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# The Old Run

Journal of the 1758 Middleton Railway Trust, Leeds



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# The Old Run

Journal of the 1758 Middleton Railway Trust, Leeds

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Telephone: Leeds 23424

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JANUARY 1964

## MOOR END WORKS LINE IS IN USE

The long-awaited point for the new siding into Clayton's Moor End Works, at the Balm Road/British Railways end of the Middleton Railway, has arrived and is now safely installed.

It is two years since work on the new siding was begun. Plans for the line were first made in April 1961, and the last of the track was finished earlier this year.

The new siding commences at a point a few yards above the turnout for the arrival and dispatch roads which are used for exchanging traffic with B.R. The point is a facing one to trains proceeding towards B.R. and the new line diverges to the left up a steep incline and round a sharp curve. After about 50 yards the track passes under a pair of high wooden gates and proceeds a considerable distance inside the works before connecting with the already existing internal works system.

### Gas Factory Junction

This is the second new siding to be laid by the MRT. The first, known as 'Youell Crossing' after the MRT chairman, Dr. R.F. Youell, is an internal works line in Clayton's Dartmouth Works. The new siding will be known as 'Gas Factory Junction', because Clayton's are gas engineers and because many of the streets abutting the railway are 'Gasholder...'.  
.

The original Gas Factory Junction is about 2½ miles from Fenchurch Street Station, where the Midland line to Tilbury and Southend diverges from the Great Eastern Railway. December was actually the 120th anniversary of the opening of that junction. There is a gas works overlooking the junction.

There are surprising links between Middleton and the original Gas Factory Junction. There is, of course, a gas works straddling the original course of the Middleton Railway north of Jack Lane, Hunslet. What is not generally known, however, is that the unmetalled road which leads off Burton Road to Hunslet Rugby ground is called 'Fenchurch Street' - although name-plates were never erected for it!

When the Eastern Region of British Railways took over the Tilbury

(continued overleaf)

## MOOR END LINE *(continued)*

line and electrified it, the LMS tank engines which had worked the passenger trains were dispersed - and some of them now work the coal traffic at the colliery end of the Middleton Railway! These engines are based at Ardsley.

It is hoped to have a Grand Opening Ceremony for the new siding when it has been bedded down by traffic.

## THIS JOB WAS WORTH DOING

*From: Dr. R.F. Youell, 5, North Grange Mount, Headingley, Leeds, 6. (Chairman, Middleton Railway Trust):*

Elsewhere in this issue there is a report on the installation of the new point into Clayton's Moor End Works. I should like to thank all those who worked despite cold, sleet, and darkness so that we should not leave a job half done. Perhaps a more detailed account of how the point was installed by the 'faithful few' would be interesting to those members who are not able to visit the site more often because of distance or other commitments.

Gas Factory Junction points (after the London namesake which is next to a gas works equipped with Clayton's Gas holders) arrived on the last day of November. It was too late to do anything that weekend, but the following Tuesday the track was unloaded and laid out in the right order. Forty seven sleepers were measured up, numbered and marked with arrows to show which way they should be laid. Your chairman was helped in this job by that unusual phenomenon, a woman mechanical engineer, member Sheila MacDougall.

On Saturday, December 7, the whole point was taken to the site from its temporary resting place in Clayton's yard and was laid next to the old track, with Messrs. Rayner and Charlesworth steamcraning par excellence.

### Senex foils suspects

That evening 'Senex' stood guard in his car after some suspicious looking people in a lorry had been seen poking at loose chairs and making loitering-with-intent noises. At 4 a.m. the loiterers departed, leaving a tired but triumphant Senex.

*On Sunday all the crossing timbers were laid in by spirit level; this was the most important exact work of all. The old track was relaid on temporary chairs, in view of the need to run daily even during the work.*

During the following week, your chairman transferred dozens of chairs to the correct sleepers and pinned them down.

Saturday, December 14, saw the 'grand slam'. All the old track came out and the steam crane dropped in the common crossing with the benefit of advance planning shown by the fact that the screw holes were normally

*(continued opposite)*

practically in line with the chair holes.

Twenty sleepers went in and were spirit-levelled, then, with a great heave, three of the four rails were lifted into place. Fishplates clanked home and bolts and nuts were tightened. At 9 p.m., five hours after dark, we called it a day.

Sunday saw the last 12 sleepers laid in level and the hand crane dropping the switch rails in. Then a final screwing up and cutting of closure rails, and the straight line was in running condition.

On Monday the last curved rail was dropped into place and connected up with the remaining old track. At 2.30 p.m. on Tuesday the first train (loco and wagon on test) ran over the points with B.R.'s Harry Lowe inspecting every inch. The gauge was exact to within an eighth of an inch, and no sleeper sank visibly under the load.

### Best job so far

As we ran up and down the joints gave not the slightest bump. We are still not perfect in our work, but this is certainly our best job so far. It is a great pleasure to look at the whole section between the new points and the top loop points and see the two lines both laid as they should be and fit to take anything we can run over them.

As usual we must recognise that doing the job properly was thanks to the careful planning and forethought of Senex. *Concilio et labore* in his method of work, and it is much more effective than the engineer's recipe of *Vi mera inscitiaque cruenta*.

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Members of the MRT would not like this letter to pass without comment. Most of the hard work in laying the new siding and much of that in connecting it up to the main line was done by one man—R.F. Youell. His achievement, and that of other loyal members who kept the railway operating and expanding during 1963, should inspire us all to make greater efforts during the coming year.*

*There is much work to be done in 1964. Can you set aside one day, or a few hours, each month to come and lend a hand? Yes, the work is arduous and slow; but its results are permanent and useful.*

### MRT has new operating chief

Mr. Graham Mitchell, the Middleton Railway's operating superintendent whose job it is to arrange the rota of volunteer drivers for the Railway's daily freight service, has resigned from his position owing to the increased pressure of academic work in his final year at Leeds University.

His successor is Mr. Peter Threlfall, of 133, Victoria Road, Leeds, 6, to whom all inquiries about the running times of trains should be addressed in future. Mr. Threlfall may also be contacted at Leeds University Union.

We are sure that all members of the MRT will join us in thanking Graham for the work he has done in the last year and will wish him every success in his exams.

## The Great Marquess will take part in special tour

'The Great Marquess', the restored LNER K4 class engine belonging to Lord Garnock, president of the Middleton Railway Trust, will be used on a special excursion train organised by Ian Allen next June.

The train will leave King's Cross behind the 'Flying Scotsman' another famous LNER engine owned by Colonel A. Peglar - and will run to Leeds as an 8-coach express.

On arrival at Central Station, the West Riding portion of the excursion will be attached to the rear of the train by 'The Great Marquess', which will then haul the 11-coach train up the steep gradient out of the station and will take it to Darlington.

The trip will coincide with the closure of Darlington locomotive works, and it is therefore fitting that 'The Great Marquess', which was built at Darlington 26 years ago, should take the party of enthusiasts on their farewell visit to the works.

*There may be more surprises on the way for this trip. This special advance publicity is meant to enable Middleton members and friends to ensure their seats on what promises to be a most enjoyable and historic trip. Further details will be announced as they are arranged.*

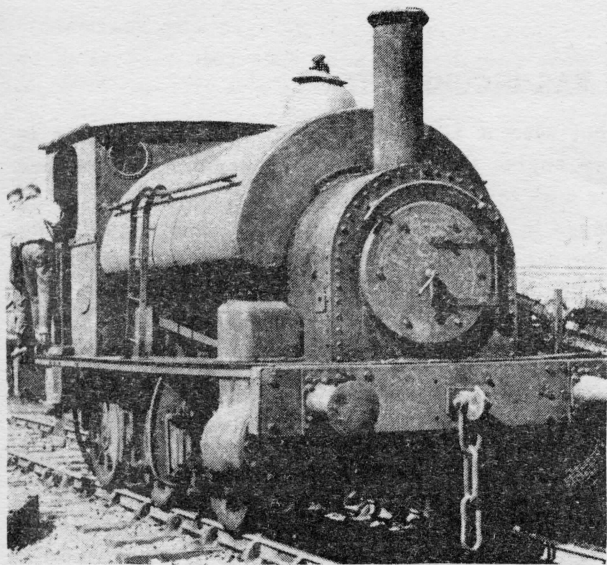
### THE OLD RUN NEEDS YOUR HELP

*No, you have not lost two issues of The Old Run in the post! Although no November or December issues of The Old Run were produced, the present issue is No. 41, which follows on from the last issue.*

*The reason for the regrettable gap is that it has proved impossible to catch up on the time lost last year through illness, moving premises and other crises. Rather than go on two months in arrears, it was decided that the best plan would be to start the new year on a more reasonable footing, and that is why this issue is dated January.*

*We should all like to see The Old Run published promptly every month, containing up-to-date news, interesting features and a pleasant format. The success of this, we must repeat, depends on you. We begin the new year with a new cover which it is hoped will help boost sales - but we need your help. Articles and photographs are still urgently required and we have yet to receive our first offer to sell or distribute copies of your journal.*

*The value of The Old Run to the Middleton Railway Trust is potentially great. If we are to expand - and we must to meet our obligations - then a lively journal widely read is absolutely essential. Will you help to realise this potential?*



'SWANSEA'  
the locomotive to  
which Mr. Shearman  
refers in his letter.  
This photo was  
taken in Autumn 1963,  
and much work has  
been done on the  
engine since.

## DON'T KNOCK THE CROCKS

### *Traction engine rallies appeal to all steam enthusiasts*

From: L. Shearman, 12, Cheltenham Gardens, Coronation Road, Halifax.  
Your comments on traction engines in the September *Old Run* completely miss the mark. I have visited many traction engine rallies in the past year, and I cannot agree that 'there is something not quite right about the atmosphere.'

A true enthusiast of the prime mover can appreciate the object of his love whether or not they are working hard. I have vivid memories of a traction engine quietly driving a threshing machine, gently rocking to and fro, and moving me deeply by its sheer unobtrusiveness. Even for the so-called 'enthusiast of steam' who cannot pursue his interest without the thunder and mushroom of smoke, a traction engine rally must hold appeal, for some people frown on rallies because they 'put too great a strain on the engines.'

#### How can you do it!

The whole point is, I feel, that the fields of steam locomotives and road vehicles should be complementary, not conflicting. I am, furthermore, baffled for an explanation as to why a Middletonian can so slate steam road vehicles when the railway not only has a crane which uses the high-

*(continued overleaf)*

(continued from page 5)

## SWANSEA ARTICLE WAS INCOMPLETE

speed steam engine, but also a Sentinel locomotive whose engine is virtually a Sentinel lorry engine turned through 90 degrees, and whose boiler is interchangeable with those on Sentinel steam lorries!

The article on *Swansea* in the July *Old Run* was, unfortunately, only about 50 per cent correct. The Avonside B3 type, of which *Swansea* is an example, was in production from 1906-1926 (not 1899-1910); the type is an enlargement of the B2, which was in production from 1896-1905. A total of 59 engines was built (not 25), and 21 were supplied to the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board, some of which later found new homes.

The statement that the engine has a 'copper round-topped firebox' is misleading. The external firebox shell is round-topped, but is of mild steel as is the rest of the boiler, while the internal firebox, of copper, has a flat crown supported by slings and bridge stays.

### No need for continous brake

There is no concrete evidence that the engine was ever fitted with the continuous vacuum brake for work on the *Swansea* and *Mumbles*. On light railways, the Board of Trade allows passenger operation without continuous brake if the average speed does not exceed 25 mph. This would appear to be the case here, for *Swansea* certainly does not carry any scars attributable to her being fitted with vacuum brake.

Recent research, incidentally, shows that *Swansea* was one of the last, if not the last, engine to leave the Avonside Engine Works with 1909 works plates.

While I am pleased to report that work on *Swansea's* restoration is progressing, it is frequently held up by the shortage of labour for permanent way and other work. Could I therefore repeat the time-worn, often ignored appeal for more helpers at Middleton?

*EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. Shearman is engineer to Swansea, and we are grateful to him for this further information on the locomotive.*

*With regard to Mr. Shearman's comments on my comments on Cassandra's article on traction engines, I think he has missed my point. I quoted Cassandra with approval, but pointed out that there often seems to be no point in the activities carried out at the rally. They seem rather degrading to the machines than showing them to their best advantage. Nevertheless, I would not advance this as an argument for stopping traction engine rallies, if they give so many people pleasure and help to preserve the engines.*

*Mr. Shearman has misunderstood my use of the word 'work', which he takes to mean 'effort'. An engine can naturally be working effortlessly*

*(continued opposite)*



(continued from page 6)

as it is said, and still have more dignity than one which is exerting itself to capacity in a game of traction engine polo.

Perhaps my remarks may be taken as fanciful or sentimental. My ultimate point in the article, however, was that whereas some preservation schemes (railway, traction engine, or whatever) are justified only for sentimental reasons, or at the best historical, the Middleton Railway is justified for its own sake - it does 'work' in all senses of the word. It is just as necessary now as it was in 1758.

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## Middleton does a 'Titfield'

Readers will be familiar with the story of the *Titfield Thunderbolt*; the Middleton version of one of the incidents in this film happened on December 14 during the installation of the new point.

Steam crane drivers Derek Rayner and John Charlesworth fired the crane on the Saturday morning and, because they wanted to reach the site of work as quickly as possible, set off with a  $\frac{3}{4}$  glass of water in the boiler, and a tank half full. The idea was to fill the tank at the tap left by the builders who had put the new factories up by the railway.

Since the crane uses more steam when travelling than when doing lifting jobs, the drivers had to inject water into the boiler on the way down. So, by the time the crane was within 100 yards of the site, no more water could be put into the boiler since the tank water gauge showed 'empty' due to the gradient.

### Catastrophe strikes!

They hurried along to the tap, hose pipe at the ready with the water level in the boiler within half an inch of the bottom of the glass. Then - catastrophe! Someone had dug up the tap and taken it away!

No water, and the boiler blowing off at 45 lbs! 'Should we drop the fire,' they wondered, 'and retire with our tails between our legs, to be hauled ignominiously back to the yard by our faithful *John Alcock*?'

Fortunately Fate intervened at this point. '*To Gasholder Place man!*' he cried. Off the driver and helpers rushed with cans and buckets, with the crane following gingerly along behind.

Middleton's friends in Gasholder Place came to the rescue. They allowed the hose to be run from their kitchen tap through the house into the front garden, where a human chain was formed to carry the buckets and cans to the crane, which was waiting just above the adjacent road crossing.

As in the *Titfield Thunderbolt*, all went happily after that. The tank was filled, water injected into the boiler, and work commenced, to a chorus of 'Thank you very much!' to the friends in Gasholder Place.

## 1758 MIDDLETON RAILWAY TRUST

### Important Notice

The annual general meeting of the Middleton Railway Trust will take place in the Physics Department, Leeds University on Saturday, March 14, at 2.30 p.m. All are urged to attend.

### Closed railway statistics

In a written answer to a question in the House of Commons last December, the Minister of Transport listed the mileage of disused railway routes in each region at January 1, 1963, together with the proportion of that mileage which has not been in use for operational running for more than two, four, six and eight years respectively.

Answering a further question, the Minister said that figures of the average cost per mile per year of the upkeep of disused railway routes were not available. The mileage of closed railway routes is listed below:

#### MILEAGE AT 1ST JANUARY, 1963 OF RAILWAY ROUTES NOT USED FOR NORMAL DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS

	Eastern Region	London Midland Region	North Eastern Region	Scottish Region	Southern Region	Western Region
TOTAL	303½	162½	292	328½	161½	561½

Note: The above figures relate to closures since 1st January, 1948.

Closed for more than:	Eastern Region	London Midland Region	North Eastern Region	Scottish Region	Southern Region	Western Region
2 years	285%	95%	233	271%	129%	293%
4 years	95	94%	181½	191½	129%	223%
6 years	82%	94%	81½	168	112½	187%
8 years	67½	89%	80	134½	78½	156%

## JOIN THE MRT NOW!

The MRT subscription, now due, is one guinea (junior and student 7s. 6d.). The membership secretary is M.D. Crew, 82, Woodland Road, Leeds, 15.

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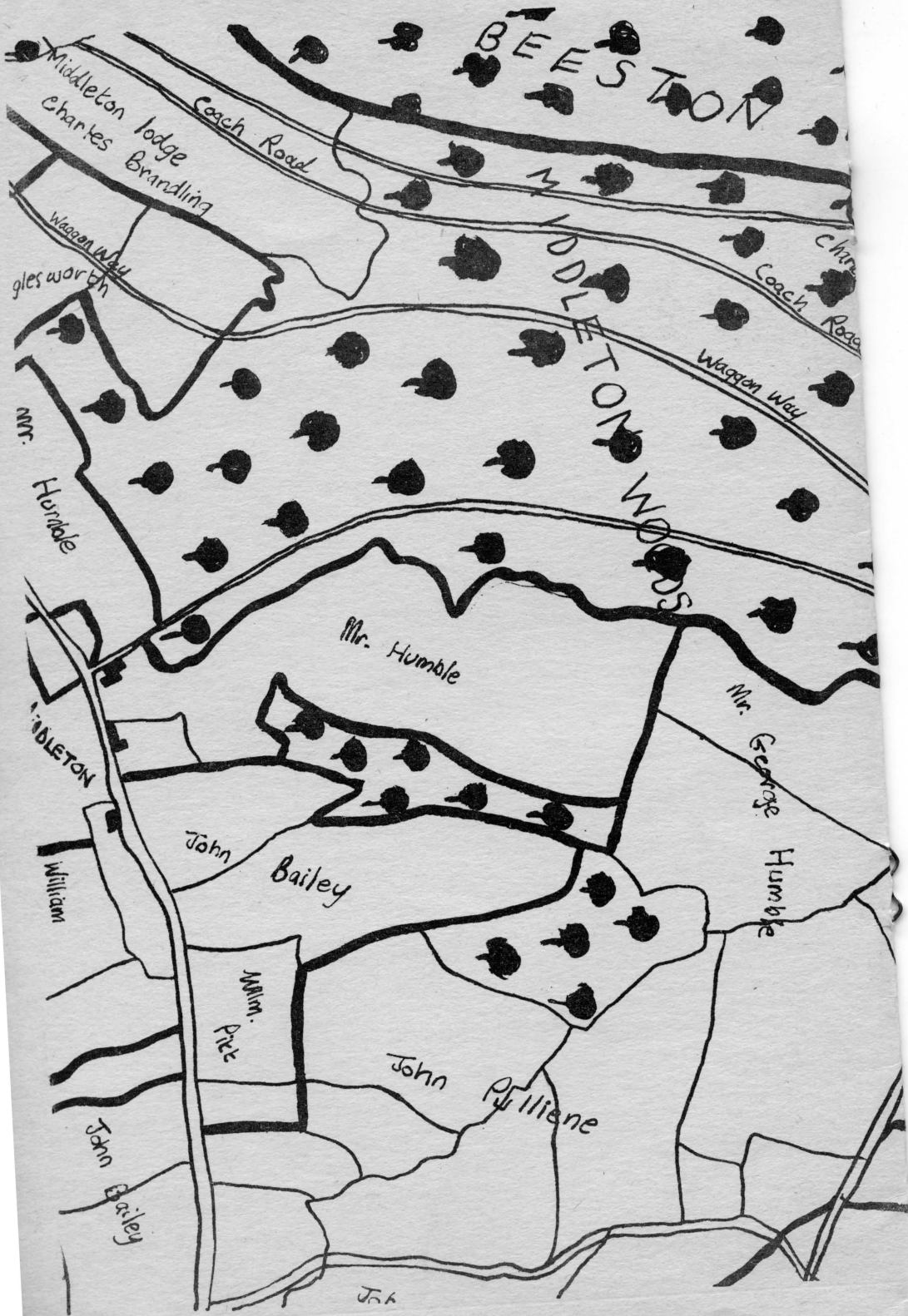
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