

# THE OLD RUN

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MIDDLETON RAILWAY TRUST



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**DEADLINES FOR CONTRIBUTIONS  
ARE THE FIRST DAYS OF MARCH,  
JUNE, SEPTEMBER, AND DECEMBER.**

Opinions expressed in the magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Middleton Railway Trust Ltd, Middleton Railway Association, or the Editor. Many thanks indeed to the members who provided articles, reports and photos for this issue. Please continue to do so - it's your magazine.

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Cover picture: *Carroll*, poses at Moor Road on Saturday 4th July, the loco's first day back in service. Graham Parkin (seen here with *Carroll*), was chiefly responsible for the magnificent repaint which followed the loco's lengthy overhaul.



Above: visitors from the KWVR - ex-L&Y, ex-LMS 51218, built at Horwich in 1901, and *Sir Berkeley*, haul a demonstration goods train during Gala Saturday, 26th September, 1998. Photo: Ian Dobson



*Mirvaic*, also seen on the Balm Road Branch with a demonstration goods train, Gala Saturday, 26th September. (1310, first loco on the Branch that morning had to wait for libations of sand to be applied to the slippery rails before it could return to the station yard.) Photo: Ian Dobson

## FROM THE CHAIRMAN

### Steve Roberts

A week is a long time in politics. It can equally be said to be the same in the life of the Middleton railway. Ian Smith's decision to stand down as Chairman and my being persuaded to stand happened in an even shorter period. So here I am!

Are there going to be any major changes with a new Captain in control? I doubt it. Ian has generally steered us on the right course, even if it has been at breakneck speed at times! In his years as Chairman, the Middleton Railway has taken on a much higher profile, and has come to be well regarded in the Railway Preservation movement as a whole. If there are any changes, they will certainly be gradual, hopefully well thought out, and with the full agreement of Council.

Ian is certainly not taking a back seat. Far from it. He will continue to be our main link man with the Heritage Railway Association and will, I am sure, continue to maintain our high profile.

For my part, I see my role as a coordinator, endeavouring to get the best out of our various Council members. I think that we are very lucky, at the moment, to have the best Council membership for many a year. Every one of this illustrious band of people is an asset to the Trust and we need to utilise their various talents to the most. In this respect, there will be change in that I do not intend to get involved with the detail, as my predecessor did, endeavouring to delegate and spread the load over far more people. We have some good front men and some equally excellent back

room boys. Will it work? Only time will tell.

So what else would I like to see happen? I could write a book on this subject (or at least a whole edition of *The Old Run!*) so here are just a couple of things to start the ball rolling.

Firstly, I share Ian's view that we need to do more for our visitors and improve that which we have on display. I think that, as a priority, we need to convert the old workshop into the beginnings of the intended museum, a scheme much beloved by the late Chris Rogers. As soon as funds permit, I would like to see this shed extended southwards to increase our covered accommodation.

Secondly, and again, very much with an eye to improving the impression given to visitors, I very much wish to see the site tidied up. I see this as our major weakness at present. We have made a start with the provision of fencing near the station entrance. We need to do much more. Let's face it, the area outside the workshop is a tip. However, most of what is there is wanted, so we have to find somewhere else to put it. This means moving it up the yard, which in turn means that we have to create space there. This is where the real problem lies. We have to have a real, concerted effort to reduce our piles of old sleepers, get rid of all the scrap rail that is lying around, and neatly store that which is wanted. We must have a concerted war on weeds. Brambles are spreading over much of the south end of the site and these are becoming a hazard, as well as a nuisance. We must also take a long, hard look at the old cranes and wagons that we have and decide what

we are to do with them.

Thirdly, I would like to see an increase in visitor numbers! Fairly obvious I suppose but, by this I don't mean through operating more trains or having more special events. I mean by a real increase in the numbers of passengers on our ordinary operating days. I have before me the ticket sales for 1974, and it makes interesting reading. On the August Bank Holiday Monday, we had 186 passengers on a day that was recorded as middling to bad! This, at today's ticket prices, would have produced £285 in fares. This day was no exception either, being exceeded on thirteen other days that year. The busiest day was Easter Sunday when we had 436 people buying tickets, producing an income of £635 at today's fares! And we only ran trains between 2.00pm and 4.30pm. Compare this with the £140 that we took this year on a bright August Bank Holiday, running trains between 11.00am and 4.30pm. Admittedly, this was not a good day for revenue, but the only time now that we approach the traffic levels that we enjoyed in 1974 is when we run a special event. Special events take a lot of organising and a lot of precious volunteer time. We need to get back to and exceed traffic levels that we once enjoyed on ordinary days. I challenge the Marketing Department to achieve this!

## LOCO & YARD NOTES

### Steve Roberts

The 1998 operating season is now half way through and, apart from the early season problems mentioned in the last *Old Run*, things have

generally progressed satisfactorily with routine maintenance being the order of the day with the operating fleet.

**1601** Some investigation has been carried out into the condition of the boiler barrel, but it has not produced any worthwhile information. Our attempts to carry out ultrasonic thickness testing have been unsuccessful, as the boiler plate appears to be quite laminated, making it difficult to sensibly interpret the results. Whilst no decision has been taken, the omens are not good.

**67** Continues to make steady, if not spectacular progress. The frames are now back on their wheels, and we have a rolling chassis once more. The eccentric straps have been machined to take up wear and, following on completion of this work, the valve gear has been reassembled, together with fitting of the connecting rods. A new big end strap taper bolt is presently being machined to replace one that was found to be bent. As mentioned in the last *Old Run*, painting, or lack of it, continues to hamper progress. There are an awful lot of components that require attention in this respect. We really need more effort to be put into this part of the job. Any willing hands would be most welcome for this task.

**1882 Mirvale** continues to give reliable service but, is perhaps hanging on by a wing and a prayer. The tube ends are becoming quite thinned and some occasional leakage has occurred in the firebox. This is, perhaps, to be expected, as the loco is nearing the end of its ten year boiler life. It is presently out of traffic for the annual boiler examination, to be carried out as soon as the boiler has



been washed out. The full ten years is up in May 1999 so we can only expect a few more months service from this stalwart of the service fleet.

Whilst the original thought was that *Mirvale* would be withdrawn after this season to enable repairs to commence with a view to a quick return to traffic, it is now possible that we will run the loco as long as we can.

**385** Like *Mirvale*, 385 continues to give sterling service. Also like *Mirvale*, 385 is starting to suffer from thinned tube ends which we will have to keep a close eye on. This loco will also reach the end of its ten year boiler life during the latter part of 1999. No thought has yet been given as to when the loco will come into the works for overhaul, and whether it will take its turn or jump the queue.

**1625** The Cockerill suddenly found itself the centre of attention during July. A formal handing over ceremony had been arranged for this locomotive, which had been most generously donated to the Railway by Mrs. Wainwright, but it was felt that its external condition warranted attention first. Thus, the loco suddenly found itself in the workshop being rubbed down for a repaint. Various minor areas of damage to the cab platework were cut out, and new plate was welded in prior to painting. Some minor modifications were made to the previous livery in applying the new paintwork, but the scheme is similar to that previously carried. Following on from this work, the formal handing over ceremony took place on 5th September 1998.

**1310** The Y7 was taken out of traffic during July when, upon investigating a steam leak at the front end, it was discovered that one of the front cylinder covers was cracked. This did cause some consternation, as the loco was scheduled to go to the Great Central Railway at Ruddington at the end of July. Initially, it was hoped that the casting could be repaired, and it was decided to send the loco as planned, and fit the repaired cylinder cover once it arrived.

However, a weld repair has proved to be impractical, and a new casting has had to be made. In order that the loco could fulfil its engagements at Ruddington, a temporary strap was fitted.

Whilst the loco was used as planned, there were many crossed fingers. The intention was to have the new cylinder cover machined by the Great Central but it now looks as though this will not be the case, and we will be carrying out the work.

Another problem that occurred with the loco whilst away, was a failure of the fireman's side injector. This was traced to the pivot pin on the overflow flap coming adrift, and was easily rectified. As this has happened before, we hope that, this time, we have effected a permanent repair!

**54** The last *Old Run* reported nil progress. The situation is still the same, but there is a real possibility that the loco will be returned to service off site in return for a period of free loan. Keep your fingers crossed!

**1210 Sir Berkeley** As briefly mentioned in the last *Old Run*, *Sir Berkeley* departed on loan to the Foxfield Railway at the end of July,

where it starred in that Railway's gala weekend. From Foxfield it is planned that the loco will go to the Keighley & Worth Valley before returning to Middleton in time for our late September gala. Some trouble has been experienced with tube leakage whilst away but, hopefully, this is just associated with a change of water. (For those of you who do not know, steam locos are finicky things and do not like changes to the water used in them!)

It is planned that the loco will remain at Middleton for the whole of 1999. This will be its last year of service before a full overhaul becomes necessary.

**2387 Brookes No.1** The owner has restarted work on this loco with a vengeance.

Following upon the rewheeling of 67, and completion of roof repairs to the Drewry, a major shunt was carried out over the August bank holiday after which *Brookes* found itself at the end of the workshop and in a position to allow the frames to be lifted off its wheels. Even more importantly, an order has been placed for a brand new boiler for the loco. This is a very considerable investment, and David Monckton must be commended for taking such a brave and radical step. In the meantime, he is slaving away in an endeavour to get everything else ready for the day when the new boiler arrives. I'm sure that he would be grateful of any help!

**91** Eventually found its way into the workshop during August and work has progressed on stripping down the front end to effect repairs to the oil leak from the crankshaft. A leaking oil



Above: 1825 *Lucie*, with paintwork to rival that of *Carroll*, double-heads with 385 on Gala Saturday, watched by shop helper/ticket clipper Daniel Cooke. Photo: Sheila Bye



cooler has also been repaired and pressure tested.

**D631 Carroll** This vintage Hudswell diesel made its planned return to traffic on 4th July following its extensive overhaul. It is now available for service, and has been used on passenger and works trains. Its limited haulage capacity does mean that, when it is used on passenger trains, one of the coaches has to be removed so that it can run at a fast enough speed to maintain the timetable.

**Rowntree No.3** Our Ruston diesel made a brief appearance in the workshop during June, to enable its air tanks to be inspected by the insurance company boiler inspector. The paintwork on this locomotive is starting to become shabby, and we will have to consider some remedial works before it deteriorates much further. The colour has faded tremendously due to the weather, and it is very noticeable when the door is opened, revealing a strip that is not exposed to sunlight! Otherwise, it is used as required.

**7051, 1786, D577 and 138C** are all serviceable and used as required.

## **PERMANENT WAY**

Towards the end of July, a cracked rail was found during a routine inspection of the track.

This was in the splice rail of the northern end turnout of the loop at Middleton Park. Close examination showed that the crack had emanated from a badly formed fishplate hole, and had progressed to the rail end and up towards the rail head. As the crack

was not in the running line, it was deemed that immediate replacement was not necessary and that a dead slow speed limit through the loop, together with observation of the passage of locos, would be sufficient action to enable replacement to be effectively planned. Just in case and as an added precaution, a 5 mph speed limit was imposed on the running line through the turnout.

We were fortunate to have in stock a suitable replacement crossing, albeit with longer splice rails than the damaged one. This was extricated from the undergrowth(!) checked over, and prepared for relaying. We had hoped to put this off until the beginning of October when we could have had a full Saturday possession. In the event, the crack continued to deteriorate and it was decided that it would have to be changed. This work was arranged for a Wednesday evening and it was essentially completed before we ran out of daylight. Some final fettling was carried out on the Saturday morning before the line was handed back to the operating department in time for the first train.

Plans are presently being formulated for our winter relaying programme. As in previous years, it is proposed to relay a section of the running line with concrete sleepers. This year's plans are the most ambitious yet, the intention being to relay ten 60' panels. Not only are we attempting to lay more than ever before, but Easter is very early next year so we will have a minimal time to complete the works. This relaying session is likely to be the last major relaying of the running line, as it will

effectively bring the concrete sleeper track up to the start of the proposed extension. Future tracklaying is likely to consist of spot resleeping using good timber sleepers reclaimed from the last few years' work. Some of this resleeping will be on the section of track laid in when the line was diverted during the building of the M1 which, incredible as it may seem, was 27 years ago! [SEE AD. ON P.24!]

## **IN THE YARD**

Plans to extend the paling fence, as mentioned in the last *Old Run*, have been put into effect. This has consisted of three removable lengths of fence which now provide an effective barrier on the exit from the car park and prevent visitors (and staff) from walking on to the tracks. The sections have to be removable to enable road access to the shed and to give the drivers of low loaders plenty of manoeuvring space when delivering or collecting rolling stock.

A 'Watch that smoke' sign has appeared outside the shed. It remains to be seen whether our train crews take notice of it, but it does serve as a reminder to them. This is particularly important as we are in a built up area and we cannot afford complaints.

The tram rails removed from Burton Road crossing during construction of the shed have, at long last, been cut up and sent for scrap. The Fire Brigade had offered to cut up the rails as a 'thank you' for being able to use a train in the tunnel in an emergency exercise. In the event, some were cut up by the Fire Brigade but most of this work was done by ourselves! A quantity of other scrap

was also despatched at the same time. There remains several tons of old rail to cut up and dispose of but the price of scrap is relatively low, at present.

## **GARDENING**

Not something that you generally associate with the Middleton Railway but, nevertheless, a task that has to be carried out. We do have grassed areas and flower beds, at least equal to a reasonable sized garden, which require regular attention during the summer. This work is done quietly and without ceremony by a couple of stalwart volunteers. Many thanks for this.

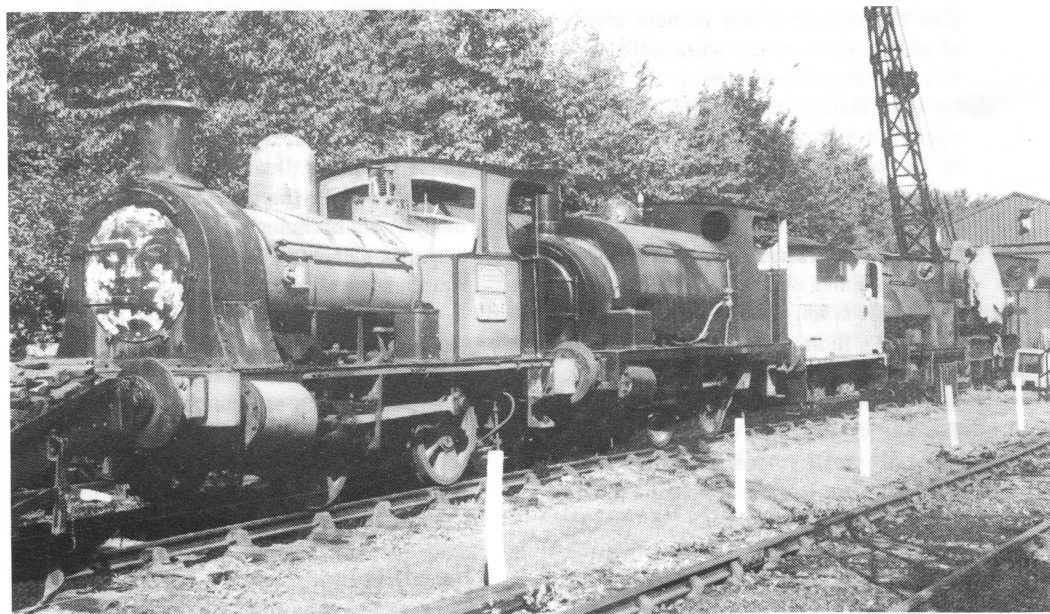
Outside the immediate vicinity of Moor Road station, a form of gardening is still necessary in order to control the growth of vegetation within our boundaries. Brambles are taking a major hold within the Moor Road site generally and, along much of the line, growth of bushes and trees is a problem. Whilst we wish to encourage the greenery springing up around us, branches too close to the track do cause problems. Coach paintwork gets scratched and there is always the danger of a branch catching the eye of a passenger who leans out at the wrong moment.

Control of hedging, etc., along the line is something that we need to take in hand. Is there a willing volunteer among our membership who would take on this task?

We do have hedgetrimmers, branch loppers, strimmers, etc. for this work, and would be only too pleased if someone would take on this steady job. Training can be given, as necessary.



Above: the bare bones of *Brookes No. 1*, await the arrival of a new boiler. Photo: Graham Smith  
Below: *Windle*, *Henry de Lacy II*, the Fowler, and the third *Matthew Murray*, also await the money and the manpower necessary for their restoration. Photo: Ian Dobson



## FROM THE DESK OF THE MARKETING OFFICER

Howard Bishop

Customers (or passengers and visitors) are the essential ingredient of our Railway, for without them we could do nothing, for we would lack the wherewithal to make our trains run or do essential repairs, let alone undertake restoration projects. It's vital that we encourage visitors to come and look and experience.

Yet, despite our best endeavours, there are many local people who do not know that we exist: even representatives of some of our independent railway companies have never heard of the Middleton Railway, as I discovered recently when talking to them about possible joint publicity, even though we have an entry in the Great Britain Passenger Timetable! Some Railways seem to have posters and leaflets everywhere. We must advertise our product, and although leaflet distribution is not glamorous it is essential and we always need help, particularly in the closed months of February and March.

Visitors must leave having enjoyed themselves - because they will then tell their friends and colleagues. This is publicity that money can't buy, and it's entirely in our hands. It's about treating people properly, dealing with queries as they arise and resolving problems if they arise. It's about being courteous to passengers, even when the injector is playing up or *John Alcock's* clutch is causing concern. It's about keeping the station site clean and tidy and the coach windows clean and the train's

verandah wiped down to keep the dirt off the passengers' clothes.

Some publicity comes cheap, like word of mouth. Advertising costs money. It requires hard decisions: do we spend money on the locomotives, carriages, trackwork, or on advertising? Without money, we can do nothing, and to scrimp on marketing the Railway is foolish in the long term.

I spent a day in the summer studying "a day in the life of the Middleton Railway", and the findings were most useful. June 25th saw us hosting several quite disparate groups of people, and highlighted the breadth and versatility of our approach and appeal. The day started at dawn with the lighting-up of *Mirvale*, and ended as the light faded that night. It was a very long day for all the staff concerned, but they did remarkably well, even though by the evening they were very tired.

First and foremost, this was School Day, with many groups arriving and departing throughout the morning and afternoon, some combining their visits with trips to the Middleton Park Nature Trail. Schools Liaison Officer, Cedric Wood, and his band of helpers fully involved the children in discussion and explanations as they toured the site and looked at the exhibits, managing to aim things just at the right level to suit different ages in their audiences. The shop staff and train crew equipped themselves well, and coped with the demands made upon them, and every group appeared to go away highly pleased with their experiences. This was confirmed by an on-the-spot evaluation carried out before the groups left.



In the morning, a group of mature students and staff from the Institute of Railway Studies in York, and the National Railway Museum, were hosted by Ian Smith, and received a lucid introduction to the historic significance of the Middleton Railway, and also a good insight as to how we cater for school parties, and saw how our input ties in directly with the national curriculum. Feedback from this potentially critical group was positive and encouraging.

The evening saw photographic charters catering for the Bradford Railway Circle and the York Railway Circle, and a change of engine and train crew. Although the weather showed its usual unpredictable side, our visitors had a profitable time, and the engine crew put on the usual pyrotechnic display on the two run pasts on the Great Northern Curve.

Altogether a most satisfactory and satisfying day. Several people remarked how tidy our station site looked. Having previously visited a very well known, larger preserved railway, where the previous year's posters were still displayed, and the paint on the passenger rolling stock was peeling and decrepit looking, I had to agree that our station and yard was attractive to visitors as they arrived. First impressions are important, both visually and from the welcome the shop staff and train crew give. The site has been tidied in the past months, although there is still room for improvement.

I think all the folk who worked so hard on the day described above, can be proud of the impression and representation they made, and should be commended for it. But, after all, if

we are spending good money advertising the Railway, we do want it to be a positive experience for visitors when they come along - they will then spread the word, and more people mean.....!

**PUBLICITY P.S.** We eventually managed to get the local media interested in the Middleton Railway over the 240th Anniversary Gala weekend! BBCTV Look North visited us on the Saturday and featured us on the Sunday news programme, and Yorkshire TV Calendar visited on the Sunday and featured us on the Monday Calendar programme. Though they spent a great deal of time interviewing 'yours truly' and shooting various shots, the news items were reduced to a few seconds of course, but at least we got a look-in. BBC Radio Leeds also featured us on the Sunday's John Boyd programme. This followed on nicely from the interview Graham Parkin and I did on John Boyd's Sunday programme in July. And Jon Mitchell mentioned us on YTV's weather forecast on the Friday evening prior to the weekend.

On August 1st Exhibitions Manager Derek Plummer was present at the Dewsbury 150 event (together with Brian Hall with *Mirvale* and Howard Bishop with his model steam railway). Then he was in action at the Royal Armouries for a weekend organised by British Waterways. In October we shall be represented at the North of England Model Railway Exhibition at the Great Yorkshire Show, and again at the Queen's Hotel, Leeds, for the "Hidden Treasures" Antiques Day organised by the *Yorkshire Post* in aid of the Middleton Railway.

Also on the Sunday of the Gala weekend, a camera crew attended and shot scenes to appear in a new series featuring Fred Dibnah, to appear on screen in the New Year, together with a new Steam book which is to include a section on the Middleton Railway. *Railway Classics* magazine is to carry an article on the Middleton Railway in the New Year. The autumn edition of the Great Britain Railway Passenger Timetable carries an up-dated and enlarged entry on the Middleton Railway.

In the course of their annual holidays, several members have visited

other preserved railways and other attractions; and, coincidentally, in order to 'spread the word', have taken a supply of Middleton Railway leaflets with them for distribution. Three of the far flung destinations of our leaflets this year have been Denmark, the most westerly preserved railway in Europe (the Tralee and Dingle Railway in County Kerry, Eire) and in the southern hemisphere (The Apple Express, Port Elizabeth, South Africa). This last-named place must be a record in terms of miles/kilometres distance - unless you know different! Please let the Marketing Manager know!



Above: 1825 *Lucie*, looking beautiful at the Park Halt passing loop, during the September weekend in which the loco was formerly handed over to the MRT by Mrs. Wainwright, who most kindly donated the loco to us following the death of her husband Hugh. Photo: Keith Hartley

## SCHOOL DAYS 1998

### Cedric Wood

**Wednesday, April 29th** Teachers have asked us for a date each term for a school day. The writer peered into his crystal ball and selected the one rain free day for a week before and after the proposed school day. What the crystal ball did not predict was that there would not be any schools requesting a spring term date. This date was cancelled.

**Wednesday, June 17th** There had been track vandalism on the Sunday and Monday before this event. Chairs had been deliberately smashed which had to be replaced before services started on the Sunday, and before a party arrived on the Monday. The line check was carried out with crossed fingers, hoping there would be a track fit to run on.

A special mention must be made of Dorothy Hebden. She took a party of reception class children whose teacher had asked for a talk on how a steam engine works. Dorothy had started her 'spiel', when the teacher took her to one side and told her not to bother: these are only reception class, you won't be able to get through to them. To cut a long story short, at the end of Dorothy's talk, the teacher apologised to her and remarked that her talk was just the right length and delivered at the right level. Ten out of ten for star quality, content and presentation.

**Thursday, June 25th** The weather started reasonably fine, but rain was forecast for later in the day. Plan B was set up in the engine shed as a backup if the rain should fall. Plan B is

a slide presentation of the history of railways. Fortunately, it was not needed, but thanks to Steve Roberts and the shed gang, a space was cleared in the old part of the shed to enable this provision to be made with the children's safety in mind.

Four schools were booked to arrive in a twenty minute period. One arrived on time, one arrived late, and two arrived early. Four schools in five buses and five private cars arrived in a six minute period. Chaos reigned only momentarily as Stan Holdsworth and Ken Hardy directed traffic with the skill and aplomb as if they had been doing that all their lives. There was a period of rain around mid-day. As the cableless *Sir Berkeley* was the locomotive being used, the job specification of the cleaner may need to be altered to include duties as an umbrella holder.

**Friday, July 17th** There was a school who wanted to come to visit us, who enquired too late for the April date and had other arrangements made for the June dates. Another date in June was offered to coincide with another party, but this was also turned down. Being of the type to bend over backwards to help, another date was offered and accepted.

The sky was overcast as 60 youngsters decanted from their road transport. Just to make life a little more interesting, Allerley's had arrived a few minutes earlier to collect *Sir Berkeley*. The youngsters and adults were ushered on to the train for their return journey to the park. They spent nearly two hours with us, split into groups: drawing, taking plate rubbings, and being given tours of the site. Favourable comments were

received from the departing adults.

**Conclusions** For the statisticians, 438 children from 14 schools visited us over the three operating days. This was about half the numbers of 1997. As the schools were leaving, the teachers in charge were asked for their opinions, and we were told that the service offered to the youngsters was ideal for their level. We were often asked if the school could take samples of coal and ash, as the children had not seen these items before. Now, if we packed ash into hundredweight bags and sold it in the shop . . . The

fence mentioned in the last issue's Yard report was invaluable for keeping the 'littlies' apart from the trains.

### Credits -

**Train Crews:** Howard Bishop, Jean Collinson, Tony Cowling, Gerald Egan, Brian Hall, Keith Hartley, David Hebden, Douglas Lovely, Mike McPeake, Jonathan Turner.

**Shop Staff:** Alan Cooke, Ken & Joan Hardy, Stan & Carole Holdsworth, Christine Nettleton.

**Guides:** Sheila Bye, Dennis Caton, Dorothy Hebden, Geoff Saunders, Ian Smith, Cedric Wood.



Above: built across Jack Lane from one another, HE1697 *John Alcock*, alias 7401 and 7051 (right), and HC D63 *Carroll* (left), are seen here on 4th July 1998. Photo: Keith Hartley



## IN THE BEGINNING

### Don Townsley

My first recorded contact with the Middleton Railway was 14 May 1948, or so my notebook of the time tells me. Memory suggests a tram ride from Swinegate to the end of Moor Road, on a Middleton Bogie car of course, and then the first sighting of the Moor Road coal staithes. Two locomotives were pottering around the area between the staithes and what is now the passenger station. The oldest, *Blenkinsop*, Manning Wardle No.797, built in 1891, had been rebuilt in 1910 and looked in much better shape than its partner, *Gladstone*, Hudswell Clarke No.491, built a mere fifty years before in 1898.

Continuing on Moor Road, I eventually turned right into Old Run Road in the general direction of the colliery and was perhaps half a mile or so up the hill when the sound of a locomotive working hard was heard. It was difficult to get close to the line at that point, but I tried to take a photograph of the passing train of empty wagons from a distance of about three hundred yards. Unfortunately, my pre war Eastman Kodak camera and the wartime film could not cope with the conditions and all I got for my efforts was a 120 size blurred contact print of what vaguely resembled a locomotive.

The locomotive was neither *Blenkinsop* nor *Gladstone*, nor had it been at the staithes when I had passed shortly before. I assumed therefore that the train had come up from Balm Road exchange sidings, although this assumption could be wrong. But there was no mistaking the locomotive despite its monochrome coating of grime and lack of any immediately decipherable marks of identity. It was a decidedly anonymous *Jean*, formerly LNER No.407, built by the North Eastern Railway at Gateshead in 1897 and purchased by the Whitwood Chemical Company in 1937. It had only come to Middleton from Savile Colliery in November 1947, and was out of use and partially dismantled by June 1949. Consequently there must be only a few enthusiasts who saw it during its eighteen or so months of activity if you take into consideration the fact that industrial locations were not generally on the itinerary of railway enthusiasts until the end of main line steam in 1968.

It was only when penning these notes that the connection between *Jean* and the present day locomotives at Middleton became fully apparent to me. One of only three North Eastern Railway Class H2 (later LNER Class J79) locomotives ever built it was, in fact, originally included in a requisition for a quantity of five Class H 0-4-0 tank locomotives, but two of the batch were built as six wheelers. Number 1310 now at Middleton is a Class H locomotive, the last of the batch immediately preceding that which included No.407, and perhaps really ought to be referred to as *Jeanette*, if only unofficially. Apart from the rear bunker, extra pair of wheels, and slight increase in length, both classes of locomotive were identical. Anyone requiring further details is recommended to consult Parts 8B and 9B of the Railway Correspondence and Travel Society's work *Locomotives of the LNER*.

Completing the stud at Middleton, but not in steam on that day in May, was the Manning Wardle 0-4-0 saddle tank *Matthew Murray No.2*.

Shortly after this encounter, I was to begin my forty years of full time locomotive

engineering at Hunslet. This was destined to range from manufacturing, through design and sales, to general management. Thus it was impossible, assuming that I had wanted, to escape from the day to day goings on in the commercial railway scene, and in the slowly emerging preservation movement very early on was a minor role in finishing off HE1697, after replacement of its original MAN engine by a second hand McLaren. In October 1949, 1697 was to go as a hire locomotive to London & Thames Haven Oil Wharves, whilst the first of two new 153hp locomotives, on order from Hunslet, was delivered in 1951. Very smart it looked in Light Brunswick green lined out in yellow, if my memory serves me well, but I do not know of any photographs taken in this condition. Of course, none of us had heard of 'railway preservation' in those days - York Railway Museum, then in the old Queen Street premises, was the only concession of any consequence to the past.

The first real skirmish with 'preservation' came three years later. It was through the friendship of Tom Rolt and John Alcock that between February and May 1952 I found myself assisting, at Hunslet, with the overhaul of the ex-Corris Railway Kerr Stuart locomotive No.4047 prior to its becoming No.4 *Edward Thomas* on the Talylyn Railway, thus heralding the dawn of railway preservation.

But this is getting away from the Middleton Railway, still a long way from being anything other than a run down working railway, scruffy - filthy even - yet interesting for all that. There was a regular pilgrimage across Hunslet Moor at lunch-time as the locomotives came and went, scrapped and replaced as the ravages of time and the slow march of progress got underway.

*Gladstone* was the first to go, being scrapped by Robinson & Birdsell in 1950, to be replaced by *No.69*, purchased second hand from Appleby Frodingham Steel Company. This was another Hudswell Clarke machine, but larger and more powerful with 15" diameter cylinders as opposed to 14". Carrying makers number 1175 and dating from 1916, it had over thirty years hard steelworks use to its credit and bore the scars accordingly. Despite its battered and run down appearance, *No.69* was a capable locomotive and seemed to do the brunt of the work until the arrival of the second *Blenkinsop* (HC1871/54) in 1954. This was the first new locomotive to come to Middleton for forty five years, and its arrival resulted in both the old *Blenkinsop* and *Matthew Murray No.2* being scrapped by Cohens. I never saw the two Pecketts that are reputed to have come from St. Johns Colliery at Normanton to help out in 1952/3, and military service took me away from Hunslet between 1955 and 1957.

When I returned to civilian life, little seemed to have changed. *Blenkinsop* was still pottering about with a few wagons and jousting with the trams at Parkside crossing. We continued to play bowls of a lunch-time to the side of Hunslet Moor, and on the moor itself Hunslet Feast was an annual event. Within two years, the trams were to disappear and the colliery line north of the BR Beeston branch at Parkside had closed. *Blenkinsop* was transferred to Parkhill Colliery, near Wakefield, where it was re-named, appropriately, *Parkhill*. It survived at Parkhill and neighbouring St. Johns until 1968, when I must confess to having sold the diesel locomotive which replaced it.

Thus ended the Middleton Railway in its traditional form, though British Railways operated coal trains on the southern end of the line until 1965. Its passing was the first really tangible warning that the industrial heartland of south Leeds was under threat.

Nothing had really changed until then. There were no Japanese cars, no motorways within fifty miles. At the time of closure, Dr. Beeching was still to enter the public arena, and apart from the 'Little Trains of Wales' railway preservation had not yet begun in earnest.

The opening of the Bluebell Railway and the appearance of Fred Youell on the Middleton scene were two coincidental happenings that were but a prelude to the emergence of 'preserved railways' (I hate the term) throughout the country and in other countries also. I do not think Fred would have taken too unkindly the comment that those of us trying to make a living out of the industry thought he was mad. He could, however, take consolation out of the fact that those of us who also had an enthusiasm for railways wished him luck to go with the madness.

John Alcock, a man for whom I had a tremendous degree of respect, was in a position to match words with deeds, and I think he was quite taken by the idea of a 'working museum' close by the locomotive works of Leeds. He was also an extrovert and a very shrewd business man. Here was the possibility of his own brainchild, locomotive 1697, to continue its working life in semi retirement amongst people sympathetic to such things. 1697 had ceased to be useful as a hire locomotive, customers were demanding larger and more modern machines, and it was only seeing sporadic employment as a works shunter. Thus came about the donation of which Dr. Youell speaks, in his progress report printed in issue No.1 of *The Old Run*\*, and the movement of 1697 to Middleton. Further involvement came with the arrival of *Windle* from Pilkingtons two years later. The rest of the story must be so familiar to MRT members as to not require repeating.

The general attitude of Hunslet, and I presume the other manufacturers still in business, towards preservationists was one of ambivalence. One tried to be helpful, but apart from the odd goodwill gesture any work carried out had to be at a commercial rate. This became ever more important as the numbers of preservation groups and projects burgeoned. Some enthusiasts found this difficult to understand, but by and large the needs of business and the yearnings of nostalgia rubbed along pretty reasonably together. The needs of the MRT were never very demanding in this respect, and as the private railways grew they produced remarkably competent repair and, in some cases, manufacturing, facilities from within their own volunteer resources.

It is tremendously satisfying to me, and no doubt many of my former colleagues, that so many Leeds built locomotives are still in existence long after their reasons for being have evaporated. It is a little sad, however, that the importance of Leeds as a manufacturing centre is not as widely appreciated within the City as it might be. The MRT plays its part in reminding those who have forgotten, and educating those who never knew, how a small area south of the River Aire shaped the world in which they lived.

\* *The Old Run* No.1: "Mr. John Alcock, MA, Managing Director of Hunslet Engine Co., visited us, expressed his wholehearted support, and gave us a most generous personal donation to our funds." Those members who, like the Editor, have enjoyed reading Don Townsley's personal view of the Middleton Railway will no doubt also enjoy his history of the Hunslet Engine Works, which is due out in November. Watch this space .....



Above: HC1175 of 1916, *No. 69*, seen steaming through Middleton Broom Pit yard on 26th March 1959. Photo: J.A. Peden

Below: 1310 and *Mirvale* double-head from Moor Road during Gala Saturday. Photo: Sheila Bye





## TIMES PAST - Autumn 1758

Sheila Bye

*The Leeds Intelligencer* of Tuesday 26th September 1758:

On Wednesday last, the first Waggon Load of Coals was brought from the Pits of Charles Brandling, Esq; down the new Road to his Staith near the Bridge in this Town, agreeable to the Act of Parliament passed last Sessions.- A Scheme of such general Utility, as to comprehend within it, not only our Trade and Poor, (which ought to be the grand Objects of our Concern) but also beneficial to every Individual within this Town and Neighbourhood: On this occasion the Bells were set a ringing, the Cannons of our FORT fired, and a general Joy appear'd in every Face.

This just had to be the 'quote of the quarter' for Autumn 1998; the 240th anniversary of the newspaper announcement of the birth of our Railway. The weekly paper in which the report was published just happened to go on sale on the date of this year's Gala Saturday, and events were closely linked to the celebration of our railway's birthday - no other operational railway can celebrate 240 years of continuous use!

The opening of the waggonway/railway, bringing abundant supplies of cheap coal to the edge of Leeds, gave Charles Brandling an immediate advantage over his rivals in the coal trade, who still had to transport their coal to Leeds in road carts, or carts and river boats. The further regulation of supplies by later Acts of Parliament meant that Leeds had a regular supply of cheap coal just at that crucial time in history, when stationary steam engines were improved and began to be used in new centralised industrial buildings, and when new processes were being invented to make feasible the large-scale production of metal goods (which were, of course, in demand for the production of steam engines and other machinery for the above-mentioned new centralised industrial buildings).

Coal from the Middleton pits greatly influenced the development of Leeds as an industrial city, and also greatly influenced the variety of industries which developed in the city: steam-powered mills and factories, iron, copper and brass founding, brewing, and pottery, brick and glass manufacture.

The successful opening of the Middleton waggonway/railway led to similar schemes being set up in other parts of the county, and some decades later, the pioneer adoption of steam locomotion brought techno-tourists and industrial spies from many parts of the world, influencing the building of locomotive operated railways in many other areas and several other countries: a fact which was clearly discernible from several of the presentations and papers at the Early Railways Conference.

Basically, the importance of that small news item in *The Leeds Intelligencer* cannot be overestimated.

## GREAT PROVINCIAL STATIONS: LEEDS TERMINI

Book Review by Henry Gunston

*Great Provincial Stations: Leeds Termini* by Bob Pixton and John Hooper

Challenger Publications, Nottingham, 1998 ISBN 1 899624 27 9

211mm by 273mm, 64 pages, 106 black and white and one coloured photographs, one coloured map and one black and white plan. Price: £6.99

This well turned out publication is the latest of a number of books which have covered the history of the main stations of Leeds and the trains which have used them. Others have included *The Railways of Leeds and Bradford* by C T Goode (1987), *Rail Centres: Leeds/Bradford* by Stephen R Batty (1989) and *Rail Memories No 3: Leeds* by Peter Rose (1992) - the last of which I reviewed in *The Old Run* No.142, Spring 1993.

A logical starting point is the coloured print of a 1913 Railway Clearing House map on the back cover of the book, which indicates the complexities of both the geography and the company ownership of the routes to and from Central, Wellington and New stations. At the centre of the book is an LNWR/NER plan of the 1890s which covers the immediate area of the three stations and their track layouts at that time. Of more recent geographical interest are eight air photographs of areas around the city centre stations and Holbeck, taken in the late 1950s and early 1960s. These are significantly clearer and more contrasty than similar air photos presented in earlier books, and they are packed with useful detail - both of the rail system and of other buildings in districts close to railway premises. An example is the Bean Ings mills site before it was cleared for the construction of the new *Yorkshire Post* building.

This is fundamentally a photographic book, with many fine views of trains and locomotives by Peter Sutherland of Keighley, who captured train operations in the late 50s and early 60s. Subjects range from a Gresley A3 leaving Central with the Pullman 'Queen of Scots' to a Selby-bound DMU lurking in the bay platform No.16 on the eastern side of what was then Leeds City. Shots from the Fastline Photographic collection vividly evoke the atmosphere of Central in February 1960. The uninspired Wellington Street frontage looks decidedly uninviting, and, looking along platforms 4 and 5, it is barely possible to make out the arched gable at the outer end of the station roof through the smoke-laden wintry gloom! Most of the well produced black and white photographs cover the 1950s and 1960s, with considerable attention being given to the major changes and rebuilding during the 1960s. Some interesting shots of the 1930s and earlier are also included, such as LMS 6152 posing as 6100 *Royal Scot* at Wellington in 1934, after the *Royal Scot* tour of North America.

Some seven pages of text give a useful outline history of Central, Wellington and New, and the progression via City (North & South) towards the current rebuilding, plans for which were announced whilst the book was being completed. The book overall is a well produced review of the major stations in central Leeds, based on a fine collection of photographs. The focus is on the 1950s and 1960s, capturing the later days of steam and the early days of diesel operation, together with the rebuilding of City and the demise of Central. Very good value at £6.99.

## 1998 INTERNATIONAL EARLY RAILWAYS CONFERENCE

### Sheila Bye

The conference, held at Durham in September, was an excellent event: c.120 people all keen to talk about early railways! Though mainly British, the company also included delegates from Canada, France, the U.S.A., Germany, Holland, Sweden and Romania. The 'cut-off' year was 1840, but it was surprising how much happened in the world of railways and locomotives before that date, starting back in ancient Sparta, where railway tracks have been excavated on the site of the amphitheatre - placed there for use in moving heavy scenery on and off the stage. Papers included the restoration of archaic mine waggons found in Transylvania, the working of rope-hauled inclines, the restoration of a historic railway in Canada - where the original '*Samson*' type locomotive was found to have LOW MOOR stamped on its boiler plates, the German Blenkinsop engines, and the construction of the Leipzig-Dresden Railway (the engineer came to Leeds in the early 1830's to collect information as had, in the 1810's, a French engineer hoping to influence *his* countrymen to build railways. Several papers concerned various aspects of Tyne and Wear railways and early locomotives, though Stephenson was by no means over-mentioned or over-praised; several other early locomotive builders and designers, indeed, had much better coverage than the great Geordie. John Blenkinsop was very well featured in a few of the conference papers, and in many conversations, leading one delegate to declare that if she heard the name Blenkinsop again, she'd scream [there's no accounting for taste, or for lack of it].

One of the highlights of the conference was the social evening at Beamish Open Air Museum. This centred on the newly completed 'early' engine shed, due to open in 1999. We were transported there from the museum entrance by two of the collection of electric tramcars, and on arriving were greeted by the sight of the *Locomotion* replica standing smoking in the doorway. What with that, some local entertainment in the form of a pair of folk singers and a clog dancer, a buffet, draught real ale on sale, and fellow enthusiasts to talk to *ad nauseum*, it was an unforgettable evening.

All in all it was a very interesting and extremely fruitful event, and there has since been a lot of information exchanging going on with the various other researchers who attended, which is - I'm afraid - partly why *The Old Run* is late yet again.

## 1998 SPECIAL EVENTS

29th November, 5th, 6th, 12th, 13th, 19th & 20th December - Santa Trains

31st December, 1st, 2nd & 3rd January 1999 - Friends of '*Thomas*' New Year Party

Normally, all Special Events trains operate every 30 minutes from 10.30 to 16.30.

Special fares normally apply to all visitors and members.

(N.B. Please note: some changes have been made from dates given in the 1998 Timetable leaflet. Correct dates are as above.)

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## **HELP!!!**

will be needed every weekend from 9th January into March, for this winter's track re-laying. It is planned to renew ten lengths of track, and all and any help will be much welcomed and appreciated.

'Phone Douglas Lovely (0113 266 7082) for details of dates, times, etc.!

## **WANTED - PHOTOGRAPHS!**

Some years ago, a start was made on gathering material for a pictorial album showing the Middleton Railway through the years, which would be a useful and attractive sister publication to the History and the Stockbook. Some good photographs were obtained, but not sufficient, either in quantity or to give a balanced view of the passing years.

The project has now been revived, and all members are asked to contact David Monckton [address and 'phone number on p.23] if they have any Middleton photographs which could be considered for inclusion. Interesting or noteworthy subjects are as important as technical quality, and pictures of Middleton characters at work, showing the human face of the Railway, would be particularly welcome.

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