley-buses simultaneously with Bradford. One proposal followed most of the present 46 'bus route. In our area it ran along Moor Road from Junction Inn, crossed over our line at Whittaker's Depot, down Church Street, crossed Balm Road, and then ran on to Low Road Hunslet. The wear and tear on the trolley-bus wire from steam locomotives puffing under them would have been interesting.

It is interesting to note that in the short period between Middleton Railway being cut back to Whittaker's, and tram abandonment being decided, the suggestion was made of diverting the No. 12 tram route along the disused Middleton Railway section, to bring it almost up to Leeds Bridge on private track, with consequent speeding up of running times. Apart from the Midland Railway bridge there was room for two tram tracks in view of the much narrower loading gauge.

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