



# The Old Run

Journal of the Middleton Railway Preservation Society

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We apologise for the rather late appearance of this issue which has been due, among other things, to the long vacation. Still, better late than never as the saying goes!

## Loco 1697.

Following our purchase of diesel locomotive 1697 from the Hunslet Loco Works, Mr. John Alcock has agreed to the naming of it "John Alcock" as a small token of our appreciation of the help that he has given us in our venture.

## Clayton's yard.

Following certain incidents in the yard at Clayton's, it has been decided to issue some kind of permit allowing only authorised members to enter the yard. Such permits will shortly be available. Applications to Dr. Youell or the Secretary.

## Tarpaulins.

We have now acquired a number of B.R. secondhand tarpaulins at £4 each. They have been used to cover 1055 car in an attempt to reduce any further damage to it.

## New points.

At the time of writing we are in the process of constructing a set of points from the used line near the overbridge going down towards Balm Road to the adjacent disused line. This will, when completed, obviate the need of parking vehicles in the Acme's sidings while those at Balm Road are removed: the scheme is that wagons for B.R. will be placed on the new loop, the wagons from B.R. then being hauled up to the required point. Unfortunately, due to lack of good sleepers, we are at present temporarily delayed in this work. The total saving will be of the order of about 200 yards.

### Locomotive maintenance.

Whilst our loco is fairly trouble free, it nevertheless requires a little regular maintenance. One or two nuts and pins etc. have recently worked loose and may have resulted in serious damage had not the faults been noticed just in time. It is essential that before taking out the loco it should be thoroughly checked, the necessary parts lubricated and the radiator filled. A first aid box, kept on the engine, must always be kept complete.

### The Middleton Railway.

Clayton's have bought all the remainder of the M.R. (as briefly reported in last month's stop press) except Whitaker's staiths and the coal board line from Parkside to the pit. At a meeting on 19th August representatives of British Railways (Mr. Charlton, Goods Assistant Superintendent), all the three firms on the line and the M.R.P.S. (represented by the Chairman) discussed the railway and it was agreed

that the M.R.P.S. could run the railway without expensive major repairs. We would be paid for every ton of goods carried and have the exclusive use of the line. It was hoped that experimental running could begin as soon as the locomotive returned from Hunslet arrived. We are pleased to say that member and solicitor Mr. F. W. Hellewell of Birstall is very kindly helping us with the legal side of the business. Now that the Society has a recognised place in the Middleton scene, we are appointing trustees for the Society as provided by the Constitution.

### Permanent way.

The Society comes to the Middleton Railway at a low ebb of maintenance. Some rails are worn down nearly to the web. Fishplates are loose and often rusted to their bolts, which are themselves of obsolete pattern. The effect of years of 'make-do-and-mend', of maintenance deferred and relaying only after derailments, is only too clear. But no-one can blame either the Middleton Estates or the Coal Board for not spending money on a railway that had become a liability. Our task is to get on with repairs and not to bemoan the past!

Early in the Society's history the line was surveyed and we decided that temporary repairs would enable us to run over the line at slow speed with some chance of staying on it!

As soon as Clayton's allowed us to bring our stock on to their sidings, we carried out extensive first aid work. Our stock of keys was put to good use, fishplate bolts were tightened up and especially bad ones burnt or hacked off and replaced with the stock of B. R. type bolts from the Mumbles Railway. Much difficulty in fitting the new bolts was traced to their being 1" flat-bottom rail type instead of 15/16" or 7/8" bull-head types. This emergency repair work, however, carried us through the June Mumbles train week without any trouble.

It was obvious that systematic relaying of bad stretches would be preferable to patching up piecemeal. Our first job was very modest, three rail lengths on Clayton's siding, where no less than seven chairs in succession were broken or missing. In one weekend we lifted the rails, rechaired and sleepers where needed and keyed up. This removed an alarming bit of 4' 11" gauge track.

Our next venture was to learn the use of a Jim Crow: we stripped three short lengths on Clayton's curve which were see-sawing badly under load, replacing them with a single rail, removing the nasty 'doglegs' at the ends which are an all too common feature of the Middleton track.

In July we tackled a very bad four-rail-leng .s between Clayton's and the points to King's siding. Sleepers here were so bad that they could be lifted without disturbing the chairs; the gauge was verging on Brunelian and the whole was covered by the horrible mixture of coal dust, ash, clay and dirt which did duty for ballast! We dug out the whole lot and blanketed the clay underneath with a good depth of sieved stone ballast from the derelict Middleton Light Railway. The result (after many hours of backbreaking toil) was really delightful - our gauge and cross level are perfect, water drains away rapidly instead of lying around in pools for hours or even days and the appearance is "Proper Railway", with a neat edge to the clean white ballast. For once we can open the throttle wide with confidence. Standard B. R. sleeper spacing at 2' 6" replaces the 3' plus of the old Middleton Line.

Ballast shifting is one of the hardest tasks. To fill forty drums of ballast (over two tons) and trundle it half a mile on a permanent way trolley is definitely tough! The Chairman's motor cycle has been pressed into services and towed full loads up the 1 in 60 of Clayton's curve, with admittedly a strain on the clutch!



We also had at the time a new two-handed saw for reducing odd timbers to the standard 8' 6" length: this also was one of the most strenuous of our efforts.

August saw the start of the work on the Balm Road loop (see first page). Only one of the original two is in commission and we are shortening the long loop to cut out extra distance to maintain, leaving a loop capable of holding about fourteen wagons in each road. This involves lifting the old points to Dennison's siding, long dis-used, and relaying with new chairs and sleepers. The turnout is rather tight, with 160 foot radius curves and a 1 in 4 frog, but we must use what is available until we can afford new stock.

Now that an agreement to work the M.R. is in sight we shall be doing regular maintenance and relaying; we are after some Tilley lamps to enable this to go on after dark if need be.

#### New members.

We are pleased to announce the following new members:-

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| 89. | Robert Schofield | 8, Dawlish Place, Leeds, 9.                              |
| 90. | J. K. Holdsworth | 47, Armitage Road, Birkby.                               |
| 91. | G. T. Verrall    | Chief Engineer's Office, Court-<br>aulds Ltd., Coventry. |
| 93. | David Higgins    | 72, Street Lane, Leeds, 8.                               |

#### The Society.

All enquiries about the Society should be sent to Dr. R. F. Youell, Physics Dept., The University, Leeds, 2, or any other committee member. Details of membership from Mr. E. G. Sawthray, 4 Midland Terrace, Frizinghall, Bradford. Normal minimum age 16 but special consideration given to others when necessary.

#### Reminders.

The Society still urgently requires donations if it is to keep afloat. Please send as much as you can. Please also fill in and return the forms attached to last month's Old Run so that we can assess the demand for badges and Christmas Cards. Photographs or negatives that might be suitable for official M. R. photographs are also still urgently required - please get in touch with P. N. Dean.