

Friends of Rhyl Miniature Railway

Newsletter No. 14


October 2007



Additional locomotives *Michael* and *Railway Queen* arrive at RMR

On Sunday 21st October we unloaded locomotives *Michael* and *Railway Queen*, which are joining our collection at RMR's Central Station. This means that we will be able to display four out of the original six engines built in Rhyl, including our own *Joan* and Rhyl Town Council's *Billy*. *Michael* and *Railway Queen* had since 1994 been on static display within James Pringle Weavers' shop at Llanfairpwllgwyngyllgogerychwyrndrobwlantysiliogogoch, Anglesey. The shop fittings and partitions had been built around them, so some ingenuity was required from our volunteers to extract them through the front door of the store, on Saturday 21st Oct. It is intended that *Michael* will be fully restored, its overhaul is to commence next summer.



 Supported by the
Heritage Lottery Fund

A Narrow Escape!

We were excited but apprehensive about moving the two locomotives from LlanfairPG. Neither loco's wheels had revolved since arrival in Pringles' store in 1994, and it was suspected that the valves and pistons would be seized (this proved to be correct). Also the shop's fittings and partitions had been built around

them, so considerable preparation from the store staff was required in order to clear a path for their way out. Work commenced during 21st October when our 'advance party' dismantled all four coupling rods and separated the rockers from the valves. All bearings then received plenty of oil.



We were helped on the day by Austin Moss from the Windmill Farm Railway, who brought with him a machinery trolley on four heavy rubber wheels, which was the key tool for the job. The locomotives were displayed on two parallel tracks one either side of a central pathway. Following closure of the store at 5.30pm *Railway Queen* was first rolled across next to *Michael*, then one end of the wooden plinth which both locos stood on was dismantled. This made it possible to move the trolley opposite to both locomotives, following they were trolleyed in four parts, through the store and out into the car park where (minus brasses) they spent the night. The store's front door was a particularly tight squeeze! Much to everybody's surprise, by 8.30pm the whole operation was complete, and our volunteers were in the pub. Early the following morning a crane wagon attended and the locomotives were transported to Rhyl, together with the tracks which they had been standing on. The last picture above shows them back on RMR tracks being towed

back towards their permanent home in 'Central Station'. At the time of writing (early November) both locomotives have been un-seized and re-assembled. *Railway Queen* is to receive a new coat of paint prior to static display. *Michael* is to be retained in one piece until next June, following which its boiler will be stripped for assessment and either restoration or replacement.



Other RMR News

The 2007 season

By the end of September the railway had carried 9,500 passengers, a good first season with the new facilities.

From the Workshop



In early September we lifted the boiler from *Joan* in our new workshop. The boiler is now in Colin Hatch's workshop near Swindon, where work on its re-tubing is almost complete. We are hopeful that *Joan* will be back in steam in time for next Easter.

2008 season and Gala event

In 2008 RMR will be open every Saturday and Sunday from 22nd March (Easter) until 28th September, also daily from 19th July until 31st August. Steam trains will operate every Sunday, and also on Saturdays and Thursdays during the peak season.

Our 2008 special event will be the **Old Friends Gala**, which will be held on Saturday 24th through to Monday 26th May. This will feature locomotives *Joan* and *John*, together with *Railway Queen*, *Michael* and *Billy*, i.e. five Rhyl engines together.

Jack the Station Cat

Friends of RMR President Alan Cliff, author of the Jack the Station Cat childrens' books, recently had two honours bestowed on him. During the visit in July by HRH Prince Edward and the Countess of Wessex to Rhyl, Alan and Rosemary Cliff were presented to the royal couple who accepted a set of Jack the Station Cat books for their three year old daughter Lady Louise. Then on July 28th Alan Cliff and his son Nigel from Wrexham, who illustrates the Jack books, were invited to a book signing at the National Railway Museum in York. The footplate of *Mallard* the world's fastest steam locomotive, preserved at the museum, was specially opened up. Alan and Nigel, whose drawing of *Mallard* appears in "Jack and the Lost Kittens," were photographed by the museum's official photographer 'driving' and leaning out of the cab window. This was a dream come true for Alan as he had long wanted to go on the footplate of *Mallard* since he first saw the loco at King's Cross station in 1946.

Alan tells us that his next book 'Jack and the Midnight Mice' will be published later this month.

All Change on our Horizon

The Ocean Beach Funfair, opposite to us, closed for good on Sunday 2nd September. Its rides have now been dismantled, leaving only our own attraction as a reminder of the fairground heritage at this end of Rhyl.



The whole of the site between Marine Lake and the Promenade has been purchased by developers Modus. Planning permission has recently been granted for their Ocean Plaza scheme, which will take place over the next few years.

We are expecting that during 2008 the site will be dominated by construction works, but by the time of our 2009 season there will directly opposite to us be large Asda store. Other aspects of the scheme are shown on Modus's poster above. This will be regeneration on a large scale, and should bring lots more people to our end of Rhyl.

RHYL STEAM PRESERVATION TRUST

Registered Charity No 1103953

Trustees: Les Hughes (Chairman), Carol Hughes, Louise Webster, Lucille Green, Cllr Joan Butterfield JP, Jack Butterfield, 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
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