

THE OLD RUN NEWS

Newsletter of the Middleton Railway Trust

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Winter approaches and with it come as usual dark evenings and a new batch of University recruits. Of the former the less said the better, but as far as recruitment of Freshers goes this year has been the best for a long time - in terms of numbers, at least. The well-attended introductory visit on October 8th. has been followed by practical training sessions on succeeding Saturdays, plus a theoretical lecture given by the Chairman at the University.

A less satisfactory aspect of the return of the students is the fact that not one of the "established" University members, including the University Operating Assistane, has a driving permit, which has led, to say the least, to some improvisation over the operation of midweek trains. Nearly all the non-University members with a driving permit were not available until after dark now that summer time has ended. The Chairman is running traffic with John Alcock and shunters from the University on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays. One hopes that this unhappy state of affairs will not be allowed to go on for long.

From the line there is only routine news to report. Traffic continues at a fairly low level (and until enough drivers are trained to cope with a higher flow that is perhaps something of a blessing), though there have recently been indications of its picking up.

The trusty 'J.A.' is now reported to be in the best condition ever, mechanically speaking. The recent addition of side windows to the cab should also make life a little less rugged for the crews in the coming months.

Work has been progressing slowly but surely on the Sentinel - perhaps a good sign is that it now sports white-walled tyres, in the true ex-works fashion.

The Y7, still resplendent in its NER livery, was steamed on November 5th, but as there was no traffic for it to work it was put to use on "service duties", i.e. taking wagonloads of waste down to the site of the annual bonfire. A good time was had by all!

Permanent-way activity has not been very great recently, the only major operation being a gardening and fishplate-tightening session covering the section from the yard to the tram-crossing. It is hoped to complete the job right down to Balm Road in the near future. The Chairman with University helpers started the improvement of the bottom loop lines by a complete overhaul of the top turn-out, involving 43 timbers, 125 chairs and about 400 coach screws. Work continues here.

Corn Exchange, etc: Our stand at the Corn Exchange model railway exhibition made a very good contrast to some of our previous efforts, thanks largely to the presence of our own layout - still incomplete but an attraction none the less - and the large folding exhibition board acquired (?) by Brian Ashurst. Response to the appeal for helpers for both setting up and manning the stand was quite enormous, and much appreciated by the faithful few who often get lumbered with everything.

The next exhibition at which we are represented is organised by the friends in the Wakefield Railway Modellers Society, and will be held at the Drill Hall, Vicarage St., Wakefield on November 26 and 27. Not so convenient as the Corn Exchange, perhaps, but if you can spend an hour or two helping please get in touch with the Secretary, 5 North Grange Mount, Leeds 6.

'The Old Run' steams again. New readers start here: once upon a time the Middleton had its own quarterly magazine, which ceased functioning because of insoluble production difficulties. Now as if by magic, they have been solved, and members can look forward to receiving not one but several back numbers shortly. Former members will also receive such copies as they are entitled to - perhaps this will be a reminder to rejoin! The current issue is also in preparation and will appear in due course. The Editor, Brian Ashurst, hopes that, now that the production blockage has been cleared, he will receive plenty of articles for publication - on the Middleton itself or on railway topics in general - as well as illustrations, letters, and help of any kind. Brian's address is 18 Inglewood Drive, Otley, Yorkshire, so get in touch with him if you are interested.

The plates for the Lithographic printing are now produced in the University, and a sample of the quality that can be expected is enclosed. The sample (by a strange coincidence) is a reproduction of the article which our Secretary has in this year's 'Trains Annual'. Copies will be autographed free of charge on application!

.....So does the "Marquess". The next outing of 'The Great Marquess' will be on April 22nd 1967, when it heads an excursion from Leeds to Crich museum and Derby works. Further details will appear in due course.

Help! John Bushell recently received an envelope with a Glasgow postmark containing a postal-order and nothing else. While thanking this anonymous donor or customer, the Secretary would like him or her to contact her at the address given elsewhere. This issue edited by Mervyn Leah, helped by N.F., B.A., & S.M.Y. Have you heard of the North Cornwall Junction Railway? Or the train that went into the river because someone had with most felonious intent opened the swing bridge? Or the driver who was driven out of his mind and came back singing Rock of Ages? Plus a mixture of drama suspense and hilarious comedy up to the Titfield Thunderbolt and Oh! Mr. Porter standard? If not - or even if you have - then come to Riley Smith Theatre, Leeds University Union, Friday 11 November 7¹/₂p.m. for the Arthur Askey version of T H E G H O S T T R A I N. Admission Free.