

# Friends of Rhyl Miniature Railway

Newsletter No. 15

May 2008



## ‘Old Friends’ Gala to Feature Five Rhyl ‘Atlantic’ Locomotives Together

Our 2008 special event will be the **Old Friends Gala**, which will be held on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> through to Monday 26<sup>th</sup> May. This will feature locomotives *Joan* and *John*, together with *Railway Queen*, *Michael* and *Billy*, i.e. five Rhyl engines together, for the first time since they were built. *John* will be visiting us from its base at Evesham Vale Light Railway in Worcestershire, where the photograph above shows it, back in steam after an extensive overhaul. It now carries an authentic livery as it would have been seen at Rhyl during the 1950s.

Our own locomotive *Joan* has also been dismantled over this last winter in order for its boiler to be re-tubed. It has been back in steam for test purposes (as opposite), and will re-enter service at RMR on May 3<sup>rd</sup>.

Our event on 24<sup>th</sup> May will coincide with the first day of ‘Rhyl Week’, a civic celebration. On this day only an open top bus will run between Marine Lake and Rhyl events arena. There will also be complementary attractions including model boats and speed boat rides.



 Supported by the  
Heritage Lottery Fund

## Winter overhaul for *Joan*

The major engineering project last winter was the re-tubing of the boiler of *Joan*, which had reached the end of its first ten year 'ticket'.



Last autumn, the old tubes were being extracted from the boiler at Colin Hatch's works near Swindon. This proved to be an unexpectedly difficult job, which required the tubes to be first knocked towards the firebox, so that the holes in the smokebox tubeplate could be reamed out. Following tubing and other work, the boiler passed its hydraulic test on 9<sup>th</sup> November.



Whilst the locomotive's chassis remained in our workshop in Rhyl, we made the unwelcome discovery that the rear driving wheelset of *Joan* had two loose tyres, and that its axle was also bent where it entered the wheel on one side. This caused our engineering team much concern. It was necessary to pull one wheel off the axle; this was done for us by the Tallylyn Railway, using their 35 ton press.



The parts then went to Acme Engineering, near Wrexham, where the axle was machined true and a sleeve made for it. Our own engineer Arthur Jones then pressed the wheelset back together, which enabled us to re-assemble the chassis ready for the boiler to return.



On 2<sup>nd</sup> March the boiler returned to RMR and was hoisted into place. A start was then made at assembling the new steam fittings and pipework.



Not until 15<sup>th</sup> March did we steam the locomotive to full working pressure. On 17<sup>th</sup> March our boiler inspector visited us, and passed both *Joan* and the Cagney fit for another season's service.

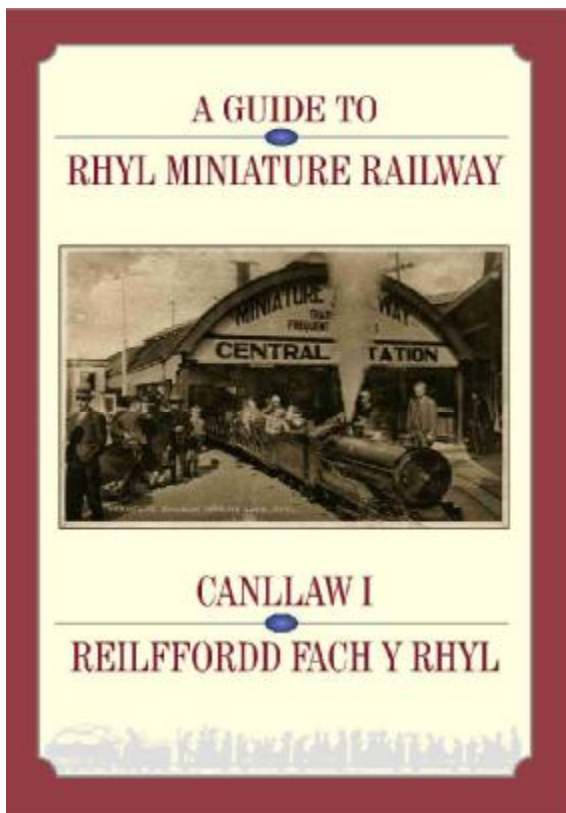
## Other RMR News

### Locomotives *Michael* and *Railway Queen*

During his visit in March our boiler inspector examined both of these locomotives but he was not complimentary about either of them. It is thought that the supply of a new welded boiler for *Michael* will cost the Trust at least £15,000. A fund raising appeal towards this will be launched during our gala weekend.

### New leaflet and Guide Book

Members of the 'Friends' will be receiving copies of our new leaflet with this newsletter. We have also been working on a new twenty page guide book, which will be on sale at the end of May.



Both of these productions are bilingual. We are very grateful to Berwyn Prys Jones and Gareth Haulfryn Williams who have been helping us recently with translation issues. We also appreciate support from Rhyl Town Council and Modus Properties, who have contributed financially to support these projects.

### Museum Progress

Rob Shorland-Ball is currently acting for the Trust as its learning advisor. We are hoping to encourage school parties to visit the railway (this was an undertaking in our funding applications), and that the first visits will take place this summer.

### From the Workshop

**Track:** Since last September our volunteers have spent many days re-sleepering. Sleepers on a hundred yards of track near to the blue bridge have all been replaced; the curve nearby has been re-laid and other similar works carried out elsewhere.

**Tramcar:** This electric vehicle is currently running on every operating day except when steam trains are in use. Over the winter its windows were glazed using polycarbonate sheets. Improvements were also made to the doors, which now have brass handles operable from outside or inside.

**Diesels:** *Clara* and the Lister have had maintenance to their fuel systems; both are currently available for traffic.

**Coaches:** The air brake system has received attention; the six 'Milnes' coaches have been re-painted; work is currently starting on restoring the seventh coach.

**Workshop:** A Colchester Student lathe has been donated to the Trust, along with a variety of tooling. Work has been carried out off site to commission the lathe (which had been out of use). It is hoped that this will be installed in our workshop reasonably shortly.

**Building:** We have fabricated new supports for the west end roller shutter, which gets battered by severe pressure from winds during the winter months. We have also fixed up an air supply at the east end of the building, which can be used for steam raising without needing to move the compressor every day, as we did in 2007. Steel bunkers have been made to enable the storage of wood and coal outside the building.

### 2008 Timetable

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

## 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**  
**Editor: Simon Townsend**