

OLD RUN NEWS  
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Newsletter of the Middleton Railway Trust.

Number 45 October 1969.

BLENKINSOP ON THE RACK. Our Sales Manager was delighted to receive the following letter from Worksop:-

"Dear Sir,

Would you please send me four copies of the bookley "First Steam Locomotives - 1812", which I saw advertised on visiting Cusworth Hall today. I think the booklet will mention John Blenkinsop, the engineer who invented the locomotive with teeth on the driving wheels to fit cogs on rails. He was a member of our family of an earlier generation, and I have the mother-of-pearl oval pass which was issued to him to travel on the Midland Railway. I have seen a cutting from Wright's Leeds Intelligence (date of issue January 11th 1813) offering a reward for information about those responsible for attempting to damage Blenkinsop's locomotive. If you happen to know where I could get a copy or photo-copy of the advertisement, or even of the newspaper, I would be most grateful.

Yours faithfully, C. L. Blenkinsop."

Having had the pleasure of welcoming Matthew Murray's descendents at the Bicentenary, we are pleased and particularly appreciative to make this new contact. Vandalism seems to have been going in Hunslet since 1813! We are a little perplexed at Blenkinsop's Pass on the Midland, as this railway was formed in 1844 and John Blenkinsop died in 1841. The pass could have been from one of his children, or from the NORTH Midland, the Midland's predecessor. To be sure (as the Editor knows) it is very easy to get mixed up between Midland and Middleton, but this is too facile an explanation, as John Blenkinsop would hardly need a pass to travel on his own railway!

Our new contact may help us sort out the facts of the early days. So often the fact that "Blenkinsop" was a locomotive name, and the term "The Blenkinsop Loco." used, has given the impression that Blenkinsop invented the whole thing. It is a fact that he invented and patented the Rack Rail, and that the LOCO. was built at Murray's works, Denisons building the rails. We have regarded the final drive and all below it as Blenkinsop's idea, and all above it as Murray's. We do NOT know with certainty how much collaboration there was, probably a great deal. Did Blenkinsop say "Please build me a steam engine which will run on my rack rail", or did he say "I have a rack rail design, and a plan for a steam engine to move on it, can you build to my plan?" Both must naturally have credit, and we think our division of the credit as above is correct, but the idea of Blenkinsop being behind the whole thing keeps popping up, and we are willing to be convinced by any new evidence. Perhaps, members, we might have a look at John Blenkinsop's grave lest it be in the same state as Murray's.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS. (including many who joined at the Steam Happening):-  
G. Nuttall (Junior) Leeds 10, V M Smith (Junior) Leeds 11, H Jacobs Leeds 9, K Parkin Rotherham, T S White Leeds 16, K Dowell Leeds 8, D Atkinson (Junior) Leeds 10, M Crapper (Junior) Leeds 15, G Ward, Leeds 11, Mrs. D Walker Gildersome, N Brooks Leeds 17, Poole & District Transport Society Dorset, J A Fleming Hampstead Heath London, J M Crowther Long Preston, N Thayer (Junior) Leeds 11.  
We also are pleased to record the birth of a daughter Helen to former Civil Engineer & Treasurer P. Worsfold, and a son Jason to Sales Manager J. Edwards.

SPONSORED WATERWALK. In order to avoid difficulties, Mr John Bushell asks that in addition to the quarto List of Sponsors, participants should have an octavo sheet with spaces for signature AT EVERY CHECK POINT and HANDED IN where the walker

finishes his effort. If this is not done, and the main sheet is mislaid, it puts an unfair arithmetical task on the organisers who have already done so much to make it succeed.

ANCIENT MIDDLETON SIDING INTACT. We have found that in the old fireclay works, now used by a wireworks, a concrete stockist and a motor vehicle dismantler, a substantial part of the Brickworks siding is still in place, although it was disconnected in 1958. This very steep branch went to a loading bay for all the brick and ceramic products.

HISTORY AND PRESERVATION. We record with pleasure enthusiastic approval from the A R P S Chairman, Captain Peter Manisty (Manisterial blessing in fact) of our course at Wetherby, and substantial support from our members at the West Riding Ainsty Institute of Further Education meetings.

NOT WORTH A HA'PENNY? Your half-penny is NOT useless. David Spencer of 26 Carr Manor Grove, Leeds 7, invites you to hand over all your 'useless' Ha'pennies so that he can exchange them to go into the M R T Appeal Fund. Give them direct to him, or via any member who is going his way.

TRUMPET BLOWING FOR PASSENGERS. C.M.E. J. Lodge has had leaflets produced to advertise our regular service to Middleton Park for visitors. These are clear and simple and he asks you to show them in any prominent position you can think of.

SUCCESSFUL SATURDAY. Laying on special facilities for visiting passengers by the train load means much work behind the scenes. Owing to a National shortage, B R could not supply us with brake vans for the R C & T S Special Train, despite 3 months notice. The low sided wagons ordered as a substitute still hadn't arrived on the morning of the trip. As a result we hadn't time to sweep them out, and the "Special" was 10 minutes late from Balm Road. We had a problem with the wagons arriving tight coupled, some brute force being needed to make the couplings suitable for our sharp curves. For a visiting party of such National reputation, only the best would suffice, and we are happy to record that from then on we ran exactly to time. Returning to City Station via Matthew Murray's grave, the visitors were all aboard their special B R train 90 seconds before booked departure. Owing to a slip-up by B R Catering Services, our own Catering Department did wonders, 10 gallon coffee urns were ready for the R C & T S at Liverpool and refilled and redelivered to their train at Leeds City. Dartmouth Yard Canteen laid on a fish lunch (WITH plates, knives and forks) light refreshments, museum exhibits, a sales stand and enrolment facilities. Henry de Lacy II and Sentinel handled the train with about 120 aboard and steamed up the 1 in 27 near Parkside Junction in a way that could only be described as nonchalant! At no time in the afternoon did we have to hustle the visitors to keep time, and we feel we kept our end up. One of our historically minded visitors was puzzled in that he could not identify which railway had run over the old track bed next to Middleton Main Line. It was of course the old Middleton Tram Route. We thank all officers and members who helped us to put a good effort on and make it worth our visitors while to spend 4 hours getting to us.

TUT - TUT - TUT. On goods shunting work recently, our Courage Alton diesel loco. ran out of fuel. This is like blowing a fusible plug on a steam loco. -- the thing that simply does not happen. The reason - someone had "borrowed" the fuel for another diesel loco. 4 days later the same loco. failed in traffic, and many man-hours of hard work finally traced the cause to an air lock in the fuel filter as a long term result of draining the fuel tank. If a locomotive stalls while in traffic, it could block a public level crossing, or make the driver unable to use the diesel engine as a brake going downhill. So PLEASE, ALL LOCO.-MEN, only drain fuel in emergency, and if you ever drain water or fuel from a diesel loco., TELL SOMEONE and PUT A NOTICE UP!

APPEAL POSTSCRIPT. At the moment the Appeal is almost exactly at £1000 - 25%!