



THE OLD RUN

The Journal of the Middleton Railway Trust

No. 231 June 2016 £2.50



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Editor: Jenny Cowling
2 College Street
Sheffield, S10 2PH
Email:

oldrun@middletonrailway.org.uk

Photo Editor: Andrew Johnson
Email:

middleton@amjohnson.co.uk

My grateful thanks are extended to all those who have provided copy and images for this issue

The Old Run is published quarterly by The Middleton Railway Trust Ltd. Publication dates are 15th March, 15th June, 15th September and 15th December, with deadlines of 15th February, 15th May, 15th August and 15th 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.

Items for publication, including images, are acceptable in any format and may be sent via CD, post or email.

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Front Cover:
Spot the Bluebells! Slough Estates takes a spring run -
Andrew Johnson

On the Platform

Jenny Cowling

Or perhaps I should say, "From the Platform". What am I talking about? The new, if embryonic, Running Shed, of course! Yes, it seems like, "at last" but it isn't really, as a great deal of 'invisible' preparation work had to be done first. However, as I write, Midbrook Steel are well on the way to erecting the steelwork, which will commence in July; and very soon after that, the bricks will begin to be added. Then we will really feel we are getting there.

We are aware that quite a few people have been disappointed at how long this project seemed to be taking. There were lots of reasons for this—major and minor snags were discovered along the way, and it must be remembered that up to the point we are at today, all the people working on this project have been volunteers, many of whom also have to hold down full-time jobs. Also, it is not possible to do this sort of building work in the dark, so if your only spare time is in the evenings, then it has to be employed on some other task—and there are plenty of others available.

Our welcome visitors seem to be flocking to us most weekends and the new coach is proving its value; thank you to all who worked on it so indefatigably. As you will see from the events leaflet, there are loads of interesting 'specials' going on this summer, both for current enthusiasts and for those of the future—i.e. your kids!

If you're wondering what to do in the long summer holiday—bring your whole family down to the railway; the next few weeks will be very exciting for everyone. We look forward to seeing you—with your children and your friends!!

Jenny

The Thoughts of Chairman Malcolm

As I write these notes for the Old Run the time is approaching for the next AGM of our railway which will mean that I will have been your chairman for a whole year! In that year I have found an empathy with President Obama. You may wonder why. After I was appointed I committed a number of aims and objectives to paper. Like the US President who, in January 2009, made a commitment to close the detention camp at Guantanamo Bay, I have discovered that some aims are not as easy to achieve as they would appear.

One suggestion which I took up was to run trains on the Beza Road branch on a regular basis. This has been adopted into the next five year plan. The possibility, during the year, of being able to bid for government funds instigated an estimate of the costs and work involved. Due to our commitment to the running shed and Picton shelter the project was not felt to be viable at the present time. So, like President Obama, this remains one aim yet to be fulfilled.

By the time that you read this, erection of the running shed should have reached the steelwork stage. There will still be plenty of work to do to finish off the building. Design work etcetera for the Picton shelter is also underway.

It soon became apparent to me that the volunteer/working member structure required overhauling and formalising to bring our policies into line with current practice and employment legislation. A report on this is included elsewhere in the Old Run.

As you may know last year we were able to obtain a defibrillator which was funded by a grant from a charity. This is located in the shop area. A second machine has now been purchased to be located in the workshop. Mrs June Hall kindly provided the majority of the funding for this appliance, which she presented to us at the Spring Volunteer Forum.

Each month has provided some new challenge for your chairman. Few, if any, were included in the job specification! However I must say that thanks to the enthusiasm and camaraderie of the people who you elected to the Council of our railway last year, each challenge has been met. Many council members have given more than their fair share over the last year in forwarding the aims of our railway – I offer them my thanks.

Malcolm Johnson

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Come and help at the Gala in July!

Gala Staff Required

As many of you may be aware, we are running a Victorian Gala on the 16th & 17th July, with a photo charter on the 15th July. This gala will include five locomotives, four of which will be operational. The intention is to use **Sir Berkeley, Matthew Murray, 1310** and visiting engine **Bellerophon**. We will also have **Lord Mayor** on site, however this will not be operational.

As usual, help is required to facilitate this event. Any and all help is greatly appreciated and this covers not only locomotive crews, but guards, crossing keepers / flagmen, PILOT-man, shop staff and a general volunteer presence to help visitors in the Engine House and on the platform.

If you are able to help out, please let Mark Whitaker know for any operational aspects and Janet Auckland for any shop duties.

As we are running a photo charter on Friday 15th July, there is a proposal to have a members evening from about 18:00 on the same day, similar to the 'party' held after the Hunslet 150 event. This is still being finalised, so please look out for further details or contact **Mark Whitaker or John Linkins**.

For those of you who like to be well ahead, we also have a diesel gala on the 17th and 18th September – this will require the same level of help and so for this please contact **Mark Whitaker or Janet Auckland**.

Bellerophon at Buckfastleigh, 21st November 2013, coming to us for the Gala on 16th and 17th July this year, photographed by Ian Smith.



Report on the Volunteers Forum in April

Volunteers Forum

About 35 members gathered in the meeting room of our newly refurbished visitor centre on the evening of 26th April.

The first item on the programme was First Aid when the meeting was advised that the skills of some of our trained staff had been called upon over the last few months. Mrs June Hall then presented to the railway a second defibrillator as she had recognised the need for one to be located in the workshops. This was accepted on behalf of our railway by Dr Tony Cowling who is the company secretary of the Middleton Railway Trust Ltd. In return he gave Mrs Hall a letter of thanks.



The members present at the meeting were then updated on the progress of both the Running Shed and the Picton Shelter by Mark Calvert, who appealed for volunteers to be on site during the construction phases which are due to take place in May.

John Linkins gave a resumé of the

plans for the ongoing training on offer to working members in the planned programme of Mutual Improvement Classes. An appeal for those willing to train as guards was made.

The last of the semi-formal items was the subject of Volunteering. Malcolm Johnson advised the working members present that the council had discussed the structure and other aspects of volunteering and had formulated some documents which now needed implementing. A working party is to be set up to consider all aspects of being a volunteer.

In response to discussion from the volunteers present, the meeting was advised about other things that had

happened at our railway:-

Consideration had been given to whether we could bring the branch into regular use by submitting a bid for a grant; We had accepted the gift of a station clock made by Potts of Leeds, which is currently being restored; train crews were now using an online calendar to find out the dates of booked

birthday parties. Janet Auckland was congratulated for leading the refurbishment of the visitor centre. All present at the short meeting then retired to the bright and welcoming surroundings of the cafe area where, over supper, informal discussions were continued and all were able to socialise.

SAFETY AND OPERATIONS

The Safety & Operations Committee is now just over a year old and so this is probably a timely point to provide a reminder that we are still here, an update as to what we are doing and also how and when to contact the committee. First, however, there are a couple of incident reports to update on, with some important messages.

Accessing locomotives and vehicles

For working members, in the course of your duties, there is a high probability that you will need to access a locomotive or other vehicle. Care must be taken at all times when accessing, alighting from or moving around a locomotive or vehicle. Further to this, the works being undertaken on the locomotive or vehicle should be considered – what additional hazards may be present, such as water, oil, heavy tools etc.

An incident occurred last year where a member of crew fell from the locomotive whilst cleaning it in preparation for the day ahead. When cleaning any locomotive or vehicle, your footwear may be wet and the surfaces you are walking on or accessing may be wet. Access to any part of a locomotive or vehicle should be by using designated access points wherever possible; where this is not possible, an assessment of a suitable and stable way of safely accessing the area in question needs to be undertaken, avoiding such things as climbing on steam pipes (especially when a locomotive is in steam).

As a further measure, the relevant senior engineers will also be undertaking a review of the existing assessments of access arrange-

ments for locomotives and vehicles, to identify if any improvements can be made to the accessibility of our rolling stock.

Setting off from the platform - guards and crew

When a train is ready to depart, the guard should give the right away from the platform, in a position that they can see the whole of the train and platform, as well as the driver of the locomotive – this position is likely to be on the platform. Once the right away has been given and acknowledgement from the locomotive driver received, the guard should board the train and keep an eye out along the platform in both directions for any issues that may arise, bringing the train to a stand using the vacuum handle in an emergency. Please note that passengers running for the train once it has started to move is not a reason to bring the train to a stand using the vacuum handle.

It is important, for this procedure to work, that the locomotive crew also understand this procedure and take the necessary actions. The driver of the locomotive should be able to clearly see the guard giving the right away and must acknowledge that he has understood the signal. The driver should then do all that is necessary in preparation for moving, but must not actually set off until a final check back along the train has been completed to ensure the guard has safely boarded the train. It is important that the locomotive crew, particularly the driver, make frequent looks behind them to satisfy themselves that no issues are occurring during departure.

Continued on page 23

Obituary for Dr Gordon Blears

We are sorry to announce the death of **Dr Gordon Blears** on February 25th, at the age of 84. He died peacefully, surrounded by his family.

Gordon had a Doctorate in Chemistry and worked for Simon Engineering, a well known civil engineering firm in Stockport specialising in chemical installations, until his move further south.

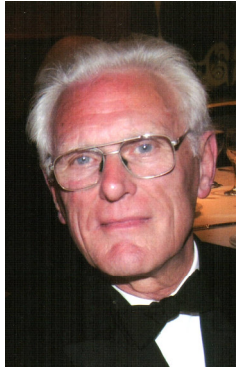
In later years he moved back up north, settling in Ripon with his wife, Una and despite being colour blind, he was an accomplished painter.

Gordon was one of the earliest members of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway Saddletanks Fund. He was also a member of the Locomotive Club of Great Britain North West Branch, and regularly travelled on the numerous brakevan trips and Railtours organised by them.

When the Manchester Ship Canal Company was disposing of its last four steam locomotives in 1966, Gordon purchased long tank number **67** whilst Richard Greenwood purchased short tank number 31. The other two, numbers 32 and 70, were purchased for use on the embryonic East Lancashire Railway.

Before number **67** went to Haworth, it operated a couple of brakevan tours of the Trafford Park Estates and the Manchester Ship Canal Company private railway systems, in company with Pug number 51218.

Number **67** arrived at Haworth in time to appear in "The Railway Children" as the engine of the local train, obtaining fame as "Daddy's Engine",



bringing Roberta's father back from jail. The heart-warming scene from the film has gone down in history. It was then used from time to time on the KWVR passenger services when the winter Sunday and summer midweek trains only ran between Haworth and Oxenhope. It was also used for pilot duties on occasion, and on

one incredible occasion piloted "Black Five" 5025 out of Keighley and ended up pulling that plus 6 coaches around the curve as the bigger engine couldn't 'find its feet'. The fireman that day was Nigel Crowther, who later worked at Middleton for some years.

As KWVR grew in size, it became obvious that **67** was not suited for use on that railway and after some talks, Gordon agreed that it should come to Middleton, where the engineering team restored it to full working order for use at Moor Road. Gordon came to see the engine on a number of occasions, but being a quiet person, he didn't like being in the spotlight, so his visits were low key.

He did, however, enjoy seeing the loco working whenever he came.

Gordon very generously donated the loco to Middleton a few years ago, for which we are very grateful indeed.

Gordon was a traditional railway enthusiast and a good friend to Middleton and we extend our sympathy to his wife, Una, and the family at this sad time.

**Ian Smith and
Richard Greenwood**

Locomotives—looking to the future:

LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

With a good team of volunteers and not a little in the way of good fortune, we should have two additional locos for our steam fleet in 2017. The two locos are **HE 2387 'Brookes No.1'** and **Sentinel 8837**, aka **68153**. However, before we get too complacent, **MW 1210 'Sir Berkeley'** comes out of 'ticket' at the end of December 2016.

The obvious question to be asking now is, 'what do we do next?' There are presently two other locos in the workshops under overhaul - **HL 3860 'No.6'** and **HE 1493 'No.11'** and common sense says that we should finish work on these. However, it isn't exactly that simple. **No.11** is privately owned and can only really be progressed at a pace to suit the owner. **No.6** has had a lot of work done to the frames but still requires a lot of work doing to the boiler. That work is extensive and therefore expensive. A budget price of £80K was given some time ago. To reduce this, we are doing much of the preparatory work ourselves and this is slowly coming to a conclusion. However, even with this, it won't be cheap. At the moment we are spending a lot of our hard-earned reserves on a running shed and other projects so, by the end of the year, our finances will be very much poorer than they are today and we will need time to consolidate them before spending significant sums.

So, where do we go? 2017 looks set to be a good year with five steam locomotives potentially available, barring unexpected circumstances, but by the time 2019 comes along things will be starting to look a bit less healthy. The boiler tickets on both **MW 1601 'Matthew Murray'** and **HC 1544 'Slough Estates No.3'** both

end during 2019 so we will be reduced, theoretically, to three steam locos to maintain our services. 2019 is only three short years away and that is not a long time when it comes to overhauling a steam loco using volunteer labour. Therefore we need to be looking at a long term plan that will give Middleton sufficient motive power well into the future.

The first part of that plan is likely to involve **Sir Berkeley**. This loco is owned by the Vintage Carriages Trust and they would like to see the loco back in service as soon as possible. In a nutshell, the existing agreement requires Middleton to look after the loco and provide the necessary manpower and time to do this with the VCT funding any materials or other significant costs. It is very likely that this situation will continue, in which case **Sir Berkeley** will be a priority to return to service. Its overhaul is likely to take 2-3 years so it should be back in traffic by 2019. The overhaul does have the advantage of being essentially at nil financial cost to Middleton so will allow us to build up our finances whilst providing for future motive power. In return for providing the labour and management resources, Middleton receives free steamings but the drawback is that the VCT is at liberty to hire out the loco elsewhere so we are not in full control of it and we cannot rely on its availability.

A similar situation is likely to be the case with **Slough Estates No.3**, which is owned by the Slough & Windsor Railway Society although they have indicated that they do not wish the loco to go on hire elsewhere. They, too, would probably wish their loco to be back in service sooner rather than later. However, the loco is known to

need quite a bit of work doing to it once its overhaul starts, so it will not be a quick job.

So, what should be next in the overhaul queue? Waiting patiently in the Engine House for their turn to come are, **HC 1309 'Henry de Lacy II'**, **HC 1882 'Mirvale'**, **HC 1369 'MSC No.67'**, **Hs No.385** and **P 2103** and outside in the yard is **HE 1684**. All these locos have a claim to be next in the queue. **HE 1684** has never steamed at Middleton and would probably be an ideal loco for us. It is unique in our collection, having side tanks coupled with outside cylinders and Walschaerts valve gear. It does, however, need a huge amount of work to put it back into service, including, almost certainly, a new boiler. It is also privately owned, so there is little likelihood of grant funding. Middleton would have to consider things very carefully if it were to take on a full overhaul but it should find time in the workshops for cosmetic restoration and display in the Engine House. Having discounted **HE 1684**, the loco that has been out of service the longest is **Henry de Lacy II**, which last ran in 1980. It, too, is in poor condition and will require a new boiler and major mechanical work. It is a fairly standard Hudswell, of which several still exist, so there is much less chance of obtaining significant grant funding for it. **Mirvale** and **385** both last ran in 1999 so they probably have an equal claim to be next in the queue if time out of service is the prime consideration. **Mirvale** is thought to be in fairly good condition although it will require some boiler work (don't they all!). The same can be said for **Hs 385** although the boiler work required is likely to be

considerably more. The next longest out of service is **P 2103**. Again, this requires boiler work but this is not thought to be significant and any mechanical work should be routine. It is, however, privately owned and, again, Middleton would have to consider things fairly carefully before committing to significant expenditure. The last of the line up is **MSC No.67** which came out of traffic a couple of years ago. This was always a popular loco and many would like to see it back in service. It does, however, fall into the category of, 'well worn' and in need of significant boiler work.

The astute reader will have realised that **Cockerill 1625** is missing from the above, as are **P 2003 'John Blenkinsop'** and **K 5469 'Conway'**. The Railway decided some time ago that the Cockerill did not form part of our collection policy and should be put up for sale, which it is still. The latter two locos are on loan elsewhere; the loan period of the **Peckett** is outside the scope of this review and Conway is rather too large for Middleton operations.

Having considered all the above (and in greater detail than is included in this brief survey), the writer firmly believes that the next loco that we should put through the workshops should be **Mirvale**. It is comparatively modern, has outside cylinders, is of a size that makes it very useful and seemingly requires little work to make it operational once more - (though you never know the truth until you strip it down). However, although objective, this is a personal opinion and it would be interesting to hear what others think, perhaps in the form of a 'letter to the editor.'

Steve Roberts, Hon. Mech. Eng.

Volunteering

Volunteering

Did you notice anything different in the last month or so? Perhaps you did not as we all seem to be carrying on in the same old way. But are we?

Over the last months there has been lots of hot air created both at the council meetings of your railway and in face to face and email discussions about the whole subject of volunteering. Until recently the volunteering structure had just evolved from the days when Dr Fred Youell and a small group of like-minded individuals banded together to save the Middleton Railway. It is now not uncommon to see 30 or 40 people in attendance at Moor Road involved in a wide variety of activities. It has become apparent that this band of enthusiasts now need a more formal structure than there has been in the past.

To bring us in line with other organisations your council has over the last year been working to establish policies and agreements which will, hopefully, be of benefit to both individual volunteers and the society. Towards the end of 2014, as part of our requirement as an accredited museum, a Volunteer Agreement was established. After careful consideration this has been found to fulfil our requirements. Next came the formation of a more difficult document – The disciplinary policy. There is no need to become alarmed as although the word ‘discipline’ is used this document also establishes some items which could be of benefit to each of us as an individual volunteer. Although we are all unpaid our rights as volunteers should be protected in line with the latest

employment legislation so the disciplinary policy attempts to provide this cover.

The Volunteer Agreement

The following document was established in December 2014 and will eventually be included in a revised copy of the **Volunteer Handbook**:

Our basic purpose as the Middleton Railway Trust (MRT from now on) is to keep alive for future generations the world's oldest working railway and the spirit of industrial railways, by preserving, restoring, operating, displaying and interpreting locomotives and rolling stock and related artefacts of the Middleton Railway. By volunteering at the Railway you can assist us in achieving this purpose, and to help you understand what this volunteering would involve, the following "volunteer agreement" explains what each of us should expect from the other.

As a volunteer, you can expect us (the MRT) to:

give you the opportunity to undertake a variety of activities, as suit your interests;

provide you with appropriate introductions to these activities, and then training and supervision for them;

ensure the safety of the working environment for these activities, and your safety while undertaking them;

provide you with appropriate general items of personal protective equipment;

provide adequate insurance cover for you while undertaking these activities;

provide you with appropriate assistance if any emergency should arise; and

treat you with reasonable courtesy and respect at all times.

Since we are all volunteers, we need you to contribute to meeting these same expectations on the part of other volunteers, and so in turn we expect you as a volunteer to:

contribute reliably and to the best of your ability to any activity which you undertake;

ensure that you inform somebody as soon as possible if you find that you are not going to be able to undertake any activity to which you had committed yourself;

be willing to learn, and accept the introductions to and training and supervision for any activities that you undertake;

dress appropriately for any work that you will undertake;

ensure that you undertake all work safely;

ensure that you maintain a safe working environment for all others in all work that you undertake;

follow carefully any policies, procedures or instructions which relate to any activity that you undertake;

give appropriate assistance to others if any emergency should arise; and

treat other volunteers and members of the public with courtesy and respect at all times.

Of course, being human we do not always live up to all of these expectations, but we must all try to do so. For each of them you will find more details in the Volunteer Handbook, including who you should inform if you feel that there has been a serious failure to meet these expectations.

What If things go wrong?

This is where the Disciplinary Policy which was agreed by your council on 21st April 2016 comes into effect. The full text of this policy will shortly be available on the members section of the website but in brief the aim of the policy is to maintain high standards and to encourage improvement of individual conduct and performance and to minimise disagreements about disciplinary matters.

Consultation is a key element between a volunteer and the supervisor. The volunteer will be given the opportunity to be represented or accompanied at any hearing and will have a right to appeal against any disciplinary action taken. In line with present employment practice the following steps will be taken with action ceasing when a resolution is achieved:

Informal discussions/counselling.

Formal verbal warning for continued infringements or lack of improvement.

Written warning.

Final written warning.

Dismissal.

Gross misconduct will normally be subject to summary dismissal. This includes theft, fraud, violent behaviour, etc.

Continued on page 20

Knowsthorpe Swing Bridge

David Hector writes, I have recently come across a site on Facebook which may be of interest to OR readers:

"Secret Leeds 2".

Whilst scrolling down their page I came across an article written by **Phil Davison**, which deals with the area around the Knowsthorpe Lock, which has always been an interest of mine. (The area is presently going through major Civil Engineering work as the Victorian Weir is being replaced with a modern moveable hydraulic Weir to help with the Leeds Flood Defences.) Many of you will be aware of the very large Circular Structure on the south side of the Canal. The following article gives a good insight into what it was, why it was built and its demise. *Reproduced by kind permission of Phil Davison. For photographs, see pp 16 & 17.*

The mystery circular structure at Knowsthorpe.

Fig A shows a huge circular stone structure on some land between the River Aire, and Thwaite Lane at Knowsthorpe. The tower is about 30ft high and 45ft in diameter. It puzzles many people what it could be. Quite a lot of people think it's an old air shaft for a railway tunnel. It does actually resemble a tunnel air stack in size and shape. But when viewed in aerial images, you can see the top has been sealed off and there is some vegetation growing up there.

The 'before and after' photos, **Fig B**, reveal the structure was at one time a huge slewing support tower for a swing bridge. This was no ordinary swing bridge, it was enormous. You can judge the size of the bridge as it dwarfs the lock keepers house next to it. The equally impressive Stourton

Grange power station can be seen in the distance. The swivel base tower had a 35ft deep foundation to stop it falling over when the bridge opened.

The swing bridge was built because of the fierce rivalry between the railway and canal company. During the Industrial revolution, there were all manner of rivalries between inventors and companies. The Aire and Calder Navigation Company first tried to work with the railways when they arrived in the 1840s. But as time went by, the railway companies started to take the greater share of traffic, and the profit.

In 1893 the canal company heard that plans were underway to build a new railway line, and a purpose-built goods warehouse at Cross Green. The Canal Company feared the worst. The new line however had to cross the River Aire. What better way to scupper the railway plans, than to stop the railway from crossing the river? The Navigation company, determined to make things difficult for the railway, wasted no time in announcing grand plans to bring ocean-going ships into the heart of Leeds, just like the Manchester ship canal. But the plan to bring tall-masted ships up the navigation wasn't going to stop the railway as the new venture was far too lucrative.

Fig C.

So the huge Knowsthorpe swing bridge was built to overcome this problem. The resulting structure was vast and expensive. The bridge had a clear span of 170 feet across the waterway and 275 feet between abutments. The two main girders, 41 feet apart, extended for 295 feet, with a depth of 30 feet. The sheer weight of the steelwork amounted to 1,250 tons. In fact the bridge was so heavy,

it dropped several inches when it was opened for it's first test. The bridge had to be jacked up for re-alignment. To add insult to injury, the Navigation company quickly dropped its plans for tall ships into Leeds, they never got any further inland than Goole. The Behemoth bridge was locked into place and never opened again. The massive structure has remained a true urban folly on the landscape ever since.

Fig D shows the huge slewing ring and bridge under construction. Heavy duty timber props support the bridge sections during construction. Three men were killed during construction work, and two were badly injured. The Darlington firm 'The Cleveland Bridge & Engineering Company' started work on the bridge in 1897. Cleveland Bridge & Engineering Company also constructed Sydney Harbour Bridge.

Although the railway line on the North side of the river survives in its entirety, virtually all trace of the line on the South side has been erased. None of this embankment exists today.

There was a great deal of embankment needed for the South side of the line. The spoil material for this was brought from eight pit heaps, some as far as three miles away.

Fig E is taken on the main span of the swing bridge, the girders are huge, and the intricate lattice work is impressive. These kind of structures are very noisy, any kind of banging on the ironwork reverberates loudly. It must have been impressive to be standing on this bridge when a train rumbled over it!

Fig F shows a 1970's photo taken before the bridge was demolished,

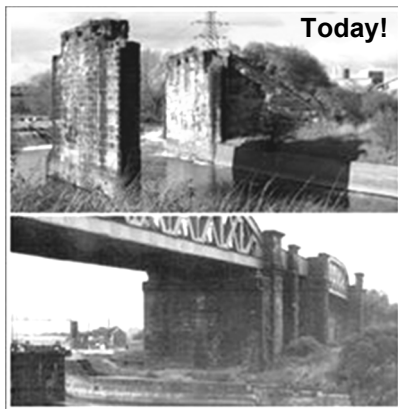
the structure was dismantled by Ogden Demolition in 1977. Only the circular slewing tower and one bridge pier survive today.

The railway line still survives on top of the embankment, a pair of buffer stops are placed at the end of the line. Although the line on the South side of the river closed on 3rd January 1966, the line North of the river is still in use. You can see the remaining line, and buffer stops on top of the embankment on this aerial photo.

The line is something of a 'forgotten railway' of Leeds. Much of the line is hidden well out of sight, it is only visible from a handful of bridges. The line opened in 1899 and ran for 3¼ miles. This new line ran from Beeston Junction to Neville Hill East Junction.

Much embankment work was needed for construction of the line South of the river. A deep cutting was needed to get the line up to Neville Hill. No doubt the waste material from this cutting was used for the embankments lower down the line.

The line connected to the mainline at Beeston Junction. The 1899 Great Northern Railway line crossed over the Middleton railway, and tramway to Middleton.



Knowsthorpe Swing Bridge illustrations



Fig A



THE MYSTERY STRUCTURE AT KNOWSTHORPE



Fig B

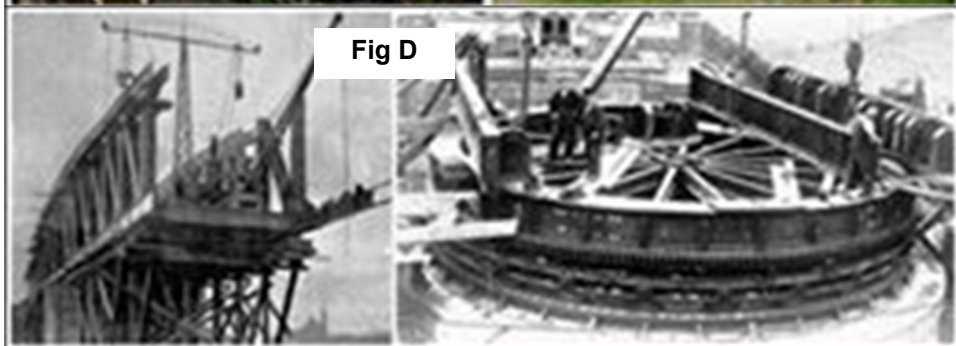


Fig D

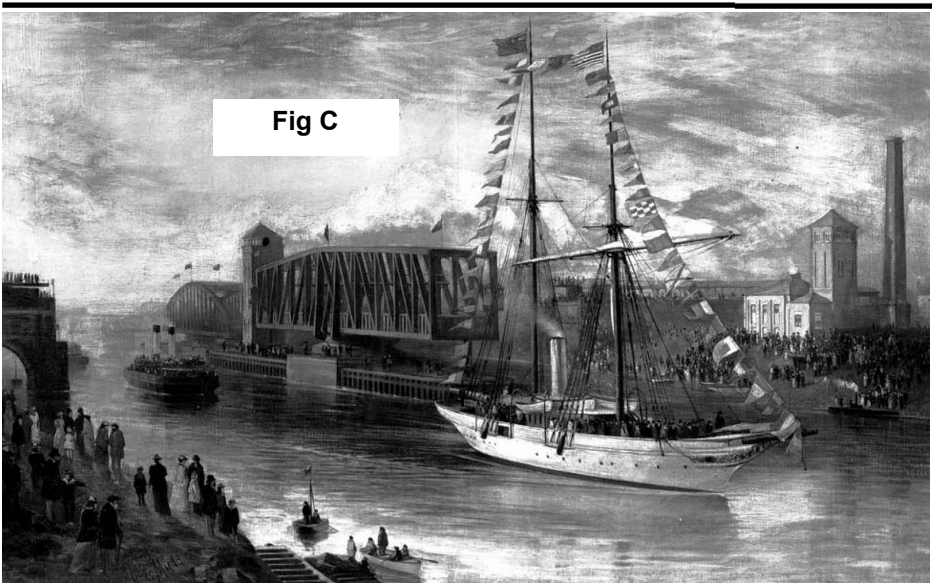


Fig F is a photograph taken in the 1970s

1601 MATTHEW MURRAY

Available for traffic and used as required. It did blot its copybook by losing the left hand valve rod taper cotter (which holds the two parts of the valve rod together) but this was spotted during its routine 'fitness to run' exam and a replacement was quickly made and fitted. The safety valves are starting to blow too early so these will need some fettling to improve their operation but this is being deferred until a suitable time slot can be found for it.

No. 6

No significant progress to report this time.

1210 SIR BERKELEY

Again, available for traffic and used as required. The right hand clack valve was starting to leak quite badly and this has had the valve re-machined and ground in to rectify the problem. Fortunately, we were able to do this without removing the whole assembly, making the job that much easier.

We have agreed with the Boiler inspector that the loco can stay in use until the 31st December. Provided that work on **Brookes No.1** is completed, **Sir Berkeley's** overhaul should start almost immediately after.

The loco is booked to go to the Tanfield Railway for their June gala, after which it will return.

No.11

Nothing to report.

No.1310 (NER H)

As mentioned in the last Old Run, **1310** has gone on loan to the Buckinghamshire Railway Centre. The loan period has been extended

until the middle of June. No news is good news so we presume that the loco is performing satisfactorily. Before it went, time was found to attend to the regulator valve which, on dismantling, was found to have slight damage which was preventing it from seating properly. A few strokes with a file soon cured this problem and it now seems to be closing properly. A few other minor steam leaks in injector pipework have also been attended to.

1544 SLOUGH ESTATES No.3

Slough has been in regular use and was planned to be used over the whole Spring Bank Holiday weekend. However, a worsening leak from the fireman's side injector clack valve made that injector inoperable and it was failed at the end of the Sunday, **MW 1601** substituting on the Monday. The clack valve will be removed and overhauled as quickly as we are able, as this useful loco is required back in traffic.

SENTINEL No.54

The really good news to report is that Israel Newton have now started work on the boiler and it is well on its way to completion. The majority of the boiler fittings and scantlings have been taken to Newton's so that they can be fitted to the boiler shell. Unfortunately, the safety valve mounting column that was originally thought to be re-usable has a corroded flange, which will reduce it beyond acceptable limits if machined flat. Efforts are being made to obtain a replacement but, if this is unsuccessful we will have to fit commercially available non-Sentinel valves. The water deflector trays that help disperse the feed water into the boiler have been repaired ready for

fitting to the new boiler shell. A new ashpan has been made to replace the one stolen some while ago.

could now be lifted back into place and bolted up and this work was quickly achieved.



The new outer shell of Sentinel's new boiler being made at Israel Newton's works at the beginning of May. the shell itself is now complete but still requires all the various openings cutting in the shell and the drilling and tapping of many holes for the various fittings.

Steve Roberts

Work has also re-started on the painting of the cab and bunker. This has already had a coat of black paint but it has been discovered that this has not taken properly and large amounts of it just peeled off when rubbed.

HE 2387 BROOKES No.1

Work continues to progress apace on the overhaul of this loco and it is mainly going to plan. Work on the frames is now largely complete and they are resplendent in Signal red between the frames, with black gloss outside. Four new piston rings have been made for the two pistons and, following the fitting of these, the pistons have been re-fitted into the cylinders and the piston rod glands re-packed. Similarly, the valves have been re-fitted and both the valve chest and cylinder covers have been re-fitted. Completion of the above work meant that the front bufferbeam

The traditional way of aligning slide bars to the cylinder is by means of a piano wire which is carefully positioned along the centre-line of the cylinders and pulled tight. This wire is then used as a datum for correctly aligning the slide bars. However, we have adopted a more novel approach which will hopefully prove to be successful.

Using a clinometer, the angle of both cylinders was carefully measured.

Other measurements were also taken to establish how much metal shimming would be required to correctly position the slide bars at the

cylinder end. The clinometer was then used to align the slide bars at the same inclination as the cylinder bore. The clinometer can accurately measure to less than one minute of inclination, which represents 0.004" of accuracy over the length of the slidebar, within acceptable limits. The eight slidebars have now been fitted by this method. As part of all this work, the four crosshead slippers, which run on the slidebars, have been white-metalled and machined to suit.

Work has also been progressing on overhaul of the drain cock operating linkage and, similarly, the front sand box operating linkage. The coal bunker has been needle-gunned and given a coat of bitumastic paint internally.

A new ashpan has been fabricated. The old ashpan was in poor condition with several holes and two badly

warped damper doors. The only parts of the old ashpan to be re-used have been the four damper door bearing blocks. The ashpan has been trial fitted to the firebox and slightly adjusted as a result of this.

The eccentric straps have been retrieved from storage, cleaned up and tried on their respective eccentrics. Whilst they were found to be a good fit radially, it was obvious that they were very loose axially. This has probably come about because the driving axle had a lot of lateral movement in it and this movement has created excessive wear in the eccentric straps. The straps are made of cast iron but have a white metal running surface. The white metal has been melted out and new white metal cast in and then machined to give the correct required clearances. Two of the four straps have now been done, painted and fitted, with work progressing on the remaining two.

The axleboxes have now been fitted to the axles in preparation for re-wheeling, which is imminent.

K 5469 CONWAY

A new smokebox has been made by the NRM team at Shildon. This presently awaits fitting.

FOWLER 42200033 HARRY

Available for traffic and has seen more use as more drivers undertake the necessary conversion course. It was discovered that the brake linkage was incorrectly set up, resulting in an awful lot of effort to apply the hand brake. This has now been altered to improve the situation. The direction change valve has an intermittent air

leak on it that we will have to address at some point, as it can result in significant loss of air. The engine cooling fan suffered some slight damage for reasons that had not become clear. However, this has now been repaired. Another unexplained mystery has been the overheating of the engine cooling system which was found to be air locked. The system was bled of the air and the problem resolved.

PECKETT 5003 AUSTIN'S No.1

Now back in traffic after its recent mini overhaul.

D2999

In use, as required. A leak on the fuel system has been rectified.

D577 MARY

Available for service when required.

HE 6981

No progress due to the owner having significant personal commitments.

D631 CARROLL

Available if required but generally on display in the Engine House. It is the intention to use this locomotive more during the coming season.

L.M.S. 7051

Available if required but generally on display in the Engine House.

OLIVE

A decision on the future of this vehicle is still awaited.

All other locos are stored, either on display in the Engine House or awaiting overhaul.

CARRIAGE & WAGON NOTES

Coach No.1074

The problem with ingress of rainwater

now seems to have been largely overcome by re-sealing the gutter and fitting a drip strip to it. With the onset of drier weather(!) the stuck doors have been freed off and planed to give increased clearances so that they will open satisfactorily. The coach has now been shunted into position between the other two coaches and is in general service.

LMS BRAKE VAN No.158760

Work continues on this vehicle, largely being undertaken by members of the "Wednesday gang". Having completed the east side solebar, attention has been turned to the west side. The old rotten and broken solebar has been removed and the new one has now been largely made although still requiring fitting. A new cross member has been fitted under the north bulkhead to replace one that was found to be in poorer condition than originally thought.

ISLES CRANE

One of the many tasks associated with the development at Moor road is the planned display of both the Isles and the Booth steam cranes at the north end of the car park. As a prelude to this, the Isles crane recently had a bit of a clean down and an assessment of necessary work. The first task will be to make it fit to move and this will necessitate the replacement of the jib rope, which supports the jib and is severely corroded. The new rope and fittings have now been obtained and will be fitted shortly. Once this is done, it is intended to move the crane to a more accessible location so that it can be cleaned up and made more presentable.

Steve Roberts

Ian Dobson's Famous Social Evenings

take place on the first **Tuesday** of each month, at Moor Road, starting at **7.30 pm**. It has been scientifically proven that there is nothing better to do on a Tuesday evening and, if you're lucky and ask nicely, Mr Dobson might even make you a cup of tea! Usual rules apply, all welcome, tea-break provided and no membership of any organisation is required, so bring your friends.

The programme for the rest of 2016 is as below. More speakers in the pipeline:-

5th July	John Fowler locos (John Pease)
August	No Meeting
6th September	China (Adrian Freeman)
4th October	TBA
1st November	Industrial locos (Ian Smith)
6th December	Christmas Quiz



Volunteering *continued from page 11*

Continued from page 11

As mentioned earlier a volunteer may appeal against any disciplinary decision to an appeals sub-committee.

So what now?

As was mentioned at the Spring Volunteers Forum a Working Party has been set up to look at the whole aspect of Volunteering. The first meeting was held in May with 11 Working Members in attendance, who discussed a number of ideas. You may not be aware that we now have a Volunteer Liaison Officer whose job is to be the first point of contact between new volunteers and the society. It is hoped to be able to engage a second person to assist in this important work. It was suggested that new volunteers should have a mentor and that after a suitable probationary period should be 'promoted' to Working Member status and presented with the Working Members Card.

After discussion it was agreed to split the tasks into areas to be pursued by one or more members.

Advertising literature

Open Day at a date to be announced

Volunteer pack, including a New handbook

Film, video etc

Many hands photo display for the Engine House—the pictures in this article will form part of that display. See if you can guess whose hands they are!

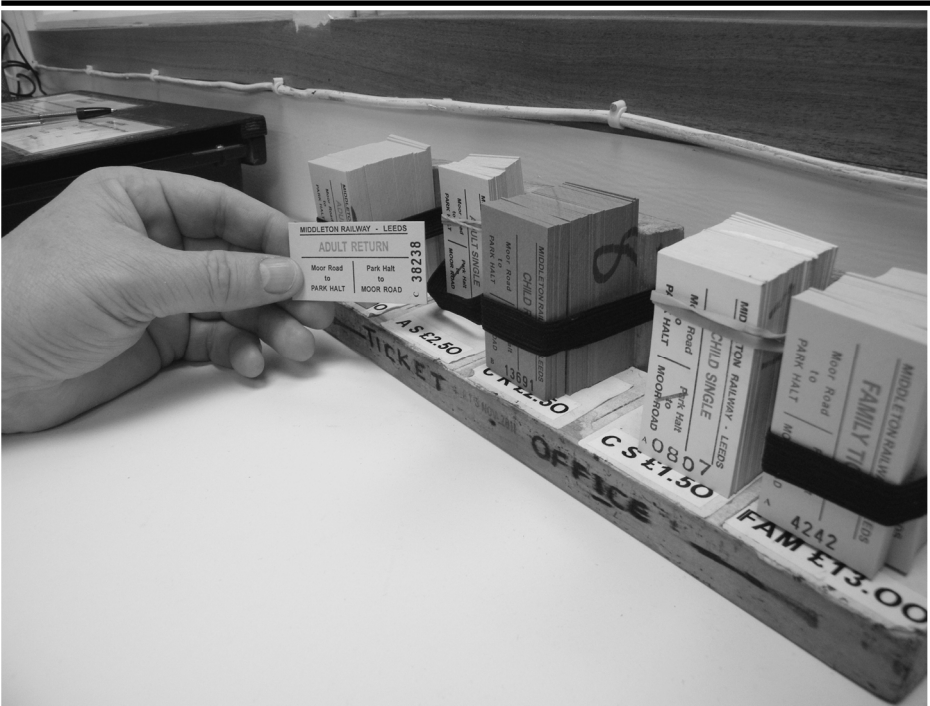
Incentives and Retention

The aim of the rejuvenation of the volunteering ethic is twofold – firstly to enhance the experience of the present Working Members and secondly to recruit more people in order that we may continue to achieve the aim of running the Middleton Railway. Who knows what we might achieve with more Working Members – Regular trains on Beza Road branch, a service to Middleton Park Lake, more visits by tour coaches?

Malcolm Johnson



Volunteering continued



So, you could work in the Ticket Office (above) or in the Café,



**Or
“Train” (excuse the pun)
to be a Guard, one of
whose tasks is to hang up
the white lamp to show
the end of the Train.**

Researching our Market

The railway's Council has been looking at how we can increase visitor numbers, and one suggestion was to conduct some market research. Richard Stead volunteered to explore this, and in February presented proposals from the firm RDSii for a project involving interviews with current visitors, group discussions with both current and new visitors, and accompanied visits with two family groups. This proposal was accepted, and the research work took place during April.

One of the first results was that some of those invited, who had not visited the railway before, had difficulty reaching us because they could not find us! We need much more prominent signage! What we have at present is not where the visitor first looks! Once they had found us they were very impressed, so much of what we are doing is right. However, various ways we could enhance the experience of visitors, particularly by explaining things better to children, were suggested.

Many of the results focused on our web site. Families doing a search for a day out are likely to find the web site "Day Out with the Kids" which advertises local attractions, and our entry there is apparently effective at pointing them to our web site. However, this appeared to the visitors to be aimed at enthusiasts, with too much text, and not enough pictures. By contrast, they suggested the web site for the National Railway Museum gave a much better impression of somewhere that would be worth visiting.

In response, work is now in progress to implement the recommendations from this project. In particular, web pages are being re-designed so as to be more colourful, and to use less text and more pictures (particularly pictures of things other than trains!). So, if you find our web site home page appears very different next time you look at it, you will know why. Let's hope it works!

Tony Cowling



Continued from page 6

A very recent report at the time of writing has come to light whereby a video has appeared online showing that not all train doors and gates were securely closed as the train departed. It is essential that the guard checks that all doors and gates are secured before giving the right away for the train to depart, especially if any passengers board at the last minute.

Safety & Operations Committee Rule Book Progress

It was reported in the last Old Run that the process was approximately 6 months behind. Unfortunately, this is now even worse! An initial review of the proposed amendments has been undertaken by the Rules and Disciplinary sub-committee which has, as expected, produced some areas that need further discussion and consideration to ensure the rule is not only fit for purpose, but that it also actually represents how we operate. This review is ongoing and a further update will be provided in the next Old Run.

Safety & Operations Committee Handbooks Progress

The Safety & Operations Committee has a desire to ensure that handbooks are available for all grades to act as a guide to carrying out duties safely and ensure that practice complies with the rule book. These will also provide a great opportunity to pass on some things that traditionally are only learnt from experience (and not usually good ones). The Shunter's handbook is the first one to be produced and is well on the way, being almost ready for issue.

Safety & Operations Committee Incident Investigation and Reporting Progress

The Safety & Operations Committee continues to investigate and report their findings on any accidents or incidents that are reported, with the primary aim of preventing recurrences of any incidents. To assist in this process, it is important that any incidents or accidents are reported as appropriate. All accidents and incidents should be reported to the Safety Officer, and the Traffic Manager should also be notified, particularly if the incident relates to operations.

To assist in the process of reporting, an incident report form is being developed. This will be a single form to be used for any accident or incident and is intended to make the reporting process easier, prompting for all the relevant information. In line with this, a review of the incident and accident reporting process will also be undertaken and updated guidance issued as necessary.

Contacting the Safety and Operations Committee

The Safety & Operations Committee details are outlined below – please do contact any or all of the committee should you need to raise any concerns or want their opinion or guidance on any matters. You can contact the committee either:

In person – Safety & Operations Committee members are; Mark Whitaker, David Hebdon, Alex Bateman, Richard Pike and Douglas Lovely. The Safety Officer is Tony Cowling, and whilst he does not sit on the committee, he can be contacted as well.

trafficmanager@middletonrailway.org.uk

And Bluebells to you too!

Have you ever wondered what retired chairmen of Heritage Railways do? Well they revert back to their pre-railway passions and then mix that with railways.

I have always had a great interest in plants and horticulture and although I have visited numerous gardens, with my equally knowledgeable wife Sue, and whilst there have been some classics visited, Great Dixter for one, you are hard pushed to beat nature. With this in mind we decided to go have a ride on the Midldeton and get off at Park Halt and go in search of our plants from the Asparagaceae family.

We are of course talking about *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* which, to the uninitiated, is the common English Bluebell (not the Spanish imposter that is creeping in).

It is hard to imagine that less than three miles from the City centre there are acres of bluebells, just waiting to be found.

Here is just one shot from our walk through the woods. If you haven't seen this spectacle, then do go and have a look next year. The Railway works in conjunction with the Friends of Middleton Park to provide guided walks through the woods, although now the signposting is excellent.

Look out for Bluebell Walks in the 2017 Timetable; you won't be disappointed.

Andrew & Sue Gill
(Former Chairman and our Membership Secretary Sue.)



Dear Editor,

After the severe winter floods we experienced over the Christmas season in Yorkshire and other regions, it was mentioned that structures such as the bridges over the canal and river at Elland and Tadcaster respectively would be restored as they are both Grade 2 listed. We also heard that the winding gear at Hatfield Colliery near Doncaster is, thankfully, to be preserved as a permanent reminder of our once great mining industry, now sadly a victim to global market forces and pricing.

There must be many pieces of interesting infrastructure which have 'gone west' over the years, not all, of course, because of forces of nature. The Yorkshire Evening Post letters column recently featured a photograph of The Cuckoo Steps taken in 1960, with some interesting local documentation. Maybe The Cuckoo Steps and Great Northern Bridges, which straddled the MR and tramway to Middleton could have been similarly listed and restored in the same way the Saxby and Farmer level crossing gates and mechanism at Moor Road have been carefully renovated. Monuments to the steam age if you like.

Sadly, so many fascinating relics of our Industrial Revolution have simply been swept away. We were so eager to 'clean up' the remains of this dynamic revolution that we are often left with a bland, sanitised landscape.

By the mid-1980s there was little excuse to allow the demolition of the likes of the LMS Goods Warehouse on Hunslet Lane. I thought we knew better than that by then. This is now

the site of the "Crown Point Retail Park" in all its loveliness.

What was to stop the conversion of the fine old warehouse to other uses? Other regions have put Leeds to shame. They did it with the dockside warehouses in Liverpool, so why not here? (They also made a tidy job of railway warehouses in Manchester and Warrington, although the Great Northern one at Grimsby docks succumbed to the wrecking ball in the '90s). The Leeds Victorian building would have looked much finer than the present installations. Sometimes, all it takes is a little vision and determination. Ask any MRT volunteer over the years!

Sincere regards,

John Roberts
(member of the trust)

(We sympathise with your comments John; sadly it seems there are not enough people interested in preserving our history. If the 'modern' were an improvement this might not matter so much! Ed.)

Dear Editor

Here are some snippets, mostly but not all from the early chapters of Simon Bradley's book "The Railways". First - not from Bradley - one piece of public benefit conferred by the rail network was the demise of the highwayman. Highway robbery had, according to Sam Willis, been made easy by the invention of the flintlock pistol in the mid-seventeenth century. With this article, one could control a horse with one hand and point a deadly weapon at rich coach-

travellers with the other. Two hundred years later, the means of safety arrived - the railway carriage!

Moving on - but returning to a theme from an earlier edition of this publication - we may turn to the issue of time. When the railways first began, every town had its own time, set by the sun. Thus noon in Plymouth came 20 minutes later than noon in London. One curious effect of course was that westbound journeys - running with the sun - took less time (apparently) than the same train heading east - running against the sun. This was not significant for direct journeys. Connections, however, required a more rigorous approach. This came with the advent of "railway" or "London time", facilitated by electric telegraph. Thus towns at some distance from London would have two times. Bradley reports that in Oxford, the university rang a curfew-bell for the undergraduates based on local time, while the pubs' closing-time was based on railway time (i.e. was earlier) - and in Andover, a sundial (local time, obviously) bore the warning that it ran 6 minutes behind London (i.e. Greenwich) time - important if you wanted to catch the train!

All was simplified by the Time Act of 1880 which made London time compulsory. There is a great asymmetry to this. If Plymouth is 20 minutes behind London, then (by my reckoning) the western reaches of Northern Ireland are another 18 on. Gt Yarmouth, however, is about seven minutes ahead of London - a grand total of 45 mins difference! The snag is of course that Greenwich is not in the middle - it's way off to the eastern end of the scale.

Bradley also draws attention to the expansion of the English lexicon by the railways. "Shunting", "letting off steam", "on the right lines" and "running out of steam", are all phrases owing their origins to rail travel. Many were brought into English by Dickens, Trollope and Matthew Arnold. Bradshaw coined the term "timetable". Intriguingly, railways do not feature - I am open to correction here - in the works of any of the Bronte sisters. (This may be one feature that makes their novels seem to relate to more distant times.) This is all the more strange when it is remembered that Queen Victoria travelled by rail for the first time in 1843 while the Bronte's brother, Branwell, actually worked for a railway company in the Calder Valley from 1840-42. The sisters' novels all came out late in the 1840s.

The sisters' aversion to railways may have been engendered by the contrast, to put it no more strongly, between the niggardly provision of space for the travelling public in the new rail carriages on the one hand and on the other the crinoline - which, Bradley reports, reached its zenith (in terms of volume) in the boom years of rail expansion 1840-60. The gentlemen of the time had their own sartorial problems when using the low ceilinged railway carriages with their small doorways - fashion demanded the wearing of the stovepipe hat!

Yours

Richard Stead

(As usual, Richard, you give us much upon which to muse! Are you able to tell us how many extra people could be crammed into a carriage once the size of ladies' skirts had been reduced? Ed.)



The Middleton Railway Trust Limited

(Limited by Guarantee and not having a share capital)

Registered Office: The Station, Moor Road, Leeds LS10 2JQ

Registered Company No. 1165589 Registered Charity No. 230387

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Telephone 0113 271 0320 (Office) & 0113 270 6162 (Workshop)

Email: info@middletonrailway.org.uk Website: www.middletonrailway.org.uk

President

Gerald Egan, 1022 Leeds Road, Dewsbury, WF12 7QR

Vice Presidents

J K Lee BEM, Ian B Smith, Don Townsley

Chairman

Malcolm Johnson, email: m.johnson324btinternet.com

Secretary

Tony Cowling, 2 College Street, Sheffield, S10 2PH 0114 268 3812

Treasurer

Ann Roberts, 0113 271 0320

Council Members

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Mark Calvert

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John Linkins

Richard Pike

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Membership Subscription Rates (from 1st January 2016)

Adult Membership (FT).....£20.50

Senior Membership (OT).....£15.50

Junior Membership (of MRA).....£14.50

Family Associates of Trust Members (in same household).....£4.00 per person

Life Membership (LT).....£370.00

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Administration (Chairman/Secretary)

Bookings (Advance Travel Reservations)

Education (Schools Programme)

Engineering (Chief Mechanical Engineer)

Finance (Treasurer)

General Enquiries

Medical Officer

Membership (Membership Secretary)

Old Run (Editor)

Staff Rosters (Roster Clerk)

Traffic Manager

admin@middletonrailway.org.uk

bookings@middletonrailway.org.uk

education@middletonrailway.org.uk

engineer@middletonrailway.org.uk

finance@middletonrailway.org.uk

info@middletonrailway.org.uk

medicalofficer@middletonrailway.org.uk

membership@middletonrailway.org.uk

oldrun@middletonrailway.org.uk

roster@middletonrailway.org.uk

trafficmanager@middletonrailway.org.uk

Progressing the Running Shed!



First comes the mini-digger to prepare the way, (picture courtesy of Robert Taggart), then follows the concrete pouring (courtesy of Tony Cowling) - although in both cases the work was done by Midbrook Steel! Perhaps not much to see yet, but it's coming on very well so far and without all this preparation, the building wouldn't stay up!

