

# Friends of Rhyl Miniature Railway

Newsletter No. 13

June 2007



## RMR 'Central Station' Officially Opened on Saturday 26th May

A large crowd attended the opening of our new building on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> May. Seen above, L to R, are Simon Townsend (Trust Secretary), Les Hughes (Trust Chairman), Samantha Stokes (Miss Rhyl 2007), Ann Jones AM, Councillor David Thomas (Mayor of Rhyl), Chris Ruane MP, Councillor Joan Butterfield (Trustee), Councillor Ken Hawkins (Chairman of Denbighshire County Council).



## In the two months before opening...

On **18<sup>th</sup> March** the last of the new tracks around the station were joined up, and work began on ballasting, point levers etc.

On **1<sup>st</sup> April** the first steam trains ran over the new tracks. Following this we operated public trains for Easter and May Day, though not inside the building.

On **17<sup>th</sup> April** the new installation was inspected by Christopher Jacquier from the Office of the Rail Regulator. This inspection led to a long list of tasks still to do, although none individually was too difficult.

On **15<sup>th</sup> May** the loan agreement for *Billy* was signed with Rhyl Town Council, and we collected him from store elsewhere in Rhyl for display in our museum.



*Photo: Brian Blakeley*

On **17<sup>th</sup> May** we were presented with *Billy* by the Mayor of Rhyl, Councillor Brian Blakeley. We also received on loan the nameplate from Patriot class locomotive 'Rhyl', which is also owned by Rhyl Town Council. In our new museum the touch screen system was commissioned and most of the display panels had been delivered.

On **18<sup>th</sup> May** visiting locomotives *Sutton Belle* and *Red Dragon* were delivered, together with our Cagney No 44, which had visited Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway for their gala even two weeks before. The signage contractors finished the gable signs at 9.30pm!



On **20<sup>th</sup> May** we entertained a large party of enthusiasts from The Heywood Society. This provided a good test for everything, with a record four locomotives in steam.

During **21<sup>st</sup> to 24<sup>th</sup> May** the platform signs were fixed, the museum panels completed, *Billy* was polished and placed in position, the museum case was delivered and filled with exhibits, the ticket office displays were put in place and the all-important tea machine was connected. On **25<sup>th</sup> May** the third visiting steam locomotive, *Pet*, arrived and all five engines were steamed in readiness.



The great day of **May 26<sup>th</sup>** dawned dry and bright, the train service commenced at 10am and soon became very busy. Complementary attractions at Marine Lake were organised by the Ocean Beach Water Ski Club and Rhyl Sea Cadets. At 11am Rhyl Silver Band started to play.



*Photo: Chris Smyth*

At the opening ceremony speeches were made by Simon Townsend and Les Hughes representing Rhyl Steam Preservation Trust, following which the tape was cut to signify opening of the building. Words of praise for the project were then spoken by the politicians present, together with Dan Clayton Jones, Chairman of the Committee for Wales of the Heritage Lottery Fund. Invited guests then retired to an excellent buffet lunch at the Rhyl Naval Sports and Social Club.

On Sunday **27<sup>th</sup>** it rained, but the crowds did return for the last day of our gala operation on Monday **28<sup>th</sup> May**.

A collage of logos and text for the Rhyl Miniature Railway project. The text includes: 'NEW STATION BUILDING AND MUSEUM FOR RHYL MINIATURE RAILWAY', 'Client: Rhyl Steam Preservation Trust', 'Architect: Denbighshire Design &amp; Development', 'Building Contractor: Wynne Construction', 'Project supported by: WYNNE', 'Gyda chymorth Cronfa Dreftadaeth y Loteri Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund', 'CYNGOR TREF Y RHYL TOWN COUNCIL', 'TOWN CLERK: Garth Nichols', 'YR UNDER EWROPEAIDD AMCAN I EUROPEAN UNION OBJECTIVE I', and 'Wynne Construction'. There are also logos for the Heritage Lottery Fund, Rhyl Town Council, and the European Union.

## Family Reunion at RMR

Pictured at right on 26<sup>th</sup> May were six welcome guests of the railway who have family connections to its past.

L to R, William Butler, his father Edward and grandfather Simon, Miss Rhyl, David Lord, Mrs Eileen Wormald, Eric Hughes.

Simon Butler and David Lord are grandsons of Isaac Gaunt Butler, the owner of Rhyl Amusements when the railway was built. Mrs Wormald's father was Albert Barnes, after whom our museum is named. Albert Barnes led the Marine Lake fairground to prosperity from its earliest days, and built its new steam locomotives including *Joan* and *Billy*. Eric Hughes is Albert Barnes's son in law, and was himself manager of Rhyl Amusements for many years.



Following the event, Mrs Wormald wrote to us as follows:

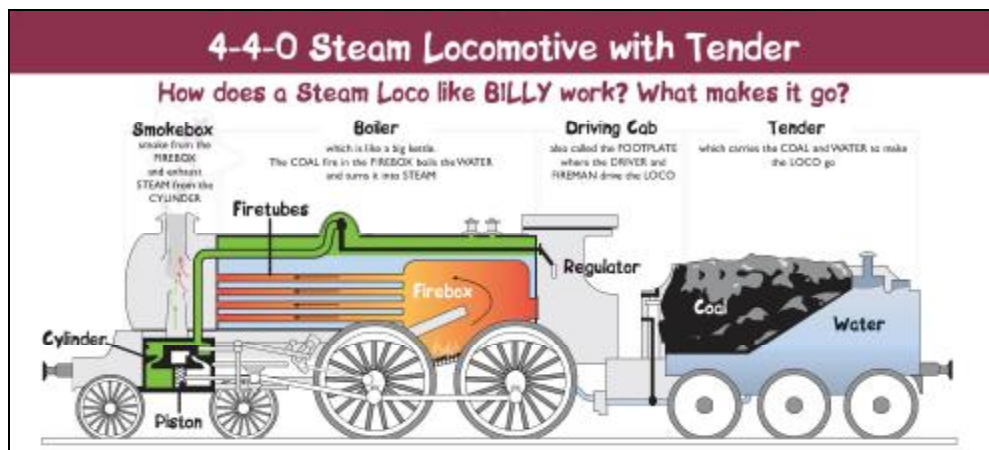
To the Trustees of the Rhyl Steam Preservation Trust and the Friends of Rhyl Miniature Railway.

I was delighted to be at the opening of the revitalised Rhyl Miniature Railway, which proved a splendid occasion worthy of all your hard work. The Museum, named after my father, Albert Barnes, gave me particular pleasure and I know that, although he had many achievements, as an engineer and a loyal citizen of Rhyl, he would have been both honoured and delighted to be commemorated and, therefore, remembered, for his work with the engines of the miniature railway.

With all good wishes for your future success

Eileen Barnes Wormald

## Inside the Albert Barnes Room



The Albert Barnes Room is where visitors can now learn about our history as Britain's oldest miniature railway.

Rob Shorland-Ball acted as our museum consultant, producing some of our display panels like the one above. Our graphic designer Jason Davies did a great job in giving the panels their own unique style. Chris Ellis of Messrs Media Vision masterminded the touch screen machine, which is already proving very popular.

Inside the glass case is a wonderful display of vintage tinsplate models from the London & North Western Railway era. These have been loaned to us, for the 2007 season, by Mark Armstrong and Alan Cliff.



## From the Works

### **Joan**

*Joan* has passed the boiler test for this summer, but during September it is planned to take the boiler to Colin Hatch's works, where the tubes will be removed for replacement; they are now 10 years old. *Joan* had a trouble-free Gala running alongside *Sutton Belle*

### **Cagney No 44**

Has had the loving touch of Arthur Jones over the winter to address a couple of little problems. The Cagney attended Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway at the beginning of May. After our opening it visited the Windmill Railway and ran well there for two days.

### **Clara**

Since the gala our diesel locomotive *Clara* has been in charge of passenger trains every Saturday. It has recently visited the new workshop where a core plug was replaced and a long-standing leak in the fuel system was rectified. It has also received a fresh coat of paint but will need a further full repaint this winter.

### **Lister**

Our works diesel had its wheels re-profiled last autumn to match with the new points. Since then it has been doing sterling work operating all of the track-laying and ballast trains together with our three wagons.

### **Tramcar**



At the end of June we purchased new batteries for this vehicle, which will now be entering passenger service in its own right, for the first time at RMR.

### **The Coaches**

The main fleet ran well at the Gala with the first use of the rebuilt brake coach, which now has a space for wheelchairs. Several passengers made use of this new service during gala weekend. Work will soon start on the seventh 'Milnes' coach, which will be built with a screen on the front, in preparation for the day when we require a second four coach train.

### **Workshop**

Our new workshop in 'Central Station' is now fully functioning, and we are just getting used to being able to drill, grind and weld on site. Another major plus is that all the consumables and spares for the railway are now kept under the one roof.

We were able to provide our boiler inspector with unlimited tea, and the chance to conduct his work from the new inspection pit. He couldn't believe it!



*Austin Moss's 'Little Giant' locomotive Red Dragon ran for six days at RMR and seemed very much at home - not surprising considering its origins. We will hope to welcome it back soon.*



## **RHYL STEAM PRESERVATION TRUST**

Registered Charity No 1103953

Trustees: Les Hughes (Chairman), Carol Hughes, Louise Webster, Lucille Green, Cllr Joan Butterfield JP, Simon Townsend (Secretary), Justin Bell.

Enquiries about railway operations should be addressed to the Trust Secretary, 10 Cilnant, Mold, CH7 1GG, Tel 01352 759109.

## **Friends of Rhyl Miniature Railway**

Our group has been formed to support the Rhyl Steam Preservation Trust in its aims to preserve and operate the railway.

Membership costs £7.50 per annum and runs to 31st May each year, including newsletters due in April and September.

President of the Friends is Rev Alan Cliff, whilst its Chairman is Simon Townsend

For Subscriptions and Enquiries: Secretary of the Friends is Dave Bell, of 22 River Street, Rhyl LL18 1PT, Tel 01745 339477.

**Friends' Newsletter**

**Editor: Simon Townsend**

**Photographs in this issue by John Myers**