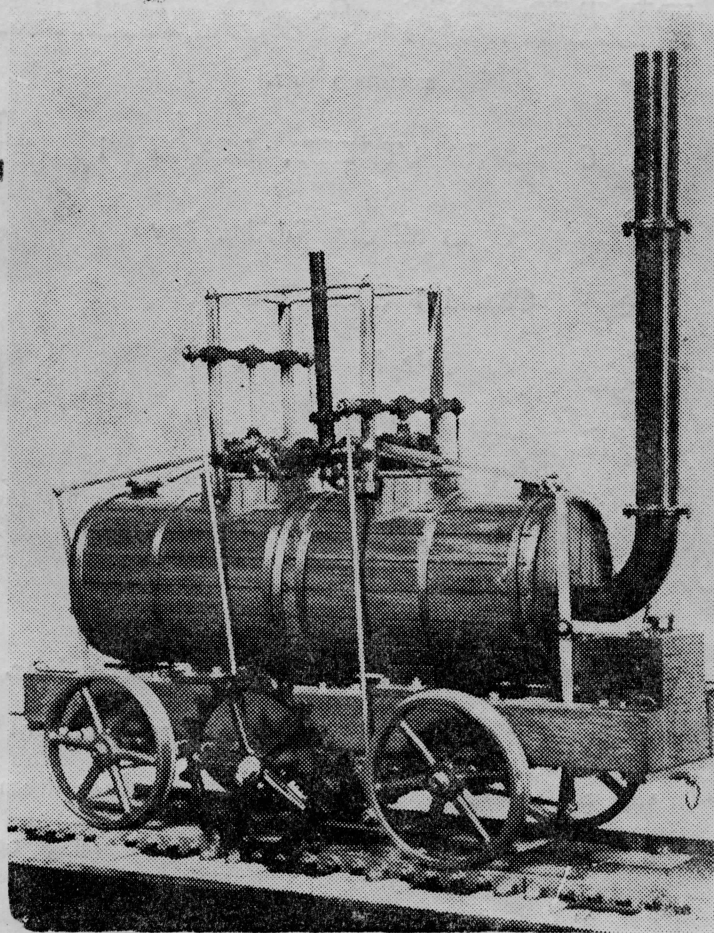


The Old Run

VOL 4 NO 40

OCTOBER 1963

1758 Middleton Railway, Leeds



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The Old Run

Journal of the 1758 Middleton Railway Trust

Editor- B. W. Ashurst, 18 Inglewood Drive, Otley,
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Vol. 4

No. 40

October 1963

'THE DREADED HOLE' RE-APPEARS!

Electricity Board digs up Railway

Relations between the Central Electricity Generating Board (Leeds Area) and the Middleton Railway have at last been put on a normal footing - after two breath-taking episodes.

The first occurred in 1961, when the Board dug up a cable under the railway and did not reinstate the track firmly enough to hold up a freight train, which became derailed. This difficulty was sorted out at the time, and, it was thought, had been finally overcome.

No authorisation

Then, on October 23rd, the Board again dug up a cable under the railway without any authorisation - fortunately without causing a derailment. The cable, the first of its kind in the country (it is a new type designed to carry 132,000 volts and is oil insulated), was being dug up for inspection when the MRT chairman, Dr. R.F. Youell, heard about it.

Dr. Youell raced to the Board's Skelton Grange engineer's office and explained the position. The engineer in charge produced the large scale map showing the

route of the new cable - and there, in large black capitals, was the explanation of the misunderstanding. The Middleton Railway was shown on the map, and beside it the words 'MINERAL RAILWAY - DISUSED'!

Exchange of views

There followed a full and frank exchange of views, after which the engineer rang up the Board's sub-contractors, British Insulated Callender's Cables Ltd, and asked them to hold everything up to avoid having their workmen run over by a 'disused' train.

The day's train crew were also alerted, and they held the train until the track had been replaced and tested for stability. When the risk of derailment was reduced, they proceeded at snail pace and crossed the spot with a load of 13 wagons in each direction without difficulty.

To end on a more cheerful note, a very black pencil was worn out at Skelton Grange demolishing that momentous word, 'DISUSED'.

JOIN THE MRT NOW!

KEIGHLEY LINE MAY RE-OPEN SOON

The Keighley and Worth Valley Railway Preservation Society reports that negotiations with British Railways for the purchase of the line over a period of several years are making good progress.

Although the report, published in the Society's monthly news sheet for October, does not go into detail, it does reveal that the Society or operating company would be involved in maintaining an annual profit of at least £1,000 after operating expenses. The report continues:

'We firmly believe this to be possible, but it must be stressed that the railway will be run as a sound business venture, with track and rolling stock maintenance of the highest order to ensure constant availability to the travelling public. Our keynote must be reliability, in the knowledge that the railway must be run

to serve the paying customers who will be our life blood, and not merely to satisfy our own pleasures in running a railway.'

Steam crane repaired

The steam crane belonging to the Middleton Railway broke down during track-lifting operations at Acme's crossing in late September. After all attempts to move it had failed, the crane was left for the night until it could be towed back to Clayton's yard for repairs. These have now been effected by the steam crane engineer, John Charlesworth, and helpers, and the crane is now working normally.

Note: The MRT's steam crane is the only surviving working relic of an ex-broad gauge vehicle. It originally ran on the GWR 7ft 0¼in. gauge at Gloucester, and still carries the attachments to enable it to be screwed down on to the broad gauge track.

THE FUTURE OF THE 'NEW LOOK' OLD RUN DEPENDS ON YOU

With this edition of *The Old Run* we say farewell to the typewriter - and hail to the Vari-Typer keyboard; which provides a selection of different type faces, of which this is 10 point size Garamond italics. The bulk of *The Old Run* will be set in 10 point Garamond.

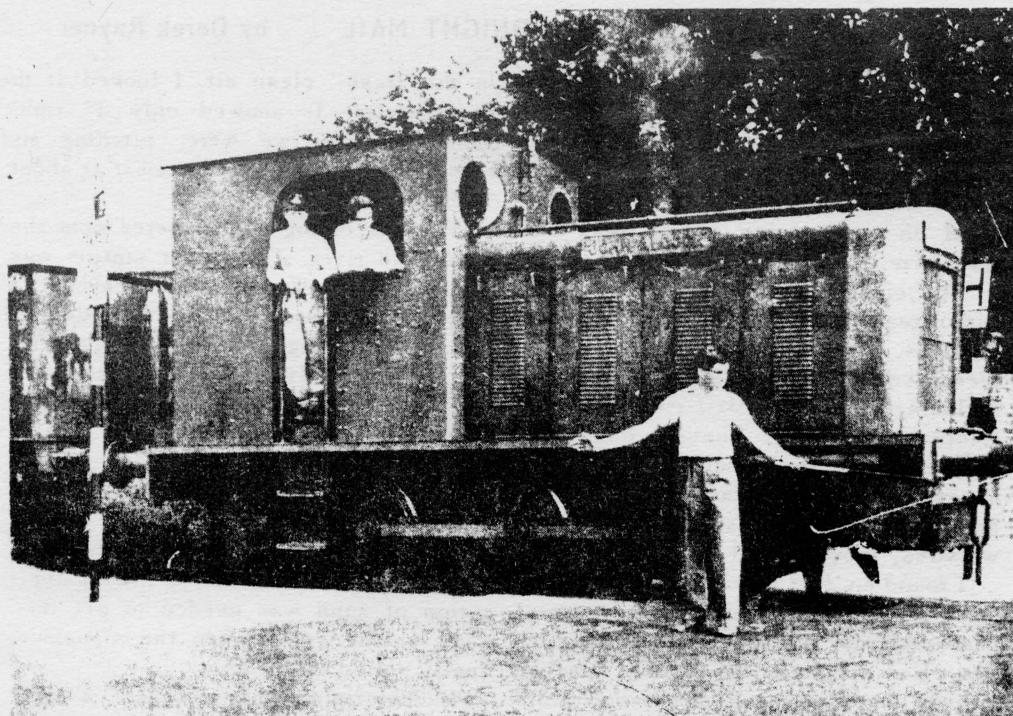
The potential of the new production will be obvious from this first issue. Its success will depend on you - the reader and Middleton member. Have you any unforgettable railway experiences? Do you work regularly on the Railway? Or do you just enjoy writing?

Whichever it is, any item connected with railways or with Middleton or

Hunslet history will be welcomed by the editor - nay, is urgently required by him! Photographs are also urgently needed. Please send the negatives only - these will be returned.

You will greatly assist in the task of building sales to cover the cost of *The Old Run* if you will commend it to your friends.

The use of the Vari-Typer - and the operator, an ex railwayman - is due to the generosity of Mr. Smith, of Mini-Press Supplies Ltd. Larchfield Mills, Pym Street, Hunslet, Leeds, 10. Mr. Smith also allows *The Old Run* very generous terms for production and printing costs.



'John Alcock' crosses Moor Road, Hunslet, with a train of mineral wagons bound for Robinson and Birdsell's, one of the firms served by the Middleton Railway's daily freight service.

THREE SUSPECTS HELD AFTER CASES OF ATTEMPTED THEFT OF TRAM RELICS

One afternoon in October the Middleton Railway's driver for the day found a man, equipped with a four-wheeled trolley, plastic bags, hacksaws, jemmies and other tools, busily sawing up one of the Railway's tramlines. His name was chalked on the rail.

When asked to explain what he was doing, he said, 'I am taking it to Crich. One of the Society members in Manchester told me to come and hunt for it.' He then produced a Tramway Museum Society membership card.

The man was questioned by Dewsbury Road police and is understood to have been summonsed for trespass and theft.

On the same day two men broke into the garage of one of the MRT members and, when questioned by the owner, said, 'We are looking for the ceiling panels of a 'California' tram which the Tramway Museum Society told us were here. We want them at Crich.'

These men also turned out to be TMS members, and were questioned at Chapeltown police station.

OVER THE HILLS ON THE MIDNIGHT MAIL by Derek Rayner

It was a cool, clear, crisp night when we set off from Leeds. On time. At first the swaying of the pilot engine's footplate as we clattered over the points tended to knock me off balance, but, having travelled on much worse track than that elsewhere, I soon got used to it.

The climb out of Leeds was tackled with great zest. The engines, both Jubilees, were pulling hard, and the eleven coaches, which weighed 370 tons including two Royal Mail coaches, were reluctant to leave. Whether they were held back by the thought of what lay ahead I don't know, but once onto the arches, after the usual exchange of whistles, they seemed glad to be away.

I found my feet and began to make the most of the experience. Excess coal cascaded onto the footplate as the fireman plied his craft. He quickly removed it into that ever-open monster's mouth known as the 'firehole' door.

Into Morley Tunnel!

We climbed very vigorously past the old Farnley & Wortley and Churwell stations up to Morley, and were soon blasting our way into the tunnel. Here was a new vogue in railway travel for me. The only illumination in the cab was the harsh glare from the firehole door, and the very dim glow from the paraffin lamp on the water gauge glasses.

I was glad that we were on the pilot engine, so that we didn't get the full force of fumes and steam as the train engine's crew did.

Once over the Aire/Calder watershed it was a downhill run to the river. As we were leaving the tunnel, at, it seemed, an almost incredible speed, we gave a long blast on the whistle and then were out

in the fresh clean air. I looked at the speedometer. It showed only 45 mph! From the way we were pitching and tossing about, I had estimated it at about 70 mph.

Pockets of fog had gathered near the canal and river. The power station was barely visible. We had had three checks in quick succession - Dewsbury, Mirfield and Heaton Lodge - through looking for the pair of dimly lit signal spectacles. At Mirfield we came to a dead stand at a pair reds.

Sand needed

Both the engines had great difficulty in gripping the rails and a liberal application of sand was needed to get the train moving again when the signalman finally pulled off for us.

Huddersfield was reached without further incident, and the crew changed. I had previously been standing behind the driver (the correct position), but here I was invited by the fireman to take his seat, as he was to be extremely busy during the next half hour.

He built up the fire, filled the boiler, and, with steam blowing off at the safety valves, put on so much coal that the firehole door space was almost blocked. As the front of the engine was in the tunnel, the use of the blower at this time proved advantageous. It not only drew up the fire, but also reduced the smoke billowing out of the chimney.

The 'right away' came, and since we were about ten minutes late, due to checks, the driver lost no time in exchanging whistles with the train engine, and we were quickly straining away into the tunnels.

(continued on opposite page)

OVER THE HILLS

continued.

We battled our way up the steep grade, in and out of tunnels, over bridges and viaducts, through eerily lit stations, and then, all at once, round the bend, 'Toot!' and the horrible cacophony reverberated in our eardrums as the driver hung on to the whistle cord. We were into the Standedge Tunnel.

If this had been a daylight run, then the sudden plunging into darkness would probably have been more frightening, but this was 'The York Mail', and hence all that was really experienced was a sudden vanishing of the stars, and a closing in of the sky, and the pencil of fiery light from the slit in the firehole door, rebounding off the roof, back over the tender.

Regular 'thump' noise

The engine, I had noticed, had been making a regular 'thump-thump' noise since I boarded her, and inside the tunnel this was magnified several times.

Once at Standedge summit, we began the downward run, I glanced at my watch - it was midnight, the witching hour! 'I must be mad,' I thought, 'being here, in the middle of a 3 mile, 64 yard long hole through a hill, when I should be at home in bed, asleep!'

But the footplate ride on what is now the only regular steam hauled passenger train over the Pennines was well worth sacrificing a good night's rest for.

How he knew, in the darkness, when to put down the scoop, I do not know, but suddenly the fireman grabbed hold of the handle on the tender and wound it like a man possessed. He had it up again by the time driver turned round and

shouted to him to take it up. The fireman was probably conscious of a groove between the rails of a certain North Eastern shed - a constant reminder of what happens when a scoop is let down either accidentally or too long.

Almost immediately (for the troughs are just inside the western end of the tunnel) we were blasting our way out into the free air again, and were away through the deserted Diggle station, clattering over the points onto the Micklehurst loop, to my surprise. The direct route, I learned later, was closed at that time of night to save staff.

It was downhill all the way now to Stalybridge, and we just coasted along, content to let the boiler pressure drop a little. We had green, green, green all the way down now.

A 'black five' on goods passed us, wending its way up the bank, leaving a trail of red hot cinders in the sky and more steam than was really necessary.

We were then into the final tunnel, catching that wonderful aroma of steam, smoke and oil which had been left behind by the recently departed 'Mickéy'. Out of the tunnel, and round the bend we rolled. We pulled up in Stalybridge station at 12.15, 20 minutes late.

Farewell to the pilot

I clambered down from the pilot engine's footplate after having said my goodbyes to the crew. She came off and awaited our departure before backing on to the Liverpool portion of the train which we left behind.

I now joined the train engine and as soon as we got the 'right away!' I noticed that the regular thud which had been prevalent on the other engine was not evident here at all. I remarked on this and was told that the other was a 'bad'

(continued overleaf)

===== Over the Hills continued =====

engine and was awaiting shopping.

A quick sprint across to Stockport, avoiding Guide Bridge, followed. A sudden ringing came from one corner of the cab and caused me to start. I realised that we had reached 'Automatic Warning System' fitted track, and the bell was the signal for the 'all clear'. Then we were under electric wires, over the junction, onto the main line and almost immedi-

ately we were way above the town of Stockport on the tremendous high viaduct. This extremely good run was a fitting climax to an unforgettable experience.

We arrived at Stockport Edgeley just one minute later than the train was due to leave it, and there I said farewell to the Jubilee, whose crew were returning over the Pennines 'on the cushions' in the returning 'Mail'. I sat down to wait, surrounded by wonderful railway smells and railway noises.....

THE 'HY-CUBE HYDRA-CUSHION TAKES THE RAILS

What is claimed to be the largest rail freight vehicle in the world has recently been introduced on the American Southern Pacific Railroad. The gigantic box car is 94 feet 8 inches long, 17 feet high and has a payload capacity of 10,000 cubic feet.

Christened the 'Hy-Cube Hydra-Cushion' freight car, the scarlet and grey vehicle is designed to handle bulky but fragile motor vehicle parts. The first shipment - from Detroit, Michigan to Oakland, California (a distance of nearly 2,500 miles) - arrived in perfect order.

The car components, loaded into individual racks, are locked into place by

moveable aluminium bulkheads. Additional protection is provided by the Hydra-Cushion underframe which absorbs impact shocks. This was developed through joint research by the SP and Stanford Research Institute.

Loading and unloading ease is facilitated through two 20 foot wide double sliding doors on each side of the car which permit unloading by fork lift truck in about 40 minutes.

Footnote: The largest British Railways goods van (the 12 ton insulated fish van) has a capacity of 1,163 cubic feet and is 21 feet long. BR covered grain wagons have a capacity of 1,200 cubic feet.

'The Great Marquess' K4 class gave birth to the lighter K1

A sister engine of *The Great Marquess* (Lord Garnock's preserved K4 2-6-0) was used to give birth in 1946 to a new class, the K1.

old 200 lb.)

The cylinders used were interchangeable with B1, L1 and O1 classes and the Gresley motion was jopped in favour of Walschaerts gear.

The engine concerned was LNER No. 3445 *MacCailin Mor*. It was rebuilt with two cylinders (instead of three) and given a boiler identical with those carried by the B1 class (with a pressure of 225 lb. per sq. in. instead of the

The purpose of the conversion appears to have been to take over similar work to the J39 0-6-0 on lines where the J39's axle load of 19½ tons was too great. The tractive effort of the K1 was lower than that of the K4.

MORE ABOUT THE OLDEST PASSENGER RAILWAY

By this time the Swansea and Mumbles Railway will have been well digested by Society members. But there are many points of interest about this unique railway that you may be unaware of. Delving back into the *Railway Magazine* one comes to an article on the railway by the eminent enthusiast Charles E. Lee in the March, 1929 issue.

The Middleton Railway has always been an obscure, little-publicised railway and this is shown markedly when, in the July, 1908, *Railway Magazine*, the Swansea and Mumbles Railway is referred to as 'The Oldest Railway in the World' and again in the S&M souvenir booklet of 1928, describing it as the 'Oldest Line in the Kingdom'.

Surrey Iron Railway

Furthermore Mr. Lee states that 'The earliest application to Parliament for powers to construct a public railway was made at the beginning of the nineteenth century, and the Surrey Iron Railway Company, incorporated on May 31, 1801, had the honour of being the pioneer line of this character'. The operative word here is 'public': but again the distinction between wagonway, plateway, tramway and railway defies description and this must surely be the main cause of the controversy.

The Swansea and Mumbles was unique during its life in that it was graced with horse, steam and finally electric traction. Unlike Middleton, though, where the horses used to haul coal wagons to and from the colliery, those at Swansea were used to pull the passenger-carrying railway 'stagecoach' as it appeared in the 1820's and the elaborate horse-tram of the 1850's.

Horses worked the railway right up to 1877 when the track was completely relaid for the new steam engines of an enclosed type (like tram engines). These were in use up to 1892 or 1893 when saddle tank locomotives were introduced.

These continued to be used until the line was electrified in 1928. From about 1909 locomotives which worked the railway were officially owned by a local steel-works: *Tirdonkin* and *Swansea* are examples and notes about these locomotives will be found in back numbers of *The Old Run*.

Permission for the Swansea Improvements and Tramway Company to electrify the 'Oystermouth Railway or Tramroad and Mumbles Railway' was given in May, 1925; the first trials took place on July 6th, 1928. The South Wales Transport Co. Ltd. took over the line in 1927 and, 23 years later, closed it in favour of a bus service, part of which traverses the bed of the original line.

'Hunslet' model

Something which will surprise many members is an advert which appeared in the January, 1933, *Railway Magazine* (among others in the same period). It is an advert by Bond's Super Detail Models of the 'New "Hunslet" Diesel tank'. To quote the ad: 'This new model is the last word in up-to-date practice, and is a scale model of the well-known diesel tank which is now being used extensively in the goods yards for shunting purposes... Price! ' mere 42/6. A photo of the model is included.

It would be very useful to know if any of these models still exists - a model of John Alcock is just what we need!

OTLEY STATION NEARS CENTENARY

This article on Otley, Yorkshire, railway station is reproduced from the Otley Parish Magazine by kind permission of the Rev. Roy Clarke.

Next year will be the centenary of the building of Otley railway station. Would it be missed if it were closed? The answer to that question at the present time is on the whole 'No'.

Excepting for Bank Holiday Weekends when crowds of visitors throng the station, the number of passengers who travel to and from Otley is small. Parents with prams and pushchairs still find the train an easier mode of transport than the bus and coach, and elderly people still favour railway travel.

Of course, the station is important to the G.P.O. for carrying mail, and the parcels department is kept busy, particularly with weights that are too heavy to be sent by post. On the freight side, Otley deals mainly with cattle food, and Silcocks alone guarantee 4,000 tons per annum through their depot in the station yard.

Two-thirds unused

Nevertheless, more than two-thirds of the goods yard is unused, and the general impression given by the station is one of disuse. Distance from the town, competition from the buses, infrequency of trains — all have contributed to the present situation . . . The only thing that could put the railway back on the map in Otley would be the recognition of its necessity as a public service. That might even entail the re-siting of the station nearer to the town. Frankly it seems unlikely that anyone at the present

INSPECTOR SMITH

Inspector Smith a British Railways permanent way adviser in the Leeds area, retired last month. Mr. Smith is well known to Middleton members for the large amount of helpful advice he has always cheerfully provided on p.w. matters. All members concerned with track maintenance will miss him, and the MRT sends its most sincere good wishes for a happy retirement

time would feel it worth the trouble and cost.

What of the future, though? Otley is among those stations listed for closure under Dr. Beeching's plan: but it is not expected that the axe will fall soon. The increase of the traffic problem might make the railway necessary for getting people into Leeds.

150 different stations

Someone who will be missed from the scene at the Otley station is Mr. Harry Garnett, the former station master. He retired in September after 46 years service on the railways, 13 of which were at Otley as station master. Mr. Garnett has been relief station master at no less than 150 different railway stations.

Among his many experiences, he tells of how a van of elephants arrived at Otley and was placed in the unloading dock for the night. During the night the swaying of the great beasts (a sign of contentment in elephants) caused the truck to move some twenty or thirty yards along the track, to the great consternation of the elephant keeper, who had visions of encountering a night express or at least of being swayed rhythmically to Harrogate!

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