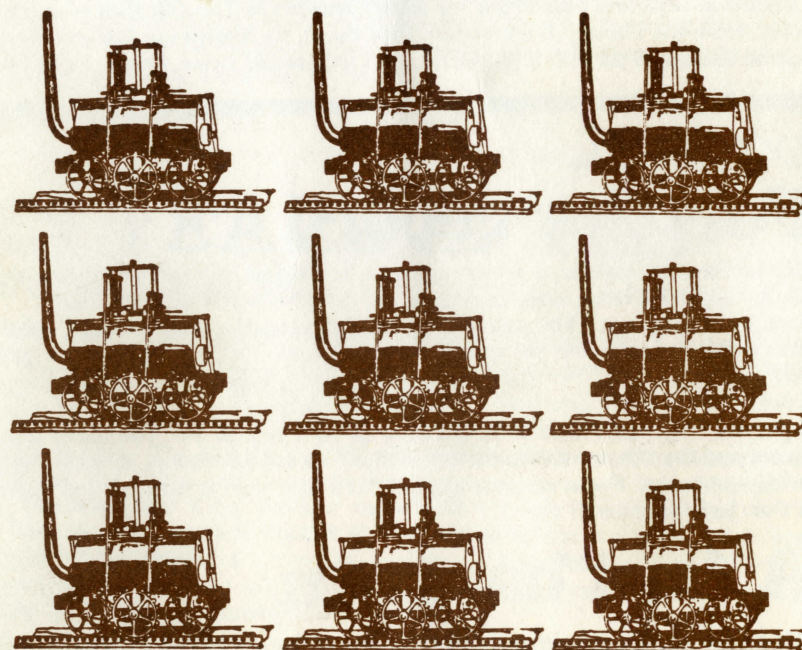


THE OLD RUN

WINTER
1972



JOURNAL OF
THE 1758 MIDDLETON RAILWAY TRUST
LEEDS

THE OLD RUN

VOLUME 10

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WINTER 1972

EDITOR: Mervyn Leah, 134 Frobisher Road, Bilton, Rugby, Warwicks.

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

The next issue will appear in March, and all contributions should reach the Editor by February 10th.

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

EDITORIAL

For the record

No further new light is, it seems, going to be shed on our old neighbour, the Middleton Light Railway, since our appeal for information in the last issue produced a nil response. The events concerned happened a long time ago, admittedly, but still well within the lifetime of many local people. But these people are getting no younger, and a lot of industrial history dies with the people who worked in or lived near the industry concerned. Documentary sources will still exist, of course, but these too are frequently in increasing danger as the years go by. Too many aspects of the history of the line are still under-researched — a sad admission, considering its historic importance. Preservation, especially in a case such as ours, should include more than just 'hardware'.

A bad bargain

We are, of course, delighted to see the return of steam to the BR system this year. The sight of 'Clun Castle' and 'Burton Agnes Hall' in full cry has warmed the heart of many a fellow-Midlander over the last few months, and we look forward to seeing these and others in action again next year.

However one small aspect of the return to steam has left a distinctly unpleasant taste. We wrote to the Great Western Society, who organised the October run behind 'Burton Agnes Hall', requesting the timings of the train, and their Secretary wrote back requesting 25p. We were somewhat taken aback by this, but, expecting in return some sort of modest souvenir booklet, we duly paid up. The timings

arrived (the day after the train had run, actually, but what else can you expect from first-class post?), and were found to consist of one solitary sheet of paper, and a xerox copy at that. The total cost of producing this mammoth publication could not have been more than 1p, and yet the selling price was twenty-five times that amount. By any standards, this is an enormous profit margin.

There is the well-known (and in most cases justified) moan about 'enthusiasts' who photograph one's pretty but costly preserved railway without returning the courtesy of buying a ticket. But we remain to be convinced that the GWS could not have filled up its train several times over, and will not continue to be able to do so with future excursions, provided the present restrained supply is not allowed to turn into a glut. The question of depriving the Society of fare revenue is, therefore, academic. As far as non-fare revenue is concerned, we are sure that most enthusiasts would not begrudge 25p for a decent publication of some sort, but will draw their own highly unfavourable conclusions about being asked that amount of money for one sheet of photo-copy.

We applaud the achievements to date of the Great Western Society, and we sincerely hope that they will continue to go from strength to strength. But we also hope that they and others allowed to operate steam specials over BR will not in future risk jeopardising their excellent reputations by resorting to such outrageous profiteering. Most enthusiasts are willing to pay a fair price for pursuing their hobby, but nobody likes to feel he has been 'done'. Especially by fellow-enthusiasts who find themselves operating a one-day monopoly.

TEN YEARS AFTER

From The Old Run, November 1962:

The year 1962 is assured of its place in Middleton Railway history, just as it bids fair to be in British Railways' history. Murray's great achievement of 1812 is in less danger than it ever was of being forgotten by the man in the street, but there are further important associations which seem to have gone unnoticed.

September 15th. The day the Exhibition opened in the Leeds City Museum was, to the very day, the 132nd anniversary of the opening of the Leeds & Manchester Railway. The celebrated 'Lion' was later to be built in Leeds for this pioneer railway. Retired years ago from the L & M, this wonderful old engine passed through years of obscurity as a stationary pumping engine on a Liverpool dock. In 1928 (or thereabouts) it was recognised and identified by enthusiasts, rescued, and restored in time for the 1930 centenary celebrations.

Many readers will have been interested to see press reports of the replica of Henry Bell's pioneer steamship 'Comet', which has just been built on the Clyde. But why is Matthew Murray's early steamship, 'L'Actif' not better known? It might well be that Murray's vessel was actually steamed on the Aire earlier than 'Comet' on the Clyde. Of course, 'L'Actif' was not built as a steamship, but started life as a French lugger, and was captured during the Napoleonic wars. A steam engine was built at the Round Foundry to Murray's design, fitted in the hull, and Leeds secured a place in marine engineering history by virtue of the genius of the man who, about the same time, was busy with 'Salamanca'.

385 ARRIVES

From the windswept Northlands and from Viking lands over the sea, that which was prophesied has come to pass! Beware you measurers in non-metric, beware you bastions of imperialism — the Vikings have arrived in Middleton!

The Middleton Railway has again made history with the arrival on its tracks, after a safe crossing of the North Sea, of the first Danish locomotive to be preserved in Great Britain. Danish State Railways steam locomotive Class Hs, Nr 385, arrived at Grimsby on Tuesday 26th September 1972, and was delivered on to British track, at Middleton top platform, at approximately 18.00 hrs. on the following day.

Nr 385 was met by the Fowler diesel, in the capable hands of Peter Nettleton, and English and Danish buffers touched for the first time. After a careful check on the platform clearances for cylinders and cab side-steps, Nr 385 made a slow, careful journey down Middleton metals. Further clearance checks were made to ensure that the classic tall chimney stack would have adequate room through the motorway tunnel.

She was then propelled, through the oncoming twilight, for her meeting with the other Middleton locomotives. When the assembly of the Steam Power Trust's Y7, No. 1310, is complete, Nr 385 will be prepared for ultimate running and exhibition use. With two whistles, a steam bell, and electric lights in the cab and externally, she gives a modern European flavour to the system.

For the technically minded, the following particulars will be of interest:

<i>Builder:</i>	<i>Hartmann of Chemnitz</i>		
<i>Date of Construction:</i>	<i>1895</i>		
<i>Works Number:</i>	<i>2110</i>		
<i>Cylinder diameter:</i>	<i>330 mm</i>		
<i>Cylinder stroke:</i>	<i>508 mm</i>		
<i>Wheel diameter:</i>	<i>1106 mm</i>	<i>Water weight:</i>	<i>4.5 tonnes</i>
<i>Boiler pressure:</i>	<i>10 kg per sq cm</i>	<i>Coal weight:</i>	<i>0.5 tonnes</i>
<i>Heating surface:</i>	<i>3.87 sq metres</i>	<i>Maximum speed:</i>	<i>25 km/hour</i>
<i>Grate area:</i>	<i>0.79 sq metres</i>	<i>Height:</i>	<i>3600 mm</i>
<i>Weight empty:</i>	<i>18.8 tonnes</i>	<i>Length:</i>	<i>7540 mm</i>
<i>Weight working:</i>	<i>23.8 tonnes</i>	<i>Width:</i>	<i>2700 mm</i>

There is no truth in the rumours that all drivers will be equipped with winged or large horned helmets, or that personnel who cross the engine's path will be put to the fire or sword, even though such customs may still exist in darkest Northumbria, following excesses of Newcastle Brown!

F. W. HAMPSON

No Games

The Commonwealth Games will not be staged in Middleton Park in 1978. This decision, announced during the summer, ended several months of hope and speculation about the southern end of the railway, in a scheme that would have turned the pit tips into grassy banks and artificial ski slopes, and would have provided a boating lake along-side our Park terminus. The intention was to use the coming of the Games as an opportunity to provide the city with a sports complex and leisure park, into which the Middleton Railway was to be incorporated, and taking in both the present Middleton Park and the eyesore tip area from the colliery to the motorway. It is likely that, in spite of the city's attempt to secure the 1978 Games, further applications of this kind will be made, and that some development of the leisure potential of Middleton Park, on a less ambitious scale, will be made in any case.

Sales

1973 diaries are now available. These are of a revised pattern although the price is still ridiculously low at a mere 12p.

Postcards of the MRT locomotive stock in black and white are on sale in the platform container. Price is 5p. each, so tarry not.

It is hoped that stocks of new colour slides of MRT locos. will have arrived by the time this magazine is distributed. Keep a look-out for them.

From the MRA

As from the next issue, the Middleton Railway Association will have its own section in The Old Run. This means that we shall require articles and letters from YOU! All members under 18 are invited to send in their views and suggestions on Middleton matters, articles about the railway or anything to do with railways, quizzes, puzzles, and so on. These are all needed to make the MRA section into something every junior member will want to read.

To start things off, we would like you to send in your suggestions for a title for the new section, and the most popular suggestion will be adopted. Send your title suggestions and other contributions to Ian Smith, whose address is below.

Your Association Committee for the first year consists of:

Chairman:	John Bushell, 12 Trelawn Crescent, Leeds, LS6 3JW.
Treasurer:	Tom Apperley, 29 Poplar Rise, Leeds, LS13 4SQ.
Secretary:	Ian Smith, 8 Manor Farm Drive, Leeds, LS10 3RW.
Membership Secretary:	Brian Ashurst, 18 Inglewood Drive, Otley, LS21 3LD.
Other Members:	Gareth Jones, 20 Kingsley Ave., Leeds, LS16 7NY. Colin Robinson, 12 Gainsbro. Drive, Adel, Leeds, LS16 7PF. Stephen Dufton, 4 Preston Parade, Leeds 11. C. Paul, 72 Parkewood Crescent, Leeds, LS10 5RB.

These committee members are here to help you. If there is anything you wish to have discussed at a committee meeting, contact the Secretary or any committee member, either at home or down at the line, where they will be found most weekends.

The Doncaster trip has, at the time of writing, proved not to be as popular as expected, although bookings may pick up. If this is the case, the next trip will be to the Keighley & Worth Valley Railway and Yorkshire Dales Railway, at a date to be fixed later.

IAN SMITH

Loco notes

The clutch overhaul on D631 has proved more protracted than at first anticipated, as a number of components have required renewal. This work has been completed.

The repairs to HC 1309 are now complete except for the replacement of the rods, which will be done when repainting is complete.

Painting of AE 1569 and the Middleton Colliery wagon is in progress, and the repiping of WB 2702 continues. The Sentinel's firebox has been removed for boiler inspection, replaced, the hydraulic test completed, and the engine put back into service.

The Y7 has now passed successfully both visual and practical hydraulic tests, to the satisfaction of the Middleton Railway's insurance assessors, and formal documentation has been received to this effect. Plans will now proceed to replace the lagging on the boiler and firebox, and much other work behind the scenes, and behind the tanks and cladding, has already been carried out.

JIM LODGE

F. W. HAMPSON

Membership

We extend a warm welcome to the following new members who have joined since the last Old Run was circulated:

Keith Fletcher, Leeds 10; Brian Howarth, and Keith Balance, Leeds 16; Mr. Dennis, Nigel, and David Holroyd, Leeds 10; David Watson and Bernard Gaffney, Leeds 12; Martin Croot, Leeds 6; William Gledhill, Slaithwaite; Ian Scott, Leeds 9; Martin Wheatley, Leeds 10; Stuart Paley, Horsforth; Alan Richards, Leeds 13; Ian Heppenstall, Leeds 11.

Why do many people fail to renew their membership of the MRT? This is an apt question to ask at this time of year, when many readers' renewals will become due. It is also a question which is of no concern to anyone else it appears, but as Membership Secretary it is my duty to try and make everybody think about it!

The reason is not expense, I am sure. £1.25 (65p for the MRA) is neither here nor there these days. How long would you chase a pound note down the street? Think about that one and you'll have to agree!

As long as members feel that they are needed and that there is a job for them to do, I am convinced that they will renew. Of course there are a few that lose interest, but they are the exceptions. Generally people are glad to help *if asked*, and we are

very fortunate in having a high proportion of active members — which, considering our total membership, is just as well.

The key is for anyone with authority over any job on the railway to feel responsible not only for doing that job well, but also for involving as many members as he can. Sometimes the technical nature of the job makes this difficult, and we are not all born leaders. Nevertheless, unless a programme of member involvement is enacted, the average member is going to feel that there is a "closed shop" atmosphere surrounding the MRT, even though this is quite unintentional.

On the other hand, the member should not be afraid of being persistent. Anyone who keeps coming down to the line and shows willing is sure to find that eventually he has become indispensable to someone!

Help make 1973 a year of progress by renewing your own membership and getting at least one new member. And if you have any grumbles, don't sit on them and disappear — write or phone me: **18 Inglewood Drive Otley LS21 3LD.**

Tel: Otley 4486. I am IMPARTIAL.

BRIAN ASHURST

Briefly...

Following the election of Ian Smith to the post of MRA Secretary, the new Secretary of the Model Railway Group, whose work was featured in the last issue, is to be: David Bushell, 11 Holmesley Lane, Woodlesford. Great progress has been made since the article in the Summer issue was prepared, and the Y7 and Sentinel which were mentioned have now been constructed, along with a model of 'Matthew Murray'.

• •

Martin Croot has taken on the job of Press Secretary, responsible for informing the news media of events on the line. Please let him know if you are involved in any work which you think might be a useful "peg" to hang Middleton publicity on. His address is 17 Ganton Place, Leeds LS6 2ND. Tel: 27851.

• •

Thanks are due to Steve Dufton, David Roberts and friends, who have greatly assisted us recently by arranging the display of MRT train service posters in their home areas.

• •

The 1973 passenger service will run from Easter to the end of October, on Saturdays, Sundays and Bank Holiday Mondays. A revised timetable has been drawn up, giving half-hourly departures from Hunslet from 14.00 to 16.30, and from Middleton Park Gates from 14.12 to 16.42. This will give the locomotive a longer layover period at the Hunslet end, where it is more likely to attract customers.

• •

The Railway now has its own postal address, complete with postcode. Communications to the Trust may now be sent to: **Garnett Road, Leeds LS11 5JY**, without fear (we hope) that they will be returned undelivered.

• •

The Inland Waterways Association, who are campaigning for the retention of a separate body responsible for water transport, rather than the proposed comprehensive body which would be mainly responsible for water supply and sewage disposal, have recently been in touch with the Trust, and a petition in support of their campaign may be found in the building at Hunslet Halt.

A shot from the very early days of the Middleton Railway Preservation Society, with HE 1697, then unnamed and still in Hunslet Engine Company livery, posing near Moor Road crossing. In the background can be seen the start of the double-track section, which was later to be singled during relaying.

IN AT THE BEGINNING

IAN SMITH

Brian Ashurst's 'Down at Track Roots' article in the last Old Run prompts me to put pen to paper and correct one minor mistake. The Middleton Railway **has** enjoyed my services before, right at the beginning of its life.

This was due to the influence of one Dr. R. F. Youell, who in the early days became a sort of 'favourite uncle' to me. My first recollection of Middleton and Fred (yes, they go together like salt and pepper!) was in 1960, when I was only six years old. I had known about the little train at the end of the street for a few months, and I went down one morning to find a huge, grubby gentleman working on some track. Being an inquisitive little chap, I watched him for a while, then asked him what he was doing. That was the beginning of a friendship with Fred and Middleton which lasts to this day.

From then on my interest grew and grew. My day used to go like this. As soon as I got up and had breakfast, I used to go down to the bottom of the street, where I would stay and watch Fred, and sometimes join in the work — it was hard work shovelling muck even then! Being a polite little chap, I used to call him 'Mr. Fred', and we used to get on famously. He used to baffle me with his technical (?) phrases such as 'humper' and 'twiddling stick'. After dinner I went back down to the line, and every night at six, Mr. Fred used to return me to the house, and get himself cleaned up before driving home.

It was strange, but I didn't know about the '1758 Middleton Railway Trust' until 1968, and I used to think of Middleton as part of BR! My first meeting with a Middleton loco came a few weeks after I had been introduced to the railway. This was a big green six-wheeled diesel with bright red nameplates proclaiming JOHN ALCOCK, and it had a fascinating toot when it wanted people to get out of the way. It wasn't until I became a Trust member that I learned that 1697 was named after its designer, and not the bloke who first flew the Atlantic in nineteen-whatever-it-was!

I can vaguely remember seeing a Black 5 poddling up the line, but if anyone can confirm this I would be grateful. (EDITOR'S NOTE: *We too have heard rumours of*



C THORPSON

a BR steam loco venturing up towards Moor Road in those early days. Perhaps some of our veteran members would like to comment, and also explain how on earth our permanent way survived the strain!!

My first meeting with a different Middleton loco came as a surprise and a shock. I had gone down to the line as usual, and all of a sudden there came a strange noise from behind me, perhaps best likened to someone trying to blow a trumpet while out of breath. I turned round and saw a small, black, box-like object wheezing and clunking its way towards me. Closer inspection revealed a large yellow 54 on each side, and thick black smoke (not unlike the stuff I produce nowadays!) coming from a hole in the top.

To say the least, I was surprised. The chimney was on the tender, but smoke was coming from the roof To a seven year-old, who had never heard of a Sentinel, still less seen one, the first sighting would seem odd. After I got over this first surprise, I quite liked 54, and still do, even though I have been heard to call it some unkind names!

When I moved to my present address in 1965, I lost all contact with the line, apart from odd glimpses here and there. By 1968, when I was fourteen, I had started coming home from school games via Parkside and past the railway. It was about this time that I first heard of the Middleton Railway Trust, even though I had worked for it eight years earlier (and had watched awe-struck at the unloading of the ill-fated Swansea & Mumbles railcar). This happened quite by accident, as I had caught a 74 bus to town and seen a poster declaring: "1758 Middleton Railway Steam Gala, all welcome". Being interested in railways, I decided to see what this was about, but never quite managed to get there. I only realised what I had missed when I saw Mr. Cole's tractor on its way home that evening.

The day I first saw Sweet Pea, coming across Moor Road on its way back to the yard, was the day I finally decided to join Middleton, and the opportunity came two weeks later, when I went to the 1969 Steam Gala.

Fowler fare

'Fowler Light Railway Machinery, Locomotives'. Reprinted by the Industrial Railway Society. 40 pp, 8½" x 11", card covers. Price 50p. post free from: 44 Hicks Avenue, Greenford, Middlesex.

It probably came as a surprise to most of us, at one time or another, to learn that Leeds builds locomotives. Unlike the Crewes, Doncasters, and Swindons of this world, the popular association of the city with the industry is just not there, and yet locomotives from Leeds — unlike, dare one say, those of the more celebrated railway towns — went out and conquered the world. Independent of any railway company, but perhaps therefore rather vulnerable at home, the locomotive manufacturers of Leeds found excellent markets overseas for their rugged little machines, primarily but by no means exclusively in the developing areas of the Empire. This world-wide approach continues today among the surviving manufacturers, and occasionally produces such bizarre happenings as last year's construction by Hunslet of a new narrow-gauge steam locomotive for an industrial railway in Indonesia.

The firm of John Fowler & Co., has perhaps been best known in recent years for its range of small diesel locomotives, production of which finally ceased in 1968, but once upon a time they too turned out a steady stream of small steam engines, mainly variations on a few standard themes, and mainly destined for the colonies. It is these machines which are commemorated in this reprint of the firm's railway catalogue of the 1920's. Excellently reproduced on good quality paper, this is a real gem of a publication, evoking the long-dead days when the steam railway was still the unchallenged answer to most transportation problems, and Britain still believed she ruled the waves.

We are shown examples of Fowler's range — mainly various sizes of narrow-gauge side-tanks, with balloon stacks, scanty cabs and prodigious quantities of domes on their tubby little boilers — some in official photos, and some in action, usually hauling impossibly long trains of wagons through some sort of tropical scenery. We are also treated to some of the technical sales patter of the time, which is both interesting and quaint, and are provided with very thorough lists of dimensions, which will be of great value to both historians and modellers.

A taste of the future comes with the short section on 'Motor Locomotives' ("Motor Locomotives are more useful than Steam Locomotives for many kinds of work and although more expensive in running costs they are rapidly coming into favour . . ."), but we return to things — even then — nearly past with a further short section illustrating the other Fowler manufactures, such as traction engines, steam rollers and steam lorries. The range of light railway rolling stock is also displayed, and the volume is introduced by a newly-compiled history of Fowler steam locomotive construction — the precursor of a fuller history still to come — together with notes identifying the locomotive illustrations in the catalogue proper.

In short, this is a publication which we commend most enthusiastically to all those interested in industrial and light railway locomotives, and one which ought certainly to find a lot of support in the Leeds area.

MJL.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

SWANSEA

Sir,

Jim Lodge's account of his thorough research into 'Swansea's' history leads us to ask ourselves again whether we should spend time, effort, money and space in preserving an engine of such doubtful historical importance, without the prospect of ever working it.

To enlighten our debate, can you tell us what other Avonside B2s and B3s are preserved, where, and in what condition?

Pinner, Middlesex

JOHN EDWARDS

(Four Avonside B2/B3 0-6-OSTs are known to be preserved in this country, in addition to our own AE 1569. In chronological order, they are as follows:

- AE 1465/1904: *No. 1 of the Mersey Docks & Harbour Board. Now preserved at the City of Liverpool Museum, William Brown Street, Liverpool.*
- AE 1568/1909: *'Lucy', formerly of Hutchinsons Estate & Dock Co., Widnes. Now preserved by the Liverpool Locomotive Preservation Group at Seacombe, Cheshire. A recent photograph of this locomotive, apparently in steam, appeared in the October issue of Railway Modeller, and so it would appear to be in working order.*
- AE 1572/1910: *'Woolmer', formerly of the War Department, and preserved as a static exhibit at Longmoor. With the cessation of railway activity there, it is not known how long the static exhibits will remain.*
- AE 1810/1918: *No. 26 of the Mersey Docks & Harbour Board. Installed in a children's playground at Digmaor Shopping Parade, Skelmersdale. Not therefore preserved in the true sense of the word, and will probably have disintegrated after a few years.*

We are indebted to the Hon. Records Officer of the Industrial Railway Society for supplying the above information.

EDITOR.)

From the grassroots

Sir,

There are sections of the MRT that function extremely well, and can be regarded as consistent and profit-making. On the other hand, there are sections of the MRT that seem to function when the spirit moves them, and then often in the wrong direction.

There exists a Publicity Sub-Committee, which meets regularly and achieves little. There exists a complicated membership renewal system, which not infrequently absorbs subscriptions and omits to produce a membership card. Since we started to

become a limited company, two other railway preservation groups have achieved this status. What happened to Middleton? Or to put it another way, who hasn't been doing his job?

No wonder there is a lack of support when a menial job requires to be done. Nobody wants to be 'used' by someone who is not doing his job, and is in some cases content with hiding behind an out-of-Leeds address at the top of a letter. Please, thou high-ranking officials, do your jobs properly, and you can count on the support of Mr. Average Member.

Leeds 6.

CHARLES OLDROYD

Electric loss

Sir,

Middleton members will recall the 1912 Metrovick electric locomotive presented to us in 1969, for a nominal sum by the CEGB, who asked us to arrange delivery and to plan covered accommodation. Two years later there was no action, and an offer to put up a wooden shed with doors and windows protected by steel plate was vetoed, although one of the proposed sites was in a place approved by the City Engineer as long ago as 1960.

The CEGB, after waiting two years, threatened to cut up the locomotive for scrap unless it was removed. The Association of Railway Preservation Societies recommended emergency action, the Stour Valley Railway Preservation Society, Essex, stepped in and the locomotive, along with a generous supply of overhead wire, spares and insulators, arrived there on 6th June 1972.

University of Leeds

Dr. R. F. YUELL

Up the workers

Sir,

It is my opinion that much can be achieved once the Workers have overthrown the elitist free enterprise organisations which now rule Railway 'Preservation' with a rod of iron reminiscent of the 19th century coalmasters, and instate true co-operatives.

Once the reprehensible, unrepresentative and impotent fabric, which currently deludes itself that it controls the Trust, is overthrown by a concerted spontaneous populist Workers' rising to support the legitimate demands of the masses, a network of ad hoc delegates will restore the Middleton Railway to its rightful condition.

Down with the shiny-trousered, tea-drinking, biscuit-eating Committee! Down with the secret-guarding Publicity Sub-Committee! Down with the notorious, unfair SS torturer pigs and Imperialist running-dogs, the R & DSC!

Bring back dumb buffers on Henry de Lacy, the wooden jib on the hand-crane, loose couplings, splintered steps and running boards on the brake van, rotten sleepers in our tracks, imbecile platelayers, and crowds on the terraces at Parkside.

Failure to implement without delay these demands, and in full, will result in the Wheeltappers & Shunters WMC forming a Friends of Swumbles (deceased) Association to take up the Revolutionary Struggle.

FRUSTRATED TRAMSPIV (Name & address supplied)

Happy ending

Sir,

I would like to thank the Middleton Railway committee for acting so promptly and restoring the Middleton wagon to a presentable condition. At last we have got a wagon which looks respectable enough to shout about. We will no longer have to 'pretend the thing's not there' when showing visitors around. We can now show them another part of our history with pride, not hide it in shame.

At last the only black spot on the whole railway has been dealt with, and we can now go forward and restore other items of rolling stock which have up to now seen years of neglect. By this I am referring to the 1880 Midland hand-crane, which needs urgent restoration before we can put it on show.

AE 1569 (Name and address supplied)

BR AND SCRAP

An analysis of BR's changing relationship with the steel industry was published in the July issue of Modern Railways, and the following paragraph is of direct interest to the Middleton Railway Trust:

"Scrap metal is . . . an important ingredient of steel-making, but it is not looked upon as an area of great traffic growth for the railways. There will be some developments in accordance with the availability of the material — as we use more, we scrap more — and the needs of the industry, but not all of them lead towards greater ton-mileage of scrap by rail. For example, the retention of scrap at steelworks will work against bigger rail traffic; this will happen at Scunthorpe where a greater demand from the steelworks with its enlarged plant will reduce the despatch of scrap to Sheffield. British Rail, moreover, is marginally limiting its own catchment areas for scrap as small freight depots are closed, so that frequently the distance a small merchant has to go by his own lorry is so great that it is more economic to take his load all the way to the BSC works in his own vehicle. Scrap is 90 per cent wagon-load working and it is generally carried in 16-ton mineral wagons, with a proportion of the traffic carried in 21-tonners. This is likely to be the continuing pattern of this side of the trade."

THE SINGED EYEBROWS SAGA

J R COWLING

I think that I can lay claim to being one of the founder members of that small but devoted band of worthy men, the top-link locomotive crew on the Middleton Railway passenger service. Yes, I was the fireman on that far-off summer's day when JAL (to his friends, J. Arthur) had a rush of blood to the head, and set the first regular passenger service in motion. The day was blazing hot, and Hunslet feast was in full swing in the open space behind the rugby ground. I well remember queues of people waiting for the privilege of riding up to Miggy park propelled by Henry de Lacy II, then freshly converted to coal firing (vandalism!). Thus it was that, as well as having to chat up potential customers at the old tram crossing, the two soot-, sweat- and grease-begrimed entrepreneurs had also to learn how to handle their charge.

I must now take a swig from my bottle of tepid, discoloured water (taken from the engine's tank) and pass on to the first winter. If that first day was the honeymoon, this was married bliss setting in in deadly earnest (who asked him?). Or should I say the wolves came down from the hills and howled at the door. Anyway, more often than not it was a case of a loco. crew of one for part of the day at least, and I well remember being promoted to driver, in spite of my age. One of my first firemen, good old (one lump or two) Philips, sheared off after only a couple of hours on the job. Well, it was snowing into the cab at the time.

Now we move the clock forward through the arrival of the passenger wagon (this is progress already?) and another locomotive, and several minor mishaps — tubes leaking, the saga of the amazing vanishing side-rod bearing, etc., — up to the end of last season, with seedy commercialism well established in the brake van, along with what at first sight appears to be a milkman.

However, we digress. I must now come to the point and explain why it is that I go in for this particular form of insidious masochism, which is a big word for this time of day. I suppose the best thing would be to give a diary of a typical day's events. The first thing that happens on the great day is that you wake up at about 8.30, and get up. As the cold lino soaks through your feet and congeals the cockles of your heart, you get dressed. Wondering whether or not to end it all, or tell the Traffic Manager and the CME what they can do with their passenger service, you burn your fingers while making breakfast, a meal which is supposed to shrink your tongue, put the top back on your head and kill those rampant trolls in your eardrums. Then you drive down to the railway.

You arrive at 10.00 a.m. There are two reasons for this. On average it takes roughly three hours to raise steam, and it's as well to allow time to deal with the inevitable 'surprises' which occur. And you have to light up — if your fireman is keen enough to be down at this time, he will be too inexperienced to manage it properly on his own. So you check the water level and clean out the firegrate, which sometimes must be done from inside the firebox, thereby silting up your nose and throat. Next you scout around, find some paper and some wood, and attempt to light a fire, which goes out. Then you open the damper and, remembering how the

Boy Scouts do it with one match, pour on some used sump oil. This time the fire goes, as too do your eyebrows, in spite of your remembering to remove the chimney cover.

Then, with the fire going satisfactorily — and hoping that the smoke doesn't attract that invariably irate gent from Garnet Road, whose wife only hangs out the washing when there's an engine in steam — you put on your soggy overalls (who used them to block that broken window?), pick up the oilcan and crawl under the engine. You can either do this along the ground, filling your boiler suit with cinders, or between the running plate and the boiler, which is awkward because spring hangers, grab irons and oilcups tend to snag on tender regions of your anatomy. When you are underneath, you realise your oilcan is empty, and crawl out again. Back under once more, you pour some oil up your left sleeve, some into your boots, some on to your head, and about six drops somehow find their way into each oilcup.

A little later, you think that maybe some dinner would kill those trolls, so you go and buy two pork pies. The first one you eat immediately, but it is cold, having just come out of a fridge, and it makes your fillings ache. So you put the other one near the fire for a few minutes, which chars the crust, but leaves the innards as cold as ever. This one tastes worse, and the last half gets thrown over King's wall.

Sometime just after one, there is sufficient steam for you to move down to the coal pile, but first you must pour some cylinder oil into the oiling points on the cylinder fronts. Then you open the little tap, and it fires the oil all over your glasses. You may have opened the drain cocks, but you still get showered with a hot, sooty solution when you move off, which is why you don't clean the paintwork before you've moved about a bit. At the coal pile you curse the man who didn't fill the bunker the previous night, and miss death by inches (well, a few feet, anyway) when the inherent instability of twelve tons of coal on a stage fit for about twelve hundredweight is displayed to fine advantage.



By now some of the ancillary staff have turned up. These include one or two people regarded as 'good blokes' — a term which may include ladies — and also the guard (alias the milkman, the ice-cream man and several less printable names) complete with about two cubic yards of assorted paraphernalia. As there is a feud in progress between him and you, you mock him in a thoroughly petty and childish manner, which helps to pass the time. Then you tear up the yard in order to wake up these good people — after all, the Sales Manager may be a 'good bloke', but he gets a bit mercenary when it comes to giving free pop to loco. drivers. You also want to put some water in the tank.

By now, zero hour approaches, and you thunder down to the platform. The next part of the day is perhaps the most boring, and the following are some of the little things which make time pass more quickly:

Baiting the guard by asking for his shunter's certificate, but making sure first that you've remembered your driving pass.

Talking to an old bloke who remembers your engine when it was (a) powering Joe Bloggs' three-abreast gallopers; (b) working underground at some colliery; (c) operating the Southend pier railway; or (d) just a baby engine.

Posing for photographs with a glassy look on your face, and bearing the escutcheon of the two digits rampant.

Assuring potential passengers that if you met a loco. driver with a hangover like yours, you'd go by submarine.

Tearing a strip off the fireman.

Blowing the whistle at a passing dolly bird.

Running a train.

The procedure for this latter diversion is complex, and merits some explanation for the benefit of the layman. First you signal to the guard by means of the whistle, and the guard then checks the barriers, and so on, and waves you on in a peremptory fashion. This annoys you, so you wait a little before setting off, in order to demonstrate to the guard that he is the lowest form of human life.

As the train lurches its way up to the park, you keep a supply of fist-sized pieces of coal handy, in case of attacks by injuns (or, in more orthodox terminology, offspring of the locals). These horrors are capable of practically anything, from placing telegraph poles across the track to sniping at you with air rifles (both have actually happened), and seem, biologically speaking, to be mutants of homo sapiens — an example of the ill effects of industrial pollution, perhaps. As the train nears the final curve, about 300 yards from the halt, pressure will start to fall alarmingly, showing that you have failed to berate your fireman sufficiently before setting off. So you are careful about stopping at the top, as the efficacy of the steam brake is somewhat impaired at low pressures, as certain deformities in the level-crossing gates at Burton Road mutely testify.

On the return journey, you may slow down almost to a crawl by the Parkside rugby ground if a game is in progress. It has been known for the visitors to score three tries, and convert two of them, whilst the train was passing.

A little later it is time for the ancillary staff to pack up and go home, but it still remains to you to 'put the engine to bed', which means filling it with coal and water, and raking most of the fire and clinker into the ashpan. You then go home, bath, have a drink and fall asleep in front of the telly. A little later still, it is time for you to go to bed, reflecting to yourself that you wouldn't half write an article for The Old Run if you had the time.

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