

Friends of Rhyl Miniature Railway

Newsletter No. 16

October 2008



'Old Friends' Gala Reunites Five Rhyl 'Atlantic' Locomotives Together

The **Old Friends Gala** was held on Saturday 24th through to Monday 26th May. It featured 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 was visiting us from the Evesham Vale Light Railway in Worcestershire, by courtesy of its owners, Jim and Helen Shackell.



Supported by the
Heritage Lottery Fund

The 'Old Friends' Gala



The event was opened on Saturday 24th May by the Mayor of Rhyl, Councillor Jeanette Chamberlain Jones. This marked the start of 'Rhyl Week'.



Family connections: this photograph shows Simon Butler standing next to *John*, which was named after his father. Behind, David Lord is standing next to *Joan*, which was named after his mother.



On Saturday an open top bus shuttled between Marine Lake and Rhyl events arena. There was a craft fair at Marine Lake and a display by the North Wales Model Boat Club. Speed boat rides were provided free of charge by Ocean Beach Water Ski Club.



John was immaculate.



The six coach double headed train went around and around, and was well patronised.



The Cagney hauled the second train during the gala.

Other RMR News

The 2008 season

During 2008 the railway opened on 86 days and carried 9,200 passengers. Our new publicity leaflet would appear to have been successful, considering that all these visitors had to find their way especially to us. Income from the shop and ticket office increased significantly by comparison with 2007.

Museum Developments

During the summer the railway participated alongside other Denbighshire museums in an initiative called 'Joy of Decades'. We were loaned a display of artefacts from the 1960s. On 12th and 20th August there were art workshops at the railway along the 1960s theme.



Visitors' Comments

One of the requirements of museum accreditation is that feedback should be obtained from visitors. These are some of the visitors' remarks captured on our new comments board.

17-08-08.
Matthew had a very nice ride, but Daniel fell asleep.
This museum is a great place to visit but someday can they use Billy for the rides as well?
Matthew Warburton - Cheshire

VERY ENJOYABLE. GOOD MUSEUM
& TRAIN RIDE IS EXCELLENT.

PJM

2-8-08

VERY GOOD LITTLE MUSEUM.
TOUCH SCREEN EXHIBIT FASCINATING
TO BOTH HUSBAND (SI) AND DAUGHTER
(S). TRAIN RIDE OK TOO!

Dear Billy the Train 23/07/08

My name is Samuel and I am 2^{3/4} yrs.
I have loved my visit to see you and
ride on the train. I have played on
you for 2 1/2 hours today - and
would have stayed longer if Mummy
& Daddy had let me. I can't wait
to come back again and see you soon.
Love
x x Samuel x x x

SO GOOD WE CAME BACK
FOR A SECOND YEAR
Peggy Family Millom
Cumbria.

Thanks to all who
have brought back such
a brilliant fun & informative
part of history
WELL DONE!

The 'Battle of the Atlantics'



We were invited to take *Joan* to the Kirklees Light Railway, in Yorkshire, for the Gala event organised by their 'Friends' organisation on 13th/14th September. This ambitious gala involved moving seven coaches from the 'Sutton Collection' from Cleethorpes to Kirklees, together with locomotives *Sutton Belle* and *Sutton Flyer*, then adding *Synolda* from the R&ER, *Joan*, *Red Dragon* from Windmill Farm, and *Pet* from the Sherwood Forest Railway.

All four of KLR's own locomotives were also operating; the 'battle' involved pitting the Atlantics against this line, which is over three miles long and has a continuous severe gradient, and a tunnel 511 yd long.



Joan survived the 'battle' with a few minor scars but in better shape than some of the other contenders.

Restoration of Locomotive *Michael*

During June we separated the boiler from the chassis of *Michael*. We have done a very small amount of work on its overhaul, and hope to make more progress, although the workshop will be occupied by *Joan* for much of the coming winter, since its driving wheels will be going to Acme Precision Engineering to be re-tired.

We have also purchased new forged steel tyres for *Michael*, which have now been delivered. We have just placed the order for its new boiler, which will be built for us by TRS Boilermakers in Derbyshire. It is anticipated that the boiler will be delivered next Autumn, and that *Michael* will re-enter service at RMR in Spring 2010.

We are very grateful to those 'Friends' who have supported the appeal for funds for this restoration. Ordering the boiler represents a brave commitment by the Trust since efforts to attract external funding for this project have thus far been unsuccessful, and the public appeal which we launched has not thus far raised a large part of the total project cost. More contributions would be welcome!



*New (to us)
Colchester Student
lathe in the RMR
workshop.*

The Class Ten Project

By Justin Bell

If you have visited the railway this year you may have noticed a new tender being built. This is for a copy of a Bassett-Lowke Class 10 being built by myself. The kick-start for the build came after we borrowed *Red Dragon* last year for the station opening. I had wanted to build one ever since I read the book 'Little Giant Story', but was not sure if one would be suitable for use at Rhyl but *Red Dragon* proved that it would be.

The big difference is that I wanted to build one with a bogie tender like the ones that opened the line here. Construction started earlier this year and the tender body is now very nearly completed with only the handrails to do, the main work is now underneath with the bogies and wheels. I have had the bogie sides flame cut and am now starting to build them up.

I have put out tenders for the wheels and will hopefully complete the tender next year and will then start on the front half once *Michael* is finished and the workshop is empty. While waiting for *Michael* to be finished I will be working on smaller bits for the front half.

Other Railway Events



Architects' Day: On 8th July we entertained a party of the architects from Denbighshire Design & Development, who had designed 'Central Station'. For many of them this was the first time they had seen the project in its completed form. Some of those who worked closely on the assignment were, L to R, David Whieldon, Ray McMonagle, Ian Prys Jones, and Frank Molloy.



Britain's Great Little Railways: On 8th October we hosted the Autumn meeting of BGLR, the trade association for miniature railways around the UK. The formal part of the meeting was held in our museum. Virtually all of the attendees operate railways of their own; some had travelled long distances to attend.

New Guide Book and DVD

Our new guide book was published, as planned, in time for the Spring Gala weekend. Since June we have also been selling a new DVD of the railway, produced by Dave Hunter of Daton Video. This features a history of the railway and footage of all the railway's recent gala events. The guide book and DVD can both be supplied by mail order, the guide book for £3.00 and the DVD for £10.00.

Your Railway Needs You!

The 2008 season has been very good for us in many ways, but lately we have lost several of our most regular volunteers.

To see whether you would like to help us at the railway we are holding a volunteers' open day on Good Friday next year, so that you can see all the jobs which are available on our railway.

You could be a train driver, or guard, or sell the tickets, or work on restoring the locos, or there's always something to clean, polish or paint or even some track work. So come along on 10th April 2009 from 12 till 4, and have some fun keeping the oldest miniature railway running.

'Little Giant' Gala 2009

The railway's Gala Weekend in 2009 will be held on 23rd to 25th May, again coinciding with the start of 'Rhyl Week'. The visiting locomotives next year will be *Synolda* from the Ravenglass and Eskdale Railway, and *Red Dragon* from the Windmill Farm Railway.

There is also talk of organising a further Community event at Marine Lake early in August 2009.

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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Photographs in this issue by John Myers, Simon Townsend, Laurence Smith and Stuart Ross