

OLD RUN NEWS

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Newsletter of the Middleton Railway Trust.

Number 46 November 1969.

Indoor Meetings. We regret that the programme of meetings was not available when the last Newsletter went to press. All Middletonians are asked to come along, as they are really interesting, and compensate for our lack of Social Occasions as compared with other Societies. The opening meeting had a long reference to Middleton, and many of the new University members have already joined in on engineering work. We have had the pleasure of a talk by MRT Sales Manager John Edwards, and Patrick McAskie on Permanent Way including his continental experience last summer. John Sugden followed with the History of the Cleveland Railway, drawing from his years of resident experience at Guisborough. We expect an interesting talk from Mr Stone of Leeds City Transport on Nov. 7th. Middleton films, some shown for the first time, will appear at the members night on 14th November. MRT Loco men wishing to see themselves on the screen should not miss this evening. Nov. 21st Annual Film, "Grand Mystery Performance". Nov. 28th. Talk by ex-Oxonian. Dec. 5th Political meeting (we don't know the details). Next term's programme includes Jan 16th Frank Dean - Films of steam traction and exciting routes. Meetings at Houldsworth School, Clarendon Road, Leeds 2, No. 1 bus.

Press Dates. We are standardising press dates to ensure regular publications of our news and articles. Information for the Newsletter should arrive at 5 North Grange Mount, Leeds 6 by the 25th. of the month for the next month's Newsletter. Contributions for the Quarterly Old Run should arrive at 18 Inglewood Drive, Otley, by the first days of December, March, June and September to avoid the Editor burning midnight oil!

Visitors Trains. We are glad to announce satisfactory public support for our service to Middleton Park at Weekends. Could we point out that visitors who have possibly come a long way to see us should have precedence on these trains, followed by those of MRT members who are not local residents. In other words, joy-riding by local MRT members should be in moderation, certainly not if it keeps visitors out. Many thanks are due to Joe Lee and the A.T.C. squad who erected a platform from sleepers for visitors at Moor Road terminus, also to Mr Holliday for large signs of the "Trains Start Here" type, which have to be removed at dusk to avoid vandalism. C.M.E. Jim Lodge says that MRT members are being very lax at plastering the posters sent out last month all over the country. He asks YOU to get these up, and if you are away from Leeds at places where "Middleton" doesn't ring a bell, to add the word LEEDS before displaying them. We know, you've mislaid them! All right, here are some more!

Engineering Progress. On Saturday 24 October, Henry de Lacy II cracked a boiler tube and limped home spurting. We didn't make things easier by ordering replacements a few inches too short! Considering the work is all spare time volunteer effort, it is very nice to report that Henry was back in steam minus leak in a week. The C.M.E. staff unloaded a wagon of coal from Garforth within hours of arrival, stoking us up for the winter. Bringing coal INTO Middleton Railway instead of out is regrettably the new order, at least it IS coal, and good loco. coal at that. Thanks, N.C.B. even if we are old fashioned in our fuel policy. A complete strip and refit of John Alcock has taken place over the last 3 years, and she is now running, minus the old rattles and squeaks from worn bearings, in good condition, with a repaint as well. On the last day of October Mr. John Alcock himself came to inspect and was photographed by Hunslet's P.R.O. for a news story. Steady and rewarding progress can be reported on track at the Beza Road section, also on the Colliery line where spot resleeping between trains, and 30' relayings in the mornings before trains start have produced much improvement.

Goods traffic Prospects. We must not forget that we are primarily a GOODS railway. We are pleased to report an enquiry from a firm at Middleton Fireclay works for the use of the weighbridge and loading facilities for scrap iron at our new extension.

A little Forethought. Could we appeal for the occasional use of grey matter by members to avoid waste of time? Remember the old phrase "Make sure brain is engaged before opening mouth". We have occasionally found visitors wandering about like lost sheep with no guides. If such people arrive unexpectedly, please do all you can to make them feel at home, show them round, answer their questions. Even though you aren't one of the Visits Sub-Committee, please don't stare at such people as though they had no right to be there! We recently found dozens of empty bottles lying around in the yard. These are unsightly and dangerous if broken. Considerable money went to the appeal fund from a car load of such waste material. Members please note. One enthusiastic member who shall be nameless used as his opening gambit in the Guard's van Sales Stand "Our main aim is to get as much money out of you as possible!" The visitors shuddered, so did some of us. One officer had several hours of his time wasted because some other member had typed many pages of records on stencils that would not fit our machine and could not be adapted to fit. None of us is perfect, certainly not the Newsletter Editor!

Oh! Dear. Owing to some lack of co-ordination, Leeds City Works Dept. has dumped many tons of rubble right where the new branch line to Birdsell's is to be built. This is entirely different from the plan agreed with the City Engineer's Department. It is not only annoying but dangerous when our shunters have to stumble over piles of rubble alarmingly close to the track. A new common crossing has also been damaged by careless behaviour with bulldozers. Gates put up by the same people were vandalised within a week. A contractor, acting we understand for Evans of Leeds Limited, dumped tarmacadam on the line and steamrollered it to rail level. Our engineers request for advance consultation and proper check clearances were responded to in a vulgar manner. Our P. W. team dug up the resulting mess before it had set. Owing to another piece of confusion, a rather decrepit foot crossing has been put in from Beza Road in a place not approved of by M.O.T. rules. We are investigating. It really is amazing how these things simply happen without any prior consultation at all!

More for the Appeal. The Sponsored Waterwalk, after good organisation, raised useful funds for the appeal, money is still coming in. No-one fell in the canal, and the first 3 home were from the Civil Engineering team, led by Patrick McAskie. It shows what good training it is to walk the Middleton track from end to end several times a week. On the same evening the Police rang us up to enquire about missing walkers. Our Marshalls were so well organised that we could tell them when and where these people had finished and were on the way home from Keighley.

Police Melodrama. We were telephoned on Friday 23rd October by Dewsbury Road Police telling us not to run on Saturday as someone had stolen the line. The vigilance of our Police friends paid off in catching a theft who made off leaving track components on his transport. A horse and cart are assisting the police in their investigations. A court case is likely as this is not merely theft and trespass, but the worse crime of endangering the public safety. Full story may appear later.

Exhibition Progress. In earlier years we have suffered at exhibitions by not being able to show visitors lavish pictures of scenery and passenger trains. At the October Leeds Corn Exchange exhibition we had excellent support, and a flow of visitors went down to see the line for themselves. Sales Manager John Edwards put on a Gala Performance with a first class memento pencil stand made from Flying Scotsman tubes removed while at Hunslet Engine Co. Quite authentic they sell at 49/6 on engraved base.