

# Friends of Rhyl Miniature Railway

Newsletter No. 3

October 2002



## American enthusiasts visit Rhyl

On Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September we entertained a party of Americans at the railway. Most of them miniature railway owners or operators themselves, they were touring the UK visiting 20 'grand scale' railways, from Kent to the Lake District, over a 10 day period.

Pictured above with the new Cagney coaches, most drove around our track at the controls of *Joan* or the two diesels. *Joan's* boiler was washed out the following day and a week later track lifting began for the contract works.

## Marine Lake Improvements – 300 yards of track being renewed

As we write this, 'contract mobilisation' has just begun. The old wall between our track and the Wellington Road is being demolished and will be replaced before Christmas by a much brighter structure. The entrance from the Foryd car park will be improved; a cycleway will be added and there will be new picnic benches and landscaping.

Moreover as part of this work 300 yards of our track will be relaid with new sleepers and ballast. The contractors needed access across our line and proposed to cover it up using a portable roadway. However on 19<sup>th</sup> September we agreed that instead of this our volunteers would lift the rails, then reinstate them before Easter next year, with virtually all materials provided for us, together with a substantial payment for our labour. Following a sterling effort by the volunteers team 74 rails were lifted over 21/22 September and moved to storage in our shed, with a further 6 on 28 September; 300 yards of track in all. Lifting the track and renewing sleepers is a much better option for us and shows what can be achieved when all the parties involved work together.

## Comings and Goings

This season has seen two acquisitions of new railway equipment, and one overdue departure, all of which will enhance our collection of 'heritage' equipment. On 7<sup>th</sup> May we acquired from Windmill Farm 7 further coach bogies, similar in type to our existing ones, together with two original coach underframes, capable of restoration with new decking and seats. This will give enough 'Milnes' type bogies for all our foreseeable needs, and mean that some years from now we will be able to operate two rakes of the traditional coaches, (which in the 1910s were termed 'cars de luxe') just as in the railway's heyday.



On 8<sup>th</sup> June, following lengthy negotiations, the *KD1* multiple unit left us for a new home in the West Country.

## Marine Lake Improvements – Signposts for the future?

Phase One of the WDA funded scheme includes a new formal access into the Marine Lake from the Wellington Road pavement opposite to the market area. We requested this entrance as many of our passengers come to us from the market across the road, rather than from the more obvious 'gateways' at either end of the site. Unfortunately objections were raised to placing the new entrance right next to our present platform, and consequently foot access to us in the finished scheme will be a little indirect from some directions, including from the play area to our platform.

It is hoped that when Phase Two of the WDA scheme gets under way we might be given signposts to help visitors find their way to us. We understand that the scheme's marketing consultant has talked in his draft report about 'white on brown signage, fingerpost signage, flag poles, prominent site signage, orientation panels' and other innovations to publicise both the Marine Lake and the railway.

This season we have tried to help ourselves by printing and distributing 13,000 leaflets, and on operating days by assembling white picket fencing to make our station much more obvious to passers by.

At the moment there are no signs at all pointing visitors to either 'Marine Lake' or 'Rhyl Miniature Railway'. We hope that Denbighshire, the WDA, and their teams of architects and consultants will recognise that signage, which is completely absent in Phase One of the scheme, should be addressed in the next phase of improvements.

### The 2002 season

This year the railway has operated on 31 days and we have carried 3,865 passengers. This is well down on the 5,500 recorded in 2001, but not bad bearing in mind that we had no special gala event. Also our volunteer midweek driver was unavailable for much of the peak season. We have in mind some improvements to the publicity leaflets for next year, and may be able to operate trains on more days.

### Thank you

We owe a big thank you to the Rhyl and District Guest House Association who have made a donation to our Trust of £650. We have earmarked this money for our air braking project.

We are also grateful to Sainsburys from whom we have received a further £200 under their 'local hero' scheme.

**Rhyl Miniature Railway –  
Gala Weekend – 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> August 2003**  
Be sure to book the dates in your diaries!

## From New York to Rhyl via Peru!



These two little vehicles, which arrived on 14<sup>th</sup> July, were made originally in New York state, and previously worked in Peru. Similar coaches were used during the 1900s on the earliest amusement park railways in the U.K.

During this early period the Cagney brothers exported little trains to South America as well as to the UK and other parts of the world. Our coaches were discovered by Jeremy Martin whilst he was working in Peru. He bought a complete railway, which had been lying unused, and included a Cagney steam locomotive dated 1904. Local craftsmen restored the coaches to their present state. One of the wooden bodies is in fact a replica whilst the other is original. It is not easy to tell them apart.

The locomotive and coaches arrived last year at the Martin family's UK base in Kent. Soon after departure of our 'KD1' a deal was struck for purchase of the two coaches. They will make a perfect train for our own Cagney locomotive to haul next year. Commissioning has involved some improvements to our track, but this work was completed in time for the coaches to run on 14<sup>th</sup> September.

15in gauge vehicles as old as 1904 are rare indeed and so far as we know very few original Cagney vehicles survive worldwide.

The postcard below shows similar coaches in use at the Liverpool Exhibition of 1913.





*On Queens Jubilee Day, Tuesday 4<sup>th</sup> June, we were feeling patriotic, and trains carried this special headboard.*

## **RMR Winter Work Programme 2002/2003**

### ***Joan***

Our main steam locomotive has operated about 90% of all trains during 2002, and has been working well. There are only one or two minor jobs which will need our attention this winter.

### ***Cagney No 44***

Frank Humphreys and Arthur Jones have been making really splendid progress with restoring the little American engine. It will formally enter service during our 2003 Gala Weekend on 9<sup>th</sup>/10<sup>th</sup> August, but those in the know reckon that it will be tried in steam some months before then.

### ***Air brake project***

We have ordered brake block castings and a special 12v air compressor with a view to making serious progress on this project over the next few months. Our acquisition of extra coach bogies will also help. This project is being paid for by the donation received from Rhyl Guest House Association.

### ***Track***

We have undertaken to reinstate the track alongside the Wellington Road. The contractor will be preparing the trackbed for us, but it will be our job to bring the rails and sleepers to the site, to assemble the track and fill it with ballast. If construction work runs to time we should have between January and Easter (mid April) to achieve this. You are likely to find us on site on most fine Sundays during this period, and anyone who can wield a shovel can join in. We will even provide shovels!

### ***Clara***

The drive chain broke again during 2002 and we have in mind some improvements aimed at tightening up the transmission so that this does not recur too often in future.

### ***Coaches***

During this winter Justin is talking of completing the superstructure of his 'new' coach, which we expect to operate next year because the air tanks will be mounted underneath it. There is also unlimited carpentry work to do on the two new chassis that we have bought, this will be aided by the new generator donated to us by Arthur Jones.

## More Images of 2002



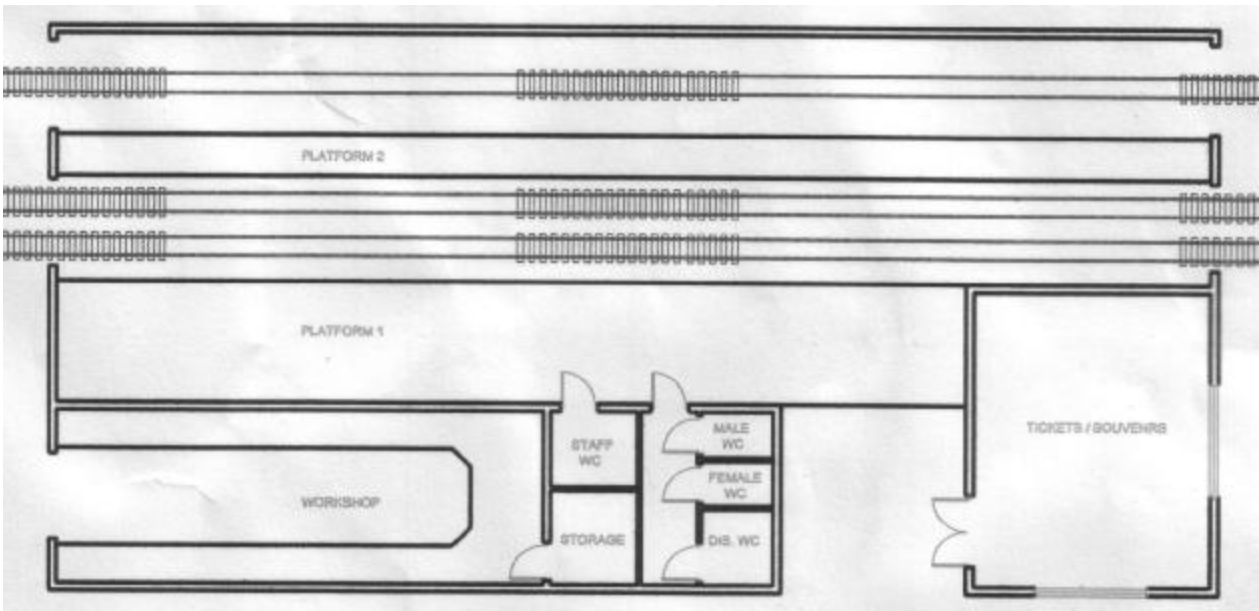
*Joan visited the Lakeside Miniature Railway in Southport and operated there on the dates shown in the last newsletter. Below she is seen with Lakeside's own steam locomotive Red Dragon.*



*Here Joan returns to our own tracks on 28<sup>th</sup> May.*



*The departure of the KD1, or 'Advanced Passenger Train' as we knew it, was a relief. Whilst operable it no longer suited our needs, and 'restoring' it would have been time consuming and expensive. It has been sold for use on a railway scheme led by its designer, Les Anderson.*



*First impressions of our building proposal, prepared by Denbighshire Design Services: more details in the next newsletter.*

# Combustion

By Vernon Aynscough

At the start of the running season, reports of poor steaming and heavy clinkering were coming through from loco crews. The main cause seemed to stem from a batch of 'indifferent' coal.

The following article is with acknowledgment to Peter Davies of the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway footplate experience, and reference to the B.R. Handbook for Railway Steam Loco Enginemen. The steam locomotive is a power plant, where heat is turned into energy. This heat is generated by the burning of fuel in the firebox.

Combustion takes place when coal burns with air, and correct combustion can only be achieved by bringing together the right amounts of coal and air at the same time.

The heat providing constituents of coal are carbon and hydrogen as chemical elements, and each requires a defined quantity of oxygen to form carbon dioxide. If, however, the air supply is insufficient, incomplete combustion occurs, and the gas carbon monoxide is formed.

1 lb of carbon completely burned to carbon dioxide produces 14.550 BTUs. 1 lb of carbon incompletely burned to carbon monoxide produces only 4.350 BTUs. 1 BTU is usually taken as the heat required to raise 1 lb of water 1° F. 1 lb of coal requires approx 12 lbs of air for combustion.

The air supply to the firebox is in two ways. Primary air is through the firegrate, controlled by damper doors on the ashpan. Secondary air is through the firedoor, controlled by a vane valve, or regulating the door opening.

In theory it is necessary to supply approx 20% more air than needed to complete combustion in a loco firebox.

Coal will burn economically when the firebed is of the right thickness. If the fire is too thick, the air cannot pass through. If the fire is too thin excess air passes through and holes are formed. In both cases the firebox temperature will be considerably reduced.. The success to good steaming is to keep the firebox temperature constant, and a continuing draught through the firebox.

As the fire is lit, on *Joan*, an artificial draught is created by the use of a mechanical blower on top of the chimney. Once steam is raised this can be taken off, and the engine's blower is turned on. When the engine is on the move the hot gases are drawn through the firebed by the action of the exhaust steam passing out of the blastpipe. If this airstream is interrupted by closing the regulator, the gases will be trapped in the firebox, so the engine blower must again be used.

The best method of firing is to limit the amount of coal put into the firebox at one time, fire again only when the last charge of coal has been burned away.

The most common mistake is overfiring: work systematically, fire sparingly, in this way valuable coal is not wasted.

N.B. Our locomotive *Joan* has no ash pan or dampers to control primary air, and no method of controlling secondary air through the firedoor.



*This minor mishap occurred on 16<sup>th</sup> June before the process of combustion had even started to take place! These days though we have most of the equipment to get ourselves out of trouble, and Joan was soon back on the rails to run trains that afternoon.*

## RHYL STEAM PRESERVATION TRUST

Trustees: Les Hughes (Chairman), Carol Hughes, 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 £5.00 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 and Treasurer of the Friends are Dave and Justin Bell, of 22 River Street, Rhyl LL18 1PT, Tel 01745 339477.

### Friends' Newsletter

Editor: Simon Townsend

We hope that future issues will include features on the long history of our railway, as well as topical items.