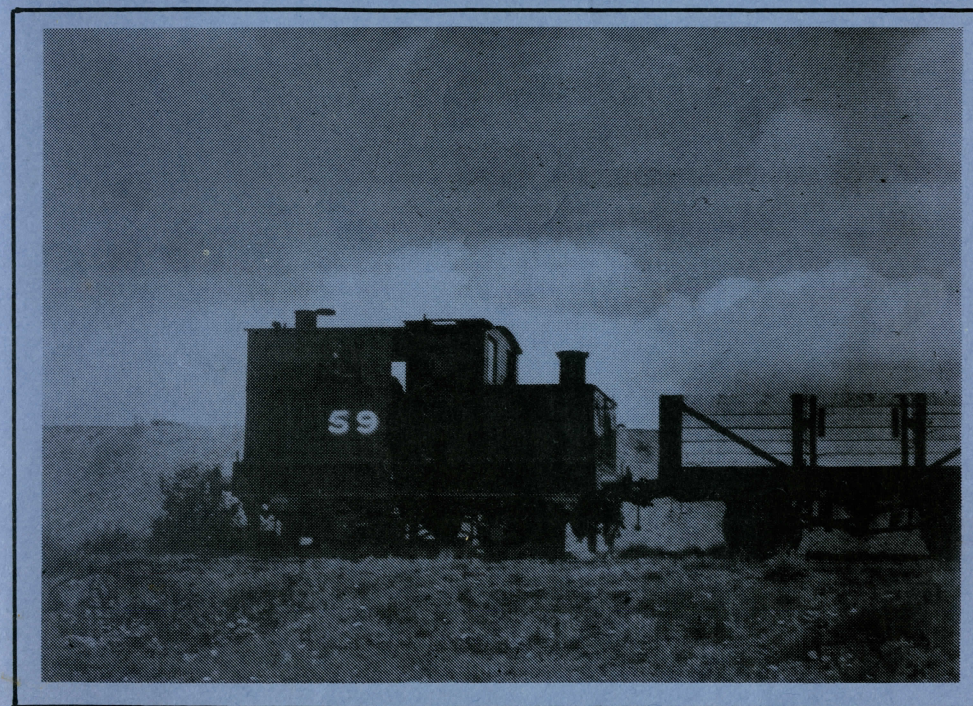


THE OLD RUN



JOURNAL OF
THE 1758 MIDDLETON RAILWAY
LEEDS

JAN. 1983.

THE OLD RUN

NUMBER 105

Jan. 1983

EDITOR: I.B. Smith, Manor Farm Drive, Leeds, LS10 3RW

The Editor invites all readers to contribute articles, news items, letters, photographs and drawings on subjects of interest! All contributions should include the reader's name and address. Opinions expressed in the magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Middleton Railway Trust Ltd, The Middleton Railway Association, or the Editor.

The next issue of The Old Run will appear in April, and all contributions should reach the Editor by the end of February.

Details of rates and conditions for advertisements in The Old Run may be obtained from the Editor.

Cover Picture Six summers ago: Sentinel No. 59 heads south to Middleton Park. Restoration of this loco to working order is one of the many outstanding tasks.

Editorial

AT LAST A FAIRY GODMOTHER

We at the Middleton Railway Trust have struggled for many years now on a shoestring budget that only just covers the cost of operating the railway. We have always had ambitions to set up a depot/museum complex at Tunstall Road but have never been able to save enough capital to start, let alone finish, our modest scheme and it seemed as though, short of some member winning the pools, things would carry on this way for ever.

Now, at last, things are about to change. Our Fairy Godmother has arrived in the shape of Leeds City Council waving a magic wand called an Inner City Grant. Full details of this are given elsewhere in the Old Run and I will not mention them here except perhaps to repeat that it is due solely to the efforts of Joe Lee, who took the initiative and masterminded the application, that we have been favoured in this way and we owe him a deep debt of gratitude.

However, having set us firmly on the road to our goal, we must not let Joe (and ourselves) down. £20,000 may seem a lot of money but it will not go far. We must ensure that it is used to obtain every last benefit that it can, for we may only have this one chance. The Council (the City that is!) wish to see the money spent quickly so as to give some benefit to the environment of the area and, whilst it is very easy to spend the money, we must get our priorities right from the start and spend the money wisely so that at the end of the day we have something worthwhile to show for it.

WELCOME BACK, IAN

The Royal Navy is obviously out to confuse the enemy and its own men for, after sending Ian Smith out to the Falkland Islands for a six month tour of duty, they have changed their minds and sent him straight back, again. Thus, my role as stand-in editor has been very brief and Ian will be taking over the reins again for the next issue. It has been very interesting doing these last two issues and I hope that you have enjoyed reading them. I do not envy Ian his task as Editor; it is far harder than people think and I for one shall never complain again when the Old Run appears late - getting it out on time appears to be an impossibility!

Steve Roberts

OBITUARY

JOHN ALCOCK

It is with deep regret that we record the recent death of John Frederick Alcock, O.B.E., at the age of 77.

His place in the pioneering development of the diesel locomotive is well known. At the age of 25 he was given the task of developing the diesel locomotive for the Hunslet Engine Company. The resulting loco, Hunslet No. 1697, was exhibited at the British Industries Fair in Birmingham and was immediately proclaimed an outstanding success. It was the forerunner of hundreds of 'Hunslet' diesels built for use in this country and abroad. The patent friction clutch and gearbox of his design has proved to be reliable and efficient on the original and many subsequent locomotives.

Having put the Hunslet Engine Company in the forefront of British Industrial locomotive design, his leadership has kept it there and, today, it is the sole surviving independent locomotive builder out of the hundreds that prospered in the Victorian heyday of railways.

John Alcock had been a life member of the Middleton Railway Trust almost since the beginning and showed a keen interest in the railway, helping us in many of our early crises. It is very appropriate that the first Hunslet diesel, which now belongs to the M.R.T. and is on display at the National Railway Museum, carries his name as a fitting memorial to a great locomotive pioneer.

We extend our sincerest sympathy to his wife and family.

LETTERS

Dear Sir,

What about the shunter?

I read the editorial and poem about diesel shunters in the Autumn issue after a working trip to Kenya, where 525 hp. 0-8-0 shunters supplied by Hunslet and BREL (Swindon) in 1979 were shunting Nairobi Yard.

Seeing these neat looking shunters at work in the dark blue livery of Kenya Railways, it occurred to me that the reason for the poor image of diesel shunters amongst British Rail enthusiasts is that the 08 class is just about the most boring looking locomotive design to have been created.

In Middleton terms, "John Alcock" and the Hunslet shunters which followed it had a pleasing angular look, and the early Fowlers and Hudswells had these very classy 'chimneys'. Many recent shunter designs, mainly seen on industrial work in this country, make use of current ideas on styling, but the 08's always give an air of postwar austerity, ration books and dreary brown macs.....

Yours etc.,

Henry Gunston (Member No. 1180)

MEMBERSHIP NOTES

The subscriptions for 1983 are coming in slowly but surely, and by the time that you read this I am hoping that most of you will have renewed. Those of you who haven't will find a final reminder enclosed with this Old Run. Please complete it and return it as soon as possible if you wish to retain your membership.

Your Council recently spent some considerable time discussing membership. A breakdown of costs involved with servicing each member makes interesting reading:

4 copies of the Old Run at 30p each	1.20
Postage of above	0.50
Miscellaneous charges (envelopes, member- ship cards, etc. amortised among members)	0.50

Total	2.20

It will be seen from this that the present subscription does not, in all cases, (i.e. junior & O.A.P.) cover the servicing cost and, in the case of full members, only provides a 20% return on the original subscription, a figure somewhat less than normally accepted by the majority of other societies. The Council have, therefore, recommended an increase in subscription rates to the forthcoming Annual General Meeting. The proposed rates would be:

Full Trust Members	3.50 (Currently £3.00)
Junior and O.A.P.	2.00 (currently £1.50)
Family Associates	0.50 (unchanged)
Life	50.00 (unchanged)

Members should, of course, realise that these are the MINIMUM subscriptions and those of you who feel able may give more (many already do!)

Another way of increasing your subscription without costing you another penny more is to make out a deed of covenant. In this way the Trust, being a charity, can recover the income tax that you have already paid on your membership fee. Anyone interested in this should just drop me a line or phone and I will be pleased to send you a form.

Ann Roberts

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - 1982

Notice is hereby given that the Annual General Meeting of the Middleton Railway Trust will be held at the Air Training Corps, Dewsbury Road, Leeds 11, on Wednesday, 16th. March 1983 at 7.30 pm. for the transaction of the undermentioned business.

By order of the Council.

AGENDA

1. To receive apologies for absence.
2. Minutes of the 1981 A.G.M. (these having been circulated to all members, the Council proposes that these should be taken as read.)
3. To receive and adopt for the year ended 31st. Dec. 1982, the accounts and balance sheet and to read the report of the auditors.
4. To receive and adopt for the year ended 31st. Dec. 1982, the report of the Council.
5. To appoint a Chairman, Secretary, Treasurer and not less than four nor more than thirteen other members to the Council.
6. To appoint the Auditors to the Trust.
7. To consider a proposal by the Council that the membership fee be increased, as follows:

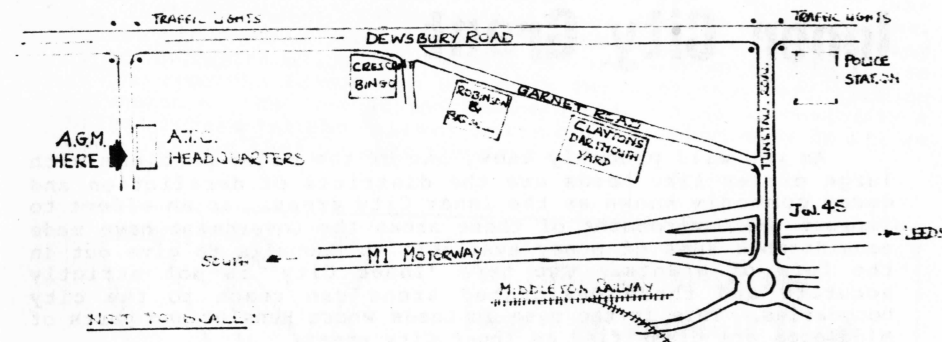
Ordinary members of the Trust	£3.50 (was £3.00)
O.A.P. members of the Trust	£2.00 (was £1.50)

Life membership and family associated to remain unchanged.

8. To transact any other competent business, notice of which must be received in writing by the Secretary at the Trust's Registered office.

Refreshments will be available and it is hoped to show some films at the conclusion of the A.G.M.

How to get to the Annual General Meeting:



A Playcoach For Middleton

A redundant P.M.V. has been acquired for use as a 'playcoach' at the Middleton Railway.

The vehicle has been purchased from British Rail with the aid of a grant provided by the Silver Jubilee Trust specifically for fitting out as a play area for young children visiting the railway. It will also be available for hire to visiting groups for a nominal charge, conditional upon adequate supervision being available.

The contents of the vehicle will include such things as a sandpit, play area, building bricks, toys, games, slide and a 'wet' area. The idea is that it will be similar in principle to the very successful playbuses. It will give children somewhere to play in safety in a railway environment. We are very mindful of the fact that today's youngsters are the preservationists of tomorrow and hope that many will remember the unique opportunity that this will provide to play on a train. Perhaps they will even drag their parents along for a ride!

The vehicle has been chosen in preference to an orthodox coach as it provides a relatively large clear area for fitting out and is very secure. It is anticipated that when complete the vehicle will be based on the siding at Tunstall Road Halt.

If anyone is interested in developing this unique venture, please do not hesitate to contact me on Leeds 645424.

Joe Lee

Inner City Grant

As you will probably know, one of the major problems with large cities like Leeds are the districts of dereliction and decay commonly known as the Inner City areas. In an effort to improve the environment of these areas the Government have made considerable sums of money available to Councils to give out in the form of grants. The term 'Inner City' is not strictly accurate and these designated areas can reach to the city boundaries. This is the case in Leeds where Hunslet and parts of Middleton are classified as Inner City areas.

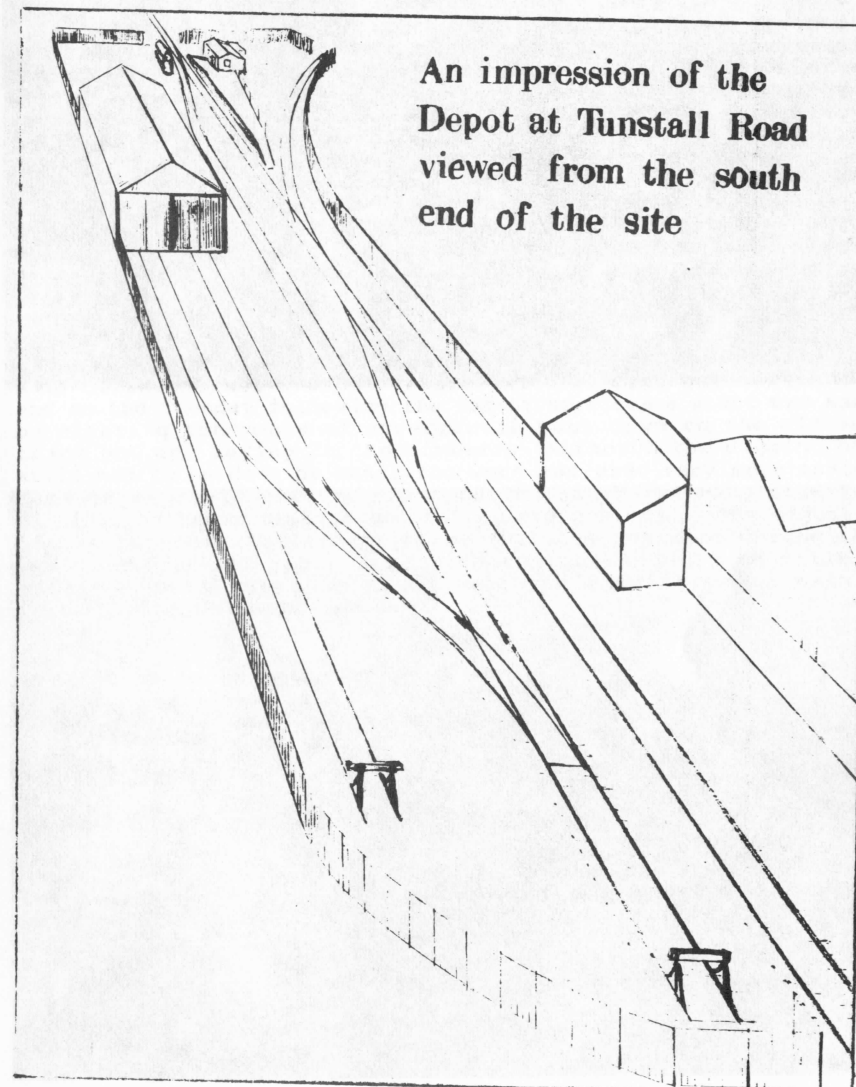
During the early part of 1982 our illustrious Chairman, Joe Lee, decided that there was nothing to lose in applying for a grant for the Railway within the Inner City Scheme. Nothing was expected to come of this as we have applied on many occasions for grants of one kind or another; thus, it came as a surprise when we heard unofficially that our application was being considered favourably.

Time seemed to drag by very slowly with no decision being reached. A party of councillors visited the Railway during the Autumn but there was still no confirmation of the rumours that we had been granted the money. Then at last, almost as a Christmas Present, came the long awaited letter telling us that we had been awarded £20,000 for "The progressive development of the Railway by the Construction of a shop, ticket office and refreshment facilities followed later by a museum".

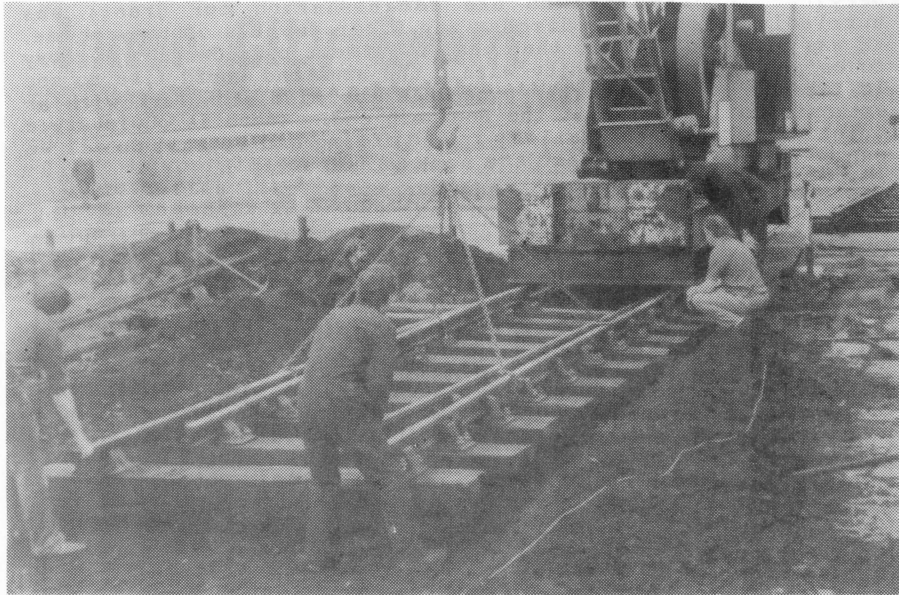
The grant is being awarded in two parts, £10,000 in the financial year 1982/3 and £10,000 in 1983/4. The first £10,000 does present us with an unusual problem as we have effectively to spend this by the end of March, 1983. whilst it would be very easy to award a contract to a firm for the complete construction of a shop/ticket office and so ensure that the money is spent quickly, this is not the best way to maximise the advantage to be gained from the grant. It had always been hoped that a Manpower Services Scheme could be run in conjunction with the grant and this is being rapidly pursued at present. If this is the case, the majority of the grant can be spent on materials.

It is hoped that, by careful use of the money available, the grant will cover the majority of the cost of the work that we wish to carry out at Tunstall Road. Briefly this comprises the construction of a Station Building, toilet block and museum/depot building, fencing of the complete site and laying in the necessary trackwork. A three phase electricity supply will be laid on and adequate servicing facilities provided for our locomotives.

When the money was approved, a meeting with the Leisure Services Department (who are administering our grant) was hurriedly arranged to discuss the finer details of the scheme. It was pleasing to hear that the Department consider the Railway to be an important amenity within the area and would like to see it incorporated within the proposals for Middleton Park with an extension of the line at the Southern end. There is obviously a bright future for the Railway in the offing and we must do all we can to ensure that we make the most of it!



An impression of the Depot at Tunstall Road viewed from the south end of the site



Laying In The Loop

I suppose this story could be said to have started in 1971 when two 1 in 8 turnouts were obtained from Flying Scotsman Enterprises at Market Overton. These were intended to form a crossover of the running line into the proposed depot at Tunstall Road. Nothing was done with these until, several years later, some of the chairs were stolen and, in an effort to prevent a recurrence, one of the turnouts was laid into the running line. Although we continued to collect track materials for the depot, notably from Kirkstall Power Station and Parkhill Colliery, no more work was done on the track layout at Tunstall Road and the materials were stockpiled. However, it was felt that there was a need for additional siding accommodation at Tunstall Road, especially on Gala days, and as we are mandated by the Railway Inspectorate to eventually install loops at both ends of the line, it was decided to start laying in the Tunstall Road loop.

Several members had a full week's holiday at Easter 1982 and it was felt that an ideal project would be to lay in the other half of the Market Overton crossover. The site was marked out and on the Tuesday following the Easter services a start was made on clearing the years of undergrowth back down to the old ash track bed and laying in the timbers. Although the digging out still had to be done by hand, the work was made very much easier because we could use the crane parked on the running line for lifting the heavy timbers and rails into position. The majority of the turnout was laid in three full day sessions during the week and the odd jobs, including replacement of the various missing items were completed over the ensuing weeks mainly working on a Wednesday evening.

Trackwork Made Easy!

Top Left Gently does it as the switches of the "Parkhill" turnout are carefully lowered into place.

Bottom Left Dave Hebden (foreground) and Tony Cowling check the alignment of the stockrail with the aid of sighting boards.

Full of confidence at doing this work it was decided to lay in the next turnout which would form the other end of the loop. However, an entirely different approach was required for this as the turnout was in the running line which, of course could not be broken during the running season. The answer was to prefabricate the turnout, off site. The turnout used was one of the ex-Parkhill 1 in 4½ turnouts. This was originally a left hand one and had to be re-handed for its new role. It also required new timbers as the originals had been considered to be beyond further use and had been left at Parkhill. A spare set of crossing timbers had been obtained from Kirkstall and it was possible to use some of these together with other timbers which we already had. Of course these timbers needed re-drilling to suit the new turnout and, for the first time we were able to mechanise this by using first the air drill and 'Carrolls' compressor and latterly the electric generator set installed on the tool van. We were even able to mechanise the job of fastening the coach screws by utilising a recently obtained air wrench. However, the back-breaking job of bending the rails (the curved rails had to be straightened and the straights curved in order to re-hand the turnout) still had to be done by hand, using the 'jim crow'.

The turnout was assembled on Wednesday evenings over the Summer on an area of land close to the installation site. The 'gang from Gosport' cleared the formation for the turnout site during their weekend visit in May.

Once the turnout had been completed it was broken into three pieces to facilitate installation. These pieces had been carefully calculated to be within the crane's capacity at its radius of operation and to check the calculations the pieces were weighed using a crane weigh.

Installation was fixed for the first weekend after the operating season and it was planned to complete the job within the day. Fortunately the weather was kind to us and everything went according to plan. In the event we didn't quite finish the job in the day but we managed to complete the work sufficiently to enable the crane to run over the new track to get back to the yard - it had been on the wrong side of the break in the line!

Having installed both the turnouts, the next job was to connect them with the actual loop itself. It was obvious that this would be a considerable task as about a hundred tons of earth required removing to clear the formation. A Ford excavator was hired for the weekend before Christmas and using this, the majority of the material was excavated. At present we are awaiting the arrival of some ballast to provide a base for the track and once this arrives, it should be possible to complete the loop fairly quickly, hopefully before Easter.

Notes & News

ARRIVALS-1

A recent addition to the diesel fleet has been a 4wh. diesel locomotive from the C.E.G.B at Wakefield. Owned by Peter Nettleton, the locomotive is in first class order. It is a Thomas Hill rebuild of a Sentinel steam locomotive and is powered by a Rolls Royce engine driving through a torque convertor and spiral bevel final drive unit. Full details of this locomotive will appear in the next issue so, as they say, watch this space.

ARRIVALS-2

Yet another PMV has been obtained for use on the Railway. Joe Lee required a vehicle for use as a playcoach. (See 'A Playcoach for Middleton' on p.7) and it was considered that one of these vehicles would fit the bill. The vehicle was B.R. No. S1867, a 13 ton vacuum braked van built by the Southern Railway in 1940 as part of lot 1092. Manufacture of the vehicle was carried out partly at Lancing and partly at Eastleigh. It was condemned in June 1982 and offered for tender in September. On inspection by Derek Plummer, it was found to be in very good condition with no apparent reason for withdrawal, other than being surplus to requirements. Until work can commence on its conversion it is being used for storage of equipment, mainly timber.

THE NORTH WIND DOTH BLOW....

The gale force winds that wreaked havoc in Leeds just before Christmas did not leave Middleton unscathed. Two vehicles suffered damage, both to their roofs. The brake van had its roof canvas ripped off and the P.M.V. being converted to a passenger coach suffered similarly. Unfortunately a piece of asbestos sheeting also pierced the roof, causing structural damage. The oil store roof also parted company with the rest of the building. All this additional work will of course require urgent remedial repairs and means that other jobs will get pushed further and further into the future.

BEWARE THE YELLOW PERIL!

Members coming down to the Railway should note that the West Yorkshire Metropolitan County Council (Leeds) (Traffic Regulation) (No. 20) Order 1982 came into force on the 19th November, 1982, and there are now double yellow lines outside the entrance to Claytons Dartmouth works which prohibit us from parking where we have done so for the last 22 years. Roadside

parking is still, however, available on the opposite side of the road and in adjacent streets but we now have to vie for places with the residents of the adjacent houses.

LOCOMOTIVE NOTES

Little apparent work has been done on the locomotives since the last newsletter; mainly due to the lack of willing hands.

PECKETT 2003 Has been prepared for Winter storage following its use last season. Little work has been found to be necessary and the locomotive is in generally good condition. The damper controls have been straightened and repaired following accidental damage earlier in the year, and various joints have been re-made to eliminate minor steam leaks. The annual boiler inspection will take place shortly but no problems are anticipated with this.

53 'WINDLE' Has, likewise been prepared for Winter storage. Windle saw fairly constant use during 1982 once its injector problems had been sorted out. Engine crews are, at long last beginning to enjoy days on Windle and it is no longer the engine to be avoided at all costs! During its days with Pilkington Bros., Windle was fitted with a six feed Wakefield lubricator to provide oil for the four axleboxes and two cylinders. This was a highly unsatisfactory arrangement as it meant that the wrong type of oil was fed to the axleboxes. We have at last corrected this dubious state of affairs with the fitting of a three feed lubricator to supply the cylinders, leaving the original Wakefield lubricator to feed the axleboxes only. It is apparent that Windle will need considerable work on the axleboxes in the not too distant future but this work is being held back until the outcome of the 'Fred Windle' television series is known.

385 Work continues on this as time allows. All the top row of stays have now been removed and the holes cleaned up. At present we are awaiting the manufacture of the replacement stays. It is perhaps ironic that, having made the decision to replace all the top row of stays as a result of previous failures, no further evidence of cracking was found on drilling them out!

Top Right "John Alcock", currently masquerading as LMS 7401, on display in the National Railway Museum.

Bottom Right Latest addition to the motive power fleet is the Thomas Hill "Vanguard" diesel owned by Peter Nettleton. It is seen here at Wakefield Power Station prior to being loaded onto the low loader for transport to the railway.



3900002 The engine of our Fowler diesel has now been re-assembled. A new water pump and radiator is still required and until these are obtained there is no possibility of this locomotive being returned to service. However, the arrival of Peter Nettleton's Sentinel diesel has lessened the urgency to return the locomotive to traffic.

WC 631 'CARROLL' AND WE 1736 'COURAGE' Are in traffic and see use on shunting and permanent way trains as required.

All other locomotives remain stored and no further work has been carried out.

PLANT AND EQUIPMENT

The machine hacksaw obtained last year has been fitted with a new motor and brought into use. A very useful piece of equipment which is going to reduce the number of aching arms considerably!

A small vertical milling machine has been obtained in exchange for a spare steam brake cylinder and transported to the railway, although it awaits installation. It is hoped that this will prove to be a useful asset and should improve our machining capabilities considerably.

The lathe, which we obtained several years ago for the princely sum of £5.00 is showing signs of its considerable age and a replacement would be a very welcome and most useful asset. Any offers?

The diesel crane continues in regular use and has recently had a comprehensive service. A transmission fluid leak was finally cured and new coolant hoses have been fitted. It is generally in fair condition although some work on the drive shaft bearings and gears is going to be necessary before much longer.

Recently some attempts have been made to mechanise the more arduous tasks involved with permanent way work. The availability of the generator set has meant that we can now power drill sleepers, etc. for coachbolts and an impact wrench is used to screw them in (and out!). A rail drill has been made using a 2 H.P. motor and gearbox that was obtained several years ago. The same motor and gearbox has also been utilised to power the rail saw. However because of the problem of changing over between its two uses, an alternative rail drill is being designed using other equipment available to us.

ALMOST A BULLEID FOR MIDDLETON

No doubt the title of this little bit of news raised your eyebrows: it certainly did ours when the request was first made!

One of the problems with buying a locomotive from Barry scrapyards is finding somewhere to restore it. The owner of this particular Bulleid Pacific (which shall remain anonymous) had found that the original offers of accommodation that he had been given were not as good as had first appeared and he was becoming desperate to find a reasonable location where the locomotive could be restored. As he lived relatively close to Middleton he approached us with the possibility of bringing the locomotive to us. Informal discussions took place and most of the problems appeared to be soluble. Although it was obvious that the locomotive would never actually run on the railway there seemed to be some advantages to having an ex-Barry engine as a resident, if only temporary, although it would have been totally out of character with the line.

In the event, discussions never reached the formal stage as the owner managed to negotiate far better accommodation than we could provide with another preservation centre. Perhaps it was a good thing that the locomotive didn't come to the Railway as, although some people were very keen on the idea, there was a strong voice of dissent and it could have caused a split in the membership. Mind you, the site of a Bulleid Pacific pushing the van up to Middleton Park would certainly have been something!

EXHIBITION & RALLY REVIEW - 1982

By Derek Plummer

During the year publicity displays of M.R.T. photographs and locomotive builders or nameplates were staged at two one day events; namely a model railway exhibition at the Central Methodist Church in Horsforth and at the Batley Sports Centre (organised by the Yorkshire Evening Post).

Our sales stands were in attendance at the Bramham Traction Engine Rally and at Model Railway exhibitions in Scarborough, Wakefield, Leeds and Hull. Overall the financial return has been good despite the recession and unemployment level evident, particularly towards the year end, when most of the events took place.

The pattern of events in 1983 is expected to be similar to 1982 with the added possibility of attendance at a revived Easter Model Railway exhibition at Harrogate.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all those who have assisted at events in 1982, particularly Joyce & Tony Bell, without whose help the number of events attended would have had to be reduced.

End Of The Line For Freight?

Freight traffic on British Railways has, over the years, undergone a radical change and the wagonload traffic in the once ubiquitous four wheel short wheelbase unfitted vehicle will soon be a thing of the past. It is precisely this sort of traffic that we have carried on the Middleton Railway for the past twenty two years of our operations. However, since the end of the 'Longbridge' contract some two years ago, goods traffic for our only customer, Robinson & Birdsell's, has been spasmodic. The only traffic in recent months has been scrap originating on British Railways itself. This has been a very motley collection, ranging from scrap wagon wheels through redundant P.W. materials to the miscellaneous junk that B.R. seems to accumulate in its unwanted role as the Nation's dustbin.

With the demise of the humble 16 ton mineral wagon, it is very unlikely that Robinson and Birdsell's will change over to the modern 50 ton air braked equivalent and in any case our track is not suitable for the 25 ton axle loads that this would entail. There is also no revenue income for B.R. from traffic currently being passed onto our line as it is all B.R. originated and of course they do not charge themselves for their own traffic!

It is for the above reasons that B.R. have recently reviewed the status of our connection with them at Balm Road. They consider that there is little likelihood of revenue being obtained from our branch in the future and are proposing to remove us from the list of sidings in May 1984. There is, of course, the possibility that, when Clayton's Dartmouth Yard is sold, the new owners will require a rail connection and this could mean a continued use for the branch - we shall have to wait and see, with fingers crossed.

After May 1984, the future of the connection is uncertain. The original agreement between the Middleton Colliery Co. and the Midland Railway is still in being and would need rescinding before the connection is removed. As has been mentioned earlier, traffic for the last two years has been all B.R. originated and the engineering department presently have a use for the connection and may wish to retain it. If this is not the case the Trust could, of course, pay for the connection to be retained though it is doubtful whether it could justify, let alone afford it. If the connection were left in, any traffic movements over it would be regarded as special movements and charged accordingly.

If the connection with B.R. is severed, the obvious question is what will happen to the rest of the Balm Road branch? It would be pointless to keep a line to nowhere that we could not use; yet to lift it would mean that we would lose any chance of being re-connected in the future. It would serve no useful purpose to run passenger trains over it and it is doubtful whether the Railway Inspectorate would permit this in any case.

One thing is certain; the end of an era is not far away.

Acme's

For some time now, the old wagon repair depot (latterly Acme Engineering) has been disused, derelict and for sale. It has been suggested that this site would make a good depot for the Railway and recently a very basic site investigation was carried out.

The site obviously has advantages and disadvantages in abundance. As it was originally built for rail access, the majority of the building is suitable for laying in track with no modifications. Part of the building was in use until recently and could be made secure and waterproof with very little work. The remainder of the building appears to have been derelict for some time and would probably be better demolished. There would be plenty of room for siding space - the old wagon repairs had eight long sidings and the site would be very suitable for laying out as a depot.

The disadvantages are that it would probably have to be re-clad as part of any planning approval. The building is currently regarded as an eyesore and the Council would like it demolished so the environmental constraints would be similar to those laid down for the Tunstall Road site. It would probably not be a suitable site for operating passenger services from as these would have to cross the busy Moor Road. Thus passenger trains would continue to run from Tunstall Road and this would divorce the operating trains from the depot/museum, which is undesirable.

On balance, the disadvantages probably outweigh the advantages but the major factor is probably the time element. Because of the time limit effectively imposed by the Inner City grant, we have to start work immediately and this would not be possible on the Acme site where long negotiations would be required before anything concrete emerged.

Middleton; The Early Years

J. Bushell

The story of the Middleton Railway Preservation Society, as it then was, differs greatly from that of other similar groups. We were not engaged in resuscitating long defunct lines such as the Festiniog, nor were we preserving a line of great beauty. Our line had only closed earlier in the same year, and it ran between factories and slag heaps, passing back to back terraced houses on the way - No "Bluebell", "Moors" or "Parsonage" here! We had more vandals than visitors whilst industrial archaeology as a tourist industry had yet to be born.

We did not suffer long, protracted negotiations with BR, or any giant fund-raising projects, our negotiations only lasting from conception in 1959 to opening in June 1960. The railway was a unique undertaking in that it was owned by the Middleton Fireclay Company, a private undertaking, but linked a nationalised Coal Mine to a nationalised railway system. The Fireclay Company was in liquidation and NCB locomotives worked all the trains. Our major source of revenue lay not in tourists, but in tonnage of freight.

We received generous help from our future customers, Robinson and Birdsell, and Clayton, Son and Company, whilst BR were most co-operative too (this was before Dr. Beeching despised "small traffic flows").

On the face of it, all that the Middleton Railway consisted of was an unattractive remnant of a once extensive industrial line. The line itself was weed-strewn and uneven, its ballast (what there was of it) consisting of cinders. In fact the Middleton Railway hardly justified preservation at all were it not for the fact that in 1958, people had flocked to ride in dusty wagons to celebrate.... the BICENTENTARY! The one fact above all others was that the Middleton Railway was the oldest railway in the world and we held the feeling that we should not allow this part of our heritage to be despatched into oblivion.

So the railway opened, initially to passenger traffic using our historic LMS diesel (kindly loaned by the Hunslet Engine Co. at that time, prior to purchase by the MRPS) and the double-deck Swansea & Mumbles coach, looking more like a tramcar than the railway coach it actually was. It was at 16.45 on June 20th 1960 when I was amongst those assembled to witness the reopening. True to Middleton tradition I was given a flag and appointed guard on the spot! As always, MRPS was short of labour! Unlike

other lines which have since expanded their activities, we proceeded to celebrate the busiest week for passengers in our entire history, carrying no less than 7700 from Hunslet Halt to the old Parkside GN overbridge. The coach was too big to pass under the bridge and travel the few yards to the severed connection with the rest of the line to Broom Colliery. This had been purchased by the NCB and was operated by such diverse BR locos as 8Fs, Austerity 2-8-0s, Class 5s, and the odd 2-6-4T of varying sorts.

One major difference between ourselves and other societies was that we decided to preserve and operate tramcars as well as a railway. In fact for years we had more trams than locos. The last tram in Leeds operated down York Road on 7th November, 1959 and an urgent need developed to find homes for some of the redundant trams. Ultimately we had eight lining the back road. From Leeds we had two Horsfields (160 and 180) and an ex-London Feltham, two works cars and one of the renowned purple "Coronation" single deckers. Trams came from other cities too in the form of an ex-Liverpool bogie car (which was in fact from Glasgow!) and one of Sheffield's last trams owned by John Rothera. We very quickly discovered that Middleton was a most unsuitable location for such activities, as the tramcars would not run on our worn rails, and the area's high incidence of vandalism caused many problems, including the destruction by fire of a number of the trams. The surviving vehicles were quickly dispersed to other sites. (It was sad to learn of the deliberate destruction of the lower deck of Leeds 160 by the staff of Armley Mills Museum as late as last year - Ed.)

Middleton was, however, primarily a goods line and at first traffic was incredibly heavy. Ten thousand tons of steel and scrap was conveyed in the early years, putting a great strain on volunteers and locomotives alike. Some idea of operating conditions can be gleaned by reading Steve Roberts' excellent article "Freight train, Freight train" in the 'Special' issue of Old Run from last year. This strain led to the proverbial 'single handed' member situation. Many members made great sacrifices to keep the railway running (though by this time I was a student myself, studying away from Leeds) but it would be wrong to omit mention of Fred.

Of all our early members, Dr. Ronald F. Youell, known to all at Middleton simply as 'Fred', was the one who spent most time on negotiation, administration, permanent way, driving - in fact you name it and Fred has undoubtedly done it! He was not alone, in spite of rumours to the contrary. Dr. (MD!) Reggie Lawrence, in spite of his health problems, was a stalwart on PW work. There were many others, but these two are worthy of special mention. One of the earliest problems was the need to operate goods traffic come what may, however much the member wanted to pursue his particular interest. This led to great ill-feeling between, for example, those who wished to preserve trams and those who maintained that the greatest need was to earn revenue by running freight. It is a matter of history that the latter group finally

won the day.

Thus the MRPS became a living railway. Unfortunately, heavy goods trains never attracted the attentions that a passenger carrying line could, and membership grew very slowly to the 300 plus level, where it has in fact remained ever since. We sought to attract the interest of the public with exhibitions showing the story of the past 200 years. Monthly open days and occasional Steam Galas were also held. These last usually took place in Clayton's Yard and playing fields. Len Coles would bring his Mann Steam Tractor and Gavioli "Steam" Organ to entertain the crowds. His 'piece de resistance' however, was his White Steam Car with which he would proceed to offer a challenge to any brave motorist willing to take it on in a tug of war. The car **always** won! Other events, such as the vintage Fire engines putting out sleeper fires, and the demolition of the old Clayton's Pavilion by traction engines all helped to swell membership and maintain interest in our activities.

Perhaps a little strangely for a preserved line, early attempts to re-introduce passenger trains on a regular basis met with considerable opposition. We had from time to time obliged visiting parties, one such occasion featuring on the cover of a Pete Nicholson publication "Preserved Main Line Diesel Locomotives". Perhaps the one I remember best was a group from West Germany, complete with interpreter. Whilst travelling down to Balm Road on the LMS van, I heard the frantic cry "Stop ze train!" I duly obliged to find that the 'emergency' was the need to take photos of the lines of washing hanging in Gasholder Terrace! Germans, it appeared, did not hang their washing in the street! Such occasions were few and far between, however, the powers that were preferring to attract folk through the galas already mentioned.

In 1967, an Ian Allen excursion hauled by 7029 "CLUN CASTLE" brought 400 passengers to ride the line in a series of open waggon trains hauled by a loco at each end. Senior committee members threatened to resign if we entertained the group, but supervised by Reggie in his 'Safety Officer's Hat' and looking more like a PW engineer than a medic, we safely and efficiently moved the traffic.

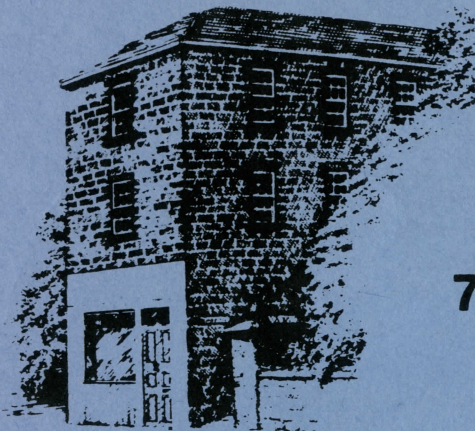
Sales were small and primitive, but the scene was now set for the development of regular passenger traffic when the colliery extension became our property some years later. The oldest firm in the business was becoming an established part of the South Leeds Scene.

USEFUL ADDRESSES - 1983

COUNCIL MEMBERS

J.K. Lee, 71 Knightsway, Whitkirk, LEEDS LS15 7BL.	Leeds 645424
J.Bushell, 12 Trelawn Crescent, Headingley, LEEDS 6.	Leeds 786282
A.P.Bell, 2 Beaumont Street, Stanley, WAKEFIELD. WF3 4HQ	Wakefield 825658
N.A.Brampton, 81 Bradford Road, WAKEFIELD. WF1 2AA	Wakefield 374630
L.Caves, 118 Fish Dam Lane, Monk Bretton, BARNSLEY. S71 2RW	0226 86384
C.J.Chaplin, 240 West End Lane, Horsforth, LEEDS.	Leeds 582393
C.Rogers, 71 Kirkstall Lane, LEEDS. LS5 3JZ	
S.J.Roberts, 7 Hayton Wood View, Aberford LEEDS. LS25 3AN	Leeds 813626
G.W.Lunn, 17 Lynwood Crescent, Woodlesford, LEEDS. LS26 8LJ	Leeds 823276
I.B.Smith, Staff Quarters, R.N.H. Hasslar, GOSPORT, Hants. PO12 2AA	Home Leeds 701083
A.J.Cowling, 65 Pinner Road, SHEFFIELD. S11 8UG	0742 661763
P.Rowden, Flat 6, 61 Clarendon Road, LEEDS 6.	Leeds 36460

THE KIRKSTALL PRESS



HI-SPEED
LITHO PRINTING &
DUPLICATING

**71 Commercial Road,
Kirkstall,
Leeds LS5 3AT.
Tel. 0532 780616**

PAINTING & DECORATING ?

For interior and exterior work contact:

William Holliday

**5 LONGFIELD DRIVE,
RODLEY,
LEEDS LS13 1JX.
Tel. PUDSEY 579639**