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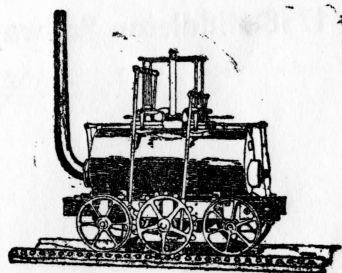
The Old Run

Journal of the 1758 Middleton Railway Trust, Leeds



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THE OLD RUN

**News of the 1758 Middleton Rail-
way at Leeds**

Vol. 8

No. 63

Winter 1968/69

LEAD ON TO VICTORY!

**1969 gives MRT unique chance to
take its rightful place**

"There comes a tide in the affairs of men which taken at the flood leads on to victory," said Shakespeare in Julius Caesar - but he was thinking of the Middleton Railway when he said it. Every history has its landmarks, and Middleton is no exception. We may look back on turning points in our history knowing that at any one of them a slight turn of the wheel of circumstance could have made the story so different.

1758 - when the drive and initiative of Brandling turned his ideas from plans to facts, and got the plans on the Statute Book.

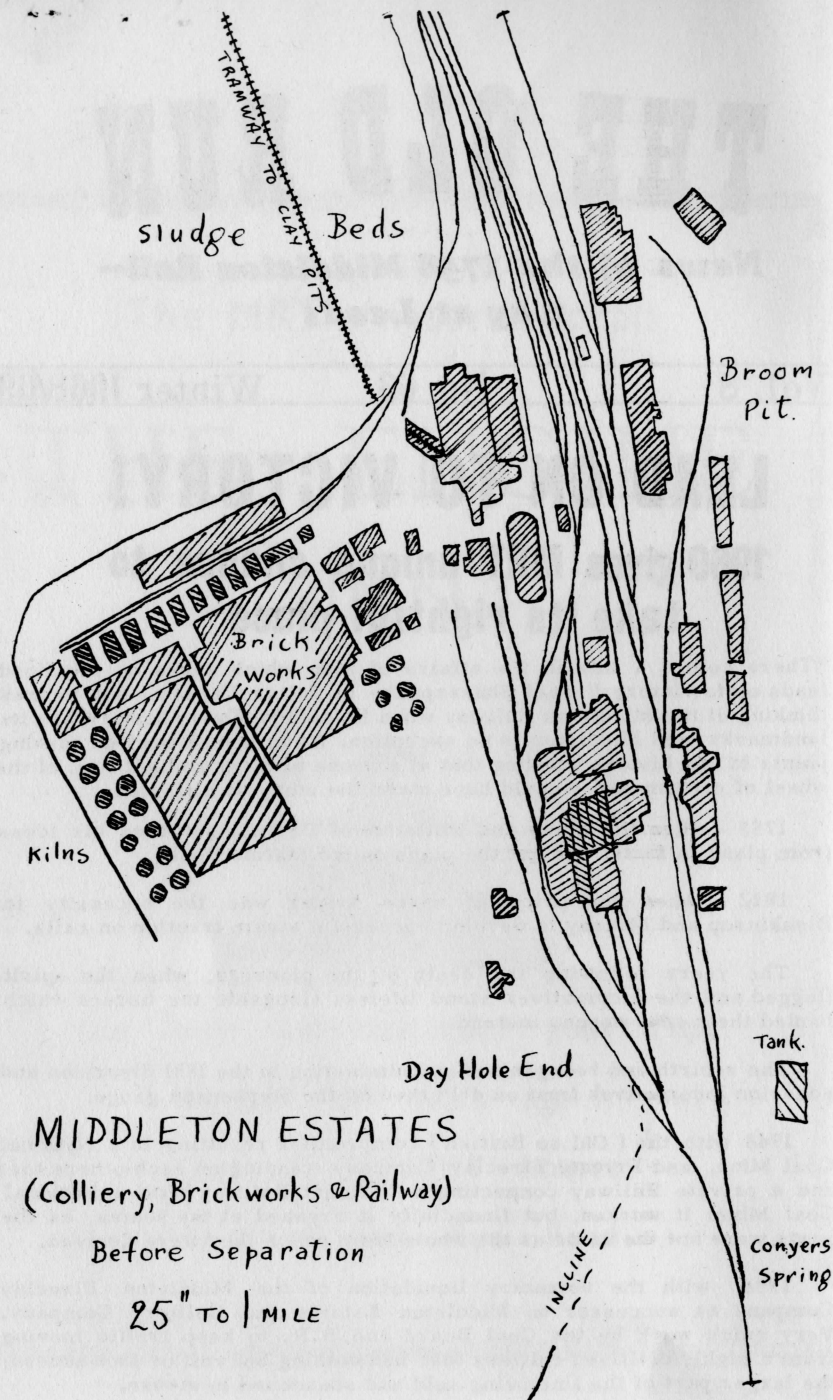
1812 - when the price of horse fodder was the necessity for Blenkinsop and Murray to develop successful steam traction on rails.

The years following the death of the pioneers, when the spirit flagged and the locomotives stood lifeless alongside the horses which hauled their coal wagons instead.

The rebirth and reorganisation culminating in the 1881 diversion and adhesion locomotives first on 4'1" then on the Stephenson gauge.

1948 with the (Oh! so British) compromise resulting in a National Coal Mine, and Private Fireclay Company standing on each others toes, and a private Railway connecting a National Railway with a National Coal Mine. It worked, but financially it creaked at the seams, as the parts were not the same as the whole from which they were derived.

1958, with the voluntary liquidation of the Middleton Fireclay Company as successor to Middleton Estates and Colliery Company. Very quick work by the Coal Board and B.R. to keep traffic moving from a highly civilised colliery that had nothing but rail or foot access, the larger part of the line being sold and abandoned in disuse.



The Old Run

3

1960, when the newly formed M.R.T. showed that determination and hard work could bring the rest of the line to life again.

With the Broom Pit producing plenty of coal and our own part of the line running well, the future seemed assured. We weathered the storm of the motorway, with the knowledge that we should have a proper line under it, and suitable realignment where necessary.

Then in 1967 came the crisis. A run down of the coal industry, part of the G.N.R. line to Parkside being abandoned, and the question of the redevelopment of the Belle Isle Beck area produced the immediate and alarming prospect of the entire line vanishing without trace.

We at once tackled the NCB headquarters in London and the Doncaster office asking for a stay of execution. We asked British Railways to defer demolition at Parkside. After months of effort apparently leading nowhere, we tackled the NCB London HQ in person and were put on to the Allerton Bywater branch office who had taken over Broom Pit Middleton. British Railways smashed up their sidings at Parkside and the Junction signalbox there despite our efforts to stop them. Then came the relief of a friendly invitation to meet the NCB officers on the spot and talk it over.

It appeared that as a national policy the NCB have to sell out disused property to the local council, in this case Leeds. While (for obvious reasons) wishing to keep the line in being, they had their orders. We tore down to Leeds Civic Hall and were faced with the prospect of the entire line being bulldozed in order to level the pit tips to the East of the line. In general the tips would be moved across into the Belle Isle Beck valley, the beck put in pipes and the area levelled for landscaping.

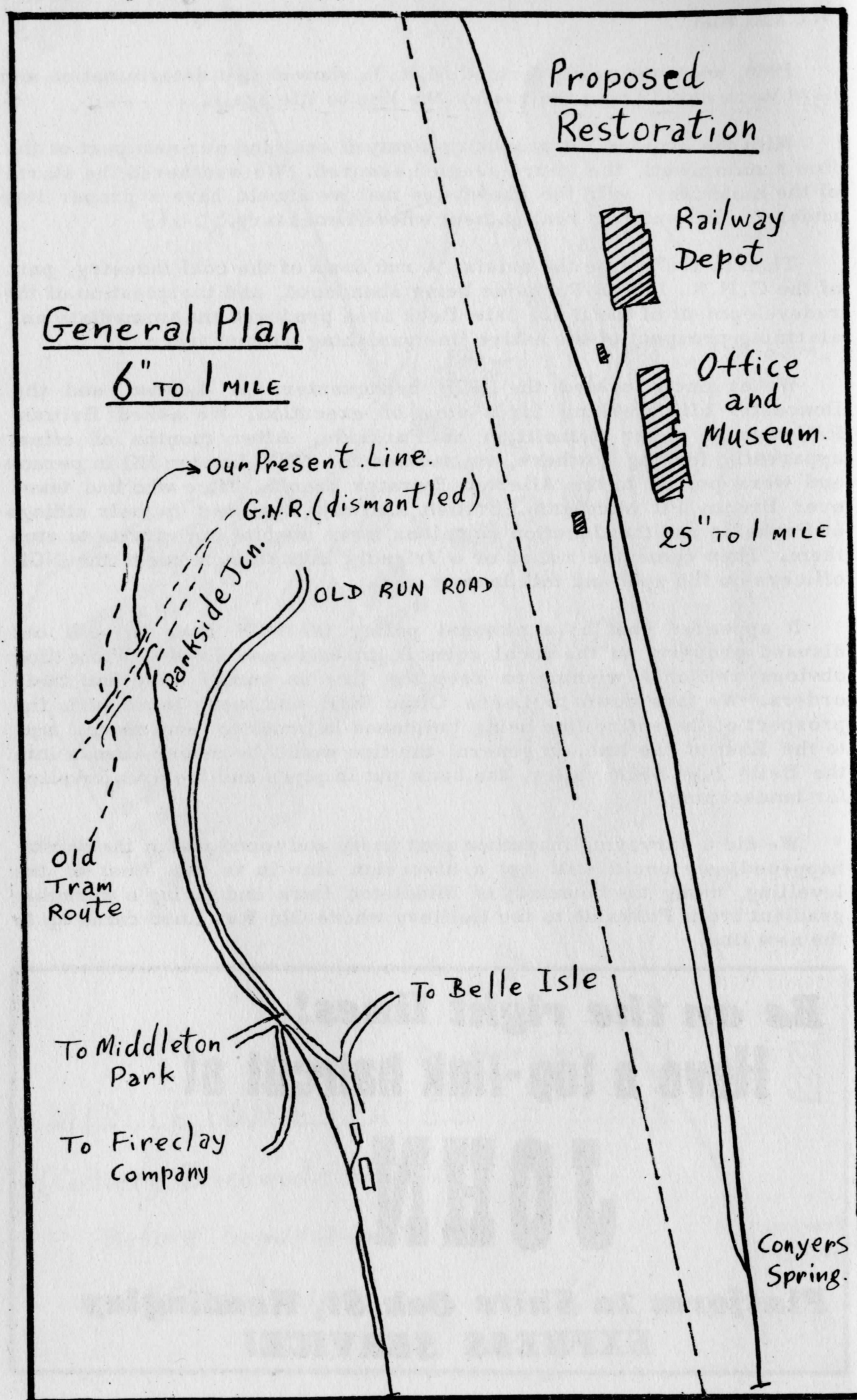
We did a surveying marathon post haste and found that if the worst happened, we could still get a diversion line in to the West of the levelling, using the boundary of Middleton Park and giving a workable gradient from Parkside to the Colliery where Old Run Road came up to the new line.

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The Old Run

At last we had got things moving. Permission was given by Leeds City to buy the line and run it for a trial period of 5 years subject to final decision after that time. There was the last resort scheme of having some Leeds Corporation land to the South West of Parkside Junction as a depot site. This however meant expensive building.

The further use of the old Tram Route was offered, and it is clear that as a diversion as far as Parkside Bridge it is quite useable, but that beyond that only a Blenkinsop and Murray rack loco could make much headway.

It is quite clear that we must take full advantage of the "probationary" 5 year period. If in that time we have the line in first class condition and the museum and depot worthy of the City of Leeds and attracting visitors from afar to see us, we have a reasonable case for the whole thing being made permanent. If we fumble along and achieve very little, we deserve to be given marching orders. The City of Leeds cannot be expected to rearrange their development plan for a Trust that cannot get a move on when need be.

The Colliery buildings will be offered to us at an annual fee to be agreed, on a fairly nominal basis. The winding houses and coal sieving machines would obviously not be of much use except as a very large and unwieldy museum piece.

We have selected buildings likely to be useful. One is a rolling stock/locomotive depot formerly used as such, needing renovation but giving us AT LAST permanent covered accommodation for our stock. One is an office block capable of conversion to museum and display with administration facilities. Also a cottage opposite quite suitable for a caretaker who might possibly be an ex-Colliery man.

We must not paint a rosy picture. Before we could prevent the NCB demolishing the railway, most of the sidings had been ripped up. We have to make a simple connection at Parkside to track which is in very good condition having been laid brand new in 1958 to last a long time. The tragedy is that at that time, the future of the pit seemed assured and modernisation of both railway and mining sides took place. We have been allowed enough track to relay from the Old Run Road crossing to the old Day Hole Terminus, plus a run round loop and a turnout to get us across into the depot.

Who is going to do this work? YOU ARE, my dear members.....
Not the Safety Officer, or Chief Civil Engineer or Chairman working
hour after hour on their own..... YOU ARE, aided by anyone you
can bring in to help.

Someone has to clear a concrete road to get the siding into the depot. Someone has to reshape the building for museum and office purposes. For an organisation of about 200 members this is a mammoth task. Impossibly so? About as difficult as the task of reopening a railway declared to be completely scrap and useless in the hands of about 50 people none of whom had any experience of railway maintenance or operation! The saving grace is that we now know how to organise engineering jobs safely and efficiently. Give us the tools - and the men-power - and we can finish the job.

If we succeeded in tackling an entirely unpredictable task in 1960 we can at least tackle the new job with resolution and determination. You will see from the plan that all the fireclay works will eventually go, as will the pit winding gear, leaving some useful buildings in what will eventually be a pleasant open space.

Grass and trees? Yes, by 1978.

Pleasant scenery? Yes, by 1978.

An attractive museum by the Most Experienced Railway with a safe reliable service running on properly maintained track to it? Yes, by 1978.

An odd Bluebell or two? Possibly! Remember we are already within a stones throw of one of the largest parks in the city. The eventual landscaping of the area will be done by the City of Leeds. We must show that we are capable of doing our side - the railway side - efficiently and without fuss.

It is reasonable to expect that when we move in and reopen the offices as a museum we shall have an attraction which will rid us of the handicap of having nothing to show our visitors. Who but the die-hard enthusiast will clamber over piles of scrap and rubble in rainy weather just because we are the oldest firm in the business? Very few. But with a tidy and inviting museum in spick and span condition and relics of railway history within, spotlessly clean and painted, it can be a different picture.

We have to raise £4000 to buy the rest of the line. This is scrap price for a line laid in brand new but 10 years ago. A generous offer from a helpful and sympathetic NCB. The rest is up to us..... Very much so. We are not the only Society who have had to raise funds to buy a line. Nor are we the only Society to have to reorganise buildings and put on a good show to the public. We have our task to do. Let us get on with it, with skill and determination.

With your help and efforts, we shall add to 1758, 1812, 1881, and 1960 another date.....that of Middleton's final and lasting triumph to take its rightful place in transport history.

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'Buggleskelley' shunter comes to Middleton (PART TWO)

The story of the transport of the locomotive is rather unusual. The shed in which it stood at the Alton brewery was difficult of access by road and in any case the only place at which the ground level was up to the rails had a shed over it which would make cranes difficult to operate, and the rails were blocked by wooden boards. After comparing the profile of the locomotive with the B R wagon sizes we found that a LOWMAC would do the job without damaging either B R 's bridges or our locomotive.

Brokenjunction proves unexpected snag

The journey was planned for the last week in September, with the locomotive running under its own power to Alton goods yard and then going on the Lowmac to Leeds. Imagine our horror when we found that the junction to the main line had been demolished a few days before the journey was due to take place.

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The Alton Goods Manager therefore knew of the journey but did not control the junction; whereas the Eastleigh engineers controlled the junction but did not know that it was (technically) still in use. A crack on the running surface of the wing rail precipitated matters and the common crossing was replaced by plain track.

Some marathon telephoning, letter-writing and telegraphing between Leeds and Alton, Wimbeldon and Waterloo got things organised, and we arrived at 4 p.m. on Friday 11th October at Courages. Mr. Green (the new works manager) contacted the engineer who had looked after the loco. for years (appropriately enough Mr. Porter) and arranged for a special run after midnight.

At 23.02 the last train for Winchester ran through, and we met Inspector Boyce of District Engineer's Department, Eastleigh, and his plate-layers. Just before midnight the Matissa rail tester cleared the line, we got the single line staff and set to work. We were delighted to find that the rail jack we had brought from Leeds came in useful in lifting a complete 1 in 8 Common Crossing.

The lock controlling the junction had not been changed when the single line protection from Alton to Alresford was modernised, so two Signal and Telegraph engineers had to unbolt it specially.

By 00.30 hours the repair had gone far enough to enable us to give Mr. Porter the go ahead, and the locomotive started first turn of the handle. With the correct headcode for single line working one engine in steam we moved off over the newly relaid track and flat out at 10 m.p.h. ran to Alton station. With Mr. Porter at the controls, Mr. Harrod (Station Manager) as pilot, and our member holding a lamp, we crawled through the station finding to our relief that the substantial footstep were clear of the live rails and the protective boarding. We screwed down the brakes in the goods yard, and returned to the siding.

Signalman Argens, who had remained on duty for the special move, shut up shop, and we were finished packed up and ready to go home by 01.30. The next day the locomotive was lifted on to the Lowmac which was booked to leave on the Monday Class 8 freight.

A derailment at Farnham (not due to us) prevented the Monday train running, so the Lowmac plus Hunslet left on Thursday 17th. It ran to Aldershot then Feltham, Stratford Whitmoor and Healey Mills,

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From ALTON
USE BLOCK LETTERS

BRITISH TRANSPORT COMMISSION
BRITISH RAILWAYS

Label from Lowmac delivering Alton loco (Actual size)

British Railways said they could send a crane from Woking to load it - but at nearly three times the price! We went down on two weekends and measured up the site and found that the junction could be repaired in a couple of hours to get the locomotive out. It transpired that the boundary between the Central and London Divisions of the Region ran across the short distance between Courage's siding and the Alton depot.

ending up on a local to Hunslet Down. It arrived in the small hours of Wednesday 23rd, and was handed over at 11.00 hours.

The Traffic Manager collected her with the Fowler and by noon we had her unloaded by the Dartmouth Yard travelling crane. At 1400 hours she had had the sandpipes replaced and after inspection she was in action shunting, and on show to a visiting party.

In less than a week she relieved the Fowler which had developed gear box rumbles of an alarming sort.

The University and Middleton Joint Working Party are already looking into the prospects of getting a shed over this latest acquisition. We expect that future joint efforts will go more smoothly as the succession of problems occurring one after the other is unlikely to be repeated. The journey by rail in cooperation with B R was quite an effort. Too many locomotives are carted about by lorry in an undignified manner. To crown the triumph, the cost was less than any road scheme we investigated.

Gifts towards the Courage Locomotive Fund will be welcomed by Chief Civil Engineer P. Mc. Askie at Hey House, Bodington Hall, Leeds 16.

Take Courage Mr. Porter.....The Buggleskelly Shunter has come back to its birthplace.

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Last train from **WATERLOO** By R J Bareham

On Saturday, November 23rd., a small party of children assembled at Dewsbury station to take part in the last steam hauled trip on the Waterloo Main Colliery Railway, Leeds.

Our trip started with a three coach multiple unit whose riding was very similar to the coal wagons on the colliery line! Our arrival was delayed a few minutes so we had to make a quick dash across Leeds for the special 'bus to Temple Newsam.

Once there we made our way by devious means across open country (in some places) and paths in the drizzle till we found the smoke and smell of real coal steam. Arriving at the engine shed we found we had taken a short cut - so we had to report at the main mine buildings to sign in and get our tickets.

The first party of 99 already having left, we found time for a look round the mine buildings. The boys were fascinated by the pit shaft and drift tunnel and wagon turntable.

Out again in the pouring rain, we made our way to the engine shed, guided by top-hatted, funereal John Bushell. Once in the shed we clambered all over "Diana" - unfortunately due for scrap. "I didn't know it was so dirty," remarked one lad as he tried to wipe grease off his mac.

Then the highlight of the trip - 5115, a 1944 Austerity 0-6-0 tank, appeared propelling up to the terminus its train of five open wagons.

"Are we going to ride in coal trucks?" was the immediate inquiry. Once assured that we were, they were only too eager to clamber aboard where the coal hopper had been carefully blocked off with timber.

We prepared to stand in the heavy rain and watch the industrial countryside pass by.

Once under way, the boys commented, "It's like being on a ship, going up and down!" "Look, the buffers are touching!" "I saw a rabbit there!" and "What a terrible smell!" as we passed the sewage works. The trip up the short branch to Neville Hill provided the chance to hear the locomotive hard at work up the 1 in 52. Then we coasted back to Pontefract Lane Crossing - to be met by a horde of pursuing motorised enthusiasts. Once back in the Colliery the sad sight of derelict wagons, weed-grown tracks and the dropping of 5115's fire greeted us.

And so 5115 - complete with plastic Yogi Bear on the front - steamed slowly into the shed for the last time at the end of an interesting, enjoyable, but somewhat sad trip.

Now it's.. YOUR TURN!

Over the years The Old Run has contained some interesting articles sent in by members. Recently, however, there has been an unfortunate trend to leave the writing to one or two people, with the result that variety has suffered.

Every railway enthusiast has something to pass on, whether it is an account of his holiday, a history of his favourite line, reminiscences of outstanding trips, or speculation about the future of railways!

Why not set to now and write something which will enable others to share your pleasure or criticise your ideas? Articles concerning the Middleton line are, of course, particularly welcome.

Send it to the editor THIS WEEK. If you don't think you are any good at writing, still send it - it's amazing what we can do with it! But please, don't think "Yes, that's a good idea," and then forget it - DO IT NOW!

JOIN THE MIDDLETON RAILWAY
WRITE TO: JOHN BUSHALL,
12 Trelawn Crescent, Leeds 6

Have you tried SKETCHING

There is a fairly common human experience of enjoying deeply, making personal discoveries about the enjoyed object, and seeking to express the enjoyment in a tangible form. The result is both a personal

William B. Stocks.

record of a passing moment of high pleasure, and a means of enabling others to share the experience.

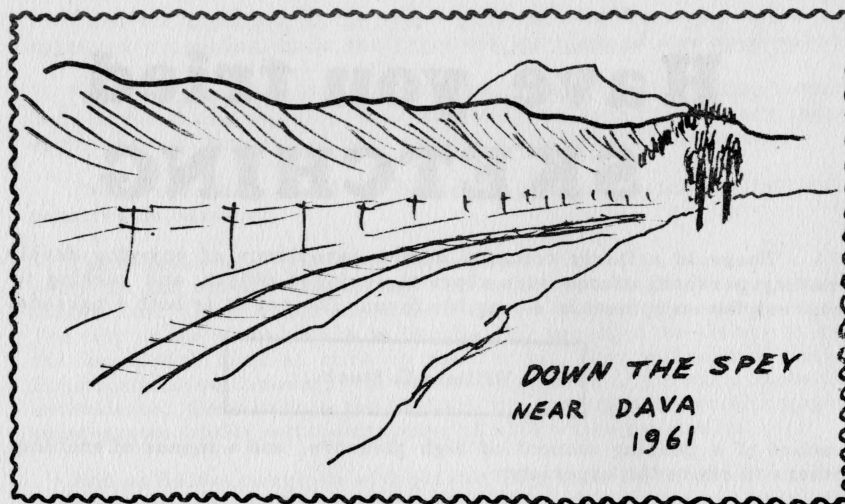
That is the primary process; the means by which it is achieved is secondary. Some methods are more sophisticated than others, like the cine camera or tape recorder. Methods like this are expensive, especially for constant use and require valuable equipment. But how about the other end of the scale? Years ago I discovered a flair for rapid landscape sketching and cultivated it with particular application to the enjoyable business of exploring Britain by train.

There are a few kinds of sketch accumulated from a long and interesting trip around, but the majority have speed of execution as their vital factor. It is unusual for and single example to take above two or three minutes to do (it is often impracticable to take longer if one wished) and the necessary dexterity of eye and hand adds greatly to the thrill of a satisfying result!

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Next come those I call "signal stop" sketches which do call for a certain agility of mind. The opportunity usually arrives quite without warning and the time available to complete a sketch of the landscape before the train moves off again is equally unknown.

But the actual travelling train sketch is the most sophisticated and satisfying of all. For one thing it needs a little practice until the discovery dawns that it is useless to try to resist the movement of the train to hold the sketching instrument steady.....but rather to use it!

The result is a scene never actually identifiable again for, in essence, it spreads over two or three miles of line, depending on the speed of the train and your speed in execution. Quite seriously, and having been doing these all over the place for years, I find the results are a sort of synthesis of lineside scenic character on different routes.

I cannot imagine a cheaper way of recording one's train trips, or in the long run a more satisfying. A packet of plain postcards and a black felt-tipped pen and your equipment is complete. Try it next time you're on a train. Nothing much is lost if the result is awful, and there is just the possibility that you will discover a new dimension of railway appreciation.....like I have.

Correction

In the Autumn 1968 issue (page 16, "Paytrains") we made a comment about return tickets. We should like to point out that returns have been abolished on pay trains.

Since the article was published there has been a public complaint that people were getting away without paying on the outward journeys from Leeds. As an occasional traveller on the line, the Editor has never had the opportunity of evading fares, nor has he seen any evidence of this.

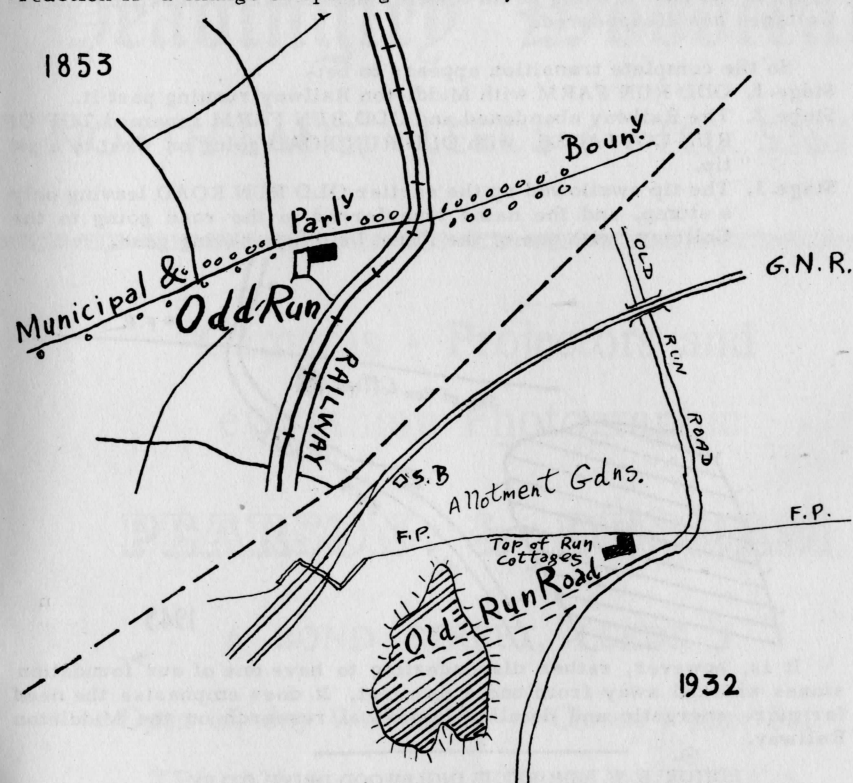
An ODD Affair

For a very long time, it had seemed clear that "Old Run Road" meant precisely that - the OLD RUN of the Middleton Railway, i.e. that prior to the 1881 diversion to the west of the original line. The fact that the 1881 line does not seem to have acquired the name "New Line" didn't really upset the idea.

However, browsing through some old maps the other day I came across a 6-inch map of Leeds in 1852, with "Railways revised to 1853". The GNR had just arrived, and New Station (built 1879) was non-existent. The original Middleton line was of course shown, marked "Railway from Leeds to Middleton Colliery", with no diversion line.

To my surprise, at the top of the incline appeared "Odd Run". This appeared to be a farm and yard in the middle of open fields. It was just outside the then Leeds boundary and a stone's throw away from the incline top to the east.

"Old Run" is so firmly entrenched in our minds that one's immediate reaction is "a change of spelling over the years". But this puts the cart



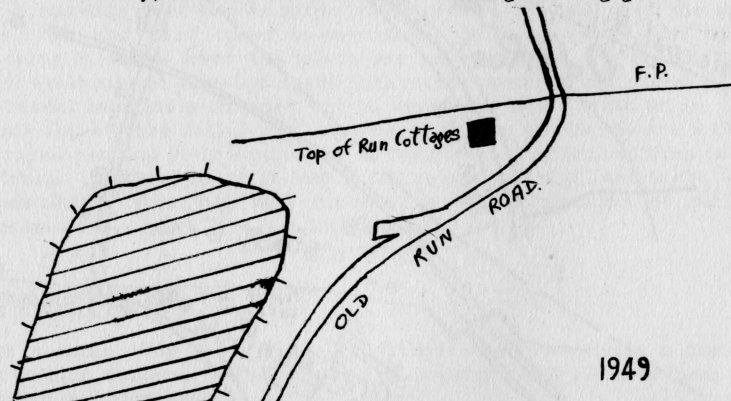
before the horse, as the line did not become "The Old Run" until 1881. It seemed likely that when the incline was abandoned in 1881, and became a rather bumpy cart track, Odd Run Farm was still there and the cart track became Odd Run Road. The farm site now being part of the mountain of pit tip, the disappearance of the farm meant that there was no "Odd Run" for the "Odd Run Road" to go to. As this WAS the "Old Run" of the railway, could this have been how the road had become renamed?

A further stage in the transition of the name and route can be seen in the 1938 6" Ordnance map. The Borough Boundary has moved Southwards, but its former site is still followed by a footpath. The GNR Branch is of course still there with a skew bridge to take the footpath over it. The name is now OLD RUN ROAD, but it does NOT go to the colliery. It follows the railway route up the incline, and then turns in almost due West past Odd Run Farm, and terminates in a small pit tip. Odd Run Farm has turned into TOP OF RUN COTTAGES, which are as near as can be measured in the same place.

Then, in the 1949 map, the pit tip has become enormous and engulfed the whole area between the old railway route and the new line. The 1932 OLD RUN ROAD has vanished, but a short stump projecting from the remaining road shows where the earlier OLD RUN started. By this time the name OLD RUN ROAD has been turned round and extended to apply to the part bending South towards the colliery. One corner of the Cottages has disappeared.

So the complete transition appears to be:-

- Stage 1. ODD RUN FARM with Middleton Railway running past it.
- Stage 2. The Railway abandoned and ODD RUN FARM renamed TOP OF RUN COTTAGES, with OLD RUN ROAD going on West to a pit tip.
- Stage 3. The tip swallowed up the earlier OLD RUN ROAD leaving only a stump, and the name transferred to the road going to the Colliery, with one of the Farm buildings having gone.



It is, however, rather disconcerting to have one of our foundation stones whisked away from under our feet. It does emphasise the need for more energetic and detailed historical research on the Middleton Railway.

EDITOR: B. W. ASHURST, 18, INGLEWOOD DRIVE, OTLEY.

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