Friends of Rhyl Miniature Railway

Newsletter No. 20 Website: www.rhylminiaturerailway.co.uk **October 2010**

New boiler for locomotive *Michael* delivered to Marine Lake

On Thursday 23rd September the new boiler for our locomotive *Michael* was delivered to the railway by Terry Statham of TRS Boilermakers. Volunteers from the RMR Engineering Team will now be assembling the locomotive so that it will be running in time for the Centenary of Rhyl Miniature Railway next year.

Costs of building the boiler have been supported by the Welsh Assembly Government Communities First Trust Fund and by Rhyl Town Council. We are also grateful to those individuals who have sponsored the project.

As seen at right, work has already begun to mount the boiler onto the chassis of *Michael*. It is well made, and we feel confident that it will out-last the current generation of RMR volunteers by some years.

In the photo above L to R John Statham, Terry Statham, Simon Townsend, Mike Watts, Pat Kelly, Joshua Lee, David Williams, Dave Purvis, Ifor Jones and Roly Smallwood.

communities first cymunedau yn gyntaf

The 'Everything Goes' Gala, 29th - 31st May 2010

This year's Gala event featured all of the railway's trains working together, something not usually seen. Diesel locomotive Clara *'s first coach had been changed to RMR's 1960s blue livery.*

The Lister locomotive chugged around a few times; it usually only operates works trains, mainly for track repairs during winter months. Here its train included the tender and main frames for the new steam locomotive being built at Rhyl by Justin Bell.

Joan *and the Cagney were also kept busy.*

Jack the Station Cat's Tenth Birthday 31st July 2010

This event celebrated the 10th Birthday of the Jack the Station Cat childrens' books, which are written by Rev Alan Cliff, President of the Friends of Rhyl Miniature Railway. Alan was also signing copies of his new title 'Jack the Station Cat and the August Day'.

On the last day of RMR's 2010 daily operation, Friday 27th August, the 'A' Team of volunteers (and our summer employee) were photographed for posterity. Mike Watts (seated) had just been passed out as a qualified steam locomotive driver.

Arthur Jones

We are sorry to inform members of the 'Friends' that Arthur died on 21st July at the age of 93.

He first came to the RMR during 1993 with his friend Frank Humphreys. By then Arthur was 85 and Frank was 78, both had recently been left as widowers and they were looking to keep active. We didn't think that at such advanced ages these two new volunteers would make much impact upon us; how wrong we were.

Arthur had a quiet manner. He had spent his career running the family farms, but his real strength was in any kind of engineering. He had built a 5in gauge steam locomotive long before such things became common, and had helped to found the Wrexham & District Society of Model Engineers, of which he was President. He was also President of Gresford Sailing Club. As if those activities were not enough his main interest, with Frank, over many years, had been gliding, and he remained interested in aeronautical engineering right to the end.

Bit by bit, parts from the RMR visited Arthur's HQ near Wrexham where TLC was administered using one of his three workshops. No engineering job was too big or too small, and the Jones influence can still be seen around the railway wherever one looks. His biggest single achievement, with Frank, was the rebuild of Cagney No 44 from a kit of parts into a working locomotive.

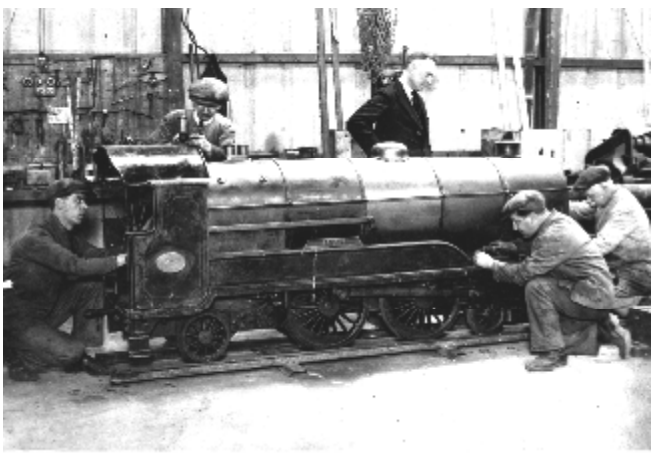
Arthur had ninety years of wisdom on his side, which often seemed like two lifetimes' worth of knowledge. His wise counsel around Rhyl Miniature Railway will be greatly missed.

RMR Postcard Request

The 'Friends' have received a letter from Peter Cove, a postcard collector from Dorset, who would like to purchase an original of the postcard reproduced above. Mr Cove tells us that it is one of six Rhyl cards painted by the artist A R Quinton, and he has been searching for an original of this card for many years.
This is a view not previously known to us, so it is certainly a rare card. If anyone can help Mr Cove they can get in touch with him via the Editor.

More Family Connections

We were pleased during August to meet Sara Peart, whose grandfather was Albert Barnes, builder of RMR's steam locomotives. Also during September we met Mrs Beryl Smallman, whose father Edwin Francis Jones features on the left in the photograph below, thought to date from the 1920s. Albert Barnes is behind the locomotive whilst another of those present was H R Roberts, the boatman.



Other RMR News

Rhyl Miniature Railway Centenary Dinner
A dinner to celebrate RMR's Centenary will be held on Sunday 1st May 2011, one hundred years to the day after the railway first opened. Tickets for the event will be free of charge, but fund raising to pay for it all will take place on the night!
Members of the 'Friends' who wish to attend can contact us now to register their interest and receive tickets in due course. Enquiries about accommodation after this evening event should be sent directly to the venue, the Oriel Country Hotel, Upper Denbigh Road, St Asaph, Denbighshire LL17 0LW, tel 01745 582716.

RMR Centenary Gala, 28th to 30th May 2011
The Trustees intend to make this the railway's biggest ever Gala event, hopefully featuring all six steam locomotives built in Rhyl. More details will be sent to members of the 'Friends' nearer to the time.

The 2010 season
During 2010 so far, the railway has opened on 91 days and carried 9,450 passengers.
This season was memorable for some fine weather up until mid year, which pushed our figures well ahead. Alas when it came to the summer school holidays there were fewer days when the sun had his hat on.
We have continued to welcome new volunteers to the RMR, several have been passed out as qualified drivers.

Santa Trains 2010
RMR will be running festive season trains on December 11th / 12th and 18th / 19th. The Saturday trains will be for groups and the Sunday trains for individuals. All children will receive a personalised gift from Santa; for this reason all places will have to be pre-booked. Booking forms are available on our website at www.rhylminiaturerailway.co.uk.

Timetable 2011
Trains will run every weekend from Easter until the end of September from 11am until 4pm, daily from 16th July through to 29th August, and also daily from 31st May until 5th June. Trains will be steam hauled on Sundays, and during the summer school holidays from Thursdays through to Sundays.

Marine Lake Nature and Heritage Trail
This is the title of a new project to improve interpretation and orientation at Marine Lake. It will include a trail which boys and girls and mums and dads can follow, to learn about the unique natural environment at the Lake.
Currently seeking funding, the project is a joint initiative between Denbighshire County Council and the Marine Lake Users Forum.

From the RMR Workshop

Steam Operations 2010: Our maintenance records show that during this season *Joan* has been in operation on 57 days and the Cagney on 15 days. This is the highest number of steam days per annum since the Trust took over operation of the railway, and we are looking forward to next year when we will also have an extra steam locomotive *Michael* in service, to share the workload.
Restoration of *Michael*: Having during July run the chassis of *Michael* successfully using an air supply, the workshop team are currently attaching the new boiler to the chassis. Once this has been achieved a lot of skilled hours will still be required to make the necessary plumbing, and set up the gauge glasses and injectors, before the locomotive can be trial steamed and then checked over by our boiler inspector. We hope that this work will be well advanced by the time of the 'Friends' AGM in November.
We also hope over the winter to re-bush parts of the motion of the Cagney, and there is a long list of other jobs to keep our volunteer team busy before the railway reopens for its Centenary season in 2011.

Supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund

RHYL STEAM PRESERVATION TRUST
Registered Charity No 1103953

Trustees: Les Hughes (Chairman), Carol Hughes, Louise Webster, Lucille Green, Cllr Joan Butterfield JP, Cllr 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
Photographs in this issue by Claire Statham (cover), Pat Kelly, John Myers, Neville Knight, and Simon Townsend