

# THE OLD RUN

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THE 1758 MIDDLETON RAILWAY  
LEEDS



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Autumn 1994

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Many thanks indeed to the members who provided articles, reports and photos for this issue. ALL members are invited to contribute to their magazine articles, news items, letters, photographs or drawings on relevant subjects. Opinions expressed in the magazine do not necessarily reflect those of the Middleton Railway Trust Ltd., the Middleton Railway Association, or the Editor.

Material for the Winter Issue should reach the Editor by 1st December 1994, at the latest, please.

## A VERY WARM WELCOME to the following members who have joined since publication of the Spring issue:

Iain Dobson: Michael Garbett: Paul Holroyd: Tracey Johnson: Alan, Sue, Holly & Sam Peters: Andrew Davey: Karina Smith: Peter Tottow: Timothy Wells: Stanley Haigh: Douglas Lovely: Richard Wildon: Barry Higgins: Andrew Nicholls: Stephen, Pam, Matthew & Lauren Carter: Reginald & Nellie Mellars: Chris Slater: Stewart Wragg: Robert Bows: Roger Bareham: Sam & Audrey Whitworth: Jacqueline Wragg: David, Matthew & Daniel Wilton: Ian Preston: Adam & Stacey Louise Dean: Terence, Tracey, Gareth & Shaun Dawson: Gloria Pamment: Robert & Carolyn Taggart: Adrian, Wendy & Alex Ladd: Steve Marran: Valerie, Juliette & Rebecca Creasey: Douglas, Heather & David Pollock: G. & Claire Hardaker: Stephen, Denise, Alice, Thomas, Benjamin & Abigail Howard: Ben, Adrian & Matthew Rycroft: John, Edward & Andrew Eastwood: Tony & Joanne Flanagan.

## OBITUARY

It is with regret that I have to announce the death on Friday 9th September of Len Plummer, father of Exhibition Manager Derek Plummer. Len was one of those members who wasn't seen very often at Middleton, but who put in an awful lot of time and energy behind the scenes, in his case helping Derek with exhibitions. Many have been the times when Derek and Len tussled with each other trying to load up the car following an exhibition: Derek would place something on the roof, and Len would promptly remove it as he knew better! These always good-natured tussles between father and son are well remembered by this fellow-helper! Len was always good-humoured and invariably had a smile and a comment for our many visitors during exhibitions, which were quite strenuous for someone pushing eighty. Len will be missed by all who knew him, and our thoughts and sympathy go to Derek and his mother.

Ian Smith

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Cover picture: visiting loco, D2854, a guest at our September gala, pictured at Park Halt on Saturday 24th October. D2854 was on loan from the South Yorkshire Railway at Meadowhall, Sheffield. Photo: Keith Hartley

## FROM THE CHAIRMAN

Ian Smith

As the year draws to a close, the first phase of our new shed is almost complete. The building was cladded during late September, and the main doors (home-made of course!) were erected a couple of weeks later. At the time of writing, the smaller doors need making and then fitting, but otherwise the shed is now weatherproof, completing Stage One of the project. Stage Two, fitting out, can now proceed as time and funds permit, whilst we can also proceed with connecting the far road to the rest of the system. Stage Three, the fitting out of the current shed as a museum, is already being planned by Chris Rogers.

We now have a building which we can be proud of - very few societies of our size have such facilities, and they certainly would not have tackled the project the Middleton way. A complete, weatherproof building has been completed within 14 months, using 75% volunteer labour. It really is an incredible achievement of which the Railway, and especially those members who worked so hard on it, can be justifiably proud.

We are holding a "topping out" ceremony on 19th November, in order to thank our sponsors and also to show the outside world what the Railway is capable of doing. Full details can be obtained by ringing me at home nearer the date. I hope members will be able to come along to see the new building. [Ian's 'phone number is (0532) 711089.]

## LOCOMOTIVE NOTES

Steve Roberts

September, and almost the end of the season. There's only the few Sundays in October and November before the chaos of Santa in December, and then we can relax for a few short months before the cycle starts again. Generally, we have coped well with only a few happenings to upset the orderly routine. Loco visits have been the order of the day, and this year I think we have done more than ever before. As usual, the loco situation is given in detail below.

54 The Sentinel eventually made it back to Middleton metals after its wanderings. It has seen service during the summer, but has proved to be a somewhat indifferent performer and has proved embarrassing for some crews! Whilst it is not steaming perfectly, in the right hands it has worked



services satisfactorily. The trouble with **No.54** is that you're either master of it or you aren't and it waits, ready to thwart the best endeavours of anybody who is wary of it!

On a more practical note, it has been suffering from various minor problems which have required the attentions of the fitters. The exhaust from the vacuum ejector had originally been piped into the ashpan, and as a result proved to be an annoying source of noise. In an endeavour to overcome this, the exhaust has been re-piped into the pre-heater which, as its name implies, pre-heats the feed water from the feed pump before it is fed into the boiler. This, in itself, was a good idea, but problems started to occur with the vacuum brake when the loco was working hard, in that the vacuum ejector stopped creating vacuum! Now the exhaust steam from the cylinders is also piped through the pre-heater before finding its way up the blastpipe into the chimney.

The Sentinel, being a sophisticated(!) machine, has a pressure relief valve to enable the blast pressure to be set so that it does not throw fire up the chimney when working hard. Recently, due to problems, this has been blanked off, causing high blast pressure when the loco is working hard. This back pressure is also present in the pre-heater, and appears to be sufficient to stop the vacuum ejector from working. Bringing the pressure relief valve back into use, and setting it properly, has cured the vacuum problem and reduced the loco's propensity to throw fire.

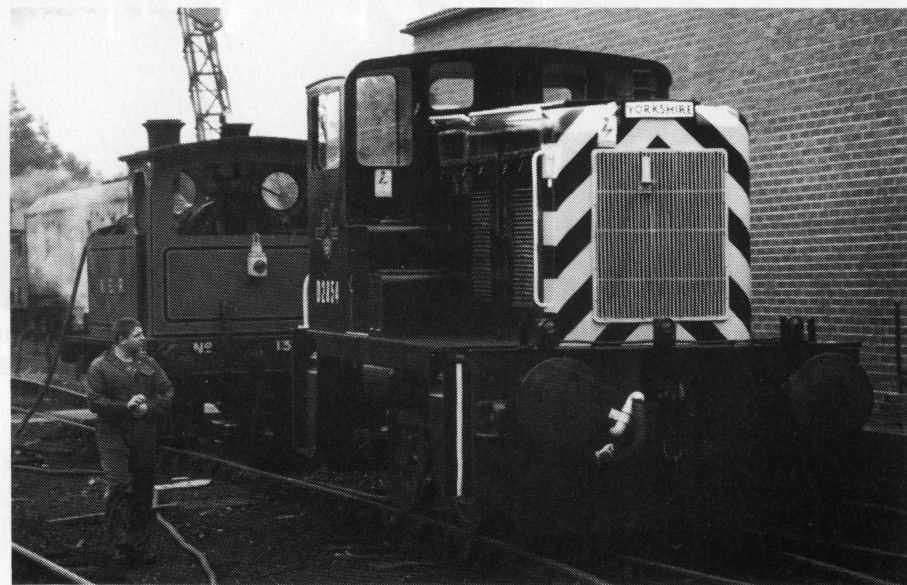
The boiler feed pump has also come in for some attention. It has gradually got less efficient in operation and, at the same time, the amount of water finding its way into the engine sump has increased. The two are not unconnected, and wear in the pump packings and plungers was causing water to be forced into the sump, instead of into the boiler. The pump plungers have been skimmed up and the pump repacked to overcome this. However, the plungers and gland packing rings are sufficiently worn to merit renewal, and it is planned to do this over the winter when the locomotive is out of traffic.

**385** has generally operated successfully throughout the season, apart from a collapsed brick arch.

**1882 Mirvale** Following the reworking of the coupling and connecting rod bearings and re-shimming of the crosshead, as mentioned in the last *Old Run*, **Mirvale** has been operating satisfactorily. It had been planned to use **Mirvale** throughout the season but, following an urgent request from the Swindon & Cricklade Railway for a small steam locomotive, it was agreed to loan it to them until January 1995.

Thus, at the time of writing, **Mirvale** has joined the ranks of locos sent on holiday in 1994! We have received comments from the S.&C.R. as to how good a condition the loco is in; whether this is a reflection on our's or other people's standards is not known, but the comments are very gratifying.

**1310** has operated satisfactorily throughout the season with only routine attention. The Y7, too, has been a-wandering; back to the East Lancs Railway for their summer gala. It returned to Middleton on the 29th August, via the traction engine rally at Harewood House, where it proved a welcome attraction and provided publicity for the railway. Upon its return, it has been rerailed facing north, something that it has never previously done at Middleton. This may, however, be short lived as, following a filming assignment at Middleton, the loco will be back on a low loader for the East Lancs again in a few days, to fulfil the rest of its sojourn there. It will be back at Middleton in time for our gala at the end of September.



Saturday 24th September - 1310 and visiting diesel D2854 resting from the 1994's busy Gala weekend schedule. Photo: Keith Hartley

**1601 Arthur** has continued to make progress, albeit slowly, as time and manpower permit. Some further progress has been made on the pipework, and the crinolines have been made and fitted. The crinolines, for those who don't know, are the steel strips that support the boiler cladding plates. The steel for the cladding plates is on order. Rather than have these rolled to size, it has been decided to make a set of bending rolls so that we can do the job ourselves, the cost of having them rolled being greater than the cost of the steel to make a simple set of rolls. It does, however, mean that the cladding plates cannot be made until the rolls have been made!

**91** has seen regular service throughout the season. It unfortunately ran an axlebox hot and this has required some attention. Hopefully this has proved successful and there will be no recurrence.



Two more shots of D2854's visit for our September Gala weekend, above at Park Halt on 24th September, and below on the Balm Road branch on 15th October, being nudged on to a low-loader by 91 ready for its return home. Photos: Keith Hartley



**1786 Courage** has seen limited use since its return from the Mid Hants Railway. It will, of course, come into its own once the shed is completed, as it will be used for shunting stock into the workshop, its short length enabling a further two locomotives to be accommodated on the headshunt.

**Rowntree No.3** is available for traffic, and used when necessary. The air receiver of the engine air start system has successfully undergone a four yearly hydraulic test.

**7401 John Alcock** After performing satisfactorily on early season trains, our veteran Hunslet went, on loan, to the Midland Railway Trust during July. Unfortunately, as is recounted elsewhere in this *Old Run*, the engine suffered a rather disastrous failure. Apparently, due to lubrication problems, a piston seized in the cylinder, leading to fracture of the piston and subsequent damage to the connecting rod and engine block. We are presently investigating alternative solutions to the problem. The easiest would be a straight engine swap if an identical engine can be found, but this is unlikely. Whilst the engine is probably repairable (nothing's impossible!), it is most likely that a more modern engine will be fitted. This, in itself, is not an easy option, as most modern diesel engines tend to run at a much higher speed and could not be used. In this respect, we are looking for an engine of about 135-150 hp at 1000 rev/min, if anybody knows of one that is available.

**D631 Carroll** has been stored for some time, but its engine was recently run up to blow out all the cobwebs that have accumulated in the last twelve months. Hopefully it will come into the workshops for overhaul, once the workshops are complete.

**D577 and 138C** are available for traffic and used as required. All other locos are stored awaiting repair.

## NOTES & NEWS

Steve Roberts

**SHED EXTENSION** To anyone who hasn't visited the Railway for the last six months, changes at Moor Road will be very noticeable. Although the shed is still far from complete, it is now taking on its final appearance. Apart from a few concrete blocks on the internal walls, all the brickwork is complete and the roof sheeting is scheduled for imminent delivery. Thanks to some negotiating by our Treasurer, we have managed to purchase the sheeting at somewhat below our expected cost. With this saving, and a favourable quotation for the work, we decided to contract out the cladding of the shed and hopefully will have a roof over our heads by the end of September.



A few weekends have been spent fitting the sheeting rails between the new building and the existing one. This work has entailed scaffolding up to the roof and modifying the existing gable end sheeting, and welding various brackets onto the existing steelwork to accommodate the new sheeting rails.

Work has started on the doors. The existing shed doors are of timber construction and have proved vulnerable to break-ins in the past. With this in mind, all the new doors, including the personnel doors, are being fabricated from steel. Whilst there is no such thing as a thief-proof building (as our friends at Chasewater recently found) we are certainly not going to make it easy for any one who tries. All doors that can be opened from outside will be fitted with a locking mechanism, rather than simple mortice locks. With this, the door is secured by a number of steel bolts, and the mechanism that operates them is locked. At the time of writing, all the door frames have been fabricated and await the welding on of the outer skins and fitting of the locking mechanisms.

Further progress has been made with painting the steelwork, but much still remains to be done. This is a must before the cladding is fixed as to do so afterwards will be very difficult. Once the cladding and doors are fitted, we shall have a secure building, and it will no doubt be brought into limited use.

There is, however, much fitting out to be done before it even nears completion, and this is likely to take much of the winter. Here are just a few of the outstanding tasks:

Installing the electricity supply and lighting - a mammoth task in itself!

Painting the walls.

Sealing and painting the floor.

Connecting the drains to the foul sewer.

Installing the water supply and associated plumbing.

Floorboarding the stores and office.

Plastering the walls of the washroom, office, etc.

Tiling the washroom and shower, etc.

Installing a compressed air supply.



Karina Smith checks her own (very creditable) handiwork on the breeze-block lining of the new shed's west wall. Photo: Stan Holdsworth

Any experts (or anybody else for that matter!) in any of the jobs mentioned would be more than welcome. The list, whilst by no means comprehensive, only relates to the actual building. There is the little matter of laying in additional track and a turnout, to be able to shunt locos into the place. Even this can't be done until the fencing is modified.

**PLANT & MACHINERY** The fork lift truck, acquisition of which was mentioned in the last *Old Run*, has been put to good use already. Being a high reach truck, its potential as a means of reaching the higher parts of the steelwork of the new building was immediately realised. To do this properly and safely, we have made a purpose built manriding platform, which enables people to work without risk of falling out. It has also been regularly used for moving packs of bricks, bags of sand, etc., as work progresses on the building. All of a sudden, the used wooden pallets which we regularly acquire are no longer just a source of firewood, but are being put to good use for stacking things on!

We have also acquired, through the good offices of a member, several powered rail saws and drills. Some of these are on loan, others donated. Whilst none were immediately usable, it has been possible to make some of them operational with judicious swapping of components. Those of us who have done battle with our old 'Abtus' rail drill and rail saw (which are hand powered) are eternally grateful!

Another recent acquisition, at no cost to the Railway, has been some rivetting guns, rivetting snaps and various ancilliary tools. This is an area where our tooling has been somewhat limited in the past, and these latest tools will give us a better choice when we need to do any rivetting.

**WEEDKILLING** A very necessary job, that we have to do every year, is the operation of weedkilling trains. Until recently, we used 'Atlavar' very successfully. However, new legislation has effectively banned this substance and last year, our suppliers, Nomix Chipman, supplied us with an alternative which again proved very successful.

However, this year we were informed that this too had been banned, and we are now on our third weedkiller in as many years! This year, we have used a substance called 'Dexuron' which is mainly a herbicide, killing off any green foliage, but it is not as long lasting as previous weedkillers. The 'Dexuron' is very concentrated, and 20 litres (about 4 gallons) is sufficient to cover the whole railway once it has been diluted. It is also very expensive, costing nearly £60 a litre!

As usual, the weedkilling trains ran on two Wednesday evenings during June. The spraying equipment is home-made and is powered by a compressed air pump. We used to have problems with spray blockage when using the 'Atlavar', as this was a solid and had to be dissolved before use and then constantly agitated. The new weedkiller, being already in liquid form, has all but put an end to this problem.



Between the writing of Steve's report (mid-September) and the writing of Ian's report (almost a month later!!), considerable progress has been made on the shed, as is shown by these hot-off-the-press photos, taken on 15th October. Photos: Keith Hartley



**COAL** Once upon a time, obtaining suitable coal was simply a matter of contacting the local sales office of the N.C.B. and ordering a wagon load. This invariably came from Rossington Colliery, but occasionally we would get a load from Peckfield. With the demise of wagon loads of coal we started to get coal in small quantities from a local merchant. This suited our bank balance, and kept the cash flow more even.

However, the undoubted advantage of lower price has caused us to shop around for the last three years. In common with many of the steam railways we have used coal from Doe Lea colliery, a small private mine, relatively cheaply and with some success. However, this colliery closed recently and we have had to look elsewhere.

Last year there was some very good Russian coal available at unbelievably low price, and we had two loads of this. This year, it appears that less coal is being dumped here from abroad, and we have again had to try alternative sources. The latest load of coal (20 tonnes) has come from Moorside Mining, who have a small colliery near Chesterfield. Although supplied at a very favourable price, we have perhaps slipped up in specifying lumps and not cobbles, and many of the 'lumps' have broken up into dust. Another load of coal will be required shortly, and with the privatisation of the coal industry and the increased competition, it will be interesting to see what is available this time.

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## TRIUMPH, TRAGEDY, and DARK GLASSES!

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*Martin Plumb*

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The weekend of 23/24 July should have seen our Hunslet Diesel, **No.1697 John Alcock**, operating at the Midland Railway Centre as part of a 'Diesel Extravaganza' and, although it did so on the Saturday, it found itself being operated on by us on the Sunday, following an unfortunate engine failure!

Preparations for **1697's** attendance at the event reached a climax during the early part of July, when a number of us carried out jobs which included washing and polishing the paintwork and applying some fresh paint to parts of the cab. The Technical Team (TT), in the form of Messrs. Nettleton and Parkin, fiddled with various things in the way that technical people do, and delighted themselves by discovering that the application of a well-aimed hammer blow to an appropriate thingummy inside the engine compartment caused the engine oil to achieve pressure readings that had not been seen for some time! Rumour has it that, in readiness for the big event, they also sent away their spectacles (which are designed to go black at the first sign of trouble) for calibration!

On the morning of Saturday 16 July, **1697** was loaded on to Cramscene's low loader and, once it had set off on to the M1 motorway, we went inside to wash our hands (of it?) before deciding to follow. It was unloaded on a level crossing just



outside the Butterley Engineering Works, where enormous bridge girders are manufactured, and then shunted around by the native Diesel shunters. Having performed the unloading operation under the watchful eyes of a member of the local Traffic Police and a queue of motorists, we had to wait for one of the aforementioned shunters to complete a shunting operation before we could pass 'Go' and proceed to the Midland Railway Centre. This gave us chance to sit and eat our 'butties' on a bridge girder which, we discovered, was destined to become part of a road bridge at Temple Mills, London.

It wasn't long before the Works Diesel growled its way over the level crossing towards us with a bridge girder in tow. In fact, I was trying to establish just what was making the most noise - the loco or the axleboxes of the wagon supporting the girder - when the loco decided that life on the rails was really rather boring, and promptly derailed its front pair of wheels at the next set of facing points! Its driver showed little surprise or emotion but seemed to be forecasting lengthy delays by his liberal use of phrases such as '16 ton jack' and 'crane'. He was therefore amazed when the Middleton Railway Technical Team, which had now re-grouped with the inclusion of Andy McKenna, effected a speedy re-railing exercise using a few bits of wood and metal which just happened to be lying around! Needless to say, I also took part by chanting words of encouragement such as "Go on"!

With this incident behind us, the Midland Railway Centre's General Manager, John Hett, pointed us in the direction of the shed at Swanwick, told us, "We've cut back the worst bushes" and, promising to meet us at the shed, jumped into his car and left. Having already traversed the Balm Road Branch that morning, we thought that we had nothing to fear from bushes etc. However, the jungle we encountered was such that Peter and Andy had to walk in front to convince themselves that there were some underlying rails and to decide which of those rails led to the shed!

At one stage, I am sure that I saw Graham press the BLACK manual override button on his glasses! I was glad that I had packed an Ordnance Survey map of the area because I was able to estimate the remaining distance to the shed. Arrival there was rather like a computer game because we suddenly completed level 1 and broke through into a brave new level 2 world - of civilisation and people with cameras and camcorders! John Hett met us as planned and, without much further ado, **John Alcock** was parked inside the shed for the night.

The following Saturday, I staggered out of bed at the crack of dawn and set off to the 'Diesel Extravaganza' with Peter Nettleton, Graham Parkin and Ian Smith. Peter and Graham had volunteered to drive **John Alcock** but, although I am also qualified to wrestle with its controls, I remembered that I possess only plain spectacles, and instead volunteered my services as a 'Floorboard Operator'. For the benefit of readers who are unfamiliar with the operational idiosyncrasies of **John Alcock**, its gearbox occasionally fails to respond to commands from the driver and instead embarks on a plan of its own which, in the worst cases, can be accompanied by grating sounds! By lifting the appropriate floorboard, the 'floorboard operator' can see exactly what is happening and can coax the driver through a remedial recipe!

Having arrived at Swanwick, we very quickly carried out the preparation duties and got the engine started. It was decided that we had to be accompanied by a

Midland Railway Centre Pilotman, because of the need to respond to those strange red and yellow things on posts and gantries which tend not to grow in Middleton soils. In fact, our pilotman turned up carrying a copy of the Special Traffic Notice, the thickness of which would put some Ph.D. dissertations to shame! Thumbing through it while he wasn't looking, we discovered that our mission was to top-and-tail a pair of Mk 1 coaches with a class 03 Diesel shunter in order to provide a shuttle service between Swanwick Junction and Butterley when the main line trains were elsewhere.

After one or two of these shuttles, we soon settled into the routine of releasing the brakes and being catapulted out of our steeply graded siding into the Swanwick platform, before being hauled to Butterley by the class 03, driving back to Swanwick, struggling into our steeply graded siding and then comparing notes as to how wonderful it had been! We took it in turns to drive and, since Peter and Graham claimed to be man enough to do so without the aid of a floorboard operator, I did some trips as the secondman on the class 03 which, as a pilotman-free zone, allowed me the additional fun of trying to catch one of those oversized bracelets when we passed the signalbox!

After the conclusion of the advertised events of the day, when most of the gricers had replaced their lens caps and presumably rushed off to have their films developed, it was decided to ask the powers that be if we could explore some more of their Railway by taking **John Alcock** to Riddings Junction which is at the eastern end of the line.

Those of us who had already experienced several non-maskable hunger interrupts wondered if this would involve the destruction of another rain forest to produce the required STN, but were relieved to be told that we had only to find and nominate a pilotman. In the event, this was no mean feat since most of their members were busying themselves in what appeared to be a rather hair-raising game of cricket between the locos! It eventually needed Ian Smith and Andy McKenna to surprise them with a two-pronged fielding attack before a pilotman was persuaded to climb into our cab. There was a rumour that one or two robust gricers had tuned into the grapevine and received a recorded message about our plans, and so we took the precaution of taking the two Mk 1 coaches with us.

The trip to Riddings Junction was uneventful because, being downhill all the way, it was simply a set of exhilarating clickety-clacks! The return journey was accompanied by slower clickety-clacks until we were a few hundred yards short of the finishing line at Swanwick, when **John Alcock** surprised us by taking up smoking and, before we had time to adopt worried expressions, the engine made some unusual noises and stopped. The clickety-clacks soon stopped too, and we left the cab to discover water pouring out of the bottom of the engine.

Being brave enough to remove one of the side panels, our Technical Team discovered an inspection hole in the side of the engine which hadn't been there earlier! It transpired that a piston had seized, forcing the connecting rod to take an excursion through the side of the engine. Looking around at the shades of the assembled spectacles, the pilotman very quickly formed the opinion that even the Technical Team wouldn't fix this one in a hurry, and went off to scramble a rescue Diesel while the TT busied itself by picking up various bits of wreckage/evidence

from the track. Our pilotman soon returned with a class 08 Diesel which dragged 1697 and its train back to the shed.

Remembering the need to process the outstanding hunger interrupts, we adjourned to an Indian Restaurant where we held an in-depth inquiry (no poppadum was left unturned), but the only conclusion reached was that the food was amazingly slow to arrive!

The following day, the initial temptation was to sulk but, since we had already planned to return to Swanwick, we did so in order to assess the damage to the engine. As it happened, it was a very successful day because we received a number of visits from members of the staff there who not only offered their condolences but also tried their best to help by exchanging ideas with Peter and Graham. Not once did anyone mention the fact that the plans for the 'Diesel Extravaganza' had been upset.

On the day in question, the Technical Team comprised Peter Nettleton and Graham Parkin, with Karina Smith and myself acting as apprentices. Almost as soon as we started, I made a desperate attempt to become an honorary member of the Team by immersing one of my arms up to the elbow in 1697's sump and fishing out various bits of cylinder liner, piston and gudgeon pin. I have to admit that I didn't know what the bits were called at the time, but I felt sure that the Technical Team would be pleased! Having done her homework, on the other hand, Karina realised that the TT was more likely to be impressed by people who use their brains than by those who rush to dirty their hands. With that in mind, she scored many points by quietly sitting back and watching the TT try to remove a cylinder head by an obvious but, in this case difficult, method before suggesting a technique which, after being gently ridiculed and left to simmer for a while, proved to be the successful one! Realising that there was no way I could match such genius, I simply rolled up my sleeves a bit further and fished a bit deeper!

At one stage during the day, someone at the Midland Railway Centre approached us with a posh wooden box containing a set of valves and gaskets for a McLaren Ricardo engine of the type used in *John Alcock*. It had apparently been gathering dust for some time and, since he had no known use for it, he kindly donated it to the Railway. This present highlighted the real members of the TT, since Peter and Graham studied the valves and gaskets while Karina and I marvelled at the box!

In conclusion, I am sure that I speak for us all by saying that we had a good time at the Midland Railway Centre. It gave us a chance to see how another railway operates, and we made some new friends and contacts. It is, of course, sad that the engine of *John Alcock* didn't survive the experience but, looking on the bright side, I hope that we will see the loco running again as soon as possible. Contrary to the comments I make at the Railway, I quite enjoy the challenge of driving 1697. Well, I would like an excuse to purchase some of those glasses . . .

[Editor's note: sadly, we have no pictorial material to accompany Martin's account, as the photos appear to have been lost by the Royal Mail, somewhere between photographer Robin Stewart-Smith's abode and chairman Ian B. Smith's abode. It is too late to obtain replacements for this issue, but perhaps next time. P.S. I promised Martin that I would mention the fact that his account arrived by the 1st September dead-line date - it was, in fact, the only contribution which did!]

## TIMES PAST - AUTUMN 1742

Sheila Bye

*The Leeds Mercury*, page 4, 12th October 1742:

### To be Lett, or Sold, At Hunslet, in the Parish of LEEDS,

A Very good Colliery, which is gain'd and working by two Pits, and a third Sinking; the Coal is very good, and near three Yards thick, and so much of it as may serve three Pits for forty Years, working 15 or 18 Men, viz. six Men in every Pit.

### Also to be Sold,

Some good Houses, and several Parcels of good Land as is in the Parish, or any where else, with good Barns, and other Conveniences for any Gentleman, or other Person that wou'd manage part or the whole; the Owner is so old that he thinks himself not fit for the Management of such an Affair, he is rather desirous to live the Remainder of his Days more retired and free from the hurry of such an Affair: The Owner is to be met with any Day in the Week at his own House in *Hunslet*, where he may be treated with either for the whole or a considerable Part of the Estate. There are two good Farms of it, each will be sold or lett to a good Taker or Purchaser. The Colliery has a good Fire-Engine, that works all the Water that comes in 24 Hours in about eight Hours Time, the Water wastes very much with drawing by the Fire Engine, and in a little time will in all Probability be much weaker, which will be a very great Advantage to the Undertaker. As is observed before the Coals are very good and proper for Cinders for Malsters as any we have in all our Country, both large and very sweet, as is experienced by a great many Maltsters. Those that wou'd engage in the Affair, may enquire of the Owner *Abraham Fenton*.

A later advertisement described the colliery as being "on *Hunslet-Common*", i.e. *Hunslet Moor*. My small collection of photocopied adverts and documents relating to it edge tantalisingly around giving some definite clue as to its actual whereabouts on the Moor, but I believe it may have been on the north or north east side - perhaps somewhere near the Craven Gate pub.

An earlier advertisement mentions, in addition to the Fire (i.e. steam) Engine, three Gins and horses, also a great many Tools, and every Thing that is necessary for the Work; very little Wood will serve for the getting of a considerable quantity of Coal

Horse gins (or engines) probably were used here for winding tubs of coal up from the pits, since the Fire Engine was attending to the water pumping. The horse was harnessed to a framework consisting basically of a rotating post and a winding drum. As the horse walked around the contraption, a rope was wound on to or off from the drum, thereby raising or lowering the tubs in the pit shaft.

Abraham Fenton was a member of a multitudinous family, other members of which were connected with the history of our railway at various times. James Fenton was a chief objector to the 1755 Thwaite Gate waggonway. Early in 1758, William and Thomas Fenton were among the rival coal owners who attempted to beat Charles



Brandling's proposed lower coal prices which were to be facilitated by his proposed new waggonway to Leeds. A later James Fenton put money and his financial expertise into the firm of Murray & Wood in 1799, at which time it became more famously Fenton, Murray & Wood, and went on to build our first steam locomotives.

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## .....BY ANY OTHER NAME.....

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*Sheila Bye*

The Middleton Railway is not the only historic site to have suffered a drop in visitor numbers during the late 1980's and early 1990's. This much was obvious from comments in one section of a day's lectures on 'Heritage Places and Tourism', which I attended recently at the British Association for the Advancement of Science's Annual Festival week, in Loughborough. CADW's Welsh historical sites had suffered a substantial drop in visitor numbers during the 1980's, and there had been only a modest recovery since 1992. Meanwhile, at Windsor Castle, visitor numbers had dropped in just over 10 years from c.4 million to c.2.4 million; apparently, Her Majesty has had the same sort of problems as us, but on a rather grander scale.

During that day's lectures, and other events, including a visit to Snibston Discovery Park, I noticed the proliferation of what presumably is an attempt to grab attention for one's own site, in a world where every closed-down railway line, mill or colliery is ripe for rebirth as a heritage tourism attraction.

Snibston Discovery Park itself occupies the site and pithead buildings of a redundant Leicestershire colliery. It has an excellent guided tour of these, led by an also redundant miner, but it has no potential for taking parties underground, due to the shafts having been filled in. One of our party expressed great disappointment on hearing this, and I told him that the place he should visit for an underground tour was the Yorkshire Mining Museum at the old Caphouse Colliery near Wakefield. Snibston did have a well-stocked Tourist Information corner so, left with spare time due to our coach being late returning for us, I thought I would look for a Y.M.M. leaflet for him. I searched the racks twice for a leaflet resembling the rather elderly one we have at home, with a picture of the pithead and the name 'Yorkshire Mining Museum' writ large. I could see nothing like it. Then, on my third try, I found it. No wonder I had failed to do so before; the Yorkshire Mining Museum appears to have been re-imaged with a pretty pastel-coloured leaflet calling it the "Caphouse Experience"!

A survey of other leaflets amply illustrated the trend towards repackaging one's historic (or "heritage") site as part of an "Experience", a "Country", or even as a "World". Areas with the very slightest connection with some famous (usually literary) figure, become 'Jane Austen Country', 'Bronte Country', 'Catherine Cookson Country', or the like, and there are enough 'Experiences' in the British Isles to provide almost a lifetime's experience. Britain is not alone, of course. France, for instance, also has its examples of rediscovered heritage connections; a multitude of border towns with fortifications designed by the great 17th century military engineer, the Marquis de

Vauban, have suddenly begun excavating their long-neglected walls and ditches, etc. from decades of undergrowth, and proudly proclaim on all main entrance roads that "Whateverville" is a "Cité Vauban". We found at least one of these where Vauban's work had actually been demolished and replaced by much later fortifications; but not to worry, the great man had been there once. Preserved railways, of course, have done something similar almost from the start, with such examples as 'The Bluebell Railway', followed later by 'Steamtown', 'The Watercress Line' and 'The Lavender Line', and soon to be joined (according to a Coalville tourist leaflet), by 'The Ivanhoe Line' (apparently a cunning combination of preserved railway **and** literary character).

This all leads me to wonder if our own marketing team should be considering a repackaging of the Middleton Railway's image. Though in recent years we have also occasionally subtitled ourselves 'The Park Line', predominantly we invite people to visit 'The World's Oldest Railway' (an erroneous title anyway, though the more correct 'world's oldest railway enterprise with a continuous record of service' would admittedly need a larger poster or leaflet to allow room for a picture and service details to be included!). However, there is little left for visitors to see which actually looks, or indeed is, old. Apart from adorning our modern brick and corrugated steel boxes with mock classical porticos and bottle-glass bow windows, there is little now that we can do to match our current publicity packaging.

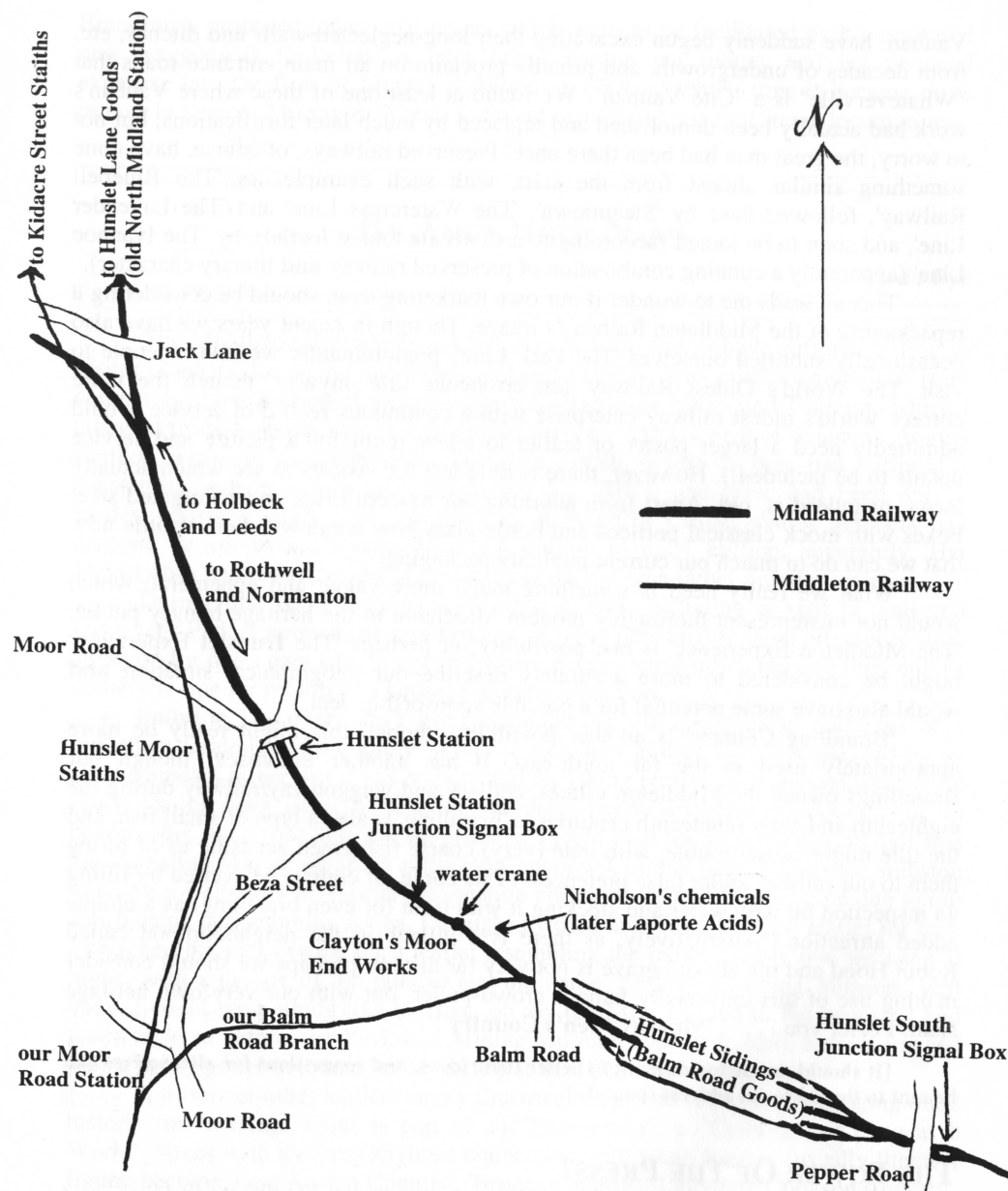
What we really need is something much more vague and ephemeral, which would not misrepresent thoroughly modern Middleton to the heritage-hungry public. 'The Middleton Experience' is one possibility; or perhaps 'The **Hunslet** Experience' might be considered to more accurately describe our geographical situation **and** would also have some potential for a possible sponsorship deal.

'Brandling Country' is another possibility, though this might really be more appropriately used in the far north-east. It has another drawback; though our Brandlings owned the Middleton estates, colliery and waggonway/railway during the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, a 'brandling' is also a type of small fish, and the title might cause trouble, with irate (very) coarse fishermen accusing us of luring them to our railway under false pretences. (This could, of course, be averted by filling an inspection pit with water and stocking it with trout (or even brandling) as a unique added attraction.) Alternatively, as there is a village in the neighbourhood called Robin Hood and his alleged grave is not very far distant, perhaps we should consider making use of this universally famous crowd-puller, but with our very own heritage slant: I offer you . . . . 'Murray Men's Country'!

[It should not be too difficult to better these ideas, and suggestions for alternatives can be sent to the Editorial address (page 2).]

## THE POWER OF THE PRESS?

Someone (can't remember who, but someone) once remarked that **any** kind of publicity was better than **no** publicity. Which may explain why, since our Summer Issue was published, the cable television Travel Channel has not only given 'Railway Adventures Across Europe' a lunchtime repeat showing, but has also promoted its evening airing to the "prime-time slot" of 19.00 to 19.30!



A rough sketch map by the Editor, showing the Midland Railway's route through Hunslet, and the sites of events chronicled in Henry Gunston's article, which begins opposite. The scale after reduction for printing, is hard to predict now, but the distance from Hunslet Station bridge to Pepper Road bridge is slightly less than  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a mile, slightly more than 1 kilometre.

## "AN UNUSUAL LIGHT AT THE TOP OF A PULLMAN CAR"

Fire on the car 'Enterprise' at Hunslet, October 1882

Henry Gunston

The Pullman cars on the Midland Railway set new standards in passenger comfort when introduced in the mid-1870's. They also brought new-fangled American ideas on coach layout to the conservative world of British railwaymen - and of the British travelling middle class. By 1882, however, the Pullmans must have seemed a regular part of the Midland scene, so when driver Frank Carlisle and fireman Joseph Coates set out from Normanton with the down Scotch express just before 2.00 a.m. on Sunday 29th October, they no doubt expected an uneventful ride.

The express had left St. Pancras the previous evening at 9.15 p.m., and was running close to time as it set off for the next scheduled stop, Skipton. Behind a 2-4-0 tender engine, the train comprised "horse box, front guard's van, North British third-class carriage, bogie composite carriage, Pullman car 'Enterprise', Pullman car 'Excelsior', two bogie composite carriages, Glasgow and South Western third-class carriage, Midland covered carriage truck, and the guard's van at the rear of the train - in all, 13 vehicles". 'Enterprise' and the front portion of the train were destined for Edinburgh; 'Excelsior' and the rear portion for Glasgow.

All seemed in order on the approach to Leeds, but at Rothwell Haigh signal box,  $\frac{3}{4}$  miles from Normanton, signalman Henry Webb noted "an unusual light in connection with the train". Thinking this was a reflection from the engine fire-hole door, he took no further action. The distant signal of the next box, Hunslet South Junction, was at danger, so the train had to slow. The signal came off shortly afterwards, but as the train passed the box, signalman William Busby saw a far more disturbing light - flames bursting from a carriage.

Hunslet South Junction box was on the Normanton side of Pepper Road bridge. The Down line then ran past Hunslet Sidings and under Balm Road bridge, reaching Hunslet Station Junction box (on the Down side of the tracks) shortly before Beza Street bridge. Then came Hunslet Station, beyond which Hunslet Goods Junction box controlled the divergence between the main line towards Holbeck and the original North Midland terminus route to Hunslet Lane Goods Depot. The Midland had a habit of calling a box "Junction" when there were links between passenger and goods tracks, even if no line branched off.

Meanwhile, back on the Scotch express approaching the Hunslet South Junction distant, driver Carlisle had been alerted by the sounding of an emergency whistle, activated from the train by the Harrison communication cord. "I looked back on the six-foot side of the train", he told the Board of Trade accident inquiry, "and observed that there was an unusual light on the top of a car." Whilst Carlisle crossed



the cab to check the other side of the train, fireman Coates climbed up on the tender, and confirmed an "unusual light at the top of a Pullman car".

Carlisle shut off steam and applied the Westinghouse brakes, bringing the train to a halt by Hunslet Sidings, between Pepper Road and Balm Road bridges. Just before the train stopped, Coates dropped off the engine and found that the Pullman car nearest to the engine, the 'Enterprise', was alight. The fire was concentrated towards the rear of the car. The time was around 2.11 a.m.

Once the train had stopped, action was rapid. Pullman Conductor Andrew Baillie from 'Excelsior' called for the train to be split to prevent the fire spreading from the rear of 'Enterprise'. Guard Andrew Morren, a Glasgow & South Western man from the rear van, handled the Westinghouse brake connections, and the front section of the train was drawn forward. Robert Miller and other staff on duty at Hunslet Sidings quickly set to work with water from fire buckets, but the fire had a strong hold. It was decided to take the car forward to the water crane between Balm Road bridge and Hunslet Station Junction box. Here 'Enterprise' was detached, and the rest of the Edinburgh portion drawn ahead into Hunslet station.

It was found difficult to direct water from the crane onto the high clerestory roof of the Pullman, but workers at Nicholson's chemical works volunteered the use of a hose situated south east of the water crane, on the Up side of the tracks. John Barnes, a goods guard whose train was nearby, joined others to push 'Enterprise' within reach of Nicholson's hose, and the fire was brought under control. A freight engine shunted the Pullman onto the Down Goods line and, whilst the firefighting continued, another engine pushed the Glasgow portion from the original stopping point to join the rest of the train at Hunslet station. "After this had been done", reported driver Carlisle to Colonel Yolland and the Board of Trade inquiry, "we proceeded on our journey." Signalman William Gray Todd at Hunslet Station Junction box sent the train forward at 3.18 a.m.

Whilst the Scotch express passengers settled to make the best they could of the rest of the night, those checking through the wreckage of 'Enterprise' made a disturbing discovery - the body of Dr. John Ginley Arthur.

The tragic events within the 'Enterprise' which led to the fire and the Doctor's death will be described in the next issue of *The Old Run*.

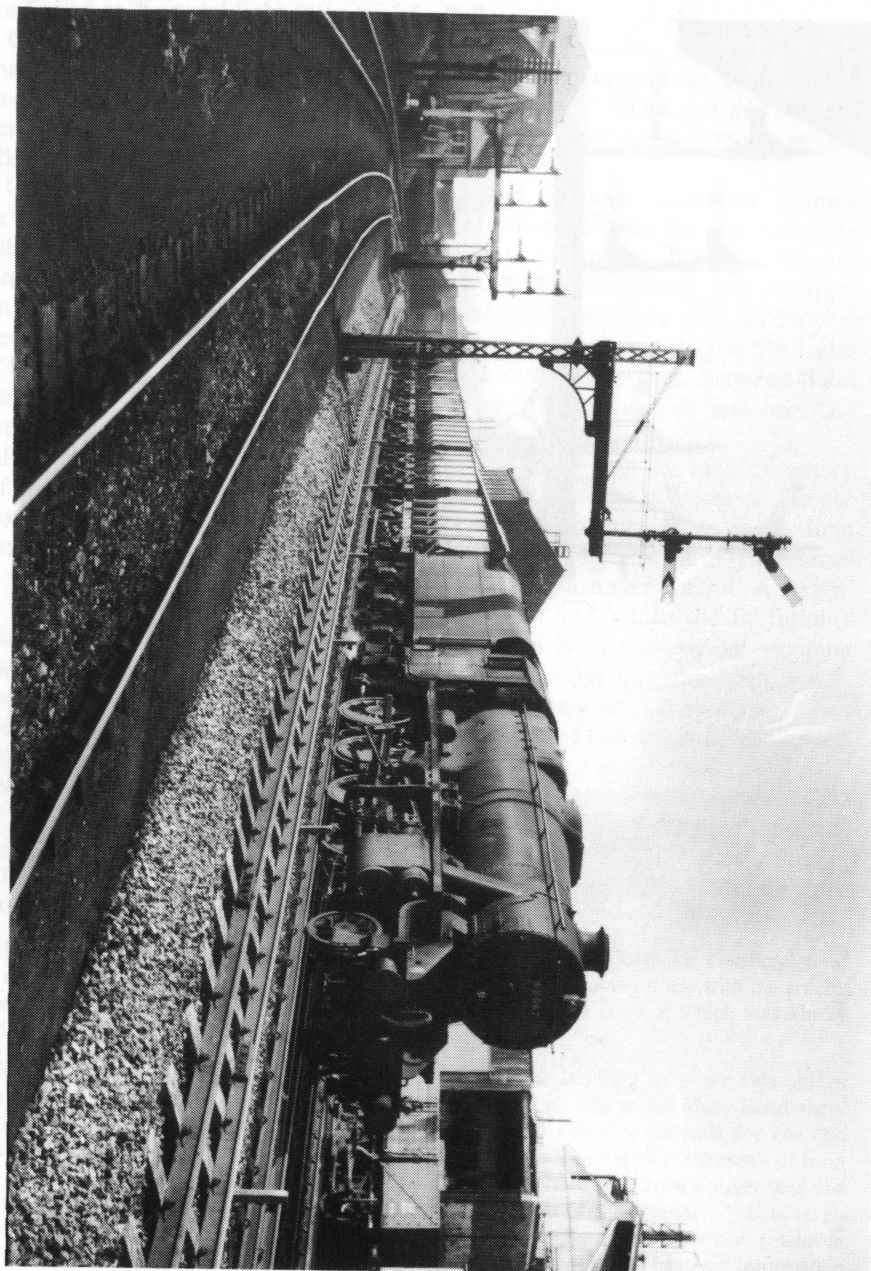
Acknowledgements: My thanks to Sheila Bye, Niall Melles and Peter Rose for clarification of Hunslet signal box sites, and particularly to Peter Rose for providing photos for use with the article. I have relied heavily on the Board of Trade accident inquiry report, a copy of which was kindly provided by the library of the National Railway Museum.

[The Editor would also like to express gratitude to Peter Rose for allowing us to use two photos from his book *Railway Memories: Leeds*, published last year and on sale at our Moor Road shop, price £8.95p. Readers may remember that Henry Gunston wrote a review of the book for *The Old Run*. This inspired me to purchase a copy, and it brought back floods of happy memories - of train spotting near the Hunslet Station Junction box, for instance. For those who have not yet seen the book, the two photos published in *The Old Run* are a tiny sample of a multitude of shots taken mainly in the 1950's and 60's, and showing not only locomotives long gone, but also trackside features and surrounding landscapes which vanished years ago. The book also has long informative captions to the photos, maps of track layouts at some of the stations and goods yards, and snippets of memories from railway workers and railway users of the era. Altogether an excellent book!]



Viewed from Hunslet Station Junction Signal Box, 90595 passes the water crane (or its successor) with a Down freight on 29th August 1961, nearly 80 years after the 'Enterprise' fire. The site of Nicholson's chemical works is on the left, Balm Road bridge is in the background, right, and the Middleton Railway's Balm Road branch junction is immediately in front of the bridge. Photo: Peter Rose

Viewed from near the Middleton Railway Balm Road branch junction, 48067, with an Up train of coke empties, passes Hunslet Station Junction Signal Box (rear left) on 29th August 1961. The buildings on the far left, alongside the box, are Henry Berry's and Clayton's works, and Beza Street bridge can be discerned between the two signal gantries. Photo: Peter Rose



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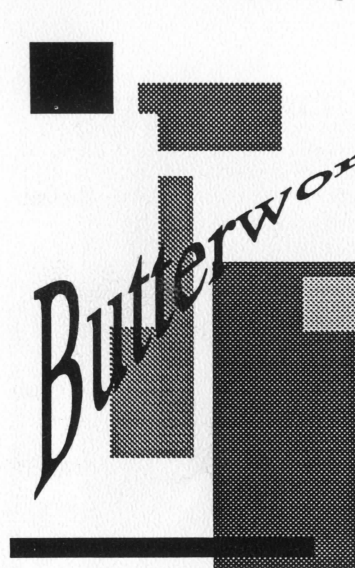
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