

OLD RUN NEWS

Newsletter of the Middleton Railway Trust

Number 38, January, 1969.

With this issue is the notice of the Annual General Meeting, and some methods of fund-raising to which we draw your earnest attention. The Winter OLD RUN is in press and will be out shortly. It contains the rest of the Alton Story, the special train at the closing of Waterloo (yes, this does sound funny to a railway enthusiast, especially if he has been born in the middle of Clapham Junction), and a special article on the Colliery line.

May we respectfully point out that this Old Run will be the last sent out to members who have forgotten that Subscriptions like Christmas come but once a year, and ask them to avoid reminders being sent out. YOUR subscription is valuable to help us keep going, don't forget it.

WIZARD PRANG AT KIRKSTALL. There seems to be a peculiar Hoo-Doo hanging over any locomotive we purchase, or are we too conservative in carting them about by rail? Henry de Lacy from Kirkstall Forge was due to be moved last year. We had looked into the modus operandi of the transfer, when suddenly everything came to a dead stand. The junction between Kirkstall Forge and the main line was unserviceable!!! The reason? A British Railways goods train had come from the straight and narrow gauge, and in the process had ripped up a critical piece of track. With the reduction from 4 to 2 tracks on the Midland Main line, alternative routes are not easy to find. Joe Lee inspected the result at Kirkstall Forge and it was quite spectacular. It was inconvenient not so much for us, as for Kirkstall Forge who had kindly kept it for us until we had space for it. This Alton-itis is becoming a recurring nightmare! We are however pleased to hear that Kirkstall Forge are not abandoning rail transport completely, they found some heavy traffic that was still economic if carried by rail. As Kirkstall Forge once boasted a station this keeps an historic association open.

SOAKING THE RICH - AND THE POOR. Progress of the appeal.

A night after night marathon has gone on since the appeal was started. Thousands of envelopes to be addressed and delivered, donations to be collected, letters publicising the appeal to go out. We have had the appeal backed up by lectures to the Thoresby Society and the Leeds Association of Engineers. Firms, shops, Churches and Schools have all been drawn in to help the great effort. We are happy to report a steady and continuous flow of money coming in, but not yet enough to make the deadline. Those members who could not pour money into the fund have helped with organising the appeal. BUT WE STILL HAVE OVER 1000 envelopes to deliver in Leeds 1 and 2 very urgently. Volunteers please telephone Leeds 54441 with offers.

PAINLESS EXTRACTION. One fund raising idea is due to the Civil Engineering team. Twice a week they travel to and from the line, and most of them get taken in some one else's car. The 'bus fare they save goes into a fund, which simple and apparently small effort has raised £20 to get the Alton loco. up to Leeds. Could we ask any member who is saved a 'bus or train fare home by a free lift to put the 'bus fare into the Appeal? You aren't really losing a penny, but it still helps.

GYPSIES AGAIN. David Hebden raised the alarm of Gypsies hacking up sleepers for firewood and the Leeds City Gypsy Pest Control Officer and the Police got them away within a day.

PRESS AND TELEVISION COVERAGE. The Yorkshire Post published a photograph of our fund-raising walk along the line, which was successful and the publicity will do us good. BBC TV in the person of Barry Chambers came down and filmed the operation of our line and other parts of our work. Although the details of the appeal did not come over the screen, the edited version in Look North on Monday January 20th. came over well, showing many shots of the track and several trains running together with the steam crane. Unfortunately the Civil Engineering team, willing to show how good they were did not get a look in - they do not seem to have the screen value of a locomotive.

Over 100 supporters patronised the walk the morning after a snow fall, rain, and mist had made the whole thing unattractive and productive of very muddy boots. Biggest support came from Middleton C. of E. School, and in view of the inclement weather Susan Youell had got ready soup tea and coffee in the Dartmouth works canteen to warm up the participants after their 7 miles. Our thanks go to everyone who helped to organise the route, the publicity, the guides and maps.

TRAFFIC. Steady scrap iron traffic has kept us going usually Monday Wednesday and Friday. Qualified drivers were scarce in the Christmas holiday period, but we managed. The Alton diesel showed that size is no measure of determination. With its unmistakable Phut-Phut-Phut exhaust audible from one end of the line to the other, the motorists get plenty of warning at the level crossings. Tim Leech managed to do a clutch removal for relining between two successive runs, and she now pulls with no trace of clutch-slip. Her miles per gallon seem astonishingly good. On the icy level crossings however her light weight resulted in her actually riding up and bumping along with the flanges unable to cut through the ice! The December freeze up resulted in some injector trouble, happily cured. Steady maintenance work on our other locos. goes on and we are in danger of having several all together and working at the same time! Thanks to the heroes who crawl under round though and over boilers with apparent delight.

NOT SO PERMANENT WAY. Relaying has progressed to the point where the curve of the Balm Road Loop is held up waiting for the City to make up its mind about the Footpath and the proposed extension of Moor End Works. Relaying of the main line goes on apace in practically all weathers.

HOLE DIGGERS AGAIN. We were appalled to find a gang of Irish navvies digging away by the line on behalf of George Grahams of Huddersfield. Some plain speaking ensued, the hole appeared to be for telephone cable conduits, and the GPO had apparently been given the go-ahead by the Highways Department - presumably the old "Didn't-Know-The-Line-Was-In-Use" excuse. We tore down and made sure that any digging was fully protected by safety inspectors and that the holes would be dug where the least damage would be caused, and out of the way of our gate operating ducts.

SOME LOOKS AT THE FUTURE. The City have been asking our Committee for 2 years to specify which relics of the line we want saved and assembled when the motorway work starts. So far we have not responded to this generous offer. It is likely that at the A G M we may have to appoint someone to salvage both historic relics and scrap material - unspectacular but necessary. We shall also need a Carriage and Wagon engineer (Peter Barry is already overhauling the covered van), and a New Works Engineer to connect up with the Colliery extension and reshape the Broom Pit buildings without overloading the Chief Civil Engineer. A Museum Curator, Refreshments and Sales Officer in the public access rooms, and visitors guides are likely to be needed.

3442 IN BLACK AND WHITE. Mr. Hobden has produced a first class picture of The Great Marquess. 500 copies are available for sale to members. Enquiries welcomed.