THE OLD RUN

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The Editor welcomes contributions relating to the interests of the Trust and the operation of our and other Railways, especially if Leeds built equipment is in use. Items for publication, including images (please send in resolutions higher than 1Mb) are acceptable in any format and may be sent via email or by post.

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Editorial

Firstly my apologies that this issue is slightly later than I would have liked but I have a had a spell of Works Attention after being poorly during the Model Railway Exhibition - and thanks to those who stepped up during the event to ensure it was a success. I am now on the road to recovery and hope to be (gently) back at the Railway from September after a period of recuperation in North Devon - probably as you are reading this. Thanks for the good wishes received.



I am also grateful to those who have provided the contents of this issue, which has made it considerably easier to put together. In an ideal world there would be more variety but normal service will be resumed for the next issue.

There have been a flurry of successful events at The Railway in the last few months and thanks to all those unsung people who have worked quietly behind the scenes to get things prepared and then ensure everything happens as it should - not easy!

As I write this, the temperature is rather hotter than we like and we are running diesel rather than steam - but our volunteers and neighbours deserve respect and support, so needs must. Hopefully the heat will ease as we move into the last quarter of the year and Santa won't need his Bermuda shorts… Hope you enjoy this issue, Ian

Front cover: *With Matt Berry on the regulator, 'Brookes no.1' passes under the John Charles Approach whilst en route to Middleton Park Halt in April 2026 (Photo: Peter Hirst)*

Back cover: *Ross Needham's drone's eye view of the handover of 'Slough Estates no.3' at Moor Road on 9th August 2026 gives an unusual view and also illustrates some of the ash collected for the Canal & River Trust and the refurbished water tank that were reported in the last issue.*

From the Chairman

2026 has passed its mid-point and has seen some very successful events on the Railway.

This year the Trust, after much effort, secured permission to arrange a display of cars at Park Halt during Classic Car Sunday. Having a collection of Morris Minors at Park Halt gave visitors an additional reason to take the train there and this resulted in enhanced revenues and a more enjoyable experience for all involved. It is hoped to build on this success in 2027. Thanks go to Colm Connolly-Taylor for creating this event and seeing it grow and prosper.



Colm's photo of the Morris Minors at Middleton Park Halt - a simple enhancement to a great event that has taken some time to make happen.

The year has also seen the return of two favourites, The Model Railway Exhibition and The Steam Punk Market.

A change in pricing policy led to a significant increase in visitors to The Model Railway Exhibition and consequently secondary spend with the result that financially the event outperformed the previous year's Model Railway Exhibition. Once again Ian Dobson must be congratulated on running such an enjoyable and interesting event.

Finally, Steam Punk Market is recovering its mojo after a few difficult years following the Covid Pandemic. There were more stalls present than in any year since the event was relaunched after Covid and this bodes well for the future.

There is one other event to mention; the naming of 'Hunslet Engine Co. Diesel Hydraulic Locomotive, works number 6981, 'Salamanca'. This was done to mark the 200th anniversary of the death of Matthew Murray who, in 1812, designed and built here in Leeds the world's first technically and commercially successful steam locomotive which bore the name 'Salamanca'. The naming ceremony was carried out by Lord Faulkner, President of the HRA, and was attended by the Railway's local MP and Trust President, the Rt. Hon. Hillary Benn MP plus the former leader of Leeds City Council and a good friend of the Railway, Baroness Blake of Leeds, representatives of the heritage railway and museum community and a surviving member of the Murray family. The guard of honour for this event was provided by representatives of His Majesty's 33rd Regiment of Foot who played a distinguished



role in the Napoleonic Wars and who also put on a display of late Georgian era crafts. The newly named 'Salamanca' looked a picture in the sunshine. It is hoped that Steve Roberts and his team will soon complete the locomotive's mechanical overhaul so that it can be placed to work in the city of its birth. This event would not have taken place without a lot of hard work by Anthony Dawson, the Trust's newly appointed Museum Manager, Ian Smith and the Museum Team and Steve Roberts and the workshop team.

Left: *The Guard of Honour for Salamanca's naming present arms.*

It is very much hoped that the Trust can stage an event involving the 33rd Regiment of Foot in 2027 – watch this space.

Later in the season the Trust will be running its first Halloween Event in many years – 'The Spell Train'. This event is aimed at families with young children and tickets will be going on sale shortly. It is hoped that a Halloween Event will become a regular feature of the Railway's event calendar in the years to come.

Unfortunately, 'A Taste of Yorkshire' will not be run in 2026 but a new managing group has been set up, and plans are being developed to relaunch the event in 2027with new vendors and a new title.

Throughout the 2026 Season monthly Craft Workshops are being run by Penny Barron under the title 'Creation Station'; each workshop has a different theme, and they are aimed at young children from 3 upwards. This is a new venture and is intended to add a whole new dimension to a family visit to the railway. Details are available on the website.

These events, plus the daily operation of the Railway and the myriad tasks this involves, would not take place without the working volunteers. As I have written before, they give willingly of their free time to ensure that the Middleton Railway survives and prospers. The working volunteers are the people who do all the behind-the-scenes tasks which no one really talks about; they clean the toilets, they wash out boilers and clear the pits of ash and oily sludge, they empty the litter bins, they keep the Trust's accounts straight, they clean the exhibits in the Display Hall and sweep out the carriages, they cut back the lineside vegetation. None of these tasks are seen by the Railway's visitors but they are noticed by the Railway's visitors if they are not done. None of these tasks are of themselves enjoyable or

fun, so why are the Railways volunteers willing to do them? There are many reasons but perhaps the simplest explanation is that word so much derided by the New Right and their philosopher Ayn Rand, altruism; helping others without expecting a reward, praise or anything back. It is a rationale summarised in the Chief Mechanical Engineer's favourite words of encouragement "Carry on Rewardless'. Forget the fine words, the Middleton Railway runs on altruism and all of us should be very proud of the fact.



Prior to the naming of Salamanca at Moor Road Anthony Dawson led a ceremony at Matthew Murray's Obelisk in Hunslet. Photo: Andrew Gill

But there is more to the Middleton Railway Trust than the altruism shown by so many of its members. The Trust is owned and controlled by its members - it is a democracy, and each member has one vote irrespective of their personal circumstances or the scale of their contribution to the Railway. Each member can take part in the governance of the Railway if they can persuade sufficient of their fellow members to vote them onto Council at the Trust's AGM. And each member can help decide on key decisions affecting the future of their Trust by exercising their vote at the AGM. In this respect the Middleton Railway is at variance with the new philosophy that greed and wealth entitles the individual to a much larger say in how enterprises and societies are run than their value as human being. The Trust continues to offer an exemplar of an approach to governance which runs counter to the views of the philosophers of the ultra-wealthy such as Tom Perkins and Curtis Yarvin who would have the world run by the ultra-wealthy for their own benefit.

It is pleasing to think that the Middleton Railway, which originated in the 'age of enlightenment', still preserves some of the best of the values of the era in which it was launched and grew to prominence.

Altruism and democracy are fine but without care and nature they will not survive. The Trust has become far too dependent on a group of septuagenarians to provide much of its leadership, and new leaders are needed to step up and take on the hard and often unrewarding task of taking the Middleton Railway into its fourth century. These new leaders must be willing to learn from the mistakes of the past as they make their own, be very thick skinned, have the time to take on leadership roles and above all must treasure all that makes the Middleton Railway special. It is pleasing to note that recently three Trust members have advised that they are willing to step up take on leadership roles and hopefully all three will be in post by the end of 2026, but more new blood is required to secure the future of the Railway.

If there are two questions that Trust members should take away from these notes they are:

How can I help the Railway to survive and prosper by becoming a working volunteer? And am I willing to take being a working volunteer to the next stage of becoming a member of the leadership team with all that entails?

Hoping to see many of you at the Railway in the remaining months of Summer 2026.

Charles Milner

Below: *At the time of writing this, our first steam locomotive, Sentinel 68153 is sadly effectively grounded due to the hot and dry weather conditions. In less arid conditions in October 2025 68153 is seen heading from Middleton Park Halt to Moor Road.*

Photo: Peter Hirst



Letters to The Editor

It was good to receive another contact from a predecessor of mine as Old Run Editor, this time from Howard Bishop in the Isle of Man…

Hello Ian

What an excellent read the Spring 2026 Old Run is! Unlike Graham Findley I refrained from reading it in the bath lest I got the pages wet and became spoiled for my extensive collection of copies of The Old Run.

In particular can I mention the superb photograph on the front cover. What a difference 20 years makes to the vegetation at Moor Road: it could almost be a country station scene rather than in an inner city setting, and how time has flown since the opening of the Engine House.

The format of The Old Run, whilst retaining some of the old features has evolved and congratulations on the use of full colour and the many photos. A good read too, featuring news about people.

Now in my 90th year and unable to be an active member for the last several years, it is good to learn of new ideas being introduced to attract visitors, and of new people joining the team of volunteers to ensure a future for the Railway. Best wishes!

Howard Bishop, Ballaugh, Isle of Man.

Like many others I have happy memories of working with Howard in the 1990s and I'm delighted to hear that he is still enjoying retirement over the water. Hope you enjoy this issue too Howard!

Andrew Gill has also been in touch to advise that the photos of Sheila Bye on page 7 of the last issue were taken by him rather than Jenny Cowling. My sincere apologies to all concerned..

And lastly I was sorry to hear of the passing of Malcolm Hindes recently - pictured right. He was a long standing member of the Trust and a great supporter of the Model Railway Exhibition, either with a layout or helping on the LTHS stall. He somehow also found the time to be heavily involved with Scouting and at the Welsh Highland Heritage Railway. The tributes to him were moving and heartfelt and our condolences go to all his friends and family. ***Ian Dobson***



The naming of Salamanca - 21st June 2026

2026 marks the 200th anniversary of the death of Matthew Murray, who designed the world's first commercially successful steam locomotives.

Born in 1765 in Newcastle, Murray walked to Leeds in 1789 to seek employment and initially worked for John Marshall at his flax mills before branching out as an engineer in his own right. Murray designed and built the famous Round Foundry in 1797 and also had his house centrally heated, the very first instance of this. The house was known locally as "Steam Hall".



In 1812 Murray's firm, Fenton, Murray and Wood supplied John Blenkinsop, manager of Brandling's Middleton Colliery, near Leeds, with the first twin-cylinder steam locomotive (Salamanca). This was the first commercially successful steam locomotive in the World. The double cylinder was Murray's invention. He paid Richard Trevithick a royalty for the use of his patented high pressure steam system, but improved upon it, using two cylinders rather than one to give a smoother drive rather than the large flywheel employed on the Trevithick locomotives.

Because only a lightweight locomotive could work on cast iron rails without breaking them, the total load they were capable of hauling was very much limited. In 1811, John Blenkinsop patented a toothed wheel and rack rail system. The toothed wheel was driven by connecting rods, and meshed with a toothed rail at one side of the track. This was the first rack railway, and had a gauge of 4 feet.



This system enabled a small and lightweight locomotive to haul loads totalling at least 20 times its own weight. Salamanca was so successful that Murray made three more models. One of these was known as Lord Wellington, and the others are said to have been named Prince Regent and Marquis Wellington, though there is no known contemporary mention of those two names. The third locomotive intended for Middleton was sent, at Blenkinsop's request, to the Kenton and Coxlodge Colliery waggonway near Newcastle upon Tyne, where it appears to have been known as Willington. There it was seen by George Stephenson, who modelled his own locomotive Blücher on it, minus the rack drive, and therefore much less effective.

After two of the locomotives exploded, killing their drivers, and the remaining two were increasingly unreliable after at least 20 years' hard labour, the Middleton colliery eventually reverted to horse haulage in 1835. Rumour has it that one

remaining locomotive was preserved for some years at the colliery, but was eventually scrapped.

With 2026 being the anniversary of Murray's death, the railway decided to honour this famous engineer by naming a modern diesel locomotive "SALAMANCA" after his first steam locomotive on Sunday 21st June.

If "SALAMANCA" was the innovation of 1812, Hunslet 0-4-0DH No 6981, built in 1968 represents one of the very last designs to be built by the famous Hunslet Engine Company at Jack Lane, thus "bookending" loco development in Leeds.



Right: *Lord Faulkner of Worcester unveils the nameplate.*

Below: *The Lord Mayor of Leeds enjoying the footplate of Brookes no.1 at Middleton Park Halt.*

This locomotive was built for use at the Conoco oil refinery in Immingham and privately purchased in 2011 and moving to Moor Road. It was later purchased by the Middleton Railway Trust and has been repainted in Conoco's livery as can be seen today.



As part of the naming ceremony, Museum Manager Anthony Dawson organised the attendance of the 33rd Regiment of Foot. This group of re-enactors provided a platoon of Napoleonic Soldiers who saluted the VIPs and gave demonstrations throughout the day.

Guests of Honour were Lord Faulkner of Worcester, President of the Heritage Railway Association, who named the locomotive; Baroness Judith Blake, former Leader of Leeds City Council,

and the Lord Mayor of Leeds, Cllr Steven Holroyd accompanied by his Consort, Mr Simon Mapals. A number of local councillors also attended alongside representatives from partner organisations, including Vintage Carriages Trust Chairman Debbie Cross.

Sadly, "SALAMANCA" was unable to operate a train due to one or two issues, so guests rode behind Brookes No 1 with the Lord Mayor being treated to a footplate ride at Middleton Park before retiring to the Conference Room for a buffet lunch ably served by Janet Auckland and the catering team.

The event was widely publicised, including an appearance on BBC Look North which illustrates the value of organising what are quite complex events – it's essential to keep people "on side" and gain valuable publicity as often as we can.



Above: *VIP guests and Guard of Honour - from left: Lord Faulkner of Worcester, Baroness Judith Blake, Rt. Hon. Hilary Benn MP, Lord Mayor of Leeds, Councillor Steven Holroyd and Consort Simon Malpals.*

Thanks are due to all those who worked so hard to make the event possible and particularly those who did all they could to try and get "SALAMANCA" operational despite the problems the engine threw at them after many years inactive. It still looked immaculate and, when sorted will prove a valuable addition to our diesel fleet in addition to keeping alive the memory of our first steam locomotives.

Ian Smith

Shop Notes

The red jackets, the muskets, the shakos (headgear), the guard of honour (by the 33rd Regiment of Foot, the presenting of arms, the playing of "Some talk of Alexander, and some of Hercules" *("The British Grenadiers" - Editor)* by the regimental piper, the heat... My apologies, dear reader, but my command of English fails in the face of rendering an account of the great re-naming ceremony of June 21st with which the railway honoured the passing of Mr Matthew Murray of Holbeck, engineer extraordinaire, constructor of the "Salamanca" class of steam locomotives - the world's first successful ones. These locos, as we all know, changed the world!



One of the more popular layouts at the Model Railway Exhibition was 'Billingate' - constructed entirely of LEGO! This photo was taken during setting up on the Friday - hence the lack of visitors...

There was also the weekend of model railway layouts when we were gloriously overrun with visitors. At the time of writing, the Steam Punk event is in the offing. *(Another success - see the Chairman's Notes, Editor).*

We have also had a good number of birthday-parties and the Heritage Railway Association (HRA) used our Conference Room for a training seminar.

Beyond that, the shop team have been plying their trade and weathering the weather which has, on many days, been easier to bear indoors than in the carriages or on the footplate. The rising temperatures have (reportedly - your writer has not experienced this directly) been rendering our carriages less than comfortable during the heatwaves which have been presenting themselves in disturbingly rapid succession. Is the awkward topic of resilience pushing its way up the agenda?

There has also been a new development - families coming on the train to scatter the ashes of the recently deceased in The Park. A different kind of celebration..

Richard Stead

Moor Road Happenings

Yet again I'm writing these notes for the summer Old Run whilst basking in the glorious sunshine in South Devon. It's a time when I can largely forget about the Middleton Railway but it is never really far from my thoughts. When I went on holiday, things were generally satisfactory but certainly not as we had expected things to be at this time.

Loco Notes

The last Old Run said that we had started the season on a knife edge in terms of loco availability and it wasn't until mid June that we were in a position where we had sufficient steam locos available to satisfy our minimum requirement of three operational locos. This has largely been due to the work carried out on the water tank over the winter which prevented us from washing out boilers and this, in turn had an effect on the annual boiler inspections. The diesel loco situation is still tight though.



Hawthorn Leslie 3860 of 1935 'No.6'

This loco had its formal visual inspection by the Boiler Inspector on May 5th with no problems noted and was followed by a steam test on May 13th. This enabled the loco to be used on a special train the following day and on timetabled trains during the rest of May. The loco is currently available for service.

Manning Wardle 1210 of 1891 'Sir Berkeley'



As mentioned in the last Old Run, Sir Berkeley had suffered from two failed tubes whilst at Beamish Museum. The tubes were removed by Middleton volunteers on the 31st May (still at Beamish) and the boiler was subsequently examined on the 2nd June. The two tubes which had failed were generally in good condition but had isolated instances of what is generally referred to as 'scabbing' (see photo left). The more correct term for this is oxygen corrosion pitting and, as its name suggests, is caused by the dissolved oxygen in the water reacting with



the steel to create ferrous oxide pits. The removed tubes allowed a limited internal examination of the remaining tubes and it was obvious that this was present on some, but by no means all, of the other tubes. A report was prepared for the Vintage Carriages Trust and they decided that the best solution would be to return the loco to Moor Road and carry out a full re-tube. As a result, the loco returned to Middleton on the 24th June. The loco has since had a boiler washout but is awaiting time and manpower to do further work.



Sentinel no.68153

Although the Sentinel passed its annual boiler examination during April, it has not been used since then and has spent all the time on display in the Engine House. This is due to the combination of the facts that it is only suitable for two coach trains - we have few footplate crew passed as competent to operate it, and it is a notorious spark thrower. 2026 looked like a year when the loco would spend a good bit of time on holiday visiting other railways but this has turned out not to be the case in the end. It had been requested to visit the Tanfield Railway for their gala in May but this fell through as we couldn't guarantee availability in sufficient time for them to publicise the visit. Likewise, an initial request to visit the Severn Valley Railway was subsequently rescinded. At the time of writing, a visit to the Chasewater Railway in September is still on the cards.

Hunslet 2387 of 1941 'Brookes no.1'



Brookes was withdrawn to prepare it for its annual boiler exam after the May Day weekend. The visual and steam examinations were passed without problem and the loco is available for service for another year, which should be its last year of service before a boiler overhaul becomes due. Another attempt has been made to cure the troublesome fireman's side injector which works but continues to leak boiler water. The steam shut off valve has been checked and proved to be satisfactory and both the clack valve and associated shut-off valve have been ground in yet again. However, the problem still persists. The leaking boiler water is either finding its way along the screw thread that holds the shut off valve seat in place or there is a crack somewhere in the body. Unfortunately, it is something that is virtually impossible to establish.

Hudswell, Clarke 1544 of 1924 'Slough Estates no.3'

Painting of the locomotive continued during April and May, including the lining out. However, the volunteer who was doing the lining and lettering was then called into hospital for an operation on his hand which made it impossible for him to

continue until it was fully recovered. We wanted the loco to be available for service by the beginning of June as we were expecting a visit from the loco's owners, the Slough and Windsor Railway Society. It was decided that the only way completion could be achieved in time would be if we employed a sign writer to do the work. As a consequence we engaged the services of Mike Jones Signwriting to finish the lining out and signwrite the legend 'SLOUGH ESTATES No.3' on the tank sides. The lining out is slightly different to that previously carried as we have endeavoured to recreate the lining carried in Estate days. This has included lining out the cab footsteps and a line around the windows. Similarly, the lettering is subtly different in that the shading of the lettering is to the right and above the block letters, as carried in Estate days and not to the right and below as carried previously.



The painting was completed on time but the rush to finish the loco turned out to be unnecessary as, in the end, the S & W R S actually decided to make their visit on the 9th August. Slough entered service on the 7th June and has worked on most weekends since that date. It was involved in a minor incident on the 14th June when it ran into the wagons stabled on the Dartmouth branch whilst running round its train, albeit at slow speed and with no damage to the loco or wagons. This was put down to the fact that the new brake blocks were not fully bedded in, resulting in reduced brake performance which was not appreciated by the loco crew. With use, the brakes are now much better.

A final outstanding task has been the provision of new screw couplings to front and rear. The couplings are actually adaptations of standard screw couplings with new straight links to couple onto the existing coupling hook, which has only a hole and no gedge slot.



Hs 385

During the shunt to get HE 6981 out of the back road of the workshops the opportunity was taken to replace it with our Danish well tank, Hs 385. The plan is to restore this loco to working order, helped by the substantial legacy left to Middleton by the late Bill Hampson specifically for the upkeep and maintenance of Hs 385 and N.E.R. 1310. Bill was very fond of Hs 385 and had been largely responsible for the loco coming to the UK in 1971.

Initial work has started on stripping the loco down, not an easy task when it has stood out of use for 27 years, albeit under cover. The cab has been unbolted, ready for lifting, and all the boiler fittings have been removed. Work is currently ongoing in preparing for the removal of the boiler cladding. Once all this has been done it will be possible to lift the boiler so that is can be fully assessed. It is expected that it will require considerable work to return it back to use. The rest of the loco is thought to be in fair condition, mechanically.

One major job that will have to be put out to contract is the removal of the known asbestos insulation around the cylinders. It is hoped that this can be undertaken in the next few months, once quotations have been received for the work.

John Fowler 4220033 of 1965 'Harry'

No resources of time and manpower have been found to continue work on the loco, which remains in the workshops. It was, however, used in the shunt to extract 6981 from the back road.





Peckett 5003 of 1961 'Austins no.1'

Available for service and used as required. There has been no further progress with the manufacture of a pattern for the brake blocks.

Brush/Beyer Peacock 91 of 1958 'D2999'

The loco has been out of service for some time with an ongoing problem with the sanding system whereby the sanders are working constantly, resulting in the loco struggling to create sufficient air to operate. Both sanding valves have been removed in an attempt to solve the problem. The right hand valve was found



to be well worn and a replacement was acquired, although it has not solved the problem. The left hand valve, which was in better condition, was ground in and tested ‘on the bench’ where it worked satisfactorily. However, when everything was reassembled, the problem still persisted. The sanders can be isolated but the valve that does this also isolates the horn which means the loco cannot be used in this condition. More volunteer time is required to solve the problem and this has not been available. The loco is also in need of new brake blocks and the necessary measurements are yet to be taken so that drawings can be made.



Hudswell, Clarke D1373 of 1965 ‘MD&HB No.45’

Currently available for traffic and is the usual choice for the passenger service.

Hunslet 6981 of 1968 ‘Salamanca’



Much time and effort has been expended on this loco in recent weeks in an attempt to have it operational for its naming on 21st June when it was to be named ‘Salamanca’. Once the painting had been completed by Pioneers Diesels, the loco was shunted out of the back road of the workshops as a first step to making this happen. The electrics were found to be in poor condition and much re-wiring was necessary. New marker lights were fitted to the ends of both buffer beams and the headlights at both ends were made operational. The four sand pipes were cleaned, painted and refitted. The leaking fuel gauge was removed and a new glass tube fitted, replacing the cracked plastic one. New Viton seals were fitted. However, when fuel was introduced into the tank, a slight leak was still evident so more work is required. The various oil and fuel filters were all changed and several water leaks were all sorted out. A compressed air line was connected to the air system and this was charged up. This found various air leaks which had to be attended to. Once all this was done it was time to try an engine start. This was successful, but the success did not last for long as it was discovered that the nylon tube that connected the oil pressure gauge to the engine had come adrift and it was pumping oil out of the engine and onto the engine and compartment at a high rate of knots. The repair was quickly carried out but the cleaning up took a good deal longer..

Once all this work had been completed it was time to try and move the loco under its own power. This, in itself, was satisfactory and the loco moved out of the workshops. However, it was obvious that there were still many problems to sort out, including the vacuum brake system. Because of this the decision had to taken that the loco would be static at its naming ceremony on the 21st June.



Hunslet 1786 of 1935 'Courage'

Currently on display in the Engine House but remains available, if required.

LMS 7051 'John Alcock'

The new head gaskets have now been received and a start has been made on rebuilding the engine.





Hudswell, Clarke D577 of 1932 'Mary'

Mary was shunted into the workshops during May to enable the axleboxes to be examined following a suggestion that the front axleboxes were running warm. Nothing obvious was found during a visual examination so the oil trimmings were all renewed.

The fluid level in the fluid coupling was checked. The specified level in the handbook suggested that the correct level was with the oil filler set at 80° but experience with the coupling filled to this level showed that it was impossible to change gear. However, some notes had been found in the files that referred to filling the coupling. These notes showed that the level had been reduced below this in order to give satisfactory operation. The oil level was reduced accordingly and the loco tried. This proved to be successful so the loco was rostered for service on the 20th June. The loco operated satisfactorily during the morning but was then failed with the front axleboxes running very warm. Attending to this will require the loco to be lifted and this is still to be done at the time of writing.

Hudswell, Clarke D631 of 1946 'Carroll'

Currently on display in the Engine House. No time has been found to investigate the problem with the gearbox.



Carriage and Wagon Notes

Coaches 1074, 2084 and 2223 are currently available for service.

The repair and repaint of Coach 1867 is now reaching a conclusion and it is expected that it will return to traffic before much longer.

Around and About

New Lathe

Well, new to us! We received an e-mail from T & A Precision Plastics on the 20th June offering us a Dean, Smith & Grace 30" centre lathe and tooling for free. From the photos the lathe looked to be good and DSG lathes are considered to be the Rolls Royce of lathes. There was only one snag; it had to be removed from their site by the 23rd! As I was on holiday and no one else could view it in time the decision was made to accept the offer. T & A offered to provide transport and the lathe duly arrived at Moor Road. Reports from people who have seen it say that it is in very good condition. The intention is to use it to replace the Harrison lathe, which is rarely used as it is well worn and cannot be used for accurate machining of bars. However, I'm told that the new lathe is slightly larger than the Harrison, so it will not be a simple swap and some movement of equipment may be necessary.

Hot Weather

As anyone living in the UK will know, we have been subjected to some record breaking temperatures in recent months. This has affected the Railway in several ways. During the May heatwave it became obvious that the track at the top curve had moved and a significant kink had appeared - see opposite. An immediate dead-slow speed restriction was imposed. With the help of our training provider, Rail Futures, we were able to slew the track in the area of the kink sufficiently to allow operations to get back to normal.

The hot weather has affected us in other ways, too. On more than one occasion, footplate crews have suffered from heat exhaustion and had to be relieved and trains cancelled. We have currently imposed a maximum operational air temperature of 30 degrees for steam locomotives.

The kinked track just north of Middleton Park Halt on 27th May (right) and staff and students of Rail Future rectifying the issue (below)

Photos:
Steve Roberts



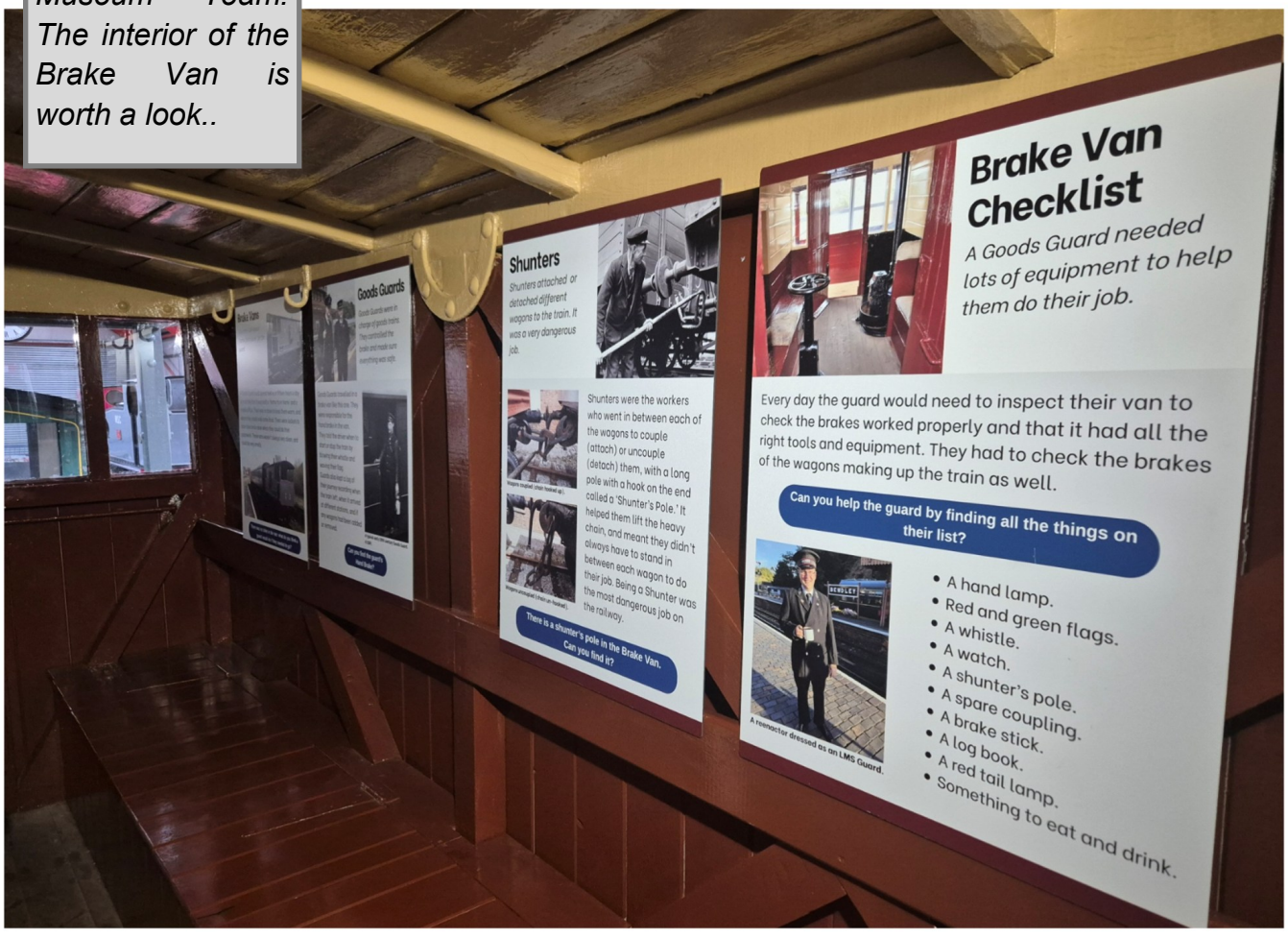


We have so far managed to avoid any lineside fires and are still operating steam locos but this is under review and diesel was used on Sunday 9th August

Steve Roberts



This year has seen a revamp of some of our Museum displays thanks to Anthony Dawson and the Museum Team. The interior of the Brake Van is worth a look..



Slough Estates No.3 joins The Leeds Collection

We were delighted to hear in May that, at their AGM, the Slough & Windsor Railway Society (S&WRS) had voted unanimously to donate HC1544 'Slough Estates No.3' to the Middleton Railway Trust. Obviously this is fantastic news as the loco is a well loved one and ideally suited to our operations. Not only has the loco been gifted but the S&WRS have made a significant donation to help with the loco's ongoing maintenance and upkeep.



On Sunday 9th August we were delighted to host a visit by the S&WRS. During this visit, HC1544 was formally handed over to the Railway following a handover ceremony. HC 1544 is now a permanent part of the historical locomotive collection at Middleton and carries a plaque to that effect.

The Trust is very honoured to be entrusted with the future care of the S&WRS's locomotive. It will become an important part of the Trust's collection of Leeds built locomotives, representing both one of the most successful designs of industrial locomotive produced by Hudswell, Clarke and Co. Ltd, and also a design of locomotive which worked on the Middleton Railway for the greater part of the Railway's time under National Coal Board ownership.



Sadly the temperatures on the day prevented HC1544 from venturing to Middleton Park Halt due to fire risk, but members of the S&WRS were treated to footplate rides whilst it steamed happily up and down in Moor Road Yard. We are sure that their members will be able to return to the Railway at a future date to enjoy the sight of HC1544 operating in the City of her birth for many years to come.

Thanks to Charles Milner, Steve Roberts and Ross Needham (photos) for their contributions to this article.



Members of the Slough & Windsor Railway Society with HC1544 'Slough Estates no.3' on the handover day - Sunday 9th August 2026. Roger Walton and Geordie Brown are the Middleton crew on the footplate (Photo: Ian Smith)



David Hector sent me this image earlier this year which he had found online. It's clearly Middleton Bogie 257 passing the Moor Road Crossing gates but he couldn't tell me any more about it. It's not an image I recall seeing before but then I am neither local or expert in such matters - can anyone expand on this please?

After leaving Middleton...

Readers of The Old Run might perhaps be interested in the experiences of someone who used to volunteer at the Middleton Railway and then moved to another heritage line. The move was the result of deciding to relocate from Leeds to the West Country where my partner's parents lived. We started renting a house near Bristol in 2013 while we worked out exactly where we wanted to relocate, and it happened to be quite close to the Avon Valley Railway, a 3 mile former GWR branch line based at Bitton that was almost entirely volunteer run. So I turned up there, had a chat with a couple of people and started as a passed cleaner. My first impression was that it all seemed a bit casual, and there was a distinct lack of motive power; I seem to recall there were three steam locos in bits and only one loco in ticket, which didn't belong to them. At one point I found myself on the footplate of a visiting 7822 'Foxcote Manor' (photo right), but my overall experience was disappointing. Despite my best efforts, they didn't seem particularly welcoming and I thought their CME in particular came out rather wanting when compared to the highly knowledgeable and skilled Mr. Roberts!



My previous volunteering experience at the Middleton had been steady but unspectacular. I first visited the railway in October 1996 after reading a book by Fred Dibnah and realising a historic industrial site was on my doorstep in Leeds. I got talking to one of the volunteers and was impressed by how friendly he was. As a result, I joined straight away. Who was the guilty party who inadvertently got me into 25 years of volunteering at heritage railways? None other than the present editor of The Old Run! *(Interestingly I don't have any record of any turns for myself in October 1996 - it was nearly 30 years ago - although I was guard at the Gala on 29th September. Mirvale, Lion (visiting Peckett), 68153, Sir Berkeley, 1310 and 385 were operating. I'm surprised I had time to be friendly - Editor)*

I had never been particularly fascinated by railways or steam engines; about all I knew was gleaned from a book published in 1939 called Speeding North with the Royal Scot which I was given as a boy, so I only had a hazy idea of how a steam engine worked. Because of this, I had assumed I'd be directed to help in the shop or some other useful backroom task, but was surprised to find myself on the footplate for the first time in my life a few days later – mainly because the membership secretary at the time was Mike Scargill and he needed a cleaner for his next driving turn! The loco was No. 67 and my fireman was Daniel Baxter, who was remarkably patient with someone who knew literally nothing about the task in hand.

To help improve my understanding I started keeping a log of my turns, then added in comments to help me remember settings and the things I'd learnt. So I slowly advanced my knowledge to the point where I was passed as a fireman, but I never really saw myself as qualifying as a driver, as there were so many things I didn't know about steam locos. When you know nothing there's a great deal to learn – just how much was to become evident a few years later.



The Author guiding 1310 into the platform at Park Halt on 9th August 2014.

By early 2014 we had moved to our present home in Bradford on Avon, which was still within fairly easy travelling distance of Bitton. But I was still unhappy with my progress at the AVR and I remember on one of my visits to Leeds talking with Steve about my difficulties fitting in at Bitton. He suggested there was another railway quite close to where I lived that could do with my input – the Somerset & Dorset Joint Railway, based at Midsomer Norton. Let's get things quite clear at the outset – there are two organisations which call themselves by very similar names and a lot of people get them mixed up. After the S&D had been closed as a mainline railway in 1966, a preservation movement started based at Radstock station, just down the hill from Midsomer Norton. After a couple of name changes, this eventually became the Somerset & Dorset Railway Trust (SDRT) and continued until 1974 when the Radstock site was closed. The SDRT was offered space at Washford on the West Somerset Railway and remained there until again being asked to move out in 2021. Meanwhile in the early nineties, the site of the derelict BR station at Midsomer Norton South had become available after it had been vacated by a local college and another preservation group was set up, this time with the name of the Somerset & Dorset Railway Heritage Trust (SDRHT). At the time I found all this very confusing!

I first visited the site in 2014 by which time the railway had expanded south about a mile up the old track bed towards Chilcompton from the station site, but at the time of my visit, it wasn't operational. As I stood on the platform intently watching some shunting taking place, a voice from the signal box behind me asked me if I was from the Office of Rail and Road? It turned out that the ORR had suspended the operation of passenger services six months earlier following complaints from disgruntled former volunteers who had left the railway. Apparently, there was a lack of expertise and the necessary paperwork to operate a railway safely.

Despite this introduction, I got involved in the railway; it turned out two other

volunteers lived in Bradford on Avon so we went over together every Monday, the main working day. My first task was assisting in laying a type of linoleum on the floor of the Mark 1 coach – the material was thick and very hard to lay in the winter temperatures we experienced. I noticed two big differences between the SDRHT and the Middleton – main line rolling stock and main line signalling and I had to educate myself about both these subjects. The coach I was working on was an SK – S(econd) K(orridor). Turns out BR had already allocated C to Composite, a mixture of classes. There was also a BSK, B(rake) S(econd) K (orridor) which had returned to the railway after going somewhere else to be refurbished. That, as it turned out, hadn't happened and it was in a grim condition, with a huge hole in the floor, a leaking roof and completely wrecked internal compartments *(photo left)* However it was potentially a very useful vehicle as it was fitted with both vacuum and mechanical brakes, and a brake compartment - important if you want to run a passenger train. Another big difference between the two railways was that at the end of the line there wasn't a run round loop (it was a main line that just stopped because the original line entered a deep cutting that had been filled in during the 1970s with household waste). So to run a train back to the station involved 'setting back' all the way back down, and a BSK was an ideal vehicle for that task if it was marshalled at the rear of the train.



One of the volunteers who joined about the same time as I did was Charley Davis, who had previously worked in publishing – he played an important part in future events. Another newly appointed role was the Chief Mechanical Engineer, filled by a very likeable chap called Barrie Papworth with a wealth of mechanical experience from both BR and the Great Central Railway. Motive power was limited to two diesels, an English Electric shunter and an 08. There was also a privately owned steam loco, a Sentinel double engined shunter which was in the process of being restored. All the locos and rolling stock were looked after by Barrie. Space was very limited at Midsomer Norton; apart from the station building on one of the platforms and a small toilet block, there was an original engine shed – and that was it. Everything else had to be done out of doors with different projects vying for space in the engine shed. I don't know if people at the Middleton realise how lucky they are with all the covered space available and all the amazing array of motive power!

During the summer of 2015 I continued helping out with refurbishing the rolling stock, but in August Charley was invited to join the board of the Company. At this

point I need to explain how the S&D was structured. In common with other similar railways, the SDHRT was set up as a Trust, which owned the site but because it was a registered charity, it was unable to engage in commercial activities outside of its stated aims. So a Company had also been formed, the Somerset & Dorset Railway Company Ltd, and although it issued shares, it was majority owned by the Trust. It was the Company that operated the railway, sold tickets, ran the shop and received almost all of the income. Every year it remitted the majority of its profits to the Trust, which was responsible for the railway infrastructure and overall strategy.

Whilst I was away one weekend in September 2015 I was informed I'd been elected onto the Company board at Charley's suggestion and given that no-one else on the board had any operational experience, I had also been appointed as Operations Manager! It was then I discovered what a truly monumental uphill task was in front of us to get the railway fit for operating passenger services. During that autumn and winter a small team worked really hard to pull together the necessary paperwork and train up volunteers – an agreed Rule Book, a Safety Management System, a comprehensive set of railway instructions, a Competence Management System, training manuals, exam questions (and answers) and records of shifts worked and competencies. Some of this work had been done, especially in some job descriptions but it was uncoordinated and out of date. I found one aspect of the volunteer body at MSN (as Midsomer Norton was commonly abbreviated) very problematical – they were mostly divided into 'silos' where one group hardly communicated with other groups and mutual suspicion was rife. This is quite common at places that have experienced upheaval and division, but I was determined to do something about it. There must have been around 30 or 40 working volunteers but everyone just seemed to do what they wanted with little central control.



Charley Davis (left) and The Author on a practice day iat Midsomer Norton in late 2014.

And looming over all this was the date of March 6th 2016, which would be the 50th anniversary of closure and which we simply had to run trains for. We were having to pull ourselves up with our own bootstraps very quickly – here's an example of how we did that involving the guarding of passenger trains. We had one trained guard who also volunteered at our nearest neighbours, the East Somerset Railway and I got him to show me and Barrie what to do on a couple of practice trips up and down the line. Then having read through the job description and the rule book I distilled everything I'd learned into a series of questions (and answers!), and tested Barrie on it. Once I judged he had passed, he then passed

me (and the original guard) and suddenly we had three competent guards with the documentation to prove it. Well – unless you looked closely to see what qualifications I had to act as a competent examiner! In a similar fashion we did the same for other safety critical duties and started to build up our competencies.

It may have been a bit belt and braces but it satisfied Steve Turner, the ORR inspector when he returned to inspect our SMS and other paperwork early in 2016. He lifted the restriction on passenger operations and the way was clear to resume running with public trains.

We decided to hire in a steam loco to mark the 50th Anniversary of Closure and managed to get hire in 'Jinty' 47406, a Fowler 3F 0-6-0T loco from the Great Central Railway. This was appropriate as locos of this class were regular performers on the S&D in BR days. The weekend of the 5th and 6th March 2016 could not have gone better – the hard work of a lot of people had finally achieved an operational railway in difficult circumstances.

Graham Findley



When the hard work pays off… Jinty 47406 departs Midsomer Norton on 6th March 2016 with Barrie Papworth on the footplate. This was the 50th Anniversary of the closure (all photos by Graham Findley)

It's interesting to hear how Middleton Volunteers have gone on elsewhere and helped at other sites and more stories like this would be welcome - in your Editor's case I worked elsewhere (NYMR and Butterley on Deltics) and ended up at Middleton! I visited Midsomer Norton on 24th March 2018 when 47406 was again visiting and 08 D4095 was operating on Driver for a Fiver. The atmosphere of the former main line was tangible - when the Jinty and the 08 were both round the corner out of sight I fully expected a Bulleid Pacific, 7F or 9F to appear at any moment - the bacon sandwiches were excellent too…



Right: D4095 heads away from Midsomer Norton with a happy customer at the controls..

Below: The Sentinel mentioned in Graham's article (now at Chinnor) This locomotive was built at the Sentinel Waggon Works at Shrewsbury in 1927. The 28 ton locomotive has a pair of transverse engines at the front and a vertical water-tubed boiler at the rear of the cab. It uses both gears and chains to transfer the drive to the axles. Unlike later Sentinel locomotives, it has only a single gear ratio.

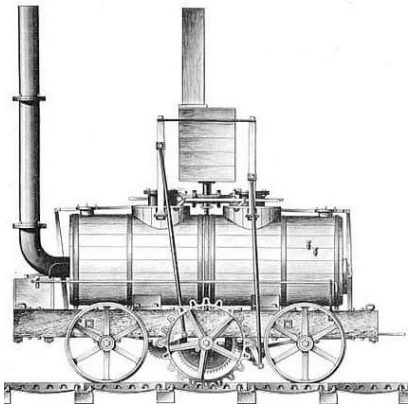


Its central section houses a four inch thick cast-iron water tank to provide ballast as well as hold water. Whatever the water level in the tank, the weight distribution remains the same and so the locomotive is balanced front to rear.

Photos: Ian Dobson (who of course had a go at driving the 08 - and had previously driven 47406 on a similar experience at Loughborough Central..)

And finally, the bits that won't go anywhere else…

A couple of photographs this time. The first was taken on 23rd May 2026 and whilst the floral display is not part of Mick Jackson's formal work it certainly brings a bit of colour to Moor Road...







Meanwhile, on the platform Geordie Brown has sourced some planters in the style of MSC 67 and the Middleton Wagon. These are an excellent addition and a talking point amongst both visitors and volunteers.

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