

AUTUMN
1970

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The Old Run

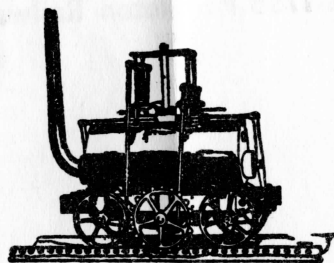
Journal of the 1758 Middleton Railway Trust, Leeds

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THE OLD RUN

**Journal of the 1758
Middleton Railway**

Vol 9

AUTUMN 1970

No 70

MIDDLETON PLANS FOR ELECTRIC LOCO

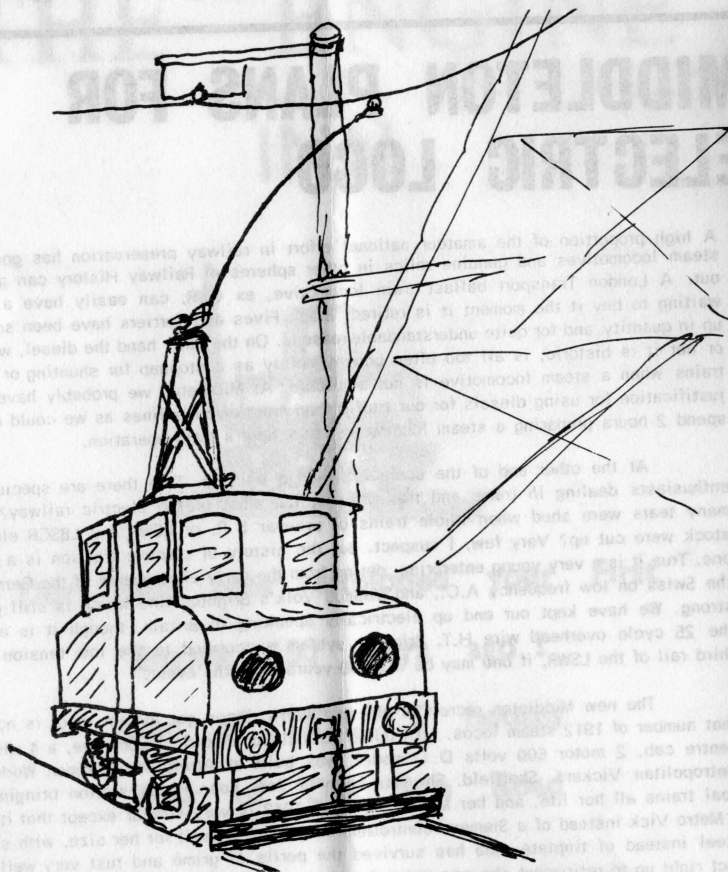
A high proportion of the amateur national effort in railway preservation has gone into steam locomotives and genuine relics in other spheres of Railway History can get left out. A London Transport ballast train locomotive, ex GWR, can easily have a queue waiting to buy it the moment it is retired. Black Fives and Terriers have been snapped up in quantity, and for quite understandable reasons. On the other hand the diesel, whether or not it is historic, is all too often bought merely as a stopgap for shunting or to run trains when a steam locomotive is not available. At Middleton we probably have more justification for using diesels for our traffic than most amateur lines as we could easily spend 2 hours preparing a steam locomotive for 1 hour's train operation.

At the other end of the scale is electric traction. True there are specialised enthusiasts dealing in trams and trolleybuses, but what of the electric railway? How many tears were shed when whole trains of pre-war S R, or LSWR and LBSCR electric stock were cut up? Very few, I suspect. But the history of electric traction is a proud one. True it is a very young enterprise, dating from the early experiments of the Germans, the Swiss on low frequency A.C., and Magnus Volk's Brighton line which is still going strong. We have kept our end up electrically speaking in Britain, though it is a pity the 25 cycle overhead wire H.T. Brighton system succumbed to the low tension D C third rail of the LSWR, if one may be wise 45 years after the event.

The new Middleton recruit is old as electric locos go, in fact there is not all that number of 1912 steam locos. still going strong! Our electric locomotive, a 4 wheel, centre cab, 2 motor 500 volts D C model, was built at Attercliffe Common Works of Metropolitan Vickers, Sheffield. She has been at York Foss Power station bringing in coal trains all her life, and her sister engine of 1942 is very similar except that it has a Metro Vick instead of a Siemens controller. Very heavily built for her size, with sheet steel instead of tinplate, she has survived the perils of grime and rust very well, in fact right up to retirement she was painted up in a most tidy fashion.

The advantage of electric traction on goods traffic is not always realised. The diesel engine drops in power as it slows down, making it necessary to have gear change

or electric or hydraulic transmission. The steam locomotive can compensate by opening regulator or extending cut-off. the steady power being dependent on the rate at which water is boiled. The electric locomotive however increases its tractive effort more and more as the speed drops, so much so in fact that one cannot connect full voltage to a stationary locomotive without all the contents being whirled out of the back in a sharp jerk! Our locomotive, like most D C equipment, has motors which can be connected in series or parallel, with variable resistances to build up the voltage steadily. There are four notches in series giving 90 h p at 1.7 m p h, dropping to 16 h p at 4.7 m p h. This means that after a mammoth heave to start the train, the locomotive will rapidly settle down to a steady speed. After three transition notches to get the motors in parallel the power jumps to 64 h p at 4.7 m p h, rising to 180 h p at 4.9 m p h in top notch with motors running on full voltage. Even so this drops to a mere 10 h p at 16 m p h, the normal maximum speed. No use is made of "Weak Field" to give higher speeds for passenger train working.



For those uninitiated in the complexities of electric traction and such shibboleths as Lenz's Laws and Back—e m f's, we should point out the main safety factor of electric braking. If the wheels skid on a wet rail, the braking stops almost immediately, the wheels begin to revolve again, and the braking effect builds up to hold the train under control. This automatic correction of skids is just the thing for goods trains on wet rails, in fact it is a Godsend on steep gradients like Penistone-Wath and Namur-Luxembourg D C lines, apart from saving in brake blocks due to the conversion of all the kinetic energy of the train into electric energy rather than heat on the braking. The regenerated current can in some cases be used to pull the next train up the hill!!!

According to the Electricity Generating Board people (who should know) these early locomotives have a very wide safety margin. Even when they have been grossly overloaded and things have (literally) got a bit warm, the insulation is so generous that no faults have developed. On ordinary loads, the two locos, with similar performance, have romped away on sharp curves and steep gradients with 110 ton coal trains.

The simplicity of the design is such that the cab has nothing but the electrical controls, hand brake and circuit breaker. No meters or auxiliaries of any kind! Lighting is equally simple — 2 250 volt lamps in series straight on the mains.

The number plates were unfortunately given away to an enthusiast but we are having copies made. The coat of arms of the City of York was carried until the York City Electricity Department became C E G B.

The C E G B, brimfull of enthusiasm for the loco., have handed over spare buffer springs, carbon brushes, bearings and overhead collectors, none having been needed as spares in 58 years. They have also salvaged the overhead wire and insulators for re-use on our line. The most embarrassing spare parts to bring to Leeds were the two 19 feet long bamboo poles used to recover the pick up if it slips off the live wire and goes into orbit.

Though we have no intention of running near a public place with live wires, we are at least reassured to find that the contact surface on the live wire is higher above road surface than the roofs of 74 buses. We remember the difficulties of Metropolitan locomotives that could get caught on dead sections at level crossings, and had to pick up from collector shoes on the following passenger coach. Then there was the Heath Robinson case of the Barking trams, which at one time had to get over the bridge across the River Roding on the Beckton route in open country by rushing it, pulling the pole off the wire and letting it back when across the bridge, as there was no live wire above the bridge.

Every effort is being made to build a vandal proof shed for the loco., so that we can overhaul and repaint her when she arrives in Leeds. Then we expect to have a formal handing over ceremony at which the C E G B, N E Area, and MetroVick's successors will be present.

This Good-Little-Un will take her place alongside the bigger diesels and steam locomotives, in fact we may end up as the only amateurs running goods traffic regularly with all three forms of motive power.

HENRY DE LACY: LADY'S MAN?

Was Henry de Lacy a man for the ladies? His namesake on the Middleton Railway certainly responded well earlier this year when Sheena Russell, Special Effects Reporter and Stunt Specialist of the Weekly News, tried her hand at driving.

In the course of her newspaper work, "Joanna" (her pen-name) has flown an aeroplane, been lowered off a fire escape ladder hanging on to a piece of rope, and was even willing to be thrown off a boat, into the sea, while tied up in a sack. Within a few days of hearing about the M R T, therefore, she naturally joined up and announced her intention of coming down to drive Henry.

She came down by sleeper from Glasgow to Manchester and then across with Roy Broome as Photographer.

Her first job was to shovel coal and fill up the bunker. Under the guidance of Chief Mechanical Engineer Jim Lodge and Chairman Joe Lee, she climbed aboard and learned the position and function of the controls. Then off up to Middleton with the passenger train, a tour of inspection of the museum site, and a photographic session.

After two hours experience Sheena was able to describe the cab layout and controls in detail, and the workings of forward and reverse gear and gauges accurately.

So please, gentlemen, let us have no funny remarks about blue-eyed blondes and women drivers. After having driven a British Army tank in Germany, this one knows what she is doing!

The story had a useful outcome - a full page write up with pictures in the Weekly News of May 2nd.

Middleton has several active lady members, although as yet none of them are permanent way engineers like Mrs Angela Harrington of the Ffffffestiniog Society, who holds the enlightened view that to lay track is a far, far, better thing than to run over it. So if there are any other ladies of this calibre hesitant about barging in on the male atmosphere --- don't worry, just start barging as soon as you like!



A distant prospect

Selside signals recall days of old red glory

R F YUELL

I am not a Midland Railway enthusiast, far from it. I must, however confess that it was the Midland that quite by chance suddenly turned the clock back 95 years for me.

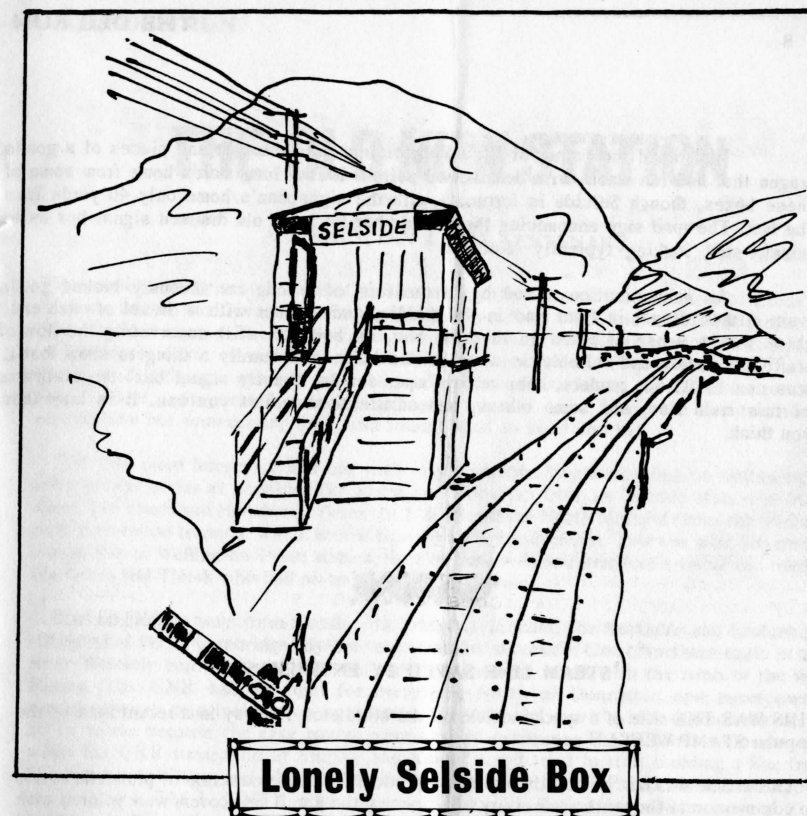
There, true, was the sleek smug flat bottom track in 45 and 60 feet lengths, mile after mile of it; there were the noisy smelly diesels rumbling back and forth. There were the mile posts painted yellow and the upper quadrant signals set at clear over the Bank Holiday Sunday. 10 feet from my bedroom were the telephone wires that passed the news onwards. But suddenly it changed; the locos were early Johnson 2-4-0's, the signals pure Derby design and the track genuine Midland. In both directions as far as the eye could see was a 1 in 100 gradient, as though the Ramsden Bellhouse bank had suddenly been transported from the lush pastures of Essex to the bleak moors of Yorkshire.

There was the signal box standing as clean as the day it was built, a thing not uncommon in the country. Block instruments had been polished so hard that the worn brass shone and shone like the midday sun.

It need never have been built, of course. Like so many other bits of 19th Century railway politics, it arose from a battle between two large companies neither of which would meet the other half way. So 72½ miles of Civil Engineering and many lives went into its construction. A White Elephant? Possibly! But a breath taking epic for all that.

The box? Selside, half way up the climb from Settle Junction to Blea Moor Tunnel. My Bank Holiday bedroom? Railway Cottages, Selside, Horton-in-Ribblesdale. To be woken up for breakfast by the clank of the down distant being pulled off for the morning Goods from Healey Mills to Carlisle, to see the Glasgow (but not alas the Edinburgh) expresses roar past, near enough to count the passengers, turned a two day holiday into something to remember.

Horton and Ribbleshead stations have now been shut for good. Alas Horton had once the best flower show in Yorkshire on its platforms. The train loads of limestone from its quarries will at least keep Horton flourishing for goods traffic. Higher up the hill the scaffolding under the arches of Batty Moss Viaduct, Ribbleshead, marked inspection and repointing work by the engineers.



Selside box was once unique in having three ladies in charge at one time pulling the levers, the last leaving in 1948. In the famous freezing winter of 1948, when every road came to a standstill and the Midland kept going only by digging its way out yard by yard, Selside became the cafe, grocery and general stores and newspaper shop for the Hamlet as there was no other way to keep things alive.

Long distance goods traffic is still there, sufficient to keep Selside box open except Sundays as an intermediate block section between Blea Moor and Horton boxes.

One realises how rapidly the scene changes when one finds it necessary to have a fire in the cottage on a summer afternoon. How easily Pen Y Gent, Whernside, Ingleborough and Simon Fell can transform very quickly from an English countryside to a Himalayan Icecap. Not far away is Chapel-le-Dale Church on the Ingleton road where the graves of the railway engineers of the 1870's far outnumber the present population of the hamlet. The size of the hills dwarfs the soaring height and gentle curve of the Batty Moss Viaduct.

Just round the corner at Blea Moor sidings was the part and pieces of a goods wagon that had run amok, with demolished paired. It is a long march home from some of these boxes, though Selside is fortunate with the signalman's home only 40 yards from the box. The road sign announcing the Selside hamlet is an old disused signal box name board, still looking typically Midland.

As modernisation roared by in the form of a long continuously braked goods train with a diesel in front and in the middle, and another with a diesel at each end, there was a sense of relief in that the box, as built, is still supervising the flow of traffic as safely and reliably as when it was built, with hardly a thing to show that it was now 1970. So, readers, keep an eye open for the country signal box, the stalwarts of this main line, and some others, and admire them whilst you can. It is later than you think.



'STEAM LINE SAVED BY ENTHUSIASTS'

THIS WAS THE title of a special article on the Middleton Railway in a recent issue of the popular STAMP WEEKLY paper.

This article was just one of the useful by-products of the production of philatelic covers to commemorate the tenth anniversary of reopening the line. These covers were printed with an impression of Salamanca in a light maroon, with wording '1758 Middleton Railway Trust' 'The World's Oldest Railway' '1960 - June 20th - 1970' 'Tenth Anniversary of Reopening' in a contrasting green. The covers were posted on June 20th to receive a special Post Office handstamp depicting a loco., description, date, and 'Leeds, Yorkshire'.

Most covers were posted on the Railway, and were stamped with a special 'Railway Letter' handstamp partially covering a yellow label bearing a Salamanca drawing and the price of 6d.

Several large orders were received from philatelic dealers, and the covers sold well to philatelists who saw the mentions in several of the well-known stamp magazines.

Many enquiries have been received by the Trust from railway philatelists who have expressed enthusiasm for Middleton's first philatelic effort, and have offered their support for any attempts we might make to operate a permanent railway letter service. The service would be on similar lines to those run by Talylyn, Festiniog, and the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railways.

However, these have obtained permission from both the Post Office and British Rail to run a full railway letter service. It is unlikely that Middleton could gain go-ahead for a proper service, but we can always hope that an initial successful launch into the philatelic market will help us to develop our activities further in this direction in the future.

Tim White

THE OLD NEW STATION

A FORGOTTEN LEEDS CENTENARY R F YOEUELL

The opening of the rebuilt Leeds City station recently eclipsed the centenary of Leeds New Station, which was opened on 1st April 1869 as a Joint NER and L & NWR project and later doubled in size. The story of the New Station is an apt illustration of the complexity and intrigue which existed in the West Riding railways of the 19th century. As the companies vied with each other to seize the profitable goods traffic the cut and thrust produced legal battles, complicated working arrangements and joint lines, the construction of competitive but unnecessary lines, and finally hand to hand combat.

The first main lines were laid out with easy gradients, Stephenson fashion, following the river valleys as far as possible. The Leeds and Selby ran from an isolated station at Marsh Lane. The Leeds and Manchester (later the L & Y) and the North Midland (later the Midland) used a common terminal which is now Hunslet Lane goods depot. This was later diverted by a loop line to Wellington Street station, start of the Leeds and Bradford railway and used by the Leeds and Thirsk who had no terminal of their own.

The original railway from London to York via Lincoln, the Northern and Eastern just struggled as far as Cambridge. By the time the more successful Great Northern came in on a more Westerly route, it was just too late to be on even terms with the rivals in the West Riding. The GNR had to fight for everything North of Doncaster, and never owned completely any principal station in the area. They climbed over the hills at gradients of 1 in 50 or worse because the easy routes were already occupied. The Midland were annoyed when the GNR turned up at Shipley and Keighley and tried to start building a line from Stanningley to Otley and Ilkley. The North Eastern felt the GNR had no right to appear at Castleford. The L & NWR were annoyed at the GNR Batley line which squeezed them between a cliff wall which held up the town to the East, and the GNR lower down to the West, thus prohibiting any widening scheme. The GNR got a precarious foothold in Leeds by using the L & Y running powers over the North Midland between Methley Junction and Leeds Wellington terminus, having run over the L & Y from Shaftholme Junction via Knottingley and Castleford. On a big race day a long special GNR train from London was prevented from entering the Midland at Methley Junction. All Hell was let loose, the Midland pulled up the track to keep the GNR out and blood was shed between the representatives of the railways concerned. The Midland won the ensuing legal battle to keep the GNR out of their Wellington station, so from the Battle of Methley Junction until the 1st February 1869 the GNR had to put up with the best of a bad job. On August 4th 1854, the GNR jointly with the L & Y, L & NWR, and the NER (as successors to the Leeds and Thirsk) opened the Central station. GNR trains had to reverse from Central down the Gelderd curve, then to run forward through Holbeck Low Level, Whitehall Junction and Engine Shed Junction avoiding the Midland station, over the Midland to Methley Junction and thereafter as before.

The GNR had some small consolation in that, by persuading the L & Y to build a loop from Burton Salmon on the York and North Midland to Knottingley, they could get Kings Cross trains to York whatever the Midland said or did. The 1854 working arrangement lasted until 1869 when the GNR acquired a joint interest in the West Riding and Grimsby with the Manchester Sheffield and Lincolnshire Railway. By using this and the Wakefield and Leeds line, the GNR got to Leeds without reversing or having a muttering Midland Landlord en route. Even so the L & Y were so furious at the prospect of losing their profitable tenant that they tried to buy up the WR & G in order to keep the GNR where they were! Even

more complex was the Wakefield Westgate station, owned by a private company and leased alternately to the GNR, the L & Y, and the Midland. The short sections into Leeds Central showed a complexity of ownership unusual even in the West Riding. There were separate goods stations reached by companies on their own or joint lines. Part of the access to the passenger station over the Leeds High Level line (the 'L.H.L.') was L & Y/GNR Joint but on arches of a bridge owned by the L & NWR who used this section for their services over the Huddersfield Dewsbury and Leeds Railway. Holbeck Low Level was spartan and grubby, and for decades came under heavy criticism from passengers who disliked it so much that they preferred to take more time by going into Leeds and changing termini instead of risking a high-to-low transfer at Holbeck!

The Gelderd Curve had a very mixed history. Owned by the GNR and NER, it was hardly used by passenger trains for many years with the exception of the L & Y Manchester-Harrogate through trains. The curve was also used by the MS & L and the L & NWR, but not surprisingly by the Midland although they were at the downhill end of it. In later years the separation of the Harrogate traffic into sections for the Midland Wellington and the Central station became customary though it was inconvenient for local passengers who had to remember from which station their next train departed. Even the LNER at times perpetuated the phobia of using the Gelderd Curve by sending some of its Harrogate - London trains via Church Fenton and Knottingley. Over the years the original prejudice of treating Leeds as a terminus for all trains faded away, and the Queen of Scots, the West Riding, and Harrogate Sunday Pullman trains became the showpieces of the Gelderd curve in its latter days. The GNR dug in their heels and became a force to be reckoned with. They even got an Act of Parliament to build into the Spen Valley in 1882, and by taking over the rights of the small Halifax and Ovenden company extended to Keighley and Bradford on an expensive line that paralleled the L & Y or Midland routes as far as these cities were concerned.

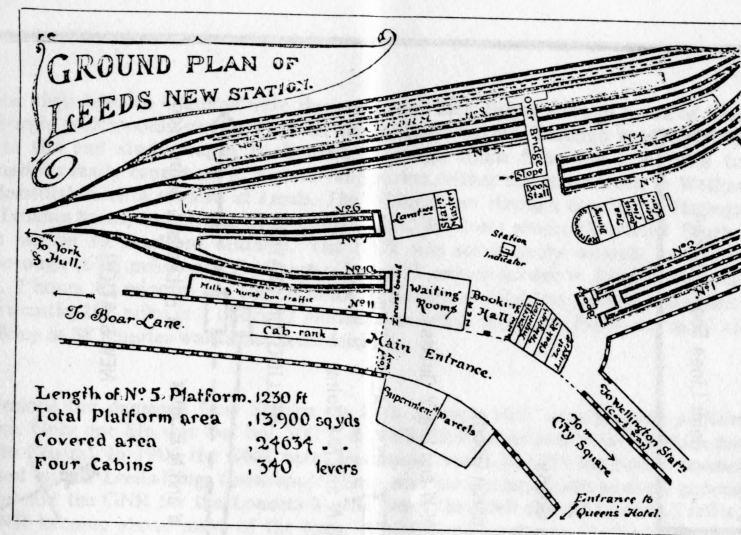
With the growth of traffic, all companies felt the squeeze on space at Leeds. The NER were divided between isolated Marsh Lane, and what the Midland would allow them at Wellington. Central was loaded with GNR, L & Y, L & NWR traffic and some of the NER and MS & LR traffic. The Midland had to tolerate not only the NER Leeds Northern traffic, but some going to Hull or York via Castleford and Gascoigne Wood, as well as the long established L & Y traffic to Knottingley and Goole. Even with the diversion of considerable traffic to Central, the Midland was still at bursting point, while the GNR

Be on the right lines

Have a top-link haircut at

JOHN

Platform 2a Shire Oak St, Headingley.

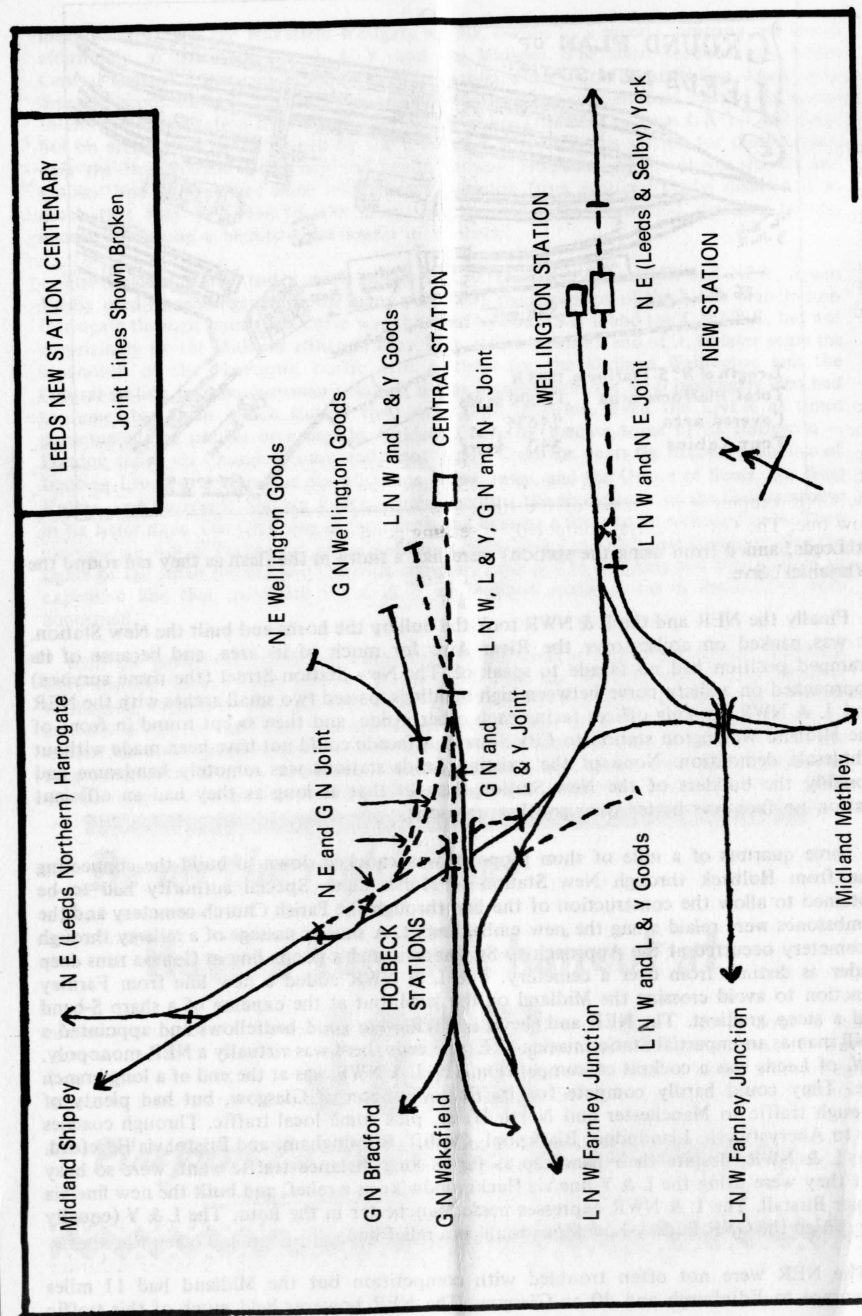


(though banned from using the station) were like a thorn in the flesh as they ran round the Whitehall curve.

Finally the NER and the L & NWR took the bull by the horns and built the New Station. It was packed on arches over the River Aire for much of its area, and because of its cramped position had no facade to speak of. The New Station Street (the name survives) approached on a sharp curve between high buildings, passed two small arches with the NER and L & NWR booking offices facing each other inside, and then swept round in front of the Midland Wellington station to City Square. A facade could not have been made without wholesale demolition. None of the existing Leeds stations was remotely handsome and possibly the builders of the New Station thought that as long as they had an efficient station no face was better than another ugly one.

Three quarters of a mile of slum property was knocked down to build the connecting line from Holbeck through New Station to Marsh Lane. Special authority had to be obtained to allow the construction of the line through the Parish Church cemetery and the tombstones were relaid along the new embankment. A similar passage of a railway through a cemetery occurred at the Approach to St. Pancras, and a goods line at Geneva runs deep under as distinct from over a cemetery. The L & NWR added a new line from Farnley Junction to avoid crossing the Midland on the level, but at the expense of a sharp S-bend and a steep gradient. The NER and the L & NWR were good bedfellows and appointed a GNR man as an impartial Stationmaster. N.E. of Leeds there was virtually a NER monopoly. S.W. of Leeds was a cockpit of competition. The L & NWR was at the end of a long branch line. They could hardly compete for traffic to London or Glasgow, but had plenty of through traffic to Manchester and North Wales, plus some local traffic. Through coaches ran to Aberystwyth, Llandudno, Blackpool, Cardiff, Birmingham, and Bristol via Hereford. The L & NWR, despite their handicap as far as long distance traffic went, were so busy that they were using the L & Y line via Heckmondwike as a relief, and built the new line via Upper Birstall. The L & NWR expresses made Manchester in the hour. The L & Y (equally busy) used the GNR Pudsey-Low Moor route as a relief line.

The NER were not often troubled with competition but the Midland had 11 miles advantage to Edinburgh and 40 to Glasgow. The NER however held much of this traffic



because their fares to Glasgow were the same, and their ticket allowed break of journey at Edinburgh, which could not be done on the Midland tickets. Through workings, though at first in fits and starts, began to flourish. Through trains from the L & NWR to NER destinations really caught on as a good proposition, either direct via York or Wetherby, or via Horsforth with a reversal at Leeds. The Midland ran through coaches to Harrogate off their London trains, and a Harrogate-Bradford via O & I Joint service flourished. Scarborough trains ran on to Bradford Midland. The NER was surprisingly variable in its running. Scarborough (67½ miles) and Bridlington had a 75 minute service to Leeds which was good going. 2 hours 40 minutes for the 80 miles to Redcar and Saltburn was anything but good. To Newcastle, 106 miles in 2 hours 12 minutes was satisfactory, but Harrogate in 35 minutes and Ilkley in 38 minutes was rather lackadaisical.

A serious fire damaged New Station on 13th January 1892 causing some platforms to collapse. Only one life was lost but 300 L & NWR/NER trains had to be diverted, many of them to Central. In 1906 the GNR hotel was burnt down. In 1879 the first restaurant cars appeared on the Leeds-Kings Cross route. Long and hard competition went on between the Midland and the GNR for the London Traffic, with the GNR for the London Traffic, with the GNR keeping ahead most of the time. The Midland service to Sheffield was always a slow one. The Great Central competed by sending goods traffic from Sheffield via Retford to Leeds, and by sending passenger trains in 65 minutes with a route over a total of 6 companies' lines, and some alarming speeds round the curves at the junctions! The GNR were pleased to see someone else doing the Midland in the eye; they had not forgotten the Battle of Methley Junction! Then the GCR overreached themselves by putting on a through train from London. Even with a 19 mile longer route, they made Sheffield in 3 hours, and with a 12 minute stop there got to Leeds in 4 hours 17 minutes. The GNR ceased being pleased and started litigation. The GCR through service faded away.

Our present B R modernised station therefore takes the place of the old Central, Wellington, New and Marsh Lane stations. Even when a new facade was put on the Wellington with very beneficial results, and the whole station renamed Leeds City, the 'New' still remained very largely a separate entity, being LM & SR/L & NER Joint next to an LM & SR section at a different level. With different controls, they were distinct from the operating point of view even though both labelled 'City'. Until a late stage of the rebuilding the L & NWR symbol still appeared on one of the loading gauges. With the rationalisation following Nationalisation, and the elimination of duplicative services as well as those that had been killed by road competition, one wonders why it took 20 years to unify the Leeds stations.

Let us look at the services over the years, taking the number of trains per day as the arrivals OR departures, or the average of these two, rather than the total in and out. Trains running through Leeds have been counted as two separate trains, but even at its best, the number running through was still small compared with those trains terminating at Leeds.

In 1848 the one station then in use (not counting Marsh Lane) had 10 trains a day on the Midland line, 7 on the L & NWR, 10 on the L & Y and 7 on the NER, total 34.

By 1894 the New station alone had 77 NER and 33 L & NWR trains a day on weekdays. It was normal for services to be little affected by the Summer season and often not altered on Saturdays, in contrast to those railways which developed a large Summer Saturday traffic.

In 1904 New Station had 144 trains a day, Central had 110, and the Wellington 128 a day. Even then the local trains had shortened to half their length as a result of tram and 'bus competition'. This loss of traffic was however more than compensated for by the growing long distance and tourist traffic, and the peak was reached before the 1939 war.

In the thirties, the Indian Summer of the 'Big Four', services were as follows:—

Central Station, GNR and L & Y

Morley via Beeston 9, Wakefield Main Line 44, Bradford and Pudsey 42, Castleford via Lofthouse 13, Ossett via Lofthouse 3, L & Y Main Line 20.

Total 131.

New Station, NER and L & NWR

Huddersfield lines 50, Harrogate, Pateley Bridge and beyond 33, Ilkley 17, Micklefield locals 26, Castleford via Garforth 7, Wetherby 18, Hull 30, York 20.

Total 201.

Midland Station

Sheffield 53, Skipton and beyond 75, Knottingley L & Y 13, Ilkley 12.

Total 153.

A proportion of the Harrogate trains will of course have used the Central instead of New Station, so that the New total is slightly too high and the Central slightly too low.

The grand total was 485 trains per day. We look at the present day equivalent. The long distance expresses are still present, in many cases back to their pre-war speeds, and sometimes faster. The local services, some of which the younger readers may never have heard of, have suffered a holocaust, in many cases even the lines have gone as well as the trains.

Missing believed dead: Morley GNR, Batley via Tingley or Ossett. Pudsey, Castleford via Garforth and Lofthouse, Pateley Bridge, Ilkley via Arthington, Skipton via Ilkley, Sheffield via Cudworth. Some, like the skeleton service to Goole hang on only by the mercy of the Minister of Transport.

Present Day Services

Midland Southwards including those using GNR part of the way 37, L & Y Goole 5, GNR Southwards 29, GNR/L & Y Bradford or beyond 48, NER Harrogate 22, Midland Skipton, Ilkley 34, L & NWR 33, NER Hull 22, Micklefield locals not otherwise included in York and Hull services 6, NER York 25.

Total 261.

This traffic is only about 30% more than the New Station carried in its heyday. Extra platforms and completely new signalling have made the extra concentration easy to handle. A shadow of its former self? Perhaps. But we hope an active and viable shadow for all that. The effort that went into the 1967 New station was as great in a way as that put into the New station of 1869. We should particularly remember the late Mr Lewis, District Engineer, Leeds, on whose shoulders much of the work fell. It was his last major work.

The writer is indebted to Mr W. Barraclough for a loan of a pregrouping map, to B.R. records and many early publications from which the accuracy of these notes was checked.

Kennet & Avon uses old beam engines

RICHARD ROBERTS

In the Spring 1970 issue of The Old Run there was an article on "A preserved canal" by Roger Bareham. Being well acquainted with the Kennet and Avon Canal at Crofton I would like to make a few comments and additions to Mr Bareham's excellent article.

At present there are three navigable sections of the canal.

- (i) A long pound of about 20 miles from the bottom lock at Devizes westward to the locks at Bath.
- (ii) Another pound above Devizes locks eastwards through Pewsey, in which the Charlotte Dundas is now operating.
- (iii) The River Kennet Navigation from Newbury to the Thames at Reading.

At Devizes there is a flight of no less than 29 locks - mostly derelict, separating the two pounds. The upper, eastern pound finishes at Wootton Rivers, and the canal from there to Newbury is largely derelict, chiefly because the locks are no longer usable.

The summit of the canal is in a tunnel beneath Savernake station on the West of England main line to Westbury. There is no natural water supply to this summit level, and water had to be brought from Grafton Water, a small lake, along a leat of about a mile long. There is however a difference in level of about 40 feet between the leat and the lake, and a pumping station was built at Crofton.

CROFTON PUMPING STATION

Crofton pumping station is of very great engineering interest, as it contains what are almost certainly the oldest beam engines in working order. One of the engines was built in 1812 by Boulton and Watt, and is still largely the same, although it was converted to the Cornish cycle of working in 1846 in order to improve its efficiency. The other engine is of somewhat later manufacture and was substantially rebuilt in 1905, in a very similar form to the other engine. Both engines have 42 inch cylinders and a stroke of about eight feet. They run at about 11 strokes per minute, and are rated at about 30 h p each. Together they are capable of raising about 25,000 gallons per hour. The engines are supplied with steam at a pressure of about 20 p. s. i. by two Lancashire boilers built in the GWR workshops at Swindon in 1905.

The engines operated regularly until 1952, and thence on odd occasions until 1958, when part of the chimney became

unsafe and had to be demolished. This reduced the draught and the boilers were unable to steam efficiently, and so an electric pump was installed to replace the beam engines. In 1968 the pumping station was acquired from British Waterways by the Kennet and Avon Canal Trust, since when restoration has been in progress.

A great deal of work has been done, but there is a lot more still to do before both engines are fully restored. Work has so far been concentrated on the building, on No.2 engine (of 1812), and one of the boilers.

The other engine and boiler have received only sufficient attention to preserve them from decay until time and manpower are available for their restoration.

Many of the window frames have been renewed, roof joists and flooring replaced, and brickwork repaired and repointed. The engine has been cleaned and overhauled, and an induced draught fan installed.

The boiler has been stripped, cleaned and painted, the scale chipped away from the inside, and all the brickwork of its flues and lagging rebuilt. The boiler passed all its tests with flying colours and the engine was steamed for the first time in about 15 years on the first weekend in April 1970.

These steam trials revealed the extent of work still to be done on the engine and pump, but it is hoped to commence public steamings towards the end of 1970, after an official opening ceremony. It is hoped to steam the engine about once a month during future summers on widely publicised dates.

The engines make an interesting contrast to railway locomotives, and I am proud to have been associated with the restoration work, being one of the three men brave enough and thin enough to perform the vital task of chipping the scale from the inside of the boiler! I will be happy to answer any queries arising out of this article.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Richard's fine article makes one wonder what other preservation projects Middleton members are concerned with. If you have an interesting story to tell, why not let us know about it?

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