

THE OLD RUN

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Since 1825



The Old Run no. 268 Autumn 2025

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The Editor welcomes contributions relating to the interests of the Trust and the operation of our and other Railways, especially if Leeds built equipment is in use. Items for publication, including images (please send in resolutions higher than 1Mb) are acceptable in any format and may be sent via email, post, CD or memory stick

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Editorial

It seems very strange to think that the 2025 'normal' (ie not Santa) season will be over by the time you read this. The preparations for Santa's arrival will be in full swing too. It's an opportunity for anyone to volunteer. If you can, say, pour a cup of tea or coffee, or a glass of squash, or wipe tables clean then there's a job for you in the Santa Season. You don't have to come every day - even half a day would help the hard working core of people who will be there all the time. Please contact Commercial Manager Janet Auckland (see inside back cover). If you can manage to help then it really would be appreciated.



If you can't make it to Moor Road for whatever reason then you can always work from home - have you told your neighbours, friends, or work colleagues with children about our Santa Trains? If you use social media then that's the easiest way to spread the word. It might not be the all singing and dancing spectacles of elsewhere but we don't charge their prices either. We rely on Santa as a very significant money-spinner so if you can encourage just one group to come along then it will help. Trains are starting to fill up now so please don't delay in getting the word out there if you can.

If Santa is not your thing, then please consider if you know of any groups that might be interested in coming along to the Railway next season? A chance conversation at my church led to a group of vintage motorcyclists (see p16) coming along in the summer (we Methodists are a very diverse lot) and they said it was one of the best outings they had had all year. Are you involved with, or aware of, any groups - they don't have to be railway orientated - that could do the same? The world's oldest railway is a good selling point, and people are available to guide them round and explain our fantastic history for that personal touch.

Happy Christmas and a peaceful new year to you and yours!

Ian Dobson

Front cover: Whilst this photo was taken after a day of Santa trains on 7th December 2024 it actually shows the Autumnal leaves still on the ground and so I believe it qualifies as a seasonal cover. Brookes no.1 is being 'disposed' in the Running Shed.

Back cover: After running round at the Park on 27th August 2025 I thought "that would make a nice back cover photo for The Old Run". Hurrah for phone cameras eh? (Photos: IRD)

From the Chairman

Little more than 7 months ago the 2025 operating season opened with all its promise and now, all too quickly, it is drawing to a close and the Santa Special Season is fast approaching.

Highlights of the second half of the 2025 operating season year must include 'A Taste of Yorkshire' – again excellently organised by John Linkins and his team and it was greatly enjoyed by all who attended, the Autumn Gala which saw some of the Railway's goods wagons in service and the return of Sentinel 68153 to service once the drought conditions had passed. Hopefully 2026 will see a little more use of this, the first steam locomotive owned by the Middleton Railway in the preservation era.



'A taste of Yorkshire' in the car park at Moor Road - under a typical South Leeds sky. Photo: John Linkins

It is becoming commonplace to write this, but once again the Middleton Railway has triumphed in Yorkshire in Bloom, securing its sixth straight gold award – this time in the very competitive small business category. This award is a tribute to the hard work of Mick Jackson and his team who have created and looked after the floral displays at Moor Road and to the work of Mick, Janet Auckland and Ian Smith who, once again, have assembled a very impressive booklet in support of the Trust's application to participate in the competition. Obtaining this award brings some welcome publicity for the Railway but more importantly it is a reflection of the Trust's continuing efforts to create a welcoming and attractive environment for visitors to the Railway and for those volunteers with the time to pause for a moment from their labours and enjoy the beauty of the floral displays.

This year has been notable for the publication of 'The History of the Middleton Railway Volume 1: The Pre-Preservation Era' by Sheila Bye. This is the most complete history of the Middleton Railway from its mid Georgian antecedents through its pioneering role in the development of the steam locomotive to the closure of the last section to be commercially operated in 1968. This book is both a very significant contribution to the literature on early railways and a valuable addition to the canon of industrial railway histories. It is a tremendous tribute to Sheila Bye's many years of careful research and writing and to its editor Dr Tony Cowling.

This book is a companion to the previously published Volume 2: 'Six Decades of Preservation' by Ian Smith, which tells the story of the Middleton Railway from its re-birth as a Heritage Railway up to the present day, and with 'Colliery, Community, Railway' - the history of the last coal mine served by the Middleton Railway, Broom Pit. That book also covers the communities of Middleton and 'old' Belle Isle which once housed the people who worked in the pit and on the Railway. These are also available from the Railway Shop.



28th September saw the Mos Eisley Misfits return for the Star Rails event. A brilliant array of props and cosplay characters were on display for visitors to enjoy and thanks to Robert Taggart and Gavin Johnson for their work in pulling this event together. Photo: Mos Eisley Misfits

The year now beginning to slip away was also notable for the publication of 'The History of Hunslet No. 1786 'Courage'/'Sweet Pea' and The Courage Brewery Sidings' by Geordie Brown. This well researched and illustrated book is far more than just a locomotive history; it provides the background story of where 1786 worked and how it was used, as well as its life as a preserved locomotive. This book has already virtually sold out and currently the author is preparing a revised and extended version for publication.

These important books are in addition to the range of children's books produced by the Railway and rigorously researched stock books - and there are more books planned relating to industrial railway history and the history of the locomotives in the Trust's collection. For a heritage railway the size of the Middleton Railway these publications and their now out of print predecessors are a remarkable achievement and one all Trust members should take great pride in.

Another piece of good news and, like the Trust's publications, also related to the Trust's charitable obligation to preserve and interpret the history of the Middleton Railway and that of the Leeds locomotive building and allied industries, is the delivery of the memorial window to Job Isles, founder of the Leeds based crane manufacturing company Isles Ltd. The company were early developers of electrically powered cranes as well as constructors of vertical boilded steam cranes which were employed by the mainline railway companies as well as in manufactories. The window is a very fine example of a late 19th century memorial glass, though not commissioned until after the Great War, and will help the Railway tell the story of Isles Ltd. and of the local industrialist who founded the company. Costs are currently being assembled for placing this window on public display.

The year 2026 marks the 200th anniversary of the death of our very own Matthew Murray;

one of the greatest Georgian engineers. The Trust is planning several events to mark this anniversary including naming a locomotive 'Salamanca' in honour of the building of the world's first commercially successful steam locomotive.

The following year marks the 100th anniversary of the winding up of perhaps the most iconic of the Leeds locomotive builders – Manning Wardle and Company - and planning has started on events to mark this anniversary.

Whilst the Middleton Railway may not have been blessed with the scenic splendours visible from the carriage windows of other heritage railways, the Middleton has been blessed with an extraordinary history, and the interpretation of this history will form an increasingly important part of the future of the Railway.

However, back to the present there is a Railway to run and a Santa Special Season to prepare for. In a few weeks' time present wrapping will be under way and the Café and Display Hall will be decorated in readiness for adults and children coming to visit Santa on our Railway. The Railway works hard to offer a traditional children-centred Santa experience with carefully selected presents to suit different ages which are given out by Santa on a steam train. 'A Reyt Grand Yorkshire Christmas' with all that implies; not some heavily curated event which has its roots in Hollywood and not in our fair county. Word of mouth is still the Railway's best form of publicity so would all readers please encourage friends and acquaintances with young children to take part in Christmas on the Middleton Railway.

Finally, may I wish all readers of 'The Old Run' a very happy Christmas and the best possible New Year.

Charles Milner

A popular visitor to the Gala on 6th September was Wallis and Steevens "Advance" steam roller, no. 7941 of 1927 'City of York no.3'. Thanks to the Knapton family for bringing it along and providing an extra attraction for our visitors.



A rare sight at the Gala in September - for us at least - was an all British Railways liveried goods train. 'D2999' is seen whilst shunting our two BR bauxite liveried wagons ready for adding into the mixed train formation.



*In response to a query from a member following the last Old Run Chairman, Charles Milner has also put together some comments on the engineering, volunteering and financial strategies for the future. These should be read together with Steve Roberts' notes on pages 13 and 14. **Editor.***

The Trust recognises that some of the skills needed to maintain in its fleet of steam and diesel locomotives as well as carriages and other rolling stock are in short supply, and we may have to contract out more work which would increase costs. However, measures such as keeping the coaches and the steam locomotives plus the older diesel locomotives under cover helps reduce the rate of deterioration and hence maintenance costs.

The Trust is very conscious of its financial position and its primary financial objective is to ensure that income covers expenses year on year so that the Railway is cash positive with regard to routine operation. The secondary financial objective is to cover depreciation charges as well as operating expenses by income year on year so that money is essentially put to one side for overhauls. Capital projects are funded from reserves which have been bolstered by legacies and donations. The Trust will apply for grants to cover new developments but it is recognised that applying for grants to cover a shortfall in income versus routine expenditure would have little chance of success for a small railway such as the Middleton Railway, which therefore has to survive through a combination of prudent financial management and its own labours.

The Trust does not take on new projects without a lot of discussion and review of alternatives, benefits, risks etc. Whilst inevitably in an all-volunteer organisation there is an emotional element in project choice, this is tempered by economic realism. Currently the Trust is managing to match projects with labour availability but more could be done with more labour which is why there are regular appeals for more labour, particularly those interested in taking on administrative tasks, and of course replacement labour is needed to cover for those who have to give up volunteering for any of a wide range of reasons - family commitments, health, relocation because of work etc., etc. **Charles Milner**

News from Moor Road

After a reasonably eventful year, we are starting to wind down with only a couple of weeks running to do before we have four weeks off to get ready for the Santa season. I say eventful year, but it has not been one with catastrophic events. The main bad event has been the long dry spell which necessitated the substitution of diesels for steam. Fortunately, that is now in the past for this year and even the fire throwing Sentinel has been allowed to stretch its legs again.

Hawthorne Leslie 3860 of 1935 'No.6'

The last Old Run mentioned a problem with a leaking regulator and the loco was only being used as a standby. Once Sir B came back from its travels and we had two serviceable locos 3860 was brought into the workshops and the regulator removed. That's just a couple of words to cover a lot of effort and ingenuity. As anyone who has worked on old steam locos will testify, the designers of them had little thought to how things could be assembled and dis-assembled and getting the regulator out of the dome is a prime example of the designer's art in this respect. Spanners had to be cut and bent to enable them to be used in the confines of the dome. They also had to have rope attached to them and suitably anchored as one slip would see them disappear into the confines of the boiler never to be seen again until the next overhaul. After much effort, the regulator was removed from the boiler and transferred to the comfort of the workbench where it was stripped and examined. There was evidence of grooving on the gunmetal face of the main valve and pitting on the pilot valve and body which are cast iron. We were able to put the relatively small pilot valve on our surface grinder and clean up its working faces. We were then able to use this to grind in the mating face of the main valve to remove the scoring. Unfortunately, we didn't have the facilities to do the same with the face on the valve body so we ground our small lapping plate true and used that to clean up the face on the valve body and the mating face of the main valve. Once done to our satisfaction and tested with water, the whole assembly was refitted into the boiler. This was then filled with water until the joint between the regulator body and J pipe was covered. To our dismay we found that the water level slowly sank until it was below the joint, indicating that the joint was leaking. Out came the regulator once more and the joint was remade, this time using a slightly thicker material. The test was repeated and this time found to be successful. The various bits taken off to do this work have now all been re-fitted and the loco will have been tested by the time you read this.



Manning Wardle 1210 of 1891 'Sir Berkeley'

Sir B returned from the Mid Suffolk Railway at the beginning of September and, following an examination and a water change, was put to use on the heritage open weekend of the 13th & 14th September and the remaining steam days of the month. Attention has been given to the valve spindle glands and the brake valve, all of which had minor steam leaks. It is currently on display in the Engine House but is immediately available for service if required.



Sentinel no.68153

The plan to use the loco on the second Sunday of each month didn't exactly come to fruition both due to the weather and lack of crews with experience of the loco. As a result, it has spent much of the season sat on display in the Engine House. It did make an appearance on the 12th October when it performed without problem. It is currently in the

workshops for attention to the steam brake valve, to hopefully rectify the problem mentioned in the last Old Run. It is also planned to fit a drain pipe to the steam brake cylinder drip valve to direct the exhaust from this valve downwards instead of into the cab.



Hunslet 2387 of 1941 'Brookes no.1'



Brookes returned from its holiday at Embsay at the end of July and was put to use over the 'Taste of Yorkshire' weekend. The concrete base in the smokebox was starting to break up so this was all cut out and a new concrete base installed. The loco unfortunately failed with a blown dome cover joint on the 31st August. Once out of steam this was quickly repaired and the loco satisfactorily steam tested so it could be used at the gala. However, on the Saturday a hole appeared in the bottom of the saddle tank. This was temporarily fixed by means of a suitable sized cork but, because of this, it was not used on the Sunday and Sir B substituted. Once the tank had been drained and dried out it was possible to get in and undertake a repair. This has been done by using Belzona 1111, which is a high strength solids epoxy resin reinforced with silicon steel alloy. The repair is good enough for it to be considered a permanent solution but, unfortunately, it is a first indication that the tank is reaching the end of its life and will probably require replacement when the loco is next overhauled, along with a lot of other work.

The loco was used on the 7th October and the crew reported that there was a steam leak coming from under the concrete in the smokebox. Although not a major leak, it is one that will require investigation. It is suspected that it is a recurrence of an earlier leak from the exhaust steam passage within the cylinder block caused by corrosion. Corrosion of cylinder blocks is a fundamental problem with inside cylindered locomotives and one the MW1210, MW1601 and HC1369 also all suffer from.

Hudswell, Clarke 1544 of 1924 'Slough Estates no.3'

The last Old Run mentioned that the boiler had now been reunited with the frames. In hindsight this was probably a mistake. The plan had been that a formal steam test could then be carried out whilst I was on holiday and work could start on re-assembly in earnest. However, this did not happen for a number of reasons. Firstly, work was ongoing in the smokebox and those doing it did not want to have to work in a sooty and confined space. Secondly, it was realised that the new ashpan was actually fouling on the rear axlebox hornstays. This required the boiler to be jacked up at the rear so that the bits of fouling metal could be removed. Witness marks on a couple of bolt heads and grinding away of the gussets to clear the boiler tell us that this is not a new problem and has probably been there since the loco was built. Whether the boiler is slightly longer than designed we won't know unless it is carefully measured and compared with the original drawing. All this, combined with the boiler inspector being fully booked and on holiday, meant that the formal steam test could not be carried out until the 13th October. Fortunately, this went without a hitch and the boiler was deemed suitable for service so we are now able to start building the loco back up with all that this entails.



Mention has been made that work has been ongoing in the smokebox. This has principally been with regard to fastening the boiler to the new frame stretcher. Boilers are generally rigidly fastened to the frames at the smokebox end and allowed to expand slightly at the

firebox end. Because the stretcher is new it had to have holes drilled in it to mate up with the smokebox and tubeplate. There is also a Z shaped spacer between the front of the frame stretcher and the smokebox front. When we came to fit this, we found that it was too large by about 1/16" so we had to set to and make a new one. To be honest, this was expected as the boiler drawing for the loco shows it as being two pieces of angle welded together on assembly. Finally, it was decided to fit a false floor to the smokebox over the frame stretcher. Previously, the whole of the top of the frame stretcher had been filled with concrete and, in times past, would have been filled with firebricks. This is relatively easy to do but becomes a nightmare when it has to be dug out for any reason. It was decided to follow Hunslet practice and to install a steel plate across the top of the frame stretcher with only the last few inches being covered in concrete. Hopefully this will work and save a lot of effort when we have to remove it, hopefully in 10 years' time and not before.



With the boiler given the OK by the boiler inspector it was time to start work on reassembling the loco. The first job on the list was to clad the boiler with insulation. For this we use a commercially available duct wrap which comes in 4 metre lengths. It is pure coincidence that the length required for a turn of insulation around the boiler just happens to be near enough to 4 metres as to not need any cutting or other adjustment. At the time of writing the boiler has been lagged and a start has been made on fitting the boiler cladding, which covers the insulation.

Hartmann 2110 of 1895 'Hs385'



This Danish 0-4-0WT last ran in 1999 and has been on display ever since, initially in the old workshops and latterly in the Engine House. Thanks to the benevolence of the late Bill Hampson a significant sum of money has been made available to return this locomotive to working order. Hs385 was a particular favourite of Bill's and he was instrumental in the locomotive being purchased by the Steam Power Trust and being shipped to the UK from Denmark in 1971. Work will not

be started immediately as we have a significant amount of catching up to do with other projects. However, one important job recently carried out has been the fitting of a memorial plaque to the cab in Bill's remembrance.

John Fowler 4220033 of 1965 'Harry'

The paintwork has been sanded down preparatory to painting but there has been no further progress.





Hudswell, Clarke D1373 of 1965 MD&HB No.45

Currently available for service. The locomotive is getting an unfortunate liking for becoming derailed as this has recently happened again during a shunting move. Fortunately, there was no damage to loco or track and it was soon re-railed. The reason is still being investigated.

Peckett 5003 of 1961 'Austins No.1'

Available for service and used as required.



Brush/Beyer Peacock 91 of 1958 'D2999'



During a recent shunt it was found necessary to use the sanders due to poor rail adhesion. Unfortunately, the sanding valve stuck in the open position so it continued to deposit sand when not required. More importantly, the stuck open valve continued to use air with a slow reduction in air pressure. Once the pressure gets below 70 psi, the control system stops the locomotive from being used. There is an isolating valve but, unfortunately, this valve also isolates the locomotive's horn so, although usable, it cannot be used for safety reasons. The valve has been dismantled and cleaned but, on reassembly, there was still a problem with it leaking so further investigation is required. At the moment this still needs to be carried out.

Hunslet 6981 of 1968

The pipework for the proportional braking system has now been completed. A new throttle cable has been fitted. This was one held in store and initially proved to be very stiff. After some attention it is now operating satisfactorily. Work is currently ongoing with painting the cab interior. It has been decided to paint the locomotive in the colour scheme in which it was originally supplied to Conoco, which is a two tone green arrangement with 2" red lines separating the two greens. The buffer beams are black and white chevrons.



Hunslet 1786 of 1935 'Courage'

Work on the locomotive was completed in time for its 90th birthday celebrations on the 19th July. The highlight of the day was the working of brake van trips to Middleton Park, something it did with ease. Its moment of glory was relatively short lived as it was soon back on display in the Engine House. It remains available for service when required.

LMS 7051 'John Alcock'

During preparations for service on Courage's 90th birthday weekend on 19th July, it was noted that a couple of cylinder heads had a blow from the head gaskets and the locomotive was declared a failure. Up to the present time we have not been able to investigate the problem and the loco remains on display in the Engine House



Hudswell, Clarke D577 of 1932 'Mary'

Like LMS 7051, this locomotive is on display in the Engine House awaiting shed space and time for the repairs to the cooling system.

Hudswell, Clarke D631 of 1946 'Carroll'

Available for traffic if required but on display in the Engine House.



Carriage and Wagon Notes

All four coaches have been in service during the last three months and each had a 3 monthly 'B' exam at the end of September. However, we are currently not using coach No.2084 (the balcony brake) and it is being kept as a serviceable spare. This was our first coach conversion of a Southern Railway parcels van and entered service in 1985. It is a quite remarkable fact that, until 2022, this coach had been used on every single loco hauled passenger train that we operated and it is only in recent months that it has not been used in regular service. Once coach No. 1867 has been repaired (see below), it is intended that Coach No. 2084 will come into the workshops for a full overhaul and rebuild.



Coach 2223

Following its brief entry into service, this coach came back into the workshops for a few 'snagging' jobs to be undertaken, as mentioned in the last Old Run. Because there was no urgent need to get them done, these have taken a bit of time to complete. Along with doing these we have started to fit the alarm system referred to elsewhere. Once done, the coach was swapped with coach 1867, which is now in the workshops.

Coach 1867

Although this coach has only been in service since 2020 and has spent all its time under cover in the carriage shed when not in use, the beading which covers the panel joints has started to rot in many places. With the entry of coach 2223 into service it has been decided to bring it into the workshops so that the beading can be replaced. This will also necessitate a repaint, even though one isn't otherwise necessary. It is hoped that this can be accomplished quite quickly but, as ever, this will depend on available manpower to do the job. The opportunity will also be taken to fit the alarm system.



Around and about

Volunteer numbers

Volunteer numbers continue to be a source of concern although it is pleasing to note that we have recently passed out new guards and firemen which has made rostering slightly easier. We have suffered significantly in our woodworking team with the passing of David Cook and Roy Gunn who did much of our work on coaches and elsewhere in recent years. If anyone is interested in strengthening our woodworking team, we would be pleased to hear from them.



Volunteers in action(?) at Moor Road on 6th September during the Gala. As mentioned in Steve's report a leak has just developed in Brookes' saddle tank and a panel of experts has assembled to consider the problem. Someone is about to suggest going for an appropriate size cork...

Based on this photograph we look to have a surplus of volunteers but this is, sadly, far from true. Anyone is welcome - please help if you can.

Emergency Alarm System

The last Old Run mentioned the Railway Safety Regulations 1997 and the need for a means of communication for passengers in an emergency (the communication cord of old). Having had no real success in obtaining a revised exemption to Regulation 4 from the ORR we have decided that the best option would be to fit a communication system of our own design. Various options have been considered, including our own version of the communication cord but, in the end, we have decided to fit a simple alarm system whereby a passenger can press a button which will sound an alarm in the guard's compartment if necessary. This is not a five-minute job as it requires a dedicated cable being run along the length of the coach along the underframe and the removal of internal panelling to fit the push buttons of which there will be two in each coach. Coach No.2223 has already been fitted and work is progressing on coach No.1074 although this may be temporarily halted to do the work on Coach No.1867 which has just come into the workshops for repairs.

Because we have an exemption to run two coaches, we will not gain any benefit from the system until three coaches are fitted and operational, but this should be the case by the start of the 2026 season, allowing us to revert to three coach operation, once more.

Tools and equipment

We are occasionally favoured with gifts of tools and equipment for which we are always grateful. However, during September we were given a significant number of hand tools by someone who had been in engineering and was "clearing out his garage". This is probably the largest donation of this type that we have had and we are still sorting out the many individual items. Our stock of good quality hammers increased by no less than eight and the number of small drills and taps was probably into the hundreds. We are probably now reaching the state where we need to have a purge of some of our older tools as we are running out of space in which to keep them.

Steam Locomotive Overhauls

We are frequently asked which locomotive will be next in line for an overhaul once HC1544 'Slough Estates No.3' enters service. Everyone has their favourite locomotive which they would like to see running again but it is fairly obvious that we cannot have all of them operational and which is next can be the subject of much debate. This was something that the Trust Council recently considered and a decision made. Before going further into this it is worth reviewing the current situation. We currently have four operational steam locomotives. It is general practice (although not law) that, once put into steam, a locomotive boiler can be operated for a period of 10 years before it needs a full internal and external inspection requiring its removal from the frames and removal of all the tubes for this purpose. It is possible to operate boilers for longer than this but it is at the discretion of the boiler inspector. Based on this 10 year principle our existing operational fleet can be used until:

HE 2387 'Brookes No.1'	2027
S 8837 'No.68153'	2029
HL 3860 'No.6'	2030
MW 1210 'Sir Berkeley'	2032

We have for many years worked on a principle of needing three reliable steam locomotives. At first sight that seems to be an objective achieved. However, in recent times we have come to the conclusion that four is a better option if we are to maintain our traditional operations, especially when considering our present operational fleet. The Sentinel is not an everyday locomotive and to operate it regularly would not be easy. It is currently limited to two coaches and is known to be challenging for some footplate crews. It is also a major spark thrower with all that entails in dry weather. Sir Berkeley is also not owned by the Railway and the owners (the Vintage Carriages Trust) are at liberty to send it away for short hire periods, as long as we get fair use from it. Consequently, during 2025 we have had periods where we have been down to one operational steam locomotive due to maintenance on the other.

This situation should improve in 2026 when HC 1544 'Slough Estates No.3' enters service. However, our current loan agreement expires in 2027 and we do not yet know what the future holds for the locomotive. Naturally, we are hopeful that the agreement



It would appear that 385 will be reacquainting itself with Middleton Park Halt again in the future. This 1985 photo from David Hebden shows it on a previous visit. The hillside at Park Halt looks different 40 years on...

will be renewed and we will benefit from the use of this popular locomotive into the future.

From the above, it can be seen that things look to be satisfactory until 2027 but could become problematical after that, certainly by 2029 - a date that is fast approaching. HE1493 is currently in the workshops although hasn't been worked on for a long time and work is expected to re-start on this once HC1544 is finished. However, it is privately owned and not currently subject to any agreement or rigorous plan.

So, which locomotive to do next? All probably have their merits and, as said earlier, their supporters.

Sir Berkeley and n.6 double head a train to Middleton Park Halt during the Gala on 7th September 2025.

Photo: David Spencer



HC526 'Hawarden', HC1309 'Henry de Lacy II' and HE1684 were quickly dismissed by Council due to their condition and likely costs. That reduced the candidates to HC1882 'Mirvale', MW 1601 'Matthew Murray', HC1369 'MSC 67', H2110 'Hs 385' and NER 1310. The last mentioned was considered to be the easiest option in terms of both time and cost, with Mirvale being another possible candidate although its boiler condition is an unknown. Matthew Murray requires a new cylinder block and 67's is also a known problem, along with its boiler. However, the decision on which loco to overhaul next was significantly swayed by the fact that Bill Hampson had left a considerable legacy for the maintenance and upkeep of both 1310 and 385 in the form of a restricted fund. We could spend it on these two locomotives or not at all. Although 385 needs significantly more work to return it to operational use it was Bill's favourite locomotive and the

Council felt that it was only right that this locomotive should be the next one to be given an overhaul and this will start once Slough Estates No.3 is finished.

Looking further into the future, it is likely that Matthew Murray and 1310 will follow 385 into the workshops as space allows although this is always subject to change.

Steve Roberts

Bill Hampson 'The Bishop'

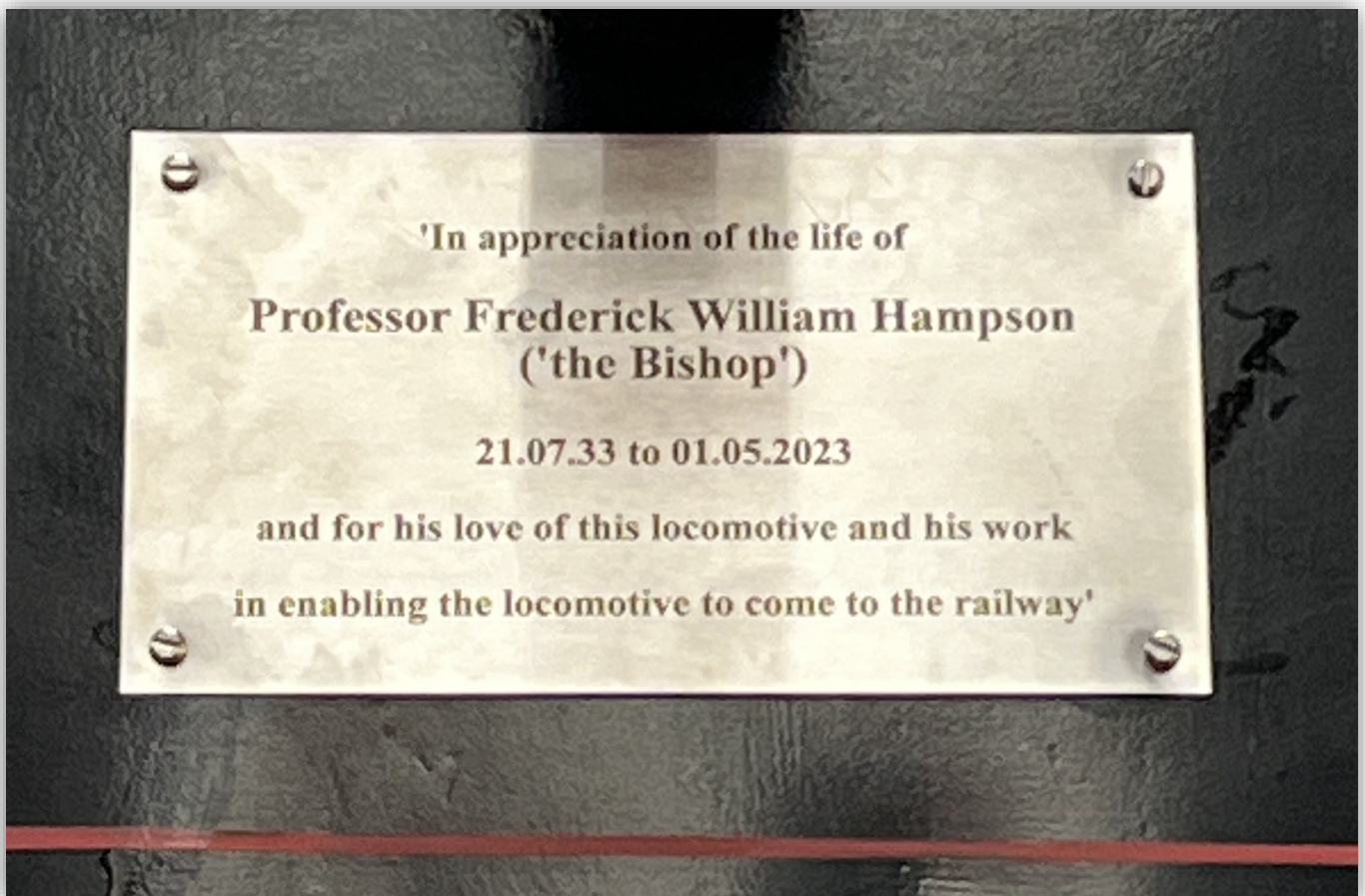
On Saturday 4th October a plaque was placed on the rear of the cab of DSB385 to commemorate Bill Hampson, a long standing Steam Power Trust and Middleton Railway Trust member who sadly died in May 2023. Bill was a great character and friend to the railway, one of his last acts was to sponsor the repaint of Sentinel 68153.

He was also very fond of Denmark and its railways, being instrumental in acquiring 385 back in 1972, which makes the plaque particularly appropriate. Over the years, Bill spent many hours at the railway and his eccentricities made for many humorous events at the old Dartmouth Yard in addition to our "new" home at Moor Road. He loved to wear continental uniforms, one being his Norwegian Stationmasters hat and coat which certainly caused much discussion amongst members and visitors alike. He was also a great fan of our friends at Tanfield, often being a Guard on their railway. One of the more impressive memories I have of Bill is being regaled with the tale of The Lambton Worm at Andrews House Station at Tanfield by him in broad Geordie, him wearing his Norwegian outfit!

Bill was a great character and he is sadly missed and remembered by all who knew him. The plaque will be a constant reminder of him and his contribution to our railway.



Photos and text by Ian Smith



A variety of visitors

On Sunday 17th August we welcomed a group from The Royal Enfield (Motorcycle) Club Airedale and Wharfedale Branch, who very much enjoyed their visit. They are seen here with Stephen Turner (left) and Stephen Penn (right). Do you have contacts with any groups like this who could visit the Railway? It's a great way to spread the word and hosts can be arranged for personal tours.



On Friday 26th September we hosted a road coach full of German Railway Enthusiasts as part of their UK Tour celebrating 200 years of the modern railway. Sir Berkeley was steamed for their visit and was the focus of many cameras at Middleton Park Halt.



Shop Notes

As well as normal running, numerous extras and specials popped on to the calendar. First came the food and drink festival in August: Many came, much food and drink was consumed and more was taken home to be enjoyed later. Then there was the Autumn Gala. September also saw Heritage Open Days, of which there were four over two weekends. The initial hurdle was finding the banners and bunting that tell visitors that they have got to the right place. Their location had been obscured by the growing accumulation of prizes for the Tombola ! Once they were found and hoisted into position, the event went smoothly, attracting some 60 visitors, nearly all of whom went on the train. The only thing to mar the proceedings was the cancellation of the last of the 16 talks. This was caused by a member of the team thoughtlessly booking a holiday.

Other groups, however, benefitted from a recounting of the illustrious history of our railway. We hosted a Railrail party, a branch of the University of the Third Age and a coach party of rail enthusiasts from the Federal Republic of Germany. Doch !

Our Historical literature also received a boost. Readers will be aware of the replacement of the 60-page A5 Eighth edition by the three volume version, each volume running to over 100 pages in A4 hardback. Volume 2 (by Ian Smith) arrived two years ago. Volume 1 (by Sheila Bye - see review on page 24) is now available. Volume 3 is in preparation.

A further development on this front is the recent installation in the youngsters' play-zone of a 3' x 12' banner that sets out the history of our pioneering railway - see photo by Ian Smith below. This it does in four scenes (thus omitting many of the details recounted in the three-volume version). It is in cartoon style, the idea being to appeal to 8-year-olds (*roughly the average UK reading age - Editor*). They, haplessly, have mostly ignored it, preferring to get on with building model rail layouts. More interest has, gratifyingly, been shown by their parents and grandparents.

Richard Stead



Seeking The Railway King in the steps of Michael Portillo

On a recent drive to the East Coast with my good friend Jack Auckland, he surprised me with a request to turn off the main road at the next junction. He assured me that our destination would include a very old Church and was also Railway related. After negotiating a very ancient and narrow stone bridge we arrived at the quaint village of Scrayingham. We headed through the small village, past some very impressive Georgian Houses to the Saxon Church of St Peter and St Paul where Christians have been worshipping for over 1,200 years.



Photo: Stephen Horncastle

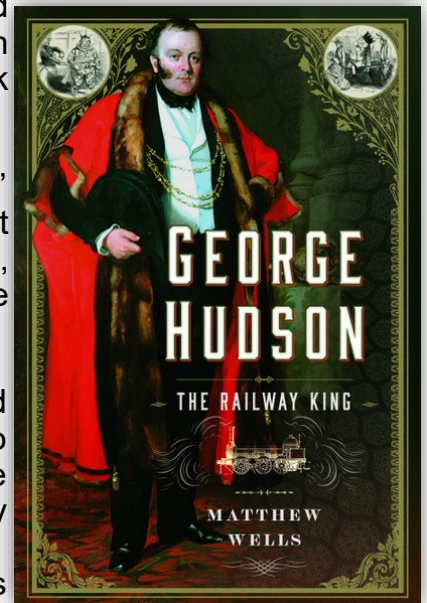
Scrayingham is best known as the Parish where George Hudson (The Railway King) was born and is buried.

On entering the Church graveyard, we found a very informative Church noticeboard. It gave us lots of details about George and his burial location. As we approached the Church, we were greeted by one of the Church Wardens, who offered to give us a guided tour. This meeting was very fortunate as it turned out that our guide, Matthew Wells, is an author and expert on George Hudson. He has done extensive research on the life and times of George Hudson and offers in his book another side to George Hudson's often negative depiction.

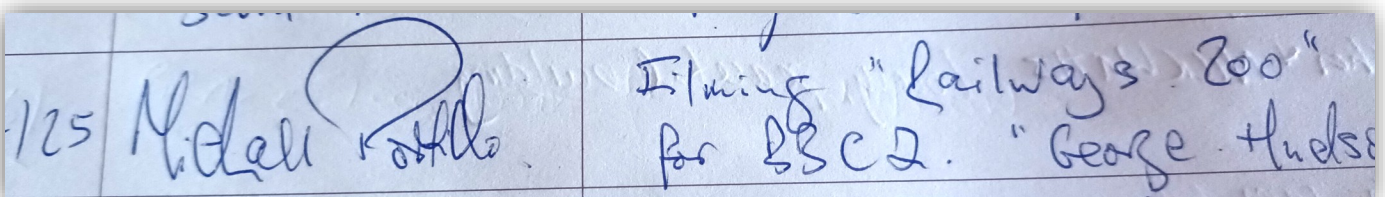
He was a wealth of information about the 'Railway King's' personal, family and business lifestyle. He was also a fount (pardon the pun) of Knowledge about the early Saxon Church, which is well worth visiting. Outside he showed us George Hudson's Grave.



As we had explained to Matthew we were Railway enthusiasts he took us back into the Church to show us the visitor's book. He showed us, that, in April, Michael Portillo had visited the Church, as he was making a new TV series about Railway History. *(This was screened on BBC2 recently and it was a good watch - Editor)*



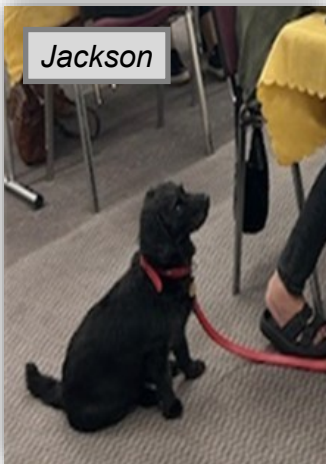
David Hector



Notes from The Almoner

To raise the profile of the role of Almoner at Middleton Railway, I was interviewed by Sally Clifford (a freelance journalist) and I explained to her what the Almoner role entails. This interview has been published in the latest issue of Heritage Railway Magazine (No.337). I hope it will encourage other Heritage Railways to adopt what has been successfully started at The Railway.

Following our successful Almoner's Get Together last year, we held a second one on 30th August this year. It was lovely to see so many of our members who were able to attend. Everyone enjoyed a trip to Middleton Park accompanied by our Chairman, Charles Milner. On their return, Afternoon Tea followed in the conference room. A nostalgic selection of photographs was compiled by Ian Smith, which caused much amusement.



Jackson

A very special four-legged guest called Jackson came along with Hilary Gunn, the widow of a much-missed Roy – you can see from the photograph that he was waiting for the scraps to fall off the edge of the table.

Sheila Bye joined us and had her photograph taken with the proof copy of her new book – The History of the Middleton Railway Vol.1. Copies are available in the shop or from the Railway's website

at a cost of £19.99. (See also p24 Editor).



Sheila Bye

I would like to thank Janet Auckland, Denise Winstanley, Charles Milner and Ian Smith for their help in making the afternoon a success.

Fran Bailey



The Almoner's Gathering - August 2025

Do you believe in..?

As we are around All Hallows Eve it's probably as good a time as any for a ghost story. This was brought to my attention on the 'British Paranormal' website some time ago and the wording (which comes with a gore warning) is theirs. I don't ever recall it being mentioned by any volunteers that I have known, perhaps someone has seen him/it?

The Middleton Railway in Leeds is the world's oldest continuously operating railway, having been established as early as 1758. Today it is operated by a trust, ensuring that the pioneering history of this engineering feat is preserved for future generations. The railway also holds another, less salubrious world's first, in so far as the site is thought to be the location of the first ever human death caused by being struck-down by a locomotive. In 1821, a young man by the name of David Brook was walking home from work along the track of the Middleton Railway. It was the start of December, so night had fallen early and the area was experiencing thick, heavy sleet, obscuring vision and blocking out the moonlight. The wind was up, whistling past David's ears with a high pitched screech. As the young carpenter continued to plod along the tracks he was totally unaware of an approaching locomotive. Likewise, the train's driver was unable to see more than a few metres in front of the train as it trundled through the night.

When David became aware of the approaching steam engine it was already too late. The train struck him down, pushing him onto the tracks and dragging him under the moving carriages. When David's body was discovered it was mangled and broken. Reports stated that one of his arms was cleanly torn from the shoulder and that the victim's stomach had burst open, exposing his guts and organs. The corpse was a bloody, pulped mess, having been rolled along the track under the train for as much as 100 metres. The young man left behind a wife and two daughters. According to the local legend, David's wife and children were unable to support themselves following his death and were evicted from their home. They ended up in a nearby Poor House, where they became the de facto slaves of a factory owner. Sadly, the Poor House was where the two daughters ended their lives, both succumbing to an outbreak of TB in 1823.

Since the accident all those years ago, reports have been made of a ghostly figure wandering along the stretch of track where the accident took place. Witnesses have described seeing a man, dressed in a thick coat, stumbling along the railway line, often with one hand over the top of his face, as though he was sheltering his eyes from the elements. The ghost has been observed for as much as a minute at a time, before suddenly disappearing in a flash of light. Interestingly, the figure appears to be fading with time. Early sightings described a totally life-like apparition, whose appearance was indistinguishable from a living human being. More recent sightings, dating from the 1980s and 1990s describe a transparent figure. Although the details remain clear, the ghost has become see-through.

The ghost of Middleton Railway has not received much coverage, despite the fact that the story and corresponding sightings have persisted down the ages. The railway itself is now run by volunteers from the Middleton Railway Trust Ltd. It has become a favoured location for railway enthusiasts from across the globe to visit, yet few realise that this historic location has a much darker past. What's more, few are aware that Middleton Railway may also have the oldest railway ghost story known to man.

Whatever your thoughts on the supernatural elements of this story, working Member David Hector has done some research into David Brook and has discovered that he died in 1821, aged 41 and was buried at Rothwell Church on 8th December.

In the 1821 Census (taken earlier in the year) he is married to Mary Dyson (they married on 21st Oct 1805 at Rothwell Church). They have 4 Daughters, Sarah, born in 1806, then aged

15, Ann born in 1809 then aged 11, Martha. Born in 1812 then aged 9 and Charlotte,, born in 1816. I was not able to find any Death records for the wife or the 3 eldest daughters. I was not able to find any marriage details for the 3 eldest Daughters. I did find a marriage for the youngest daughter, she married in 12th April 1835. It is possible that the Wife and the 2 middle daughters might have gone into the Workhouse and died, but there is no record of this.

The Editor is aware of the death of the first member of the public to be killed by a locomotive, it was almost certainly a 13-year-old boy named John Bruce killed in February 1813 whilst running alongside the Middleton Railway. The Leeds Mercury reported that this would "operate as a warning to others". Clearly, and sadly, David Brook was not a subscriber to The Leeds Mercury...



Yorkshire in Bloom Award 2025

Chairman Charles Milner is very pleased to announce that the Middleton Railway has again been awarded a Gold Medal by Yorkshire in Bloom. This time the Railway was entered into the very competitive Small Business category. This continues the Railway's remarkable run in Yorkshire in Bloom, receiving a Gold Award in each of the six years it has entered. This success is a tribute to the



hard work of Mick Jackson and his team who have continued to develop and enhance the floral displays at Moor Road, as well as keeping the grounds and entrance to Moor Road Station clean, well-managed and welcoming. It is also a just reward for the work that Janet Auckland, Ian Smith, and the Commercial team put into the creation of the booklet which must accompany all entries into Yorkshire in Bloom and for looking after the judges when they visited the Railway. Congratulations to all involved!

The Editor adds his congratulations to Mick Jackson for this award - and also wishes to place on record his sincere apologies for the error on p23 of OR267 where he incorrectly stated that it was Mick Cox who looked after the flowers... Whilst on the subject of OR267 errors, on p30 Max Emmett is far RIGHT and Ross Needham second RIGHT in the middle photo - It's my age...

More on that Famous Rag Week

Further to Brian Ashurst's memories in the last issue Chris C Thornburn has been in touch and can add some more details...

I was very interested to see "That Famous Rag Week" in Old Run 267 – 65 years ago! – as I was around at the time. It prompted me to look out my own photographs. For some reason, I took only one of the actual operation, a distant view from the GN railway bridge; but that's no matter as many other people were camera-active.

But what I did get was a shot of two of the girls, which I took because I knew them well through a shared interest in Scottish country dance. We can thus illustrate Moira Kennedy and Enid Robinson on Brian's list – fortunate his roster turned up! I also got an interior view, which adds a name not on his list, Anne Rose; I feel pretty certain that I brought her along myself, so I think she was reading Science rather than English. I am led to wonder, how many other pictures of the girls were taken and still exist – particularly any showing them actually at work? Or is my view unique?



Left: Ann Rose at work issuing tickets on 25th June 1960. Achieving acknowledgement and photographic fame 65 years later!

Where is she - or any of the Ladies of the Line - now?

Photo: © Chris C Thornburn

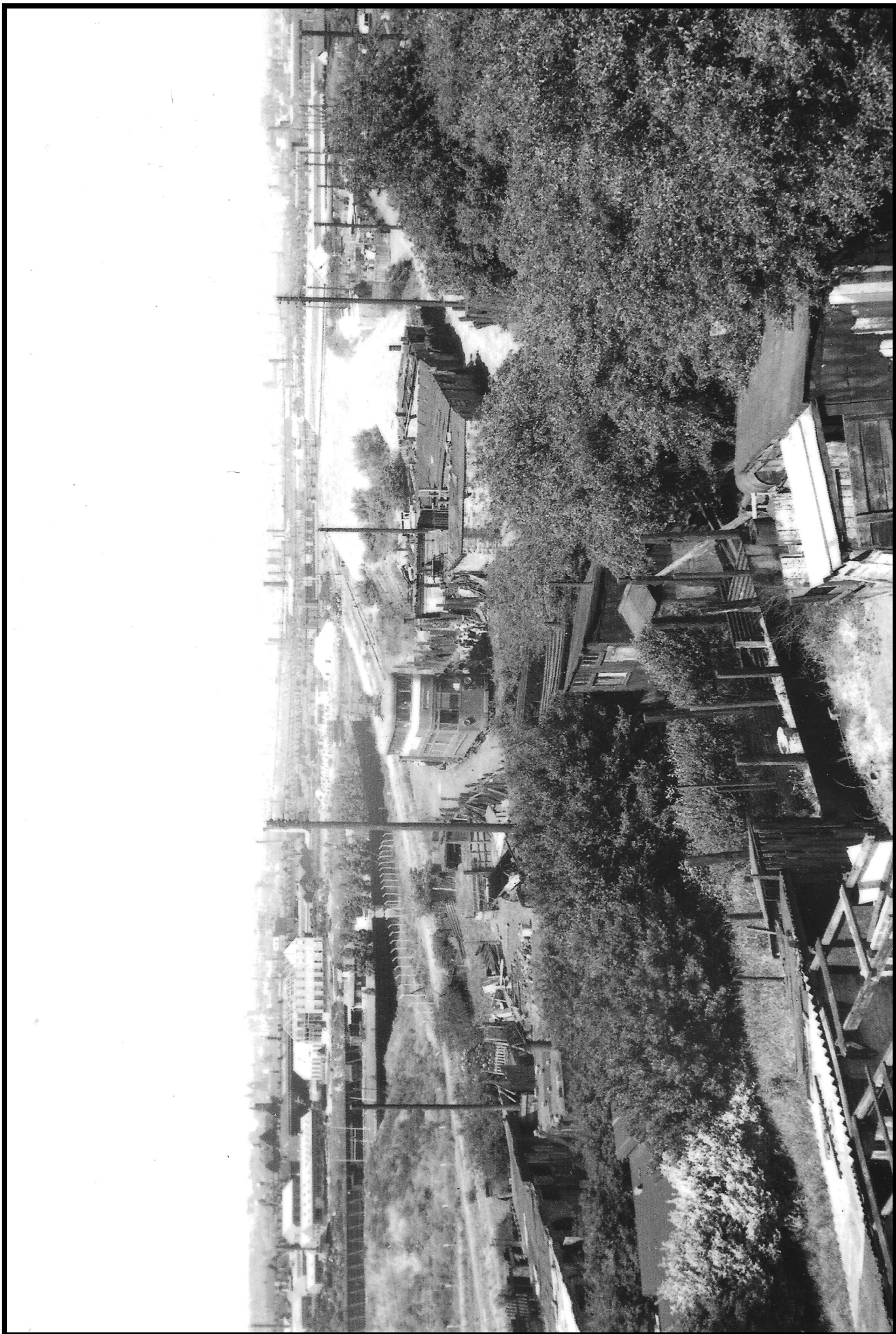
Right: Enid Robinson (L) and Moira Kennedy pose on the front of the Swansea and Mumbles Railcar on 24th June 1960. Perhaps one of them issued the ebay purchased ticket I own.



Opposite: The view from GN Bridge as the Railcar makes it's way back to Moor Road. It's more or less on the current foot crossing with Parkside Rugby Ground and a stored tram to the left.

Photos: © Chris C Thornburn



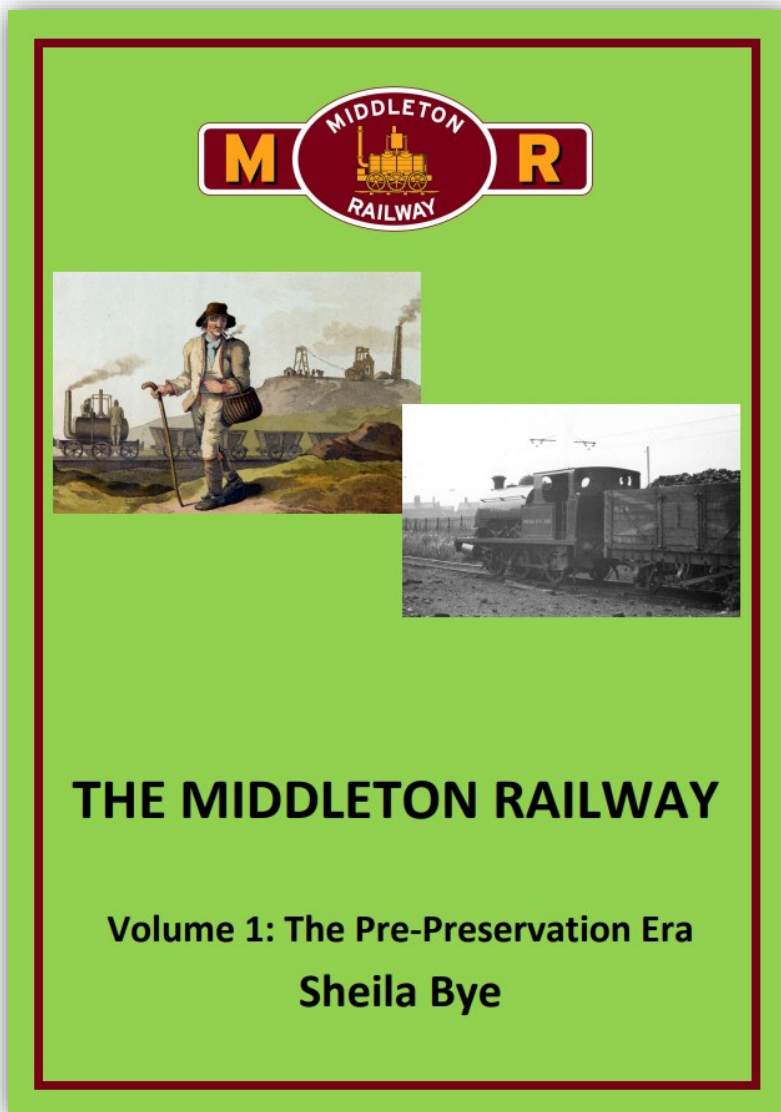


Book Review: The Middleton Railway Volume 1: The Pre-Preservation Era

As mentioned in The Chairman's Notes, the long awaited Volume 1 of the Middleton Railway History has been published. Working member and Railway Historian Anthony Dawson has reviewed it, and it looks like it should be on every member's Christmas List...

This is a high quality A4 size hardback book which explores the history of the oldest continuously operated railway in Britain: the Middleton Railway, Leeds, which obtained an Act of Parliament in 1758. The Middleton was also the first railway to be operated by steam, and also the first standard-gauge railway to be preserved and operated by volunteers. More of this anon.

Sheila Bye - the Archivist and Historian of the Middleton Railway - has spent over 30 years researching the Middleton Railway: it's history, people, locomotives, and impact.



Chapter 1 explores the wooden waggonway and the fledgling coal industry it served. Coal mining began in South Leeds around Middleton in the 1630s and, as experienced elsewhere in the country, saw a massive increase in the Restoration period. In 1697 Ralph Brandling of Gosforth Park acquired the Middleton Estate through marriage and his heirs and assigns continued to manage the Estate until 1856.

Use is made of contemporary Tithe Maps showing the route of the first waggonway built to Thwaite Gate (1754/5) and the second of 1758. Whilst the maps are useful, it might have been more helpful to re-draw these maps and print them as full page rather than reproduce the originals with the route highlighted. However, what the map on p.14 demonstrates is the need for the 1758 Act (which confirmed its route) because the waggonway ran through land owned by the Brandling's rivals, the Fentons. How the Act was gained is described in detail, as is the relationship between the Brandlings, their tenants/employees and the good

folk of Leeds. Subsequent Acts set the price and amount of coal to be carried into Leeds: essentially a Brandling Monopoly.

Chapter 2 explores John Blenkinsop and his patent steam carriages.

As Sheila explains, the Middleton collieries were never rich and were seeing falling revenue at the turn of the 19th century despite Leeds being a coal-burning industrial boom town. Because they were not rich, it was important for them to adopt as many cost-saving measures as possible and that included mechanisation: by 1820 the whole process of getting coal to market was done by machinery, other than the physical act of mining the coal underground! Blenkinsop re-routed the waggonway to avoid the worst gradients, and at its

greatest extent consisted of three levels joined by two incline planes. Blenkinsop in partnership with Leeds engineer Matthew Murray developed the first commercially successful steam locomotive in 1811/1812 and this is detailed clearly by Sheila, and photographs - but no maps, sadly - of the Blenkinsop route are included when they still survived. The Blenkinsop material in Leeds Archives are extensively quoted as is the Murray/Watson correspondence in Newcastle. Bye demonstrates the importance of the 'Patent Steam Carriage' at home and abroad including what was then Prussia and in modern-day Belgium. However, her discussion of Monsieur Andrieux the French spy is sadly out of date and relies on the slightly inaccurate 1910 translation of his 1815 description.

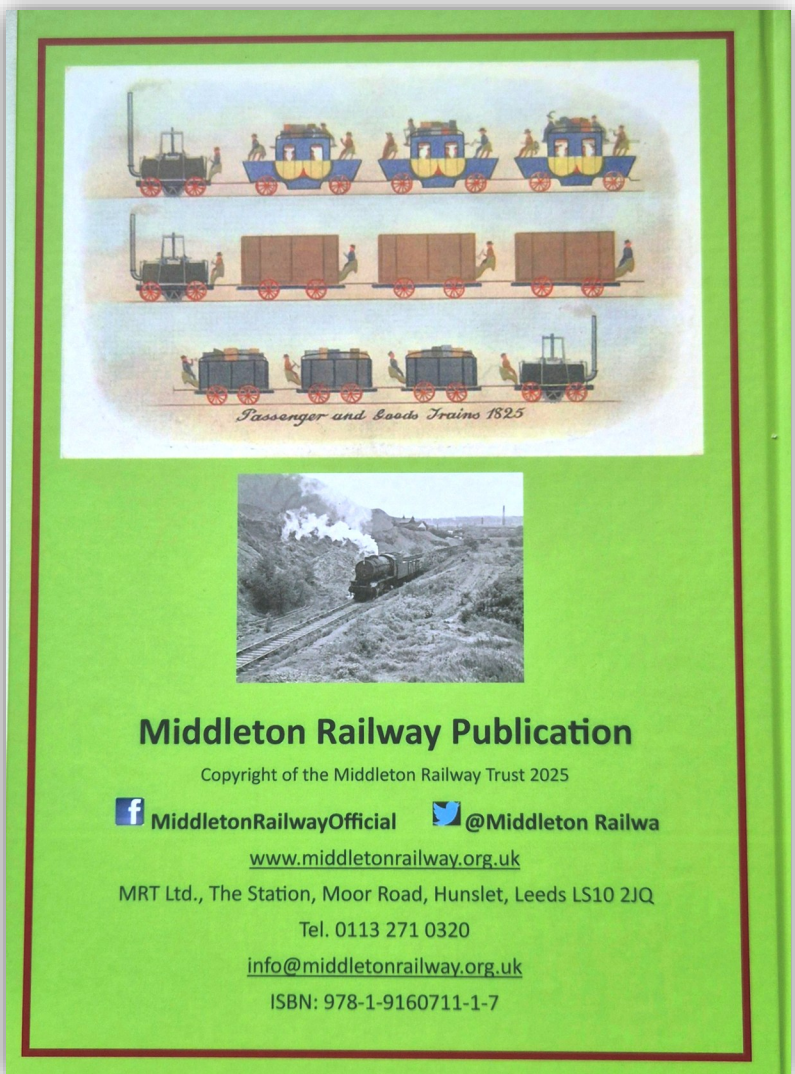
Chapter 3 covers the period 1830-1900 including the possibility in the 1830s of converting the railway to adhesion worked and even rebuilding the existing locomotives. Sadly, this was not to be. The railway was then worked by horses and retained in Brandling ownership until mid-century. The decision to use locomotives and re-route some of the line led to a major legal challenge over use of Hunslet Moor and whether the railway was dangerous and if it should be fenced in. A mass protest in 1877 saw 30,000 people gather in opposition to the plans of the Middleton Estate & Colliery Company. It was finally settled by Leeds Corporation buying Hunslet Moor then ordering MECC to erect a 'good and substantial fence' to protect users of the Moor. Some of the fencing still survives at the Railway today. It was re-gauged to 4' 8 1/2" in 1881.

Chapter 4 discusses the decline of the colliery and its railway. By now increasingly encroached by domestic houses, the issue of fencing and safety reared its head again. And, as Bye records, even before WW1 the line was being cut back, although there was some modernisation including the use of an electric motor to power one of the incline plain winding drums, replacing an earlier steam engine. The chapter concludes with the railway's bicentenary in 1958 and increased local and enthusiast awareness of the railway.

Chapter 5 takes a brief look at preservation 1959-1969, which is covered in far more detail in the second volume of this two part history by Ian Smith.

There is an appendix discussing the family history of the main people involved with the railway; an extensive bibliography and facsimile reproduction of the first history written in 1958.

This is a well presented, high quality hard-back book for which the Middleton Railway Trust is to be commended. Paper and print quality is excellent, as is the reproduction of images. The text is well written. It is informative but never heavy. However, it is spoiled by one or two grammatical and typographical errors.



The lack of footnotes is understandable for an enthusiast rather than academic publication, but it would have been helpful particularly in chapters 1 - 3 to have known exactly from where the information was obtained. The book is at its best in the period 1758-1940 and really shines in its first two chapters. Chapter 2 especially represents the current state of knowledge (in print) about Blenkinsop & Murray's locomotives.

More and better maps would have been appreciated - the one map in the book is one which the Middleton Railway Trust has seemingly used for years. Maps showing the original route, the Blenkinsop route and later changes as separate maps rather than a palimpsest (*an original manuscript page - Editor*) would have been useful and help explore the railway story better. So too indication of the location of the incline planes. Gradient profiles would have been useful to better explain the topography of this area of South Leeds.

Nevertheless, this is a tour de force which sets the standard for 'line histories'. It is a very welcome addition to the bookshelf of anyone interested in the history of Leeds, industrial railways and of course, the birth of the steam railway. Well done to the Middleton Railway Trust in producing these two sumptuous volumes during 'Rail 200' and just in time for 'Murray 200' next year. It demonstrates that Leeds was the city which got the world on track, back in 1812.

'The Middleton Railway: The Pre Preservation Era' is available from www.middletonrailway.org.uk/shop or in person from the Railway Shop, the price is £19.99 plus postage.

Anthony Dawson

On top o' t'job - a book coming soon from Chris. C. Thornburn

Whilst sending the article used on p22 Chris also advised that he is about to publish a book that may be of interest to members. There will certainly be some images that are taken next to the Railway.

This book is based on the author's experiences as a student-conductor on the Leeds trams in the mid-1950's. It focusses on the crew who operated the trams, not merely what they did, but how it was done. It details the training, 'Patterns of Work', and the various facets of the

Time to chat at Roundhay Park for the Bank Holiday Extras. 30th May 1955. Photo Chris C Thornburn



job on the road. It links to driving, driver and conductor being a team, and brings in other places in Britain and abroad as comparison. A wider front provides an analysis of individual tram movements on their Final Day; statistical analysis of ticketing; comparison of 1930s tram designs from the conductor's viewpoint; and touches of humour.

It presents supporting contemporary documentation,

and is lavishly illustrated with some 130 of the author's photographs, all pertinent to a point in the text and many showing the trams in their context at work. Very different from others, and far from 'just another picture-book', it is one of the very few authentic first-person operational accounts by platform staff, such as Stan Collins' London classic 'The Wheels Used to Talk to Us'. Essential reading for anyone interested in traditional tramway operation, it runs to 208 fully-indexed pages, and retails at £35. To express interest and pre-order, please contact the publisher at info@memoriesofmotion.co.uk.

Letters to The Editor



You could almost start to think that I include deliberate errors in The Old Run to see if people spot them and therefore write in to correct them - thus filling up the following issue. I can assure you this is not the case - well, not deliberately anyway... The first email I received was from David Hebden who said that Mrs Hebden had noticed the misattribution of gardening duties to Mick Cox. I have already owned up to that one (and apologised) on p21 but sorry again Mr Jackson and here's another picture of his fine handiwork as a thank you.

Moving on to Vice President Ian Smith and The Dartmouth Dawdler (or not)...

Another good read, OR267 dropped through the letterbox today, 7th August.

I have, however, noticed that the photo on p21 does not show the "Dartmouth Dawdler" railtour on 6th March 1971 as captioned. As the opposite photo of the tour in Dartmouth Yard shows, the "Dawdler" did not utilise the LMS Brake Van, simply using BR open wagons throughout. I well remember CME Jim Lodge remarking to us volunteers "Don't say anything but HENRY's got a hole in the boiler!" A small steam leak had indeed occurred and the loco was withdrawn for repairs immediately after the tour.

I believe that the tour depicted in OR267 is in fact the infamous RCTS railtour on 27th September 1969, which as can be seen, did use the LMS van. This was tour which also started in Dartmouth yard, but the participants required feeding, leading to the now famous request of the local chippy "Can you deliver fish and chips 200 times please?" Once they recovered from the shock, they did indeed



deliver the fish and chips as promised and the tour participants were happy as Larry!

Keep up the good work - some interesting stuff in the magazine as always!

Ian Smith

I believe Ian is correct in this and can plead on two counts. The first being that I was four in 1969 and therefore not on either tour. The other is that I did check some of the archive photos I have access to and noticed that a child in a red coat appeared in both the photo in OR267 and photos of The Dartmouth Dawdler - surely they can't have been on both tours?

Over to my editorial predecessor Tony Cowling...

I can't help but reply to Ian Smith's this message - not least with commiserations about having to try to sort things out in a hurry!

If you have a copy of volume 2 of the Railway History (*I do, it makes a very good partner for the recently published volume 1 - and available from the same sources. Editor*), then



you will find that it includes on page 27) a picture of the RCTS special which was in OR267. On p29 it also has a picture of the Dartmouth Dawdler. It appears that the same red-coated passenger was indeed on both trains!

For future reference, the two tours used similar train formations, with Henry at the North end and the Sentinel (carrying the number 54) at the South end, but the RCTS special used 4 open wagons and the LMS brake van, whereas the Dawdler just used five open wagons, and this is probably the best way of telling the two tours apart. Also, in any view of the south end it is very obvious that for the Dawdler the Sentinel was carrying a rectangular headboard, whereas I don't think that any headboard was carried on the RCTS special, although I can't be sure about that.

On a slightly different topic, whoever supplied you with the caption information for the model of Salamanca got their facts wrong, as the model was not built until some time in the 1930s (but we don't have an exact date). The date 1910 relates to another object which came with the model, and which we are still investigating. I will try to write a short piece for the next issue about this model and the other items that came with it.

Tony Cowling

Clearly either the red coated passenger was very keen or red children's coats were popular in 1969. I think either is possible! As regards the Salamanca model I suspect the 1910 date published was down to me misinterpreting the model and the accompanying documentation - mea culpa (again!)



The last letter (email really) came from David Spencer and was more memories of early days at the Railway

I was interested to read T Colin Dews' memories of earlier times on the Middleton Railway in the Spring 25 issue (OR266) of Old Run. Some of these link in with my own memories.

I first heard the name John Bushell when my brother, who was more than nine years older than me met John in the 6th form at Central High School. They were good friends at school, as my family met with those known as the Christian Brethren, so their shared faith was the link. However, my brother left to work in the East Riding, so the friendship lapsed.

At 7, I became friendly with John Cowling, aka 'Prentiss' who was in my class at school in Chapel Allerton. The friendship continued and the years passed. He started to go to the Middleton Railway when we were (I think) 14. I went with him and I soon came into contact with someone called John Bushell, and found out that he was my brother's school friend.

John Bushell and I became friends and I did a lot of work behind the scenes with John. We also went into Lancashire a few times chasing mainline steam, and I went to Scotland with the school parties that he led in 1966 and 1967. John managed everything from riding in the observation car from Kyle of Lochalsh to Inverness to a run from Aberdeen to Perth behind A4 60034. I also took the bookings for the final day of the Waterloo Main Colliery railway for John on 23 November 1968. The weather that morning was rather unpleasant, but John still turned up in his famous top hat for the event. It was reserved for the last day of operation of railway lines. I never harboured any ambition to drive on the railway, but John Bushell briefly handed over the controls of Sweet Pea between the Parkside headshunt and Moor Road to me during an RCTS visit around 1970. John had asked me to help him with the midweek visit. This was my last operational activity on the railway.

Colin also mentioned the 1965 Steam Fair. I recall that event well. The weather was kind that day. In the run-up to the event, I had a discussion with John Bushell and one or two others (if I remember rightly, it was Derek Plummer and Susan Youell) about how we could issue tickets and count the number who attended. The result was that I volunteered to take along the child's bus conductor's ticket machine that I had received as a Christmas gift when I was six. It was simple and somewhat comical, drawing some unflattering comments from visitors, but it did the job. However, it meant that I stayed at the gate to Dartmouth Works Yard for most of the afternoon and saw almost nothing of the event.



Your Editor can very much identify with missing an event you are working at - I never saw the steam at Jack Lane in 2012 as I was on duty at Moor Road all weekend!

For David's benefit, here's a visiting steam road vehicle in Dartmouth Yard in the 1960s at a Steam Fair, not sure if it is the 1965 event or not - perhaps someone knows?

Photo: David Hebden

I felt that I was eased out of the railway, both on the operating side and finally on the publicity side by the then Exhibition Manager when I phoned volunteering to man the stand at the Leeds Model Railway Exhibition one year. Having introduced myself on the phone to the new manager, explaining my name and considerable experience, I was asked the question "Who are you?" I identify with Colin's comments regarding poor management of volunteers. As a result, I withdrew and spent many teenage hours working for another preserved railway in their shop. Let us learn the lesson.

Work, church activities and moving round the country kept me away from the Middleton Railway for many years, but after retirement, I started visiting most Sunday afternoons with my camera and have a considerable library of photos of the railway. One appeared in a recent issue of Steam Railway Magazine. I finally rejoined in January this year, but even in retirement, I'm not able to volunteer as I would like due to other commitments, but try to publicise the railway online with my photos.

As for my friendship with John Cowling, we fell out when I was 16 and our paths never crossed again, even at the railway, due to me moving further into admin and publicity for the Railway, whilst John stayed active on the operational side. I was deeply saddened when Ian Smith told me some three years ago that he had passed away some years earlier.

David F Spencer

And finally...

There has not been mention of DB998901 (Olive the Railbus) in The Old Run for some time for the not unreasonable fact that not much has happened since it returned from contract bodywork repairs at the Vintage Carriages Trust in Ingrow following the arson attack in 2016.

It is owned by the EM2 Locomotive Society (EM2LS), a charity who also own EM2 27000 'Electra' at the Midland Railway - Butterley. COVID and other commitments have got in the way but in recent months a number of EM2LS people have begun discussions and a way forward has been agreed. One of the key sticking points was likely to be replacement doors

and frames in wood in place of those extensively damaged in the fire.

I have recently visited Aaron Marsden (formerly of Middleton but now C&W Manager at Embsay and we are awaiting a quote for these from them. In addition to my Middleton roles I am also an EM2LS Trustee and I am grateful for the support and help offered by Middleton



Some Olive progress: Refurbished Oil Bath Air Filters - a homework project and soon to be back on top of the engine.

volunteers since interest has been reawakened in moving the long overdue restoration forward. It won't be quick, but we hope to hear the chug of a Gardner 4LW from the Olive direction this side of Christmas.

Ian Dobson

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