

Old Run

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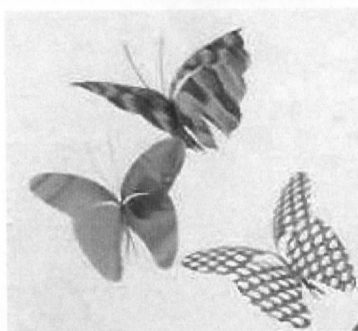
September 2005



**All change at Middleton
Wickham Railbus at Llangollen**



Supported by the National Lottery through the
Heritage Lottery Fund



Editorial

In nature metamorphosis signifies change and renewal. This issue of *Old Run* contains a further photographic and written record of the gradual but incredibly relatively rapid transformation of the scene at Middleton within the confines of the Moor Road yard.

It is also a tribute to the hard work of those members who have contributed to this on-going transformation throughout the last several months: those involved in the physical work, be it infrastructure, restoration of locomotives and rolling stock, or the back-room development work for the current works, and planning for future operations. There is a great deal more going on than most of us realise.

Members who have not yet visited Moor Road this year can see in this issue alone the immense change as it has taken place—and there is much more to do and experience before we see the scheme completed! *Vive le future!*

Howard W Bishop, Editor

The deadline for the next issue is 15 November 2005

Front cover photo

Reconstruction work in progress at Moor Road on 13 July 2005 as concrete sleepers and new rails are craned in to complete the new track layout at the south end of the yard.
(*Andrew Gill*)

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The Old Run is published quarterly by The Middleton Railway Trust. Publication dates are 25 March, 24 June, 29 September and 25 December with deadline dates of 15 February, 15 May, 15 August and 15 November respectively. The Editor welcomes contributions—photographs, articles, news items and letters—relating to the interests of the Trust and the operation of the Railway. Copy for publication can be typewritten or word processed and is acceptable on CD-ROM. Photographs can be prints, or saved to disk in jpeg or tif format. Opinions expressed by contributors do not necessarily reflect those of the Middleton Railway Trust Ltd., Middleton Railway Association, or the Editor.

Especially thanks to those who have provided copy for this issue.

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From the Chairman

I don't know about you but I am starting to get withdrawal symptoms – I have not been on a working steam loco since last year and as far as I am concerned that is where the real pleasure is in my hobby. I have just prescribed myself a few days away in North Wales where there are some Leeds built locomotives that my long suffering wife has not yet seen and I feel obliged to fill that gap in her life experience. The day I return to work is the day the Contractors start on site and it will give me nearly equal pleasure, and I am sure I speak for everyone else in this, in saying how much I look forward to seeing somebody else's digger on site, somebody else's crane hoisting steel beams into position and somebody else laying bricks. In the next few weeks the whole project is visibly going to start coming together on site and with a fair wind we will see the shell of the new building complete by Christmas. Has anybody noticed how the evenings are starting to draw in already and where did I leave that tinsel?

When we set out on this project the 'best case' target was always to try to be sufficiently advanced with the various areas of work to enable us to run Santa Trains in December. To do this we would now need to be able to guarantee that we can run the trains so that the presents can be bought, the advertising and other publicity prepared, volunteer staff organised and much more. We can now see that there is going to be so much to do in the next four months that we cannot reasonably give that

guarantee today and are unlikely to be able to do so in September. Pity, because it would have been good to see Santa in a hard hat, high-vis vest and safety wellies and we could have done with the income.

With Contractors on site there will be a need to follow a different set of rules, obey instructions and not have the ability to wander as freely about the site as we do now, there is also likely to be more competition for spaces in the car park. On the plus side the pace of visible progress will quicken but we will come under pressure to meet dates dictated by their progress for items that we will have to provide. For instance we must have the rails fully prepared and ready to drop into the new building floor to suit the contractors programme – not ours. At times that will be easier said than done which will add to the pressure on our volunteers and is a good illustration why we should not retire to our armchairs between now and Christmas. As always your help is needed in all departments to carry on with the parts of the Project that are our responsibility.

As before I conclude by thanking all of you who have contributed so far and for those who have not done so yet please consider The President's Appeal and read the Moor Road Messenger and ask yourself, "What can I do to play a part in these important times for our railway?"

David Monckton, Chairman

NEW MOOR ROAD SITE RULES

From 1st August 2005 the whole Moor Road site is considered a 'construction site' for Health and Safety purposes. This is particularly because the Contractors are starting their work but also as a result of what we are doing elsewhere in the yard. Until further notice these rules will apply to anybody (even me) coming to site, the main points are set down in the August issue of the Moor Road Messenger and will be displayed on site to assist you. What these new rules mean is that you will still be very welcome to come to your Railway, particularly if you are going to help in any way, shape or form but for your safety and that of everyone else there will not be the same freedom to wander that there has been. We are intending to maintain a 'presence' near the site entrance (eventually a site cabin will replace the shop as our temporary base) and for the much of the time at weekends volunteers will be on hand to help all visitors. These Rules will remain in force for as long as Contractors are on site and we are carrying out major works elsewhere in the yard.

The story so far, part 2

David Monckton

Since the previous instalment of this epic saga progress has been maintained both on and off site. Away from the public eye the current position is that:

~ we now have Full Planning Consent for the whole new building subject to clearance of one final condition regarding drainage and we also have Building Regulations Consent for the works again subject to clearance of structural calculations to be provided by Contractors. The new Lease for the whole of the Railway has been agreed and signed. We have obtained a strip of land from the Builder Centre next door and there is a secure new fence all along this side of the site.

~ we have received authority to proceed from the Lottery People now we have met the conditions attached to their offer of a grant and we are in contact with John Morris who is our Monitor, appointed by the HLF to oversee the project on their behalf and ensure we achieve the best we can within the budget we have set to give our visitors as comprehensive and enjoyable an experience as possible.

~ we have now appointed Contractors to carry out the Groundworks and Superstructure Packages of work. For a variety of reasons (mostly economic) the building work has been split into three main packages. The Groundworks Package comprises preparing the site, carrying out enabling works in the car park, demolishing the shop and platform, digging and concreting all of the foundations for the new building, laying the reinforced concrete ground floor slabs to the majority of the building and laying the majority of the new drainage. This work starts on 8th August and will take approximately ten weeks. The Superstructure Package comprises supplying and erecting the structural steel frame for the new building plus all of the 'wriggly tin' insulated sheeting plus gutters and rainwater pipes. Steel erection is likely to commence in early October and should be finished during the first week in December.

~ the last of the three main packages is for building the 'Admin Block' end of the new

building with its brick walls and slate roof plus most of the general builders and fitting out work to the interior. This is presently out to tender with the expectation that work will start late September/early October.

~ Committees have been formed to consider how best we are going to run our new facilities, what items should form part of the display, what items 'out there' would enhance the display and how to show everything to its best effect to 'tell the story'.

Oh, and back in the public eye, thanks to the efforts of our volunteers:

~ we have got through the stage where there was next to no track still in position in the whole yard and steady progress is being made towards the point that when you read this there will be a continuous line of track from the car park to the tunnel gates – it still needs a bit of fine tuning but it is very good to see track being laid again.

~ the enabling works to clear the area of the new building are almost complete and we can hand it over to the Contractors.

~ a Contractor has made a start on digging the foundations for the platform walls and we are busily filling the holes with concrete and starting to lay concrete blocks.

~ good visible progress is now being made on the three cosmetic restorations in the car park headshunt but the jungle is starting to engulf Picton again.

We are getting there, and it will be good to shortly see the new building taking shape, but now is not the time to relax.

As I have said before it is essential to build up and maintain momentum with all the tasks that we have to carry out 'in house'. There continues to be a fantastic and consistent effort from both regulars and occasional regulars at weekends and through the week. At the time of writing, we are well into the holiday season and it remains essential that there is a big enough pool of volunteers coming forward to carry on as part of the team,

so don't be shy - we are happy to welcome you as an occasional and you will be sur-

prised at how easy it is to get passed out as a regular.

The President's appeal

The President's Appeal is now bearing fruit and we are very grateful to everyone who has contributed. At the end of July donations from members have steadily built up to the current total of £5036-00 with a further £300-00 donated for specific items (furniture for the Training Room). If you have not already given, don't worry there will be plenty more opportunities in the coming weeks.

Gerald Egan has been approaching the Train Operating Companies that use Leeds City Station with the result that Network Rail have sent us a cheque for £10,000-00 as their contribution to the Appeal! Network Rail has also offered us a day at Leeds City station to 'collect' and 'display the Middleton Story' – this will be organised with the Marketing Committee.

As a result of Gerald's approach to the Leader's Office, Leeds City Council have indicated that they are interested in helping us 'in kind' and we will shortly be meeting with a Council Officer to discuss this offer.

Keep up the good work Gerald – it looks a little ominous for our postage bill that he has just asked for a copy of the Leeds Telephone Directory! □

(These figures were correct at 1 August 2005. By the time you read this, the amount raised may well have been increased significantly.)

Locomotive facts and figures, 2004

The following table shows the number of turns completed, and miles travelled, by the locomotives that were used to operate trains at the Railway during 2004. The number of turns, which has been taken from the computerised roster, includes some non-passenger turns such as 'Thunderbird' rescue duties, weed-killing trains and even a tree-pruning train.

Mileages are generally based on 17½ miles for a timetable A duty, 25 miles for a timetable B duty and the entries in the drivers' logs for other duties such as special events. In the case of occasional omissions, a sprinkling of guesswork has been added. There were also four occasions when the diesel locomotive(s) that wrestled with the 'Troublesome Trucks' at the Happy/Mischievous Engines events chose to remain anonymous.

As can be seen from the table, the steam locomotive that was used the most was MSC No. 67, which did roughly half of the steam turns and miles, and the clear leader from the diesel stable was Hunslet 7051 "John Alcock". I'm confident that the compilation of these figures for the 2005 season will prove to be remarkably easy because I don't collect statistics for the cranes or the JCB digger!

Steam Locomotive	Turns	Mileage	Diesel Locomotive	Turns	Mileage
MSC No.67	33	717½	7051 John Alcock	8	113½
1601 Matthew Murray	18	401	D2999	7	78
2103	10	233	5003 Austins No. 1	5	85
5459 Austin 1 (visitor)	2	26	631 Carroll	5	74½
2384 Brookes No. 1	2	24	577 Mary	5	53½
3694 Whiston (visitor)	2	21	138C	3	52½
			Rowntree No. 3	2	32½
			Wickham DB999507	3	28½
			DB998901 OLIVE	3	21
			1786 Courage	2	7
TOTAL	67	1,422½	43	546	Martin Plumb

Middleton — No!

says Ian Smith

The photo of *SIR BERKELEY* at Middleton Park, published in the last issue of *Old Run* is actually NOT on the Middleton Railway at all. In fact, this shot is taken in July 1998 and shows *SIR BERKELEY* at Foxfield Colliery, on the Foxfield Railway, Staffordshire.

SIR B is coupled to *LEWISHAM* [WB2221/27] and is resting in the dock road at the bottom of



WANT TO WIN A TENNER?

(which you may wish to donate to the President's Appeal)

The membership has obviously got too much money for their own good – a pitiful two suggestions (not two pitiful suggestions) have been made for possible names for the new building. So the incentive is doubled to see if we can flush out some more suggestions – and, no, if you wait for the December issue it won't have doubled again!

What about - The Round Foundry Resource Building (except it's rectangular), Moor Road Museum (except they say it's a Resource Centre) or for those with a lisp The Waylway Intewpwwative Twainshed Building (TWIT Building for short). It is reasonably safe to assume that none of the above will be

COME ON, YOU CAN DO BETTER!!

This doubly significant (to me) reward is offered to the contributor of the best suggestion for a name for the new building. Send your suggestions in either written or electronic form to David Monckton who will choose and reward the best one (in his opinion) and submit it to Council for their consideration.

the infamous Foxfield Bank, a 1 in 19 stretch of the line from the colliery site to Dilhorne Park, where the passenger station is situated. At present freight only, this bank is a mecca for industrial steam enthusiasts and is always a challenge for locos and their crews.

At the time this photo was taken, *SIR B* and *LEWISHAM* were waiting for the return of the freight train [known irreverently as the "Windbreaker"!], which they would be working up the bank. Once coupled to this train of 6 mineral wagons plus brakevan, both locos would go hell for leather up the bank – great fun!! On this occasion, *SIR B* was being driven by John Wilkinson, with myself

as fireman. The next attempt was done with the positions reversed. The old loco was "game" and the sound from *SIR B*'s chimney in front and *LEWISHAM* immediately behind us, was something to behold!!!

NER 1310 has also visited Foxfield, whilst they have also been asking for 67 to visit in due course. Also, with *BELLEROPHON* being based at Foxfield, the possibility of *SIR B* making a return trip to double head with her VCT stablemate is also on the cards for a future date, so keeping links between the two industrial lines alive.

New Hunslet diesel locomotive for Isle of Man Railway

In the year when two IOM Beyer Peacock steam locomotives No. 10 *G H Wood* and No. 11 *Maitland*, celebrate their centenary, the newly acquired Hunslet diesel loco was named by IOM resident and former IOM Railway shareholder Cecil Mitchell, on the occasion of his own 100th birthday. The diesel was built for the construction of the Jubilee Line, and re-gauged to 3 foot by the contractors for the relaying of the IOM line to Port Erin before acquisition by the IOM Railway at the end of the contract.



It was named *Ailsa* in recognition of the part Lord Ailsa played in keeping the railway open in the late 1960s, and given IOM no. 18.

25 July 2005

(HWB)

funding. I was in the Hunslet area a few

Dear editor, I must say.....

Another year over, and another successful set of industrial projects have been undertaken. May I thank you for your participation and support in making this one of the most interesting and challenging modules for our student to undertake. Will you please pass my thanks on to your colleagues: without you and their continued support and involvement the chance for students to actively be involved with the problems that beset tourism related business would be curtailed and our students would be deprived of the opportunity to be involved in "real world" scenarios.

We hope that the exercise was also of benefit to you and assisted in the granting of the Lottery

weeks ago and it appeared to be a hive of activity.

When you are "back on track" (sorry for the pun) perhaps you may wish consider participating again for another project. Thank you once again.

Yours sincerely

Graham Whitworth
Senior Lecturer
Centre for Tourism Management
Tourism, Hospitality and Events School
Leeds Metropolitan University

Volunteers are still needed for work in all areas. Help is needed with the many jobs involved in getting the Moor Road site ready for operation. At the earliest date. There are front line and back room jobs involved in planning for the opening of our new facilities in 2006. Use your skills and experience and contact a member of the Railway's Council (details on page 31) or turn up on a Wednesday or a weekend for information.

KNOW YOUR RAILWAY

Annual General Meeting

At the 31st Annual General Meeting of the Middleton Railway Trust Limited held 16 June 2005, Officers of the Trust remained unchanged for the ensuing year. There were no nominations for office other than those already in post, and Chairman David Monckton said he was happy to continue in office for a further period in order to see the current development work through. The Company Secretary Tony Cowling and Treasurer Stan Holdsworth were also reappointed. Members of the Trust's Council (managing body) remain largely unchanged for the ensuing year (see page 31).

Council Meetings

The Railway's management board consists of a Council which meets on a monthly basis, and Members of the Trust may attend and observe the workings of this body. Council meetings are held in the Board Room in the Fred Youell Building, at 7.30 p.m on the dates below:

Wednesday 14 September 2005

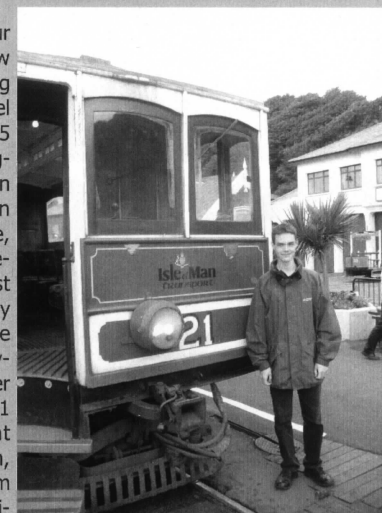
Thursday 13 October 2005

Wednesday 9 November 2005

Thursday 13 December 2005.

Andrew Plumb celebrates 21st birthday in style!

Not only did your editor and Andrew witness the naming of the new diesel locomotive on 25 July 2005 at Douglas, Isle of Man station, as seen on the previous page, but Andrew celebrated his 21st birthday on 30 July 2005 whilst in the Isle of Man by having MER "Winter Saloon" Car No. 21 specially brought out for the occasion, as was Horse Tram No. 21. Both vehi-



bly older than his mere 21 years! In this photograph he is seen at the MER's Derby Castle terminus before setting off for Laxey and Ramsey. This was part of his annual pilgrimage to the Island as part of the self-styled *Isle of Man 30 Group* whose members organised this birthday surprise for Andrew.

(Christian Hartley-Woolley)



Contrasting views.

Top—as it was in May 2005 before work started on the relaying of the south end of the yard. Bottom—the scene on 27 June 2005 with track taken out and ground being prepared for the new track formation to be laid. (HWB)



Lego-like building blocks arrive on site ready for the building of the new platform
27 July 2005
(Andrew Gill)

Two days after the contractors started work, the site of the Exhibition Hall has been cleared and the shop awaits demolition,
9 August 2005
(HWB)



Looking from the south end of the Moor Road yard on 10 August 2005. Progress with the new main line and platform walls can be seen and in the background the contractors are busily engaged (HWB)

Kirkstall Forge and its railway system

Derek Plummer

The Kirkstall Forge was started by a group of Cistercian monks who came from Barnoldswick in Lancashire and founded Kirkstall Abbey. The Abbey Mill Race was constructed to convey water from a weir on the stream known as Cow Beck to power the water wheels which operated the tilt hammers. Pig iron was heated in a furnace and then worked under the hammers to produce wrought iron. The forge was worked by the monks for nearly 400 years until it passed into crown property in 1539 at the dissolution of the monasteries by Henry VIII.

Towards the end of the 17th century a slitting mill was set up with rollers to firstly flatten the iron bars produced by the tilt hammers, and secondly with the rollers replaced by slitting cutters to cut the bars into strips for nail manufacture. Power was provided by water wheels fed by water taken from the River Aire at Newly Weir via a channel or giot leading into a dam at the forge.

In 1777 the Leeds and Liverpool Canal was opened and became the main means of transport for both inward and outward goods at the forge.

Horse drawn vehicles were conveyed across the River Aire on a ferry between the works on the north river bank and the canal wharf on the south side. In 1835 a steam engine of 8 h.p. was put into use to power 12 lathes, a column drill and a screwing machine and this was followed in 1835 by a second engine.

John O. Butler served his time with Messrs Fenton, Murray and Jackson in Hunslet, Leeds, and joined the forge in 1841 with the idea of setting up an engineering branch to make railway wagons and axles. This trade peaked in 1847. In 1848 600 pairs of wheels and axles were supplied to the Austrian State Railways at a cost of £34.10s. per pair.

In 1845 the Leeds and Bradford Railway was constructed past the forge crossing a bend in the River Aire by two bridges a short distance apart. A level crossing was provided for vehicular traffic between the forge and the canal. Exchange sidings were provided at the forge.

Bridges, cranes, steam engines and boilers were manufactured including a rail hand crane built in 1865 for the Isle of Wight Railway at a cost of £200. The crane was still operational in 1967 when Kirkstall Forge bought it back for £200 and put it on display at the works.

In September 1873 the landowner of the forge site, then Lady Cardigan, visited her tenantry and toured the works in a special saloon carriage hauled by a locomotive named Henry de Lacy. Manning, Wardle & Co. supplied in 1876 locomotive No. 578 which was an 0-4-0 tank engine equipped with a 3 ton crane. In the same year the British Iron and Steel Institute met in Leeds, visited Kirkstall Forge and were impressed by the usefulness of the crane tank in handling materials around the site. The visitors also saw a Haswell system 1250 ton hydraulic press and a machine for straightening and planishing round steel bars.

In 1878 the engineering branch was discontinued and the works concentrated on the manufacture of best Yorkshire iron railway tyres and axles, crank axles, forging bar iron, patent rolled shafting, arms and axles for road vehicles; also anvils.

About 1900 large quantities of bus axles were made for the London General Omnibus Company. In 1906 the first motor vehicles front axles were produced. In 1904 a ten inch rolling mill was set up on a hillside between the works dam and the main Leeds - Guiseley road. First World War developments to meet the demand for military vehicles included a bar shop, axles shop, axles heat treatment and a canteen.

Hudswell Clarke supplied 0-4-0ST works No. 1309 in 1917 named Henry de Lacy II. This locomotive, and a later one named Henry Lacy III, worked the internal railway system, until 1968. The duties included moving incoming wagons of steel billets from the main line exchange sidings to the appropriate part of the works for manufacture, moving loaded wagons of scrap for despatch to steelworks, and positioning fuel oil tankers for unloading.

A simple bar and pin coupling allowed the locomotives to move around the site basic 4-wheel bogies loaded with steel bars from the stockyard situated towards the main road entrance to the rolling mill. Steam rail cranes were used to load the bogies and move them about the yard. In 1920 iron ceased to be worked at the forge after about 700 years.

In 1921 the first complete rear axle for a motor vehicle was manufactured, whilst in 1925 came the first braked front axles to meet a vehicle manufacturer's need. In 1927 came the first twin drive rear bogie which was applied to Karrier 6-wheel trolleybuses made in Huddersfield.

The water wheel and helve hammers had ceased work in December 1918, enabling the dam to be drained and filled in. In 1939 at the request of Thorneycrofts a front wheel drive axle was produced. Between the River Aire and the exchange sidings the area had been used as a works tip until in 1940 at government request a heat treatment and stamp shop was developed on this site and came into operation in December 1941. During World War II, on the night of 27th/28th August 1942 bombs were dropped on the forge site; there was not a great deal of damage, but five workpeople lost their lives.

On 20th May 1949 the Kirkstall Forge Engineering Company was formed to take over from the private family business. In 1973 Kirkstall was the largest independent manufacturer of heavy duty axles in Europe. In 1974 the Butler family, as major shareholders, sold the business to the engineering company GKN. The Butler family connection which had lasted 195 years ended. In 1983 the company name became GKN Axles Ltd - Heavy Division, and in 1995 sold the business to the Dana Corporation of the USA. Dana invested in equipment at Kirkstall, including in 1999 a large 38 metric tonne forging hammer to produce axles beams in one piece.

In 2002 it was announced that Kirkstall Forge would cease production and so far the first time in 852 years the hammers fell silent. □

Acknowledgements: Heavy Metal - Images of the Kirkstall Forge by Ian Beasley. The History of Kirkstall Forge through seven centuries, 1200 - 1945 AD, by Rodney Butler (pub. Henry Jenkinson Ltd, 1945)



Hudswell Clarke, Henry de Lacy II, No. 1309 of 1917 and Hudswell Clarke Henry de Lacy III, No. 1716 of 1940, seen at Kirkstall Forge on 4 November 1966. (Ron Allison)

The great British railtour

Howard Bishop

Each year for the last several years I have set myself a challenge. In past years I have undertaken various long distance cycle rides: the c2c cycle ride from Whitehaven to Sunderland; the North Sea cycle ride from Berwick on Tweed to Spurn Point; the grand tour of Lincolnshire; Holland in winter via North Sea Ferries; southern Ireland; the Yorkshire Dales Cycleway. Last year it was to travel on the newly constructed railway line on the extended Ghan Express from Alice Springs to Darwin as part of a visit to Australia.

For 2005 it was seven days travelling on the railways of Great Britain using an All Line Rover ticket. This is something that has been an ambition for a long time; now I've got the time, "why not?" I thought.

The aim was not to break any records – this has been done already according to the Guinness Book of Records – but to travel as far as possible to the far compass points of the British mainland, using not only fast trains but also travelling over some not previously-used-by-me scenic lines using local trains.

Thus it was in early June I set off early on a Monday morning from Doncaster station on the 0615 GNER Mallard service to Edinburgh on the first day. We were 8 minutes late leaving due to the late arrival of the driver from Neville Hill, Leeds, whose train had been cancelled, but would have made this time up had there not been a lorry strike at a bridge at Drem, just before Edinburgh, making arrival in Edinburgh 38 minutes down. From Edinburgh to Aberdeen we were on time, then at Inverurie north of Aberdeen we made an emergency stop due to a Land Rover having crashed through

fence and overturning on the line ahead. Ten minutes were spent before we crawled past the offending vehicle with about a metre to spare. Splendid views of the coastline in Northumberland, and along the north east coast of Scotland were enjoyed, and after a short break in Inverness it was off to Wick in the Far North of Scotland. Problems still awaited in the form of a herd of cows on the line between Thurso and George-mas Junction, arrival in Wick at 2145 being 16 minutes down. *Miles travelled 650.75*



Class B12 4-6-0 locomotive No. 61572 at Sheringham

Day two saw departure from Wick promptly at 0629 for Inverness. The scenery in Caithness is stunning: a feeling of being on top of the world with huge skies, total isolation in the last great wilderness in Britain, and lots of red deer in sight. Suther-

land in contrast is rolling hills and verdant pastures. Then Inverness to Kyle of Lochalsh, one of the most scenic lines in Great Britain, with views of Flockton, well used for filming, bubbling mountain streams, lochs, soaring red kites and eagles, oyster catchers, yellow gorse and purple rhododendrons. An extended lunch is taken overlooking the Isle of Skye before the return trip from Kyle to Inverness, the silver sea shimmering in evening sunlight. The Highland capital is left at 2040 precisely on the Night Sleeper for London Euston, congenial company in the bar car, and a good night's sleep before arrival in Euston 3 minutes early at 0737. *Miles travelled today 927.50.*

Day three, Wednesday, involved a huge culture shock. From the beautiful and quiet Scottish Highlands you are deposited in the centre of the mad maelstrom of a metropolitan rush hour. By

(continued on page 21)



Wickham Railbus DB998901 departs from Carrog during its visit to the Llangollen Railway in the summer of 2005, on the sunny afternoon of 17 July 2005
(Ian Dobson)

Centre pages photographs

Top row, l to r:

"Chief fire raiser and chain-saw fiend" David Cook dismantles the station platform, 5 April 2005. The new back road and the car park head shunt get joined together, 11 May 2005, David Wraith in foreground. And the workshop spur is reconnected to the new layout, 11 May 2005, with Sue Gill, Karl Fischer, Mark Whitaker, Andrew Gill and Steve Roberts.

Middle row, l to r:

Many hands make light work: shifting old sleepers after the rails and chairs have been removed, 28 May 2005, with Andrew & Martin Plumb, Sue Gill, Brian Hall, Peter Nettleton and Graham Parkin. Site of new platform takes shape in the form of a mound of earth, alongside stacks of newly acquired concrete sleepers, 29 June 2005. The Balm Road branch spur is slewed towards our new boundary fence, making room for the Display Hall to be erected., 29 June 2005

Bottom row, l to r:

New long length sleepers are positioned for the turnout at the south end of the yard, 16 July 2005, with Martin Plumb, Martin Jenkins, Andrew Gill and Tony Cowling. (Sue Gill). The turnout is positioned (view seen from the crane driver's elevated position), 17 July 2005, with Steve Roberts, Sue and Andrew Gill, Karl Fischer, Andrew & Martin Plumb, Mark and Brian Jenkins. (Peter Nettleton) The new platform walls are taking shape, with Neil Carmichael and Andrew Gill, 10 August 2005.

(Photos HWB except where indicated above)



Moor Road



metamorphosis continues



Rolling stock report

Steve Roberts

The need to concentrate our valuable volunteer resources on the redevelopment of Moor Road has meant a considerable reduction in work on our rolling stock. Essentially, such activities have been relegated to wet weather days. Surprisingly, we have had relatively few of these! On the few occasions when we have had the benefit of an excess of volunteers, work has been possible on both Moor Road and in the workshop.

1601 MATTHEW MURRAY Continues on its 'holiday' at Shildon. No news from there is being interpreted as good news!

No. 67 Theoretically available for traffic but with no trains to run and no track to run on, it hasn't been used.

No. 6 Work has continued has continued spasmodically. The drain cock linkage has now been completed. Various parts of the new cab platework have been given a coat of red oxide primer.

1210 SIR BERKELEY is presently the priority consideration in terms of loco overhauls. We have managed to make steady, if unspectacular progress with its overhaul. The needle-gunning of the frames and subsequent priming is now all but complete. Inevitably, it is the awkward corners that are still to do. This always seems to be the case! It is unfortunately symptomatic of volunteers that some tend to do the easy bits and leave the harder things until next time on the basis that somebody else might do it in the meantime!

Work has started on repairing the two axle-boxes found to be in need of remedial works. The previous method of repair does not make this an easy task but it is one that we shall accomplish. The cab, or to be more precise, the bunker, has been needle-gunned and primed. One of the bunker doors was found to be seized and this required free-ing off. The slide

valves have been removed to enable their replacement. This simple statement covers a lot of hard work. One valve spindle, in particular, was very reluctant to come out, requiring the manufacture of a special tool to persuade it otherwise. At Israel Newton's works in Bradford, the new boiler is slowly taking shape. The outer firebox is now complete and the two pieces of the boiler barrel (known as strakes) have been rolled. These await the manufacture of the butt straps, after which they will be riveted together.

No.11 A little progress has been made on this loco. A new frame stretcher has been fitted behind the front buffer beam to replace a badly corroded one. The original would have been fitted before the cylinders and it was not possible to replace it in one piece. The solution was to fit it in two halves, then weld them together before riveting to the frames. Another, substantial stretcher between the cylinders has also received remedial attention. This forms the base of the smoke box and had corroded through in places (it was originally $\frac{3}{4}$ " thick!) Complete replacement would have been a significant piece of work and repairs have been effected by cutting out the majority of the stretcher and welding in new platework. Other parts have been built up to original thickness by welding.

BROOKES No.1 (aka THOMAS) Like Matthew Murray, this loco is spending the summer away. It is currently on the Great Central Railway

HENRY de LACY II As briefly mentioned in the last *Old Run*, this loco has been receiving cosmetic restoration. A good team of volunteers has been steam cleaning, needle-gunning and sanding the paintwork of the loco as it is gradually repainted in its Kirkstall Forge livery of maroon.. Some minor patching of the platework has been found to be necessary, notably to the cylinder and boiler cladding. To date it has been primed and largely undercoated, aided by some relatively good weather.

Fowler 3900002 Has also benefited from some long needed attention.. It has generally become a project for the guards who are trying to keep up with the pace set by the Henry de Lacy team! The Fowler is in need of more substantial platework repairs than the steam loco. 'The chimney just came away in my hand' was one cry and the cab roof was deemed to be too thin and corroded to stand on. An original photograph has been obtained and it is likely that it will be restored to its 'as built' livery.

The Greenbat The third of the trio of locos being cosmetically restored is the Greenbat electric loco. This work is being undertaken by the EM2 group members. The paintwork on this loco is proving to be very stubborn to remove, the needle-gun just having no real effect. However, progress is being made as time and working parties allow.

5003, D2999, D577, D631, 7401, 1786, Rowntree No.3 and Olive remain

usable but have, of necessity not seen any use, other for the occasional minor movement of stock to facilitate access. With only about 150 feet of unoccupied track space, there is little scope for them to stretch their legs

Coach 2084 Work continues on this coach as time permits. Following re-panelling of the east side, similar work is now being carried out on the west side.

Plant and Machinery With all the work going on at Moor Road, our plant has become even more important to us.

The 5-ton Booths crane has been out of service for several years, pending various repairs. As it has a longer jib than the Smiths crane it was felt desirable to return this to operation and, following minimal repairs and a satisfactory inspection by

the insurance company inspector, it has been in regular use. It still needs much work doing on it to bring it up to a satisfactory standard (including a new cab) but this will have to wait until time allows. The Smith 10-ton crane has also been in regular use.

Our faithful JCB has probably seen more use in the last three months than in the previous ten years. We did consider replacing it but Council authorised some expenditure on it as being the cheapest cost option. The cylinder head has been re-ground to eliminate cooling water loss. A new radiator has also been fitted to eliminate the other source of water

loss. Following a long saga of punctured front tyres, which were of the wrong type, two new tyres of the correct type were fitted. Several hydraulic hoses have failed in service and these have been replaced as necessary. The gearbox selector mechanism has also been an occasional source of problems, requiring the top of the gearbox remov-

ing to rectify. Several other items have also required attention but we have generally managed to keep it serviceable and to do all the jobs we need it to do.

The mobile air compressor has also seen some repairs carried out and has been in regular service. It has needed much tender loving care to keep it operational but we have generally been successful in doing so. The need to build a new platform meant that there was a relatively long-term requirement for a concrete mixer. We do have diesel driven one, which has seen quite a bit of use over the last 20 years but, following a long hard look at it, we decided to invest in a new electric mixer. Not quite as large as the diesel mixer, it nonetheless is of adequate capacity for our needs. □



Our crane in action, 11 April 2005

(David Monckton)

(The great British railtour contd from p.14)

Underground train to Liverpool Street for the 0830 to Norwich and without doubt the finest Great British Breakfast on any train this week, the food superb and the service exceptional! The Suffolk and Norfolk countryside with its cobble-built houses, looks glorious on this third day of blue skies and wall-to-wall sunshine. Board the local train to Sheringham, followed by a chance to see a B12/3 Class 4-6-0 steam locomotive in action at the North Norfolk Railway, then back to Norwich and London, across London in the afternoon rush hour for the 1636 express to Brighton.

All trains today on time. Brighton is a mix of Blackpool, Southend and Great Yarmouth. Apart from the Brighton Pavilion, the Volks Electric Railway the world's first electric railway built 1836, and the imposing Victorian

over-all roof of the station, Brighton holds nothing that is attractive. *Miles travelled today 342.00.*

Thursday on the 0857 I head from Brighton to Salisbury via Southampton. Lots of manned level crossings make this journey very slow, sights of coastal inlets, Southampton Docks and its immense container base. Take a quick walk around Salisbury's Cathedral Close before the train to Exeter (St David's) by way of the former route of the Atlantic Coast Express. The train crew now have a distinct west-country accent, and immediately you cross the boarder into Devon thatched cottages are in evidence around Axminster, with small fields, lots of hedges and trees. Hop on a late running Virgin X-Country train from Exeter to Plymouth and enjoy their free food before transferring to

the following train I should have caught at Exeter, GWR HST for Penzance. Fine views of Brunel's Tamar Bridge as we cross into Cornwall, and due to rear locomotive having failed en route we arrive in Penzance 36 minutes down at 1743. After a leisurely look around the town and harbour, find what must be the finest fish restaurant in Penzance for dinner and, feeling replete, wander back to the station for the Night Riviera train to London Paddington leaving at 2200, arriving in London at 0507. *Miles travelled today 623.50.*

Friday is Day Five! A good sleep and after using the facilities provided, I enjoy breakfast in the First Class Lounge on Paddington's No 10 platform, it's

off on the 0645 train to Cardiff, by way of Brunel's Great Western race track via Didcot, Swindon and the Severn Tunnel. After a second

breakfast en-route(!) take an hour's city tour, then the next train to Swansea and Carmarthen, then back to Llanelli, where after lunch get the local train through the Heart of Wales to Shrewsbury. Everything on time thus far, but at Llanwrtyd get held because the train in the opposite direction has failed and as this is a single track with passing loops it has to be rescued from Shrewsbury before we can proceed. But it's hot and sunny, the countryside is exceptionally beautiful and all the passengers are having a thoroughly enjoyable time. The time is passed talking with the train crew and listening to their phone conversations with Control. When we arrive in Shrewsbury 55 minutes late our connection to Barmouth in west Wales has gone, so it's dinner in a pub and then the next train to Barmouth via Dovey Junction, arriving at 2216. What a contrast in scenery today: cityscapes in London and Cardiff, terraced houses, coal mines,

steelworks and dockyards of south Wales, then bursting into the incredibly beautiful countryside in the heart of Wales. *Today's mileage 441.25*

Saturday (Day Six) I head home. But first, the 0758 Barmouth to Porthmadog gives me time to enjoy a good breakfast on the high street there. Then it's off on the 1020 narrow gauge Ffestiniog Railway steam train to Blaenau Ffestiniog and with 8 minutes to spare catch the local train down the Conway Valley to Llandudno Junction. Then to Bangor to get the Virgin Voyager train from there to Crewe. Lovely views of Cardigan Bay, the Great Orme, and Irish Sea along the north Wales coast. The Crewe to Manchester Piccadilly connection is just made with 3 minutes to spare and we pass Jodrel Bank radio telescope, the Alderley Hey Forest and the Cheshire Gap. Then Manchester Piccadilly via the Derbyshire Peak District's Hope Valley to Sheffield, Doncaster and Thorne South, arriving 1930. *Today's mileage 257.50.*

One more day still to go! It is 0945 on Sunday, and nothing is planned. What takes place depends on engineering works. I would have liked to have travelled from Doncaster to Bristol, then to London and back to Doncaster to get in the maximum miles in a not too strenuous day. But there are no trains south of Birmingham today due to major engineering works. I therefore get the first train that leaves Doncaster, this time to London St Pancras, via Sheffield, Derby and Leicester. Underground train to Waterloo, and train to Portsmouth Harbour through leafy Surrey. The trees are so prolific it is impossible to see the countryside from the train - no wonder they have a *leaves on the line* problem hereabouts. A view of

Guildford Cathedral en route. Portsmouth harbour gives views of Portsmouth dockyard and the fleet, HMS Victory and the Isle of Wight in the distance, before returning to London, then King's Cross to Doncaster arriving punctually at 1835. A fitting last day; the GNER Mallard service takes me past the commemoration sign where Sir Nigel Gresley's Pacific locomotive "Mallard" achieved the world speed record for steam at 126 miles an hour near Stoke summit, on 3 July 1938, a record that still stands today. *Miles travelled 489.00*

A highly enjoyable week's travel, covering the length and breadth of the British mainland. Total miles travelled by train including London Underground - 3641 miles. There is no doubt that the British Isles contains some of the most diverse and spectacular scenery in the world. I was fortunate to see it for a whole week bathed in wall-to-wall sunshine.

Despite so much criticism in the press and by the general public, the railways of Great Britain worked extremely well. With the possible exception of those on Arriva Trains Wales in north Wales, the railway staff were most helpful and courteous. The most comfortable trains are still the HSTs, the GNER Mallard and the Mark 3 coaches on the Norwich service, the restaurant car food was excellent and the restaurant car service on the Norwich trains outstanding. Seven days spent travelling a grand total of 3641 miles, or to put it into context this is almost half the distance by rail from London Waterloo to Vladivostok via Moscow and the Trans-Siberian Railway!

Would I do it again? You bet, but using different routes next time!
□



**George England 1863 0-4-OST Palmerston
at the Ffestiniog Railway**



Virgin Cross Country Voyager train set at Plymouth



Left:

Cosmetic restoration of Hudswell Clarke 0-4-0ST No. 1309 of 1917, *Henry de Lacy II* started in April 2005. Here seen in yellow primer, in the style of NetworkRail's HST "yellow banana" track testing train, and anxious to try out the new Moor Road track formation!

Right:

Henry de Lacy II sports a new coat of paint in the original Midland Railway Crimson Lake on 10 August 2005. This loco is halfway towards restoration to its original Kirkstall Forge livery. Final painting and lining out is to take place when the new Display Hall has been erected next year.

(Photos this page, HWB)



Brian and Mark Jenkins take down the old fence between the wood yard and Moor Road, 28 May 2005



David Wright dismantles the old station platform in 28 May 2005



Steve Roberts supervises the tracklaying, 28 May 2005



Above: Kris Ward and Andrew Johnson on 16 July 2005 restoring Fowler 0-4-0DM JF3900002 of 1945 (HWB)

Right: Howard Bishop, Neil Carmichael and Phil Holt work on *Henry de Lacy II*, June 2005

(Stan Holdsworth)



The Wickham Railbus had a fault free weekend at Llanguollen and covered around 60 miles. It was very well received and was requested for an additional run through the tunnel so that the exhaust noise could be sampled once more! The additional train is shown in this picture before departure from Llanguollen on 17 July 2005, complete with headboard, Graham Parkin at the controls (Dewi Davies)

The railway fork lift truck David Wraith

As the Middleton Railway obtains pieces of equipment, special tools etcetera, after a while you wonder how we managed without them, and our fork truck is no exception.

When I joined the Railway we had an electric battery operated truck which served us well, until a fault developed on the steering pump electrical control system. As usual, Doctor Nettleton engineered a transplant unit, which looked a bit strange, but it worked.

During my previous life, before Middleton Railway, a chance conversation about fork truck repairs ended with "There's an old one over there if you want it". "Does it work" I asked. "I think so", came the reply. A quick telephone call was made and the truck was loaded onto the vehicle I had just inspected and our new Fork Truck arrived at the railway.

Our 'new' Kamatsu Fork Truck is gas operated by a converted Nissan petrol engine. It's a rough terrain truck on pneumatic tyres. After a touch of TLC and a good dose of looking, Doctor Nettleton had it working by the time I arrived at the railway later that day, with only a couple of minor faults and one major drawback...(like most of us at the railway). It is an older model and has no power steering. This means that the operator develops big arm muscles driving the truck.

About 12 months ago the steering started to get heavier than normal and jamming during tight operations, and finally locking up solid. The truck was brought into the workshop for repair. The steering box was removed and stripped down. We found that the recirculating ball bearing carrier tube had collapsed. Parts other than the ball bearings were not obtainable, so we tried to repair the carrier tube as best we could. This repair lasted until just before Christmas last year when the steering failed again. Again the box was removed and stripped down and declared a total failure. The search began for another steering box, which proved harder to find than 'rocking horse manure'.

After numerous phone calls, a possible replacement was found at a breakers yard in Chesterfield. They said they had a second hand steering box for a Mark 7 model which might fit our Mark 1. As this was the only option so far, Steve Roberts and I set off down the M1 to Chesterfield, getting direction to the premises over the phone. We eventually arrived having passed the famous Crooked Spire only twice when we shouldn't have passed it at all!

The breaker's premises were a bit like home from home...bits of fork truck covering the floor, on shelves and lying around outside. After looking at our steering box, the owner took us to an out-building filled with more bits of fork trucks, including a shelf full of steering boxes. He lifted the Mark 7 box down from the shelf and laid it next to ours. The length and the steering wheel fitting were the same, but nothing else was. Could we make it fit was the question. A management decision was taken. Yes we could! Steve's flexible friend was produced with a deep sigh, and we left with our replacement box.

The rebuild began. The first problem we found was that the box was left handed and therefore would not fit in the original position. This meant that a new mounting bracket was required. A piece of 3/8th plate, 6 inches wide was drilled and welded across the front of the chassis. Minor modifications to the steering box drop arm were made and the box offered up into position. Bingo! It fitted. The hand-brake and the forward and reverse lever control linkages were modified to suit the new steering column position, a new brake pipe fitted and adjustments made to the steering linkages, an external horn fitted and we had a usable fork truck.

During testing it was found that the mast tilt position was insufficient and another slight modification was made to the new cross member. We then added a strengthening bar and the job was complete, although you still need strong arms to steer it!! □

Our locos in their original settings

Dr J. Gordon Blears of Ripon, and owner of **Hudswell Clarke & Co 0-6-0T MSC No. 67 (1369 of 1919)** said in *OR184* that it would be good to see photographs of Middleton locomotives in their previous working settings. True to his word he sent in these two photographs of MSC No. 67 taken on Sunday 14th September 1969. Together with L&Y 'Pug' 0-4-0ST No. 51218, MSC No. 67 is seen on the occasion of The Ship Canal Railtour, organised by the L&Y Saddle tanks Fund, Roch Valley Railway Society, Stephenson Locomotive Society, Manchester Locomotive Society, RC&TS and the Locomotive Club of Great Britain.

The tour was to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the opening of the Manchester Ship Canal, the Port of Manchester, Trafford Park Estate Co. Ltd., and Port of Manchester Warehouses Ltd. The special steam-hauled train travelled along the surviving portion of the MSC Railway main line then still in use and the then recently laid branch of the MSC Railway system to the newly open Trafford Park Freightliner Terminal. Both locomotives were due at the time to be transferred to Haworth for preservation. The train was comprised of two brake vans and open wagons, and passengers were advised to make the necessary precautions against inclement weather. The tour notes suggested that the tour would not proceed beyond Partington because the track has been partly lifted and partly abandoned. The reason for abandonment was a landslip caused when construction of the M6 motorway bridge (Thelwall viaduct) altered the drainage system on the MSC railway. However the driver of MSC No.67 decided it was safe to propel the train to the location shown in photo no. 1. The viaduct is visible a few yards further on. The L&Y 'Pug' did not travel beyond

Partington due to limited water capacity. Photo no.2 shows the train later in the day as we traversed the Trafford Park Estate back to the starting point at Trafford Wharf. The train with MSC No.67 travelled more than 35 miles on the day and over 200 enthusiasts took part, at £1.10s. (£1.50 in today's money) per head.

Middleton loco guru Ian Smith writes: *"The photographs show No.67 when first preserved by Gordon Blears in 1969. Of particular interest is the dome cover seen in this photo. Observant members will notice that the top of the dome is relatively flat, particularly when compared to views of the loco today and there is a good reason for this. As with many industrial concerns, the MSC swapped loco bits and pieces around as and when it suited circumstances. The Boilers of all the Hudswells were interchangeable, but the "long tanks" had a form of "top feed" for their injectors, whilst the "short tanks" fed the side of the boiler in classic Hudswell style. It was quite common during overhauls for boilers to be switched and many had flanges for clack valves on the side of*



the boiler in addition to the top flange in order that they could be used on either variety of loco.

In the case of smaller items such as dome

managed to acquire a dome cover from a Hunslet 0-6-0T, identical to MSC 14 which visited Middleton a few years ago. These were somewhat flatter on top than their Hudswell counterparts. Gordon Blears had acquired a spare Hudswell dome cover with the engine and during its overhaul at Middleton, it was decided to fit the

correct cover in place of the Hunslet one. This was done, but the old dome cover wasn't discarded - in true Middleton fashion it was

recycled and can now be seen on BROOKES No 1, recently disguised as THOMAS. This engine was, of course, a saddletank and its dome was therefore far too short for use on the side-tank it became a *THOMAS*. *Dor* Blears kindly agreed to it being used for that locomotive and

so, with a small hole cut in the top for the safety valves & whistle, the old Hunslet dome now adorns the perfect host locomotive!" □



THE LEEDS AND DISTRICT TRACTION ENGINE CLUB
incorporating the
British Fairground Society

SOCIAL EVENINGS, 2005-06

All the socials commence at 7.45 for 8 p.m. on the third Tuesday in the month, and are held at Dewsbury Road Social Club, 393 Dewsbury Road, Leeds 11. Members of the Middleton Railway are invited to attend and take part.

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| 18 October | Tony Brown from Soham, Cambs. To talk on Fyson's made TEs. |
| 15 November | Mr Lowe from Abbey Light Rail way, Kirkstall. |
| 20 December | Annual auction and buffet. |
| 17 January | President's 'oliday snaps. |
| 21 February | Slide show presentation by Geoff Mott on Rallies in the 60s. |
| 21 March | AGM (members only). |

Deadline for next issue
15 November 2005

CORRECTIONS: The photograph on page 23 of OR186 depicted a Sopwith Camel aircraft and not as stated.

The photograph on page 22 of OR186 of part of the main-frames of Sir Berkeley and the HLF sign was inadvertently printed sideways. Apologies to the photographer concerned.

Personnel personal profiles

Alex Hurd

This issue of *Old Run* we feature a member who, whilst not a regular working member of the Middleton Railway in the accepted sense, nevertheless over the years has been instrumental in putting our Railway in the public eye, through his passion for unusual railways and his work in recording those railways for posterity on film, video tape and nowadays digital video disc (DVD). He is Alex Hurd, of PM Video based in Reepham, Lincolnshire. Whenever there is a special event, and at other times too, Alex can be found setting up his camera in and around Moor Road, and ultimately the results can be found amongst the items on sale in our shop.

Alex tells me that he was born just before the Second World War in York, "within sight and sound of the east coast main line just south of York station. There was and still is a bridge over the track at Holgate, and the first A4s were passing at the time! With a start in life like this it was inevitable that I became a train

spotter from about 1945, a passion that has remained ever since. I still have my 1945-1948 Ian Allan ABCs LNER to BR"

After school at Nunthorpe Grammar School, York, and York Technical College, Alex worked as an instrument maker and draughtsman at Cooke, Troughton & Simms in York - they later became Vickers Instruments Ltd. Then he was drafted into the Royal Air Force as a national serviceman, and served in the RAF Police. His

main employment from 1967 was with the Post Office Telephones, later British Telecom, from where he retired in 1992 as a Quality Manager. This was his role, rather than his personal attribute, though the two may well have been synonymous!

He was married for over 40 years - sadly Alex's wife died in 2003— and they have a son who owns his own telecom business and a married daughter.

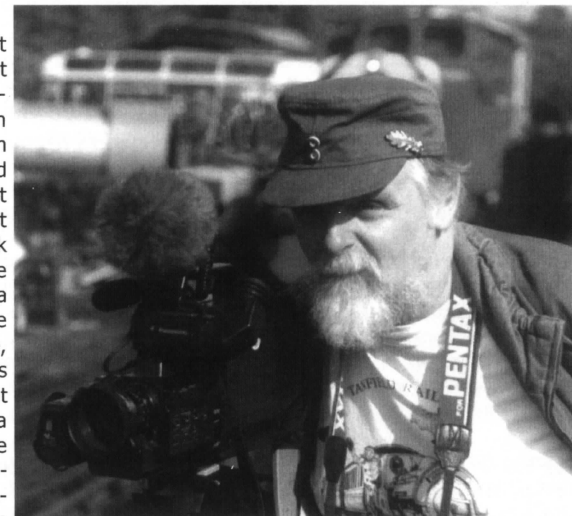
He first became associated with Middleton Railway in the late 1960s, when he would travel over by motor cycle. "I still have a few cine shots of those days", he recalls, "but cine film was expensive at £1.6s.0d for four minutes when my weekly wage as a draughtsman was about £12 with a wife and child to feed. Sounds like Dickens doesn't it?"

After spasmodic visits Alex be-

came a member of Middleton railway in 1998 when our first video came out.

"Although mainly an armchair enthusiast, I have attended several times a year to record visiting locomotives and events, making several friends and very few enemies (that I know about)!" he remarks.

Most of his time, especially at weekends in the summer seems to be taken up



travelling to and from railways throughout the country and recording them for present and future generations of railway buffs. An article by Alex in this issue tells something of his activities over a number of months last year.

But that's not all he is involved in. Alex is a member of several other railways, clubs, organisations and churches! He is former Chairman and editor of the Lincoln Railway Society, having lived in Lincolnshire since 1975. A member at Lincoln for over 20 years he has given 14 annual video shows there on the big screen. He is a member of the Narrow Gauge Railway Society and the Industrial Railway Society.

Steamin' Around

Alex Hurd

At Lincoln Railway Society, we all know and admire Martin Bromley - that shy, self-effacing individual and itinerant professional diesel driver, who has given us illustrated talks about his interest in railways for many years and I was pleased to see he hasn't lost his touch when he came to see us in August 2004.

Saturday August 21st, having made a brief delivery call to the West Riding at the Middleton Railway, where the newly painted, blue-liveried, formerly steam-powered Sentinel was being given a wash-and-brush-up ready for the day's work, I arrived for the weekend in my former home County - The North Riding of Yorkshire.

Arriving then at Leeming Bar I found that I had missed the first train. This was the opened-last-July Wensleydale Railway. Driving the short distance to Bedale Station I found the signalman in a good mood as we awaited the returning DMU. He turned out to be an acquaintance of mine. Amazingly seven years ago now, I stood with him in Bedale waiting for the 'special' bearing our President on his mainline/branch trip, behind, I believe a pair of class '47's. Then, in the days before the Association had gained permission to run their own trains, passengers were not permitted to dismount at the stations and Bedale 'box' was boarded up. Things have since, I am pleased to say, improved a lot. I was invited into

He enjoys long-distance walking, and fell walking, and has completed the Coast to Coast Walk, from St Bee's Head in Cumbria to Robin Hood's Bay in Yorkshire no less than four times! "I actually took my mountain bike up several mountains when doing the Coast to Coast with friends, who did it on foot".

"I hope to live long enough to see the Middleton Railway's extension!" he says cheerily, and we all echo that sentiment. So next time you see Alex armed with camera and microphone you'll know he is once again making a record of the goings-on at Middleton Railway not just for himself but for a much wider audience.

the 'box, whose thirty-six white-painted levers are still sadly unconnected, from where I was able to video the train approaching from Leyburn.

Later, at Leeming Bar I approached the driver of the 12.36 in the somewhat forlorn hope of having a cab-ride. I was pleasantly surprised to find our friend Martin 'in the chair'. Following a little grovelling to the Operations Manager I joined him in the cab of the three-car 110 unit. [There is also a 107 unit - more later] I was thus able to make a movie record of the line for a forthcoming video. Some of this material should appear in the 14th annual video show this month. [October 2004]. You may remember that Martin is seldom lost for something to say! I was somewhat amused that, during his last show he was trying manfully to keep up with the slide projector set on 'automatic'. Luckily his ex-colleague and assistant managed to gain control, to stop Martin talking about the 'slide before last'!

His descriptive skills came in very handy for the video, providing a useful, well-informed commentary and description of lineside features, such as the farm crossing where the farmer often crossed the line without too much thought of 'health & safety', or

worrying about a possible collision! The line is populated by much wild-life:- rabbits, squirrels, pheasants and partridges are just a few of the 'creatures great & small' seen crossing the line without thinking a great deal, never mind the farmer who should have known better. A pause at Leyburn, after passing the fabulous home of Rodney Tennant, often seen on 'Flog-it' and other antiques TV shows at his auction rooms in the town, then we proceeded to the current terminus at Redmire.

I really enjoyed my day on the line, taking a second ride in the train with the Chairman of the Northallerton Branch of the WRA from whom I learned quite a few little-known facts. I rode this time as far as Leyburn where, and completely out-of-character for me, I spent £35 on books and a DVD about the line.

Sunday morning found me back at the railway, this time for a few line-side shots. One surprise, when I stopped at Bedale to video the incoming 'up' train, was that the signalman was a well-known ecclesiastical Yellow-Belly, the quite substantial Geoff Evison whom some of us know well from his days on the Grimsby-Louth Railway. He was reported as having consumed several ice-creams at Leyburn later in the day! He was impressed when I told him I had lost 3½ stones recently, but doubted whether he had my self-discipline! In spite of his bulk, he retains his youthful exuberance and certainly doesn't look his age!

Thankfully we can now dismount from, or join the trains at Leeming Bar, Bedale, Leyburn and Redmire. Several other smaller 'halts' are passed en-route, such as Crakehall and Finghall lane. At these points i.e. level-crossings, a 'mobile' crossing keeper often affords a smooth passage for the DMU, if not, the guard disembarks to unlock and close the gates, re-joining us before we continue. Mobile phones offer a definite picture to the control about the situation.

I spoke with the lady who rents the house at Finghall. She had just returned from the village with her Sunday papers, and told me that her satellite TV also kept her in touch with world events. She is a keen gardener and the platform is decorated with many tubs, pots and hanging baskets. The railway is renovating an

unused single room near the gates to provide shelter for the gate-keepers.

Higher up the line the station at Wensley [from which the valley takes its name, unlike all the other Yorkshire Dales which take the name of the river] is well preserved and in use as a holiday home. Its platform stands well back from the line but it would make a useful dropping-off point for walkers and mountain-bikers. If you decide to visit and ride on this beautiful railway, either spend the weekend, or at least arrive before 9.05 am for the first train. There is such a lot to see!

Just a week later I headed north once more. This time passing by Leeming Bar on the 'A1' reaching Wolsingham on the Wear Valley Railway by 10.30 am. Guessing that I had missed the 10.30 departure, I continued up the valley to wait at Frosterley station to video the train arriving. This welcome addition to the preserved railway scene was opened in July and currently uses a hired NER liveried 'P3', the property of N.E.L.P.G. and normally seen on the N.Y.M.R. Four smartly turned out crimson coaches completed the train. A few minutes later, the train soon appeared round the curve to draw up against the newly restored and very long platform with its beautiful station building, in use as a children's nursery school.

I watched it arrive later at Stanhope station which belongs to the railway and is being expertly restored, including the replacement of its canopies. The original footbridge has survived here as it carries a public footpath across to the sports field and beyond. The prices are very reasonable, I thought as I paid just £4 for my return ticket. (The NNR charges £10) The trains leave each end of the line at half past the hour, the easterly journey departing at 11.30. The stop at Frosterley is advertised as a request stop but seems to be automatic.

Arriving at the current terminus at Wolsingham (plans are to reach Bishop Auckland soon) there is no run-round loop. The train continues round the bend to the 'depot' where a diesel loco assists in getting the loco to the opposite end of the train for the return journey. I happened to know the day's driver, small, white-bearded Terry Newman, a fellow NELPG member, and was promised a foot-

The following day after a pleasant night in Alston, I reached the Tanfield Railway, eagerly looking for their 'new' loco. Sadly the 0-6-OST Renishaw Ironworks No. 6, Hudswell Clarke 1366 of 1919 was not running. According to one of my Tanfield pals, who also drives at Middleton, the bearings were a little tight when it arrived from 'another railway' and the loco had been lifted from its wheels in order to ease the edges of the bearings to allow free passage of oil to its surfaces. Locos 49 a large 'Austerity' 0-6-OST, RSHN (7098 of 1943) and Stagshaw a smaller 0-6-OST Hawthorn Leslie (3513 of 1927) were in steam and I had several rides along the line, dismounting here and there to lineside and checkout the amenities.

After lunch, a short ride down the A68 brought me to Wolsingham for a little more lineside videography. The 'J27' performed immaculately and I caught it at several new vantage points, all achieved without the use of a large scale map, which I must remember to purchase when visiting a strange railway. I'm sure I missed out a level crossing! I stood manfully in the rain with the big green umbrella to film the last train at 17.00 leaving Stanhope, before heading the seven miles over the 'tops' to my little grey home in the north - half a mile from the Northumberland border.

Next morning, I was in Darlington before the Railway Museum opened. I had come to inspect NELPG's 'A2' which occupies the space formerly taken by three other locos. 60532 awaits a decision and finances as to whether it will run again on the main-line or perhaps on the Moors. I took a ride with the lads in the adjacent field who were running their 0-4-OST Peckett (2142 of 1953) Northern Gas Board No. 1. I gained a very black face while riding the brake van! One of the lads also kindly opened the old goods shed and showed me the progress on their large mainline loco 78018 which mainly requires the boiler finishing off. All the engineering work I saw looked very professional.

A few miles to the south I pulled off the 'A1' to call at Leeming Bar for lunch. I was in luck - the

operations manager had decided to change the DMU units over for his turn at driving in the afternoon. The class 110 was taken off and changed for the class 107 (both three car units) before leaving with the delayed 12.36 to Leyburn and Redmire. I never thought I'd get excited about a 'manqué diesel'. But after all, I thought, they are both Heritage trains!

A week later was the North Norfolk Railway annual gala. The bad news was that the loco everyone had come to see was not in running order! That is to say, 92 Squadron, one of those Southern Railway engines, had been inspected the week before and behaved very badly, it blew off a mud-hole door in front of the Inspector! This was blamed on the substitute for the old asbestos rope formerly used to seal such items. Asbestos is not allowed for health reasons - nobody told me when I was marching the stuff in the fifties!

However I managed to spend most of the three days either riding or videoing the trains. It was not a bad turnout, locos in steam were:- 97775 the 2-10-0 WD which has been resident since before last year's gala, 61572 the 'B12', 65462 the 'J15', both in black British Railways livery, and the pseudo-'J94' Hunslet 8009 in LNER paint-work.

Seen in the siding behind Weybourne station were Hunslet Ring Haw (with firebox problems) and Hunslet 3809 (awaiting overhaul) along with the newly restored Wisbech and Upwell coach, formerly at Cottesmore. To add a little variation on the Saturday I visited the Mid-Norfolk Railway at Dereham, travelling the full 12 miles to Wymondham (the driver came from Alford, Lincs.), disembarking at Yaxham on the return trip, to visit Chris Fisher and his lads at the two foot gauge railway. I had a great surprise when shown an item under sworn secrecy! I look forward to its first steaming and am on the invitation list. Back at Weybourne I spent Sunday walking several miles with tripod etc. to take in some excellent shots involving locos, churches and windmills! □

The video/DVD *The Wensleydale Railway* is available from PM Video Pleasant House, 30 Station Road, Reepham, Lincs. LN3 4DN. VHS £12.95/DVD £14.95 post free. This and other videos may also be obtained from the Railway's shop.

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Wickham Railbus DB998901 on its arrival at Llangollen Railway on 30 May 2005, alongside Wickham BR Class 108 DMU and being overtaken by a service train hauled by GWR 4-6-0 No. 3440 *City of Truro*. The Wickham railbus did a test run on 25 June, traversing the full length of the line 7 miles each way and achieved full line speed of 25 mph in several places, silencing a few critics and impressing everyone. Passenger services were scheduled for 16 and 17 July 2005. *(Llangollen Railcar Group)*