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# The Old Run

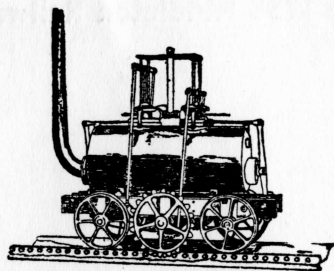
Journal of the 1758 Middleton Railway Trust, Leeds



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# THE OLD RUN

**News of the 1758 Middleton Rail-  
way at Leeds**

EDITOR: B. W. ASHURST, 18, INGLEWOOD DRIVE, OTLEY

Vol. 9

No. 66

Autumn 1969

## TRAINS RUN AGAIN TO PARKSIDE

Permanent Way maintenance is rather like Alice in Wonderland : it takes all the running you can do to stay in the same place. "permanent" is a misnomer. The endless hours of patient hard work needed for the task are an eye-opener to those who have never tried to run a railway!

The Civil Engineering team had spent a very long time filling up paper with plans and diagrams, and chairs (wooden) with themselves. Finally they said "Let's stop talking and do some work". And off they went.

It was a Midsummer day almost exactly 9 years ago that the Middleton Railway was re-opened. We had no precedent for a take-over bid on a 4' 8½" gauge line. Somehow we made the grade. Other lines with better scenery and passenger trains have had all the publicity ---- and all due credit to them. We are acclimatized to the fact that goods trains are neither news nor a public attraction. We have made do with the solid history of being the Oldest Firm in the Business.

There in full view was the Main Line to Parkside Junction -- dis-used since 1959 apart from an occasional inspection train - and then beyond it the line on to Broom Pit, closed since 1967, with the trackless G. N. R. Hunslet branch over both lines. When members have raised the purchase price, the M.R.T. will own the rest of its main line. Until that date, care and maintenance is both necessary and permissible.

The Engineers took stock. Half a mile of old track, some good, some not so good, mostly overlain by pit shale washed down from the Alps next to it. Few weeds grew here because pit shale is so devoid of nutrition. To the South, half a mile of N C B track, mostly standard LNER



type bullhead rails in 60 feet lengths on standard chairs and sleepers, overlain with a forest of green grass and weeds.

Between these two sections was a gap where the vandals had stolen nearly 100 yards of track, and the smaller gap where the 1958/9 re-shaping had cut our line in two.

On Tuesday 17th June - almost 9 years to the day since first reopening - with University Examinations finished, the unanimous decision was that the Keying hammer is mightier than the pen, and car loads of students bent their minds to a far, far better thing!

Coach screws by the dozen went into loose chairs at Tram crossing Junction. The daily working parties were led by Chief Civil Engineer Patrick Mc. Askie, and New Works Engineer Chris Metcalfe ( a Professional Civil Engineer now in charge of the Colliery extension.) Weeds were dug up by the cubic yard to see whether there were any keys and chairs under them. The Hunslet diesel "Courage" from Alton Brewery chugged energetically up and down from depot to working sites, its very light axle load being safe on the questionable track. Sleepers rails and tools were loaded in an ex-Laporte Acid wagon adapted as a flat truck, and the brake van behind carried a warm fire to dry soaked overalls after the eccentricities of Midsummer weather.

Spot resleepering was carried out where the woodwork had departed this mortal life and felt not firewood but just dust. Constant gauge checking; packing under sleepers whose ballast had been washed away by deluges from the pit tip; solidly rusting fishplate bolts hacked off with cold chisels; new chairs for old; dangerous short lengths closure rails lifted, and then replaced by something better; a well thumbbed Permanent Way Institution text book open at the right page; worn rails turned for better-riding and a new lease of life; the 100 feet measuring tape in constant use; spot checks on radius of curvature ---- with determination and hard work we progressed South.

In under 2 days the first gap was reached. Literally tons of rubble and mud were shovelled away to make room for inspection and replacement. The contractors demolishing the GNR line for British Railways had blundered over the track with heavy lorries and crushed many sleepers, leaving ruts deep in the ballast. The whole lot had to come up for inspection and replacement.

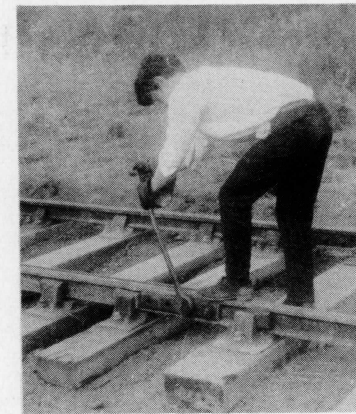
In one afternoon a complete 45 feet length went in, then two 30 feet lengths the next day, and the first gap was closed. The gradients here were a bit like those of a helter skelter, the worst section being such that the 22 h. p. diesel could only just manage the 25 tons of brake van!

Then came a length of 45 feet rails on old type chairs - good enough to let wellalone but unfortunately standard keys would not fit. It appeared that the Middleton Fireclay Company engineer was not above putting 95 lbs rails in 85 lbs chairs. The Chairman disappeared to the workshop and emerged with a large box of hand-cut keys which went in with an excellent fit. Another problem solved!

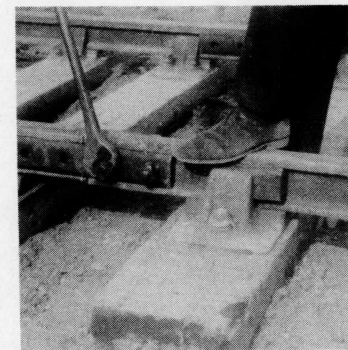
The next task was to realign the awkwardly shaped junction between



CHRIS PLUS HAMMER



PAT PLUS SPANNER

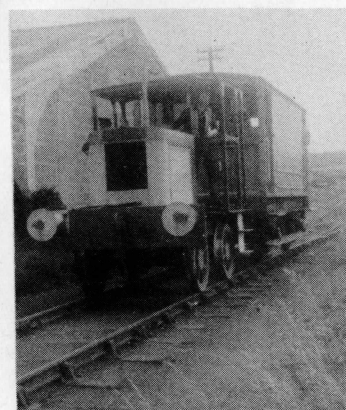


THE LAST

FISHPLATE

FIRST TRAIN

FROM HUNSLET



TO MIDDLETON



the two sections. The 1958/59 relaying had left the two lines almost 2 feet out of alignment, and some slewing over was carried out. A local mechanical shovel driver who was clearing up shale for a building firm came to the rescue and in one dig cleared a path of weeds and ballast down to the sleeper bottoms -- 60 feet long and 8'6" wide -- just right for a length of complete track.

## MRT's new line links up with ex-BR worked track

Jobs that would have caused alarm and despondency in 1960 were now taken as a matter of course. No carelessness; no feet or fingers trapped under rails; the art of placing oneself such that if a hammer bounces it doesn't land on one's knee or leg; the right angle to hit a key to get it in first time; judging the expansion gap right without having to measure it every time; spotting the awkward bolts and nuts before they gave trouble - every man of the P.W. Gang has acquired these simple arts. Organisation rather than panic, and steady effort rather than frantic battering, were the order of the day. Having taken over a worse 4'8½" gauge track than any other Society, they have had to learn the job and do it properly.

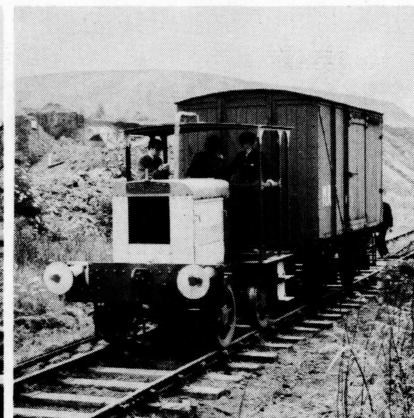
We took the Saturday off, feeling that we had earned it. Then followed the slewing over and replacing of defective timbers and chairs, making a nice job of fishplates and other components. There were muttered comments about the Middleton Fireclay Railwaymen who had mixed up 4½"-5"-4½" and 5"-5"-5" fishplates on the same joint, and had apparently forgotten to oil the plates, bolts and nuts annually.

Plenty of oil and grease was put in the right places until the nuts could be tightened with the fingers instead of the 4 feet spanner plus grunting. Checks of gauge alignment and level, sleeper spacing, and inspection for cracked components --- clearing away all tools, and components nightly to avoid theft in the dark. A welcome police officer from Dewsbury Road came to see whether the gang of men armed with offensive weapons were Friend or Foe, and left without making any arrests!

The ex British Railways operated section of the line gave many headaches. Non - removable fishplate bolts; wood keys stolen for firewood; collapsed trees walls and pit shale had all to be cleared away or dealt with. The worst trouble was the vegetation. On our first walk we simply couldn't see the rails. Rather like the famous Noble Duke of York, an army of Gangers marched up the hill and down again, with picks, shovels and scythes, hacking, scraping, chipping until they found two rusty bits of steel about 56½ inches apart.

We cleared right up to Middleton Park entrance, further progress being unwise because of Colliery demolition work. Even the MRT Loco. men came to watch us, and some even picked up shovels to lend a hand. Tim Leech, Courage loco. engineer, did a mammoth double act!

On Monday 30th June the last keys screws and bolts had been tightened, the last sleepers packed and we made the trial run. We were the first train to run from Balm Road to Middleton Park Gates for nearly



11 years. Hunslet diesel 1786 (shining in her coat of fresh paint) and her train set off. Steadily we climbed up the bank. The Traffic Manager and Chairman had gone ahead with a ceremonial red flag.

Putter-Putter-Putter roared the exhaust of a locomotive on full regulator, and Putter-Putter-Putter echoed back the roar from shale tips, then the G.N.R. viaducts and the Middleton Woods. Higher and higher over the track that had been our entire life for over a week.

A rumble under the G.N.R. bridge over new track that had bedded down to a firm and perfect running condition. Our memories went back to 9 years ago when knowing so little about running a railway, our founder members had the courage to have a go. Putter-Putter-Putter, as we tackled the last climb and our track once again followed the route that had been on that precise spot for 211 years. There to the right was Middleton Park, quiet and green in the Summer evening sunlight. On the left and ahead were the Broom Pit buildings that will be our depot and museum when the N C B have gone and we have raised the money to buy them.

In under a fortnight before our University members went home for the Summer Vacation, we had turned a mile of bits and pieces into a safe running line.

## But extension is still provisional

Elsewhere in this issue of The Old Run you will read the story of our reopening of the Main Line. Those who cannot for reason of distance participate in such activities missed the most progressive and inspiring fortnight of our existence.

All this great achievement will be of no avail unless we can foot the bill for the purchase of the line pretty soon. So, hands in your wallets everyone and support the most genuine preservation appeal of all time! The engineers have given their time and work--help us with every penny you can raise.



# THIS MAN NEEDS YOUR HELP

"I need help!" The cry comes from Peter Barry, the Middleton Railway carriage and wagon engineer, who wants volunteers to form a Carriage and Wagon Department.

"I need reliable help on Saturdays," he told The Old Run. "Men! Keen, tough, ready for anything (to make up for me)! As a modern efficient one-man army I am creaking to a halt."

Carriage and Wagon has a lot to do, Peter Says. Anyone who has been down to the line and found nothing to do to his liking is urged to contact him - Pete guarantees every volunteer enough work for two!

"Let's have our flat wagons ready and get on with preparing a supply of serviceable vehicles we can be proud to own," he adds.

Any ideas or reports on C & W should be given to him at the line or at home - 310 Stanks Drive, Leeds 14.

## NEW COAL RESOURCES FOUND

It was just before the Steam Special. Suddenly, there it was - a Giant Economy Size 10 ton coal heap. Right in the middle of Clayton's Yard.

There was nothing else for it. At the close of the day the carriage and wagon engineer removed some civil engineer's leftovers from the 12-ton 5 plank ex-LMS wagon and began shovelling the coal into it. With a relay of willing workers about 6 tons were loaded.

At dusk inspiration came! The steam crane was steamed and using relays of 5-gallon drums the crane quickly finished off the loading. Some hard slog and superb crane driving by Nigel Short reduced the "coal mine" to odd lumps here and there, and so the newly initiated miners, tired out and coal black, retired for the night.

**HUNGRY?**

**THIRSTY?**

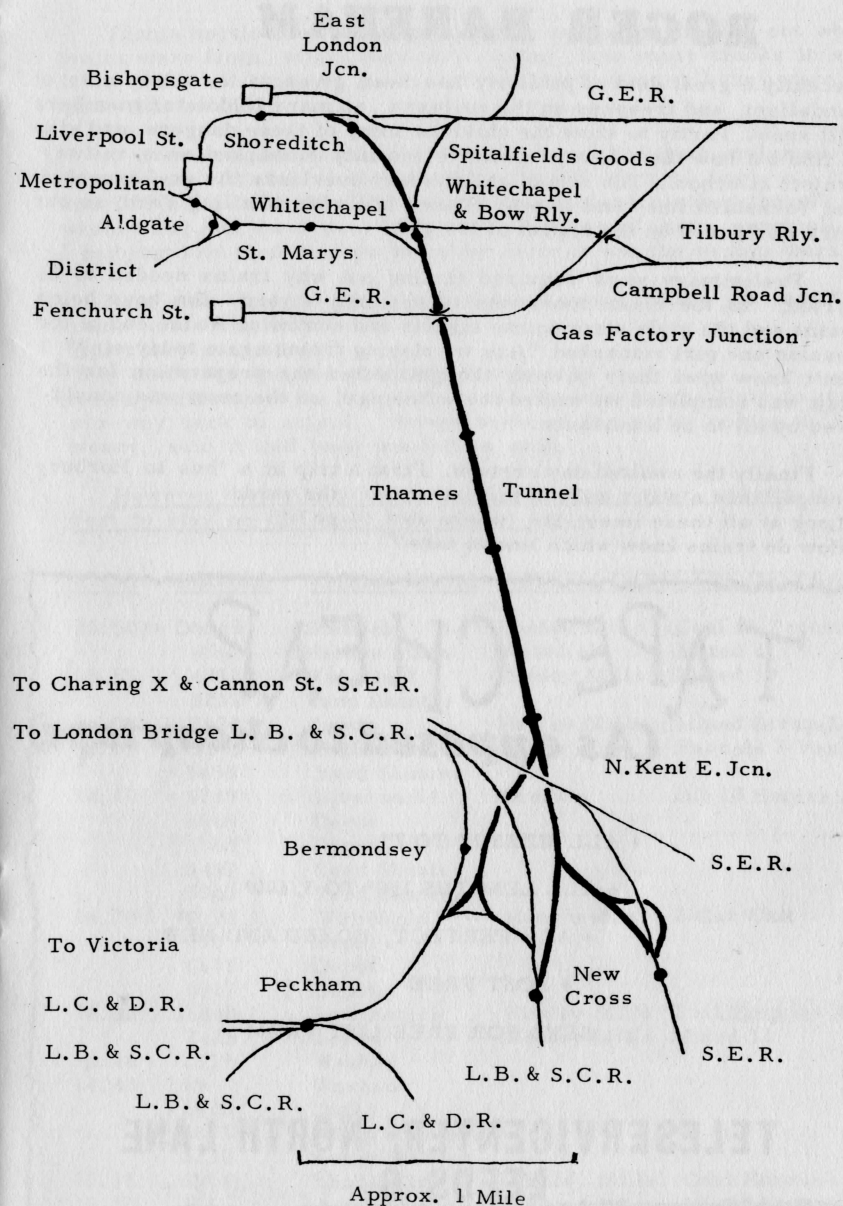
**THE GENERAL STORES**

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**ONE MINUTE FROM TRACKS!**

## THE EAST LONDON RAILWAY

(See article starting on page 13)



# A Day at Healey Mills

**ROGER BAREHAM**

Recently a great deal of publicity has been given to the many acts of vandalism, and trespass on the railways, as many Middleton members will know. Partly to show the children some of these dangers, and also to find out how the railways work we recently embarked on a railway project at school. The school at Dewsbury overlooks the ex-Lancashire and Yorkshire line, and is near Healey Mills Marshalling Yard, so our work was based on the aspect of freight

Preliminary work required finding out why trains needed to be sorted, so the class room was turned into a yard, the boys being trains and the girls were points signals and controls! At the end of the session one girl remarked "Are we playing trains again today sir?" I don't know what their parents thought! After the preparation for the visit was completed we waited for a fine day, so the snow was considered by all to be a nuisance.

Finally the awaited day arrived. First a trip in a 'bus to Horbury Bridge, then a short walk to the entrance the yard.  
"Look at all these lines, Sir, where do they go?"  
"How do trains know which line to take?"

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"What's the shunter for?"  
were some of the many questions I had to answer.

Then a hectic hour was spent taking numbers, finding out where trains were from, where they were going, how many trucks in each train, different kinds of goods carried, and so on till they were all quite exhausted.

A stroke of good fortune followed, when I had just explained how the automatic diesel washer worked. D1839 off a 10 bogie oil train, and D39 off a Midland Line freight followed each other through the washer and into the depot. This thrilled many of them, especially as I had just told them that we would be lucky to see the washer working.

Next stop was the Hump and Control tower where we saw three trains sorted by D3230 and D3873

"Don't they ever stop?"

"Why don't the wagons jump off the rails?"

were again some of the many remarks. By now it was time to make our way back to school, though some of the girls looking a little weary, said it had been too far to walk.

However they all know now how trains are sorted, and why it's best to stay on the right side of the fence.

TIME	ENGINE	WHERE FROM	DESTINATION	TYPE OF TRAIN
13.50/+	D6863	Sheffield	Healey Mills	Coal 12 Trucks
	6867	Healey Mills	Wakefield	Mixed 27
13.55	6950	Wakefield	Healey Mills	Mixed 39
	3231	Yard Shunter		
14.00	7624	Leeds	Healey Mills	Mixed Scrap Emp.
14.05	5176	Halifax	Leeds	Parcels 7 Vans
	3455	Yard Shunter		
14.10	6719	Liverpool?	Leeds	Oil 10 Bogies
	6868	Depot		
	6864	Depot		
	3457	Yard Shunter		
	3941	Yard Shunter		
14.20	D.M.U.	Wakefield	Manchester	2 Car Unit
	398	Depot		
	5678	Depot		
	6917	Depot		
14.30	6860	Lancashire	Healey Mills	Coal Empties 49
	7625	Leeds	Healey Mills	Mixed 32
14.40	1839	Washed		
14.45	39	Washed		
	6920	Depot		
	3873	Hump Shunter		
	3230	Hump Shunter		
15.15	6914	Lancashire	Healey Mills	Coal Empties 50
15.30	356	Lancashire	Healey Mills	Mixed Vans 42



# Today and Yesterday

**PETER BARRY**

I hardly slept the night before. Catching the 7.30 Leeds to Kings Cross train! Memories of "White Knight" beating down the rails. Memories of other journeys south in the steam hauled expresses of my boyhood - all excited me beyond sleep.

Next morning, with deliberate restraint and struggling to look unexcited, I took my seat in a gleaming Mk.II coach and waited for the entertainment to begin. I was still waiting at Grantham and disappointed at Kings Cross!

What was missing? The coach was very comfortable. The cooked breakfast, sumptuous! The train was even bang on time. So what was wrong? There was no character, that's what! No splendour! No STEAM!

Two hundred miles of steady running. How boring! Hurtling past the ghosts of passengers long passed. Waiting at closed wayside stations. Damp, lonely, deserted stations, with windows broken and staring, waiting for the trains that rushed past. No more the bright paint and flower beds - only the buildings remain as tombstones to past glories.

Modernisation murdered the past! British Rail, who swept away jewels of the railway age, may not be without blame! So where do the enthusiasts gather now? Not at King's Cross! "There's nothing to see now!" But with us, the preservationists! In our hands lies all that remains. All that is worth keeping may be ours with effort. Personalities should not interfere with our task, so please let's pull together before the future steals our past away.

On my ride to London a ray of light shone out alone in the train. A sugar bowl, stamped LNER - a piece of our history! Rare in itself - a rose in a garden of weeds. To me that sugar bowl was worth preserving. How much more so is our line worth our efforts - for it too will be a rose in a garden of weeds in the 1970's. The hills of South Leeds can echo to the exhaust bark of a steam engine straining at the Old Run again - if we try.

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**JOIN THE MIDDLETON RAILWAY**  
**WRITE TO: JOHN BUSHELL,**  
**12 Trelawn Crescent, Leeds 6**

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# ANY MORE FOR FIVE SISTERS JUNCTION?

"Any more for Five Sister's Junction?" No, it isn't a kind of depleted Seven Sisters - it's what you might hear from an over - enthusiastic workman trundling an ex - coal mine hopper wagon along Britain's only Anglican railway, inside York Minster.

Five Sister's Junction is underneath the famous window of the same name and marks what is probably the first narrow-gauge (2ft) left-hand turnout to be installed in any church (subject to correction by the MRT vice-president, the Bishop of Wakefield!)

The railway is, of course, used to cart away spoil from the extensive excavations taking place as work on the Minster restoration proceeds. The sheer size of the work being done is staggering, and one looks down from the transept into what looks like a vast quarry. The site manager (Mr. George Preston) confirmed that the railway has been invaluable in carting away the Material (and bringing building materials in) without mess and with the least possible disturbance. Yes, it's Services as normal on all stations of the Minster Line!

The line exits into a yard behind the North Transept, where the five side tipping hoppers are emptied into demountable lorry skips, although Five Sisters is a proper junction, most of the branches start from wagon turntables which take up less room and can be moved to another site more easily when the usefulness of one line expires.

The line is supported above the excavations on the steelwork holding back the timber shoring to the hole in the floor of the building.

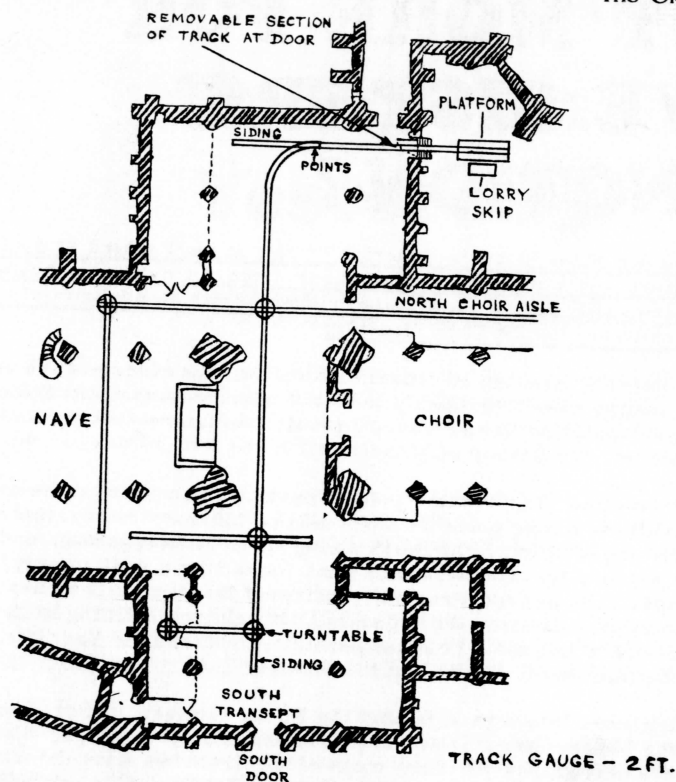
Thousands of tons of soil have to be shifted. At first the possibility of a small locomotive was considered (Merddyn Emrys, perhaps?) but this was ruled out on grounds of public safety - much to the disappointment of the choir who were visualising arriving at their stalls by train!

So much soil has to be taken out that it would cost more to put it back than to build special supports, so a museum is to be created under the floor together with other rooms.

The spoil is removed from the holes by electric "on-scaffold" type derricks and emptied into the trolleys for transport to the loading platform outside.

Thanks go to Derek Plummer for the layout plan and much of the information.

(In a muffled gurgle from the direction of a gagged "61506" we hear the plea "But there must be a Bishopsgate, and a St. Botolph's Station!")



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# East London Junction - a little known closure

## ONCE-USEFUL NORTH-SOUTH LINK 'JUST FADED AWAY'

Journal of the Leeds University Union Railway Society No 13  
by Kind Permission

There were no T.U.C.C. meetings, frantic protests, or letters from aggrieved passengers, or formal pronouncements from the Minister of Transport, when East London Junction closed. Like Old Soldiers, it didn't die, it just faded away.

The story goes back to 1876, four years after the low level line from Bethnal Green to Bishopsgate and Liverpool Street had its first section opened, to relieve the load on the old high level Shoreditch/Bishopsgate terminus which was burnt down quite recently.

Routes between North and South London were always rather limited, The West London, the West London Extension, and the North and South West Junction lines connected the Midland at Cricklewood, and the L. & N.W.R. and N.L.R. at Willesden Junction with the L. & S.W.R. at Kew and Gunnersbury, and the L. & S.W.R., L.C. & D.R. and L.B. & S.C.R. in the junctions near Battersea Bridge. The Metropolitan connected Paddington, St. Pancras and King's Cross with the L.C. & D.R. at Blackfriars albeit with some awkward working and a nasty gradient up from Farringdon. From Stratford the G.E.R. had to send traffic over the N.L.R. and the W.L.R. lines to get across the river.

The new Liverpool Street had a connection with the Metropolitan extension to Aldgate, but it was hardly good practice to block two platforms at a terminus with goods trains and to put them on an incline in order to do so! The Tottenham and Hampstead joint line followed by the Midland and the Metropolitan were equally awkward. The increasing density of Suburban line traffic eventually enforced the removal of the Liverpool Street G.E.R. -Met. connection and the inclined platforms.

So in 1876 a new line mostly in tunnel was opened from East London Junction, about half a mile from Liverpool Street, to Wapping where it connected with the line to Surrey Docks and New Cross S.E.R., and later the L.B. & S.C.R. at New Cross Gate, the first section South of the Thames having been opened in 1869. A multiplicity of connections enabled all lines South of the River to be reached easily via this new E.L.R. route.

The E.L.R. was jointly owned between the companies at either end, and as the Metropolitan from Moorgate, and the District from Mansion House had extended to a joint station at Whitechapel with a connecting curve to the E.L.R. beneath them at this station, they came into the E.L.R. Joint scheme, having a legitimate finger in the pie.



Whitechapel remained the Met and District terminus until the opening of the Whitechapel and Bow line, built to connect the District to the Tilbury Line at Campbell Road Junction, Bromley, thereby easing a perennial problem of the Tilbury Line by no longer being a nuisance to the G.E.R. at the Fenchurch Street Terminus. This was a very late development, in the early years of this century. The Metropolitan could send their traffic from Paddington down to Aldgate East, St Mary's (now superseded by the new Aldgate East) and round the South curve to join the E.L.R. between their low level station at Whitechapel and Shadwell.

Liverpool Street was much larger than its higher-up predecessor, and the 1894 East Side enlargement made it the country's busiest terminus. Platform 18 had a nocturnal monopoly of the E.L.R. goods traffic, as this was almost exclusively in the small hours and involved a reversal due to the layout of East London Junction. Passenger services over the line started from Liverpool Street or Shoreditch, and ran through to Peckham Rye, New Cross S.E.R., New Cross L.B. & S.C.R. (now New Cross Gate) with some trains extended to what is now East Croydon.

In due course, the G.E. having to serve nearly a quarter of London's suburbs, mostly from Liverpool Street, found the East London passenger traffic an embarrassment. The electrification of the Met, and the District, meant that the E.L.R. had to use the same system of electrification, or lose through traffic (passenger) between Aldgate East and New Cross or New Cross Gate. Electrification of the existing service would imply the partial electrification of a busy steam-worked G.E. terminus, and a system different from that later adopted by the Brighton, S.E.R. or L.S.W.R. and Southern systems.

What happened was a truncation, the E.L. trains being confined between Shoreditch (just beyond E.L. Junction) and New Cross and New Cross Gate, with no through workings except goods trains to the G.E. or Southern Companies' lines. This insularity was if anything accentuated when the newly formed L.P.T.B. took over passenger responsibility, leaving the S.R. and L. & N.E.R. to deal with goods traffic, almost entirely with G.E.R. tank locomotives in view of the severe bridge loading restrictions South of the Thames on the E.L.R.

Electric trains from the Aldgate direction became more important than those from the short remaining spur to the very inaccessible Shoreditch E.L. Station. The goods trains continued their nightly marauding, their locomotives being fitted with condensing equipment and Underground Railways type Trip-Cocks for automatic Train Control. (It might be wondered whether an uncontrollable brake application on the loco. was the best way of dealing with a slight over-run of a colour-light signal!) A general limit of 30 m.p.h. was enforced with tighter limits in some places and a dead slow limit over East London Junction just East of Bishopsgate Low Level Station, where both lines were on a curve, and at different gradients as they approached from the East.

The Whitechapel - Shoreditch E.L.R. service has now degenerated into a peak hour only service.

With the increasing traffic needs on the Tilbury line inner suburbs, through trains from the Met. have been diverted to Barking rather than the E.L.R., and even the off-peak Met trains terminate at Whitechapel, leaving a purely E.L. shuttle service in operation down in the depths, as of old, in pseudo - isolation. It is still a very useful service which

## The Old Run

15

could do with better publicity, in that from Met. line stations it is often as quick to get to the L.B. & S.C. or S.E. this way rather than by changing at Moorgate and having a long walk at London Bridge between the C. & S.L.R. tube and the Main Line Station. This easy transit is to some extent balanced by the fact that the fastest suburban trains do not stop at the New Cross Stations.

The final scene started with the destruction by fire of Bishopsgate Goods Station. It was possible to send traffic from there via the E.L. direct or via a wagon lift from Spitalfields G.E. sidings down to Whitechapel Junction sidings thus avoiding Liverpool Street. Since the fire, G.E. goods traffic has been dispersed to other depots in the London area, and the advantage of the E.L. over the N.L. from Stratford has largely disappeared. The only remaining use of E.L. Jcn. having gone, it was dismantled in 1966, thereby easing the layout for the A.C. electric trains at the awkward spot just clear of the tunnel under the high level lines to Bishopsgate goods station. The writer's 1847 engraving of Bishopsgate appeared in the Railway Observer within days of the fire. The two events were not connected.

The closure of the Junction produces a situation in which one side of the junction has electric trains with 2 minute headways, and the other side an adequate electric service, yet with no connection between them.

Some research carried out with the approval of the Eastern Region was directed to the possibilities of making fuller use of the E.L.R. to relieve existing main line overloading instead of as an isolated feeder service with a peak hour frequency of only 10 4 coach trains per hour. It appears that the space available from the disused Bishopsgate Low Level platforms, and locomotive refuge sidings made surplus by the almost complete electrification of the G. E. London Area, could be used for a single or double track from East London Junction to the normal length platforms 16, 17 and 18 at Liverpool Street, leaving free the lengthened platforms 11-15 on the East Side for existing traffic. A careful study of the peak hour timetable at Liverpool Street shows that, with the platforms made surplus by the diversion of the Loughton branch traffic to the Central London Railway extension, it is possible to release these 3 platforms for E.L.R. traffic while still having a peak density in trains per hour per platform substantially below the density of the 1920 Jazz Service, although the latter involved first class organisation to deal with substantial locomotive movements which no longer exist. A service of 15 trains per hour (20 by using Great Eastern techniques of the Hilton and Russell era) would be within the bounds of feasibility with 2 extra tracks, & 10 per hour with 1 extra.

With the transfer of operation and system of electric traction from London Transport to the Southern Region, it appears that the L.B.S.C. service would benefit substantially, the S.E.R. connection being kept in being by a shuttle service from Surrey Docks to New Cross. The Brighton line has a West end terminus at Victoria, but London Bridge is just far enough from the City to be awkward. The S.E.R. with its Charing Cross and Cannon Street termini, and the L.C. & D.R. with its Blackfriars and Victoria termini can both serve the City and West End adequately. The 6 tracks of the S.E.R. and the 6 of the Brighton line approaching London Bridge are squeezed to 4 at Borough Market Junc -

tion, with an unbelievable number of fouling movements inwards from North Kent East Junction, New Cross Gate and Bermondsey. The incurable overloading at Borough Market Junction is such that even manganese steel turnouts there have not a very long life! The use of Liverpool Street as a City terminus for some of the L.B. & S.C.R. traffic would be very useful and far better utilisation of the E. L. than its present rather meagre traffic by London suburban peak standards.

Some careful investigation shows that a substantial majority of E. L. R. traffic is not station to station, but is from one E. L. R. station to New Cross S. E. R. or Brighton line where passengers change on to a "Southern Electric", with a lesser amount going to Whitechapel where they change for District and Tilbury line trains. This would ease the traffic planning in that not every train need stop at all stations even though these stations had as good a service as they do now.

With Southern Electric trains running on from New Cross Gate stopping at Whitechapel for underground connections, then Liverpool Street, some part of the heavy congestion at the Borough Market Junction and the termination of a high proportion of Brighton line trains at London Bridge would be alleviated. The possibilities are evident, and what at first sight appears to be an outrageous idea is in fact within the bounds of possibility without the fantastic expense of many major suburban area rail traffic improvements. It is not impossible for one region to help another.

The use of a lightly used branch line to aid a neighbouring overloaded main line has occurred elsewhere. For example the Greenwich Park branch was diverted to Lewisham to relieve S.E. line congestion, and the L. & S.W.R. Hammersmith-Turnham Green-Kew branch turned into a trunk route for the District and Piccadilly lines Western extensions. The present G. E. traffic would be uninhibited and kept completely separate from the "Southern via East London" traffic.

Hilton and Russell of the Great Eastern, past masters at getting several quarts into pint pots, would probably have tackled this with delight - they knew every trick of the trade as far as intensive suburban services went!

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