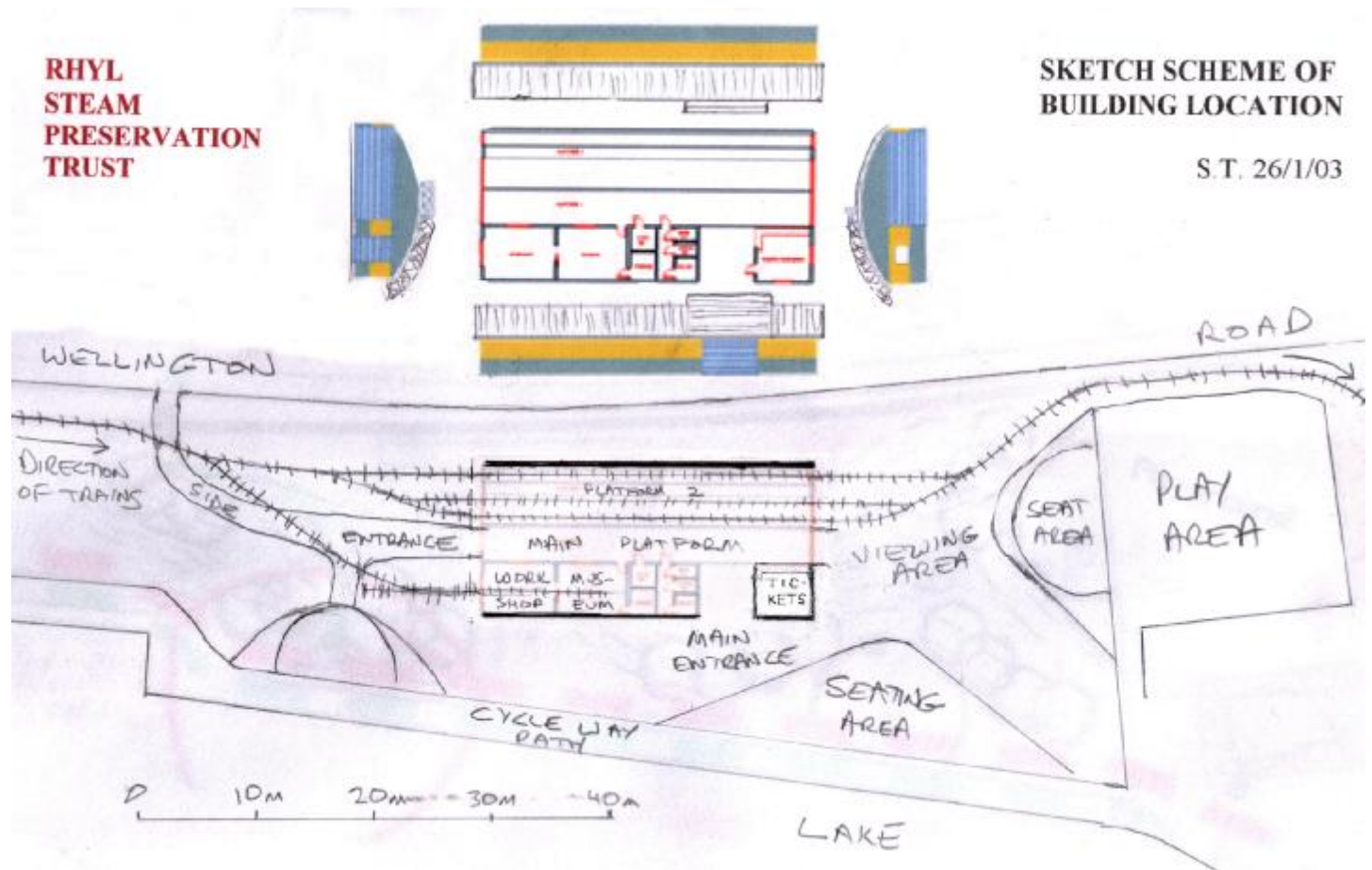


Friends of Rhyl Miniature Railway

Newsletter No. 4

April 2003

Planning Application submitted for New Station and Museum



On 10th April 2003 we made a planning application for our new station building and museum, which has been designed for us by architects Denbighshire Design Services.

- The building will enable us to keep our unique collection of heritage assets under secure weatherproof cover, so that the present 'eyesore' railway shed can be demolished.
- The design includes a large enclosed platform area, which will be free of access to all, a museum in which one of our locomotives can be displayed, and also a workshop with restoration facilities. There will be plenty of space for displays about the history of our railway (the oldest of its type in the UK), and about the heyday of Rhyl's fairground heritage. It will also provide a starting point for the proposed 'Marine Lake Environmental Trail'.
- The new Marine Lake Strategy and Management Plan sponsored by the WDA rates our proposals as being of high/moderate priority and says that our building will become the focus of visitor facilities on the site.
- Over coming months we will be progressing towards making an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund, from whom we have received a favourable informal opinion. Partnership funding will include gift of the railway locomotives and stock into the ownership of Rhyl Steam Preservation Trust, thereby securing the future of steam trains at the Marine Lake towards the next ninety years.

Station and Museum: Questions and Answers

Where will the building be situated?

The building will be situated in the area behind our present platform, with its main entrance facing the Marine Lake, not far from the play area. The WDA have recently provided seating areas next to the site, which is not far from 'gateway' improvements proposed in their next phase.

There will also be access into the platforms from the building's west side, via the new site entrance recently provided from Wellington Road. opposite to the market. This will provide a route from the new Quay Street car park and Foryd Harbour developments. We hope also that funding may be procured for a new adventure playground to be located alongside the lake shore on the west side of our building.

Why is the location different to that of the railway's 1960s station?

The location chosen has good access and good visibility from all directions. Its north face will be 'architecturally enhanced' with sculptures or similar features. The railway's station up to 1969 was located in the north east corner of the site, where the railway track is now constrained narrowly between the play area and the site boundary.

Why could the design of the railway's 1960s station not have been used?

From the viewing area on its east side the scene will be very similar to the railway's 1920s-1930s station. With two platforms we hope one day to operate two train sets in the fashion that many still recall to us.



'Central Station' during the RMR's pre war era.

However, the new building will be secure on all sides when its roller shutters are down. Its museum and workshop facilities will distinguish the design from any of the four previous stations in the railway's history. The architecture is comparable to that of the boat house and pumping station already at Marine Lake. *The drawing opposite is the building's east elevation, with the window being from the ticket office. Access to the main platform will be next to this, when the blinds are up, as well as from the lake (south) side and also from the west side of the building*

Does this mean that there will be more steam locomotives at Rhyl Miniature Railway?

Yes it does. Newly restored 4-4-0 Cagney No 44 will be arriving at the railway in July 2003, and will be in steam for our gala weekend and possibly on off-peak days. Trust Chairman Les Hughes is the owner Barnes 4-4-2s *Joan, Michael, and Railway Queen*. He has pledged that he is prepared to donate all three locomotives to Rhyl Steam Preservation Trust as partnership funding should the scheme go ahead. We could therefore be moving *Michael* and *Railway Queen* from display at James Pringle Weavers' shop at Llanfair PG, some time after June 2004.

What about *Billy*?

Barnes 4-4-2 *Billy* belongs to Rhyl Town Council and is presently in secure storage at a location on Rhyl sea front. Its condition is not deteriorating, but it is not presently accessible to the public. When our building is complete it might be viewed as appropriate for *Billy* to return to Rhyl Marine Lake once again, but this would be entirely an issue for the Town Council to judge.

Where will the money come from?

The Heritage Lottery Fund may contribute up to 70% of the costs. Denbighshire Design Services have estimated in broad terms what construction costs of the building will be, and the railway assets have recently been independently valued. The project will also incorporate some volunteer time on laying track and restoration work. By the time this is taken into account the gross value of the project is in the order of £600,000, of which we will need to find further cash partnership funding of at least £45,000. It is up to us to lobby further potential sources of funding and to persuade them of the value of our proposals.

What happens next?

Assuming that our planning application is successful, we prepare a business plan.

We negotiate with Denbighshire County Council to formalise our lease terms.

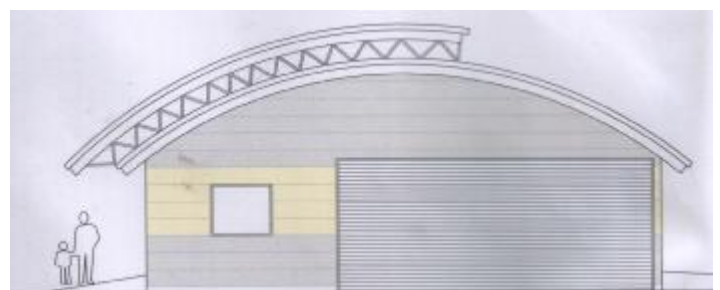
We progress our application for charitable status.

We seek partnership funding.

We prepare the elements of our HLF application, and then submit it.

When will construction begin?

Ours will be a two stage application and it will take at least a year for processing and to work up more detailed costings. Construction over winter 2004/2005 might be possible, or 2005/2006.



300 yards of Track laid in five days

We reported in the last newsletter how contractors arrived on site in September 2002 to commence Phase One of improvements financed by the WDA. This programme included complete replacement of the wall between our track and the Wellington Road, along with a cycleway and new seating areas.

At one point it was proposed to cover up our track during these works by hiring a portable roadway to protect it. However, it proved possible to reach agreement with the contractors for us to lift the track and then relay it with new sleepers and ballast, which proved to be a much better option for all parties.



Fortunately the contractors themselves were friendly people and when it came to re-establishing the trackbed at the correct and even levels they did a good job. We commenced relaying work on Sunday 2nd March, and Austin Moss from the Windmill Farm Railway joined us the following morning. Once we got onto the straight section rails were going down at 'Wallace and Grommit' speed, such that on Thursday 6th the circuit was joined up again, a fantastic team effort by all concerned.



By Christmas 2002 the whole north side of the Marine Lake was a boggy construction site, our station being visible in the middle distance of the view below.



Reinstatement commenced with the two level crossings, at the Foryd access (here), and at the new entrance near to our station.



Austin Moss and Justin Bell set the rails into these on 10th February.



These new works have certainly changed our environment, with a brick wall topped by bright blue railings on one side, and more 'mounding' between our track and the lake shore.



The end product.



Tracklaying in full swing on Tuesday 4th March, with our Lister hauled permanent way train.



On 5th April we steamed Joan, seen above back in the station platform for the first time. The following day we tested the new track by running five coach trains, with no problems reported.

Other Volunteer Projects

Air brakes

Good progress has been made with this and we would hope to have the system operational before the main season begins. All our bogies are of the same 'Milnes' pattern and nobody has ever mounted brakes on them before. Following some experimentation in Arthur Jones's Wrexham workshop, the first bogie (for the front of the train) is now braked and the second (for the back) is almost done. We have acquired all of the fittings and pipes required and now need to assemble everything.

Our requirements are different to those of most other railways, in that we rarely uncouple from our train and will not need to apply our continuous brakes except in

emergencies. We plan therefore to use our battery driven compressor mounted on the guard's coach to supply air. If we find in practice that we also need an axle driven compressor or battery charger then commissioning could take a little longer.

Coaches



At the AGM of Friends of Rhyl Miniature Railway it was agreed that an appropriate project for the Friends to sponsor would be the purchase of hardwood for the restoration of our two coach chassis. On Easter Sunday, 20th April, Justin was able to demonstrate the first new hardwood coach seat.

Publicity

Our 2003 leaflet is enclosed; we have also advertised in this year's Rhyl tourist brochure. As well as organising a gala weekend we have planned several extra steam operating days in 2003, and will run using *Clara* on most days during the summer school holidays, all being well.

New Book on Little Giants



Rhyl Miniature Railway with its original 'Little Giant' locomotive Prince Edward of Wales, and train, alongside the old sea wall, probably in 1911. Collection: John Milner

A new book, *The Little Giant Story*, to be published in May, will be essential reading for those interested in the history of our railway. 'Friends' member Robin Butterell has had a lifelong fascination with 'Little Giant' locomotives, whilst co-author and publisher John Milner has drawn from his extensive collection of archive photographs, most of which have never been published before.

'Little Giant' was the name of a class of fifteen inch gauge locomotives designed by Henry Greenly and built by Bassett Lowke at their Northampton Works between 1905 and 1924. Rhyl Miniature Railway is itself a product of the golden age of 'Little Giants' before the First

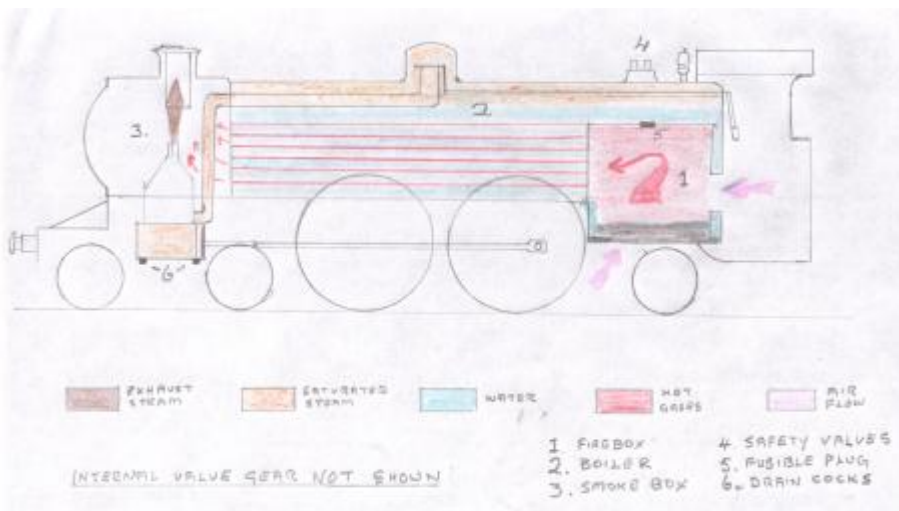
World War. During their long lives these little engines have operated all around the UK, and some on the continent. This book tells the story of their design, building, and travels, including much on the railways upon which they have worked.

The Little Giant Story is to be published in a limited edition of only 600 copies, and has 216 large format pages, 200 photographs with 56 in colour, and 32 drawings and track layouts.

The book will be available at the end of May 2003 from RailRomances Specialist Publishers, PO Box 85, Chester CH4 9ZH, price £42.00. plus £5.00 p&p.

More on Combustion

By Vernon Aynsough



Following my article in the last issue, here is a diagram of the cycle of heat to energy. Also shown are the three safety features incorporated on all

steam engines.

Safety valves are situated at the top of the boiler and are spring loaded closed. When the pressure rises above the working limit, it forces the valves to open, blowing off steam until the pressure returns to normal. The fusible plug is a bolt of low melting point alloy, screwed into the crown of the firebox. This will melt should it be uncovered by low water level in the boiler.

Drain cocks are used to relieve water from the cylinders, and are operated manually by the driver. They are opened when lighting up to dispense condensation, starting away from a halt, and if the engine starts to prime, ie carry water over to the cylinders, should the boiler be too full.



Cagney No 44 Steams Again



When Cagney No 44 arrived in Arthur Jones' Wrexham workshop in January 2002 it was, at best, an incomplete kit of parts. New axles were required for the driving wheels, and even the wheels themselves were found to need re-profiling to make them compatible with 15in gauge. These were among many restoration tasks undertaken by Frank and Arthur, which culminated on 8th February 2003 when the locomotive was steamed for the first time, pictured above.



Lancaster & Chester Railway 4-4-0 Cagney 44 at Lakeview, 5.4.2003 © N.R.Knight

During March and April further trials followed at the Windmill Farm Railway, where No 44 passed its boiler examination. On May 10th/11th the locomotive and its Cagney coaches made a special appearance at the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway's Steam & Diesel Gala.

Next dates in the Cagney calendar are May 31st/June 1st, when it will be at Cleethorpes Coast Light Railway. Then, on July 6th, it will be in steam for Wrexham Society of Model Engineers' Open Day.



Cagney No 44 with RH&DR No 4 The Bug at New Romney, 10th May 2003.

Roy Reid

We were sorry to learn of the death of 'Friends' member Roy Reid, on 16th March 2003, at the age of 72. He was Treasurer of Rhyl & District Model Railway Club. Our condolences go to his widow and three daughters.

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Rhyl Miniature Railway – Gala Weekend – 9th/10th August 2003

Cagney No 44 and train in operation

Sutton Flyer visiting from CCLR

Extra attractions still to be announced

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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 £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 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