

# Friends of Rhyl Miniature Railway

Newsletter No. 35

Website: [www.rhylminiaturerailway.co.uk](http://www.rhylminiaturerailway.co.uk)

June 2018



## RMR locomotive *Railway Queen* back in service

RMR locomotive *Railway Queen* re-entered public service on the railway on 17th June 2018 following restoration over a five year period at the RMR. Prior to this the locomotive had last run in 1989, and it has required a new boiler to get it steaming again.

We have restored *Railway Queen* in the same light green livery that it once carried during its time at the Belle Vue Miniature Railway in Manchester, where it worked from 1928 until 1977.

We ordered the new boiler in 2013 and collected it last June from its makers TRS Boilermakers in Derbyshire. In shape it is the same as *RQ's* 1948 boiler, and it has the original regulator inside, but the firebox has similar dimensions as that on RMR *Michael* with plenty of water space either side to give better transfer of heat. Shortly after delivery of the boiler we lifted the locomotive chassis and took the driving wheels to the Ffestiniog Railway at Boston Lodge works to be fitted with new tyres.

Whilst the wheels were away we fitted the boiler to the chassis and piped it up, enabling steam to be raised for the first time last December.

To make best use of our stock of injectors we fitted a Gresham and Craven one on the left hand side and a traditional Velox injector on the right hand side. In January we took the driving wheels to our regular machinists R & S Sine Engineering to be fitted to the



18<sup>th</sup> December 2017



8<sup>th</sup> April 2018

new main axleboxes that they had been making. During this time we still had plenty to do painting the cladding and cab in its new light green livery.

On 15th March the new axleboxes were fitted into the chassis for the first time. Shortly after this the driving wheels had their coupling rods added and everything was seen to revolve. This was a great step forward, considering that the components had been machined in three different locations and there had been assumptions that everything would align.

We were then able to place the boiler permanently onto the chassis. Steam was raised again and now *Railway Queen* was able to move under its own power.

As is to be expected there have been one or two problems and we have been grateful to various friends of the railway in guiding us towards solutions. At the third attempt we got the regulator valve inside the dome of the boiler to seal properly when shut. The remaining problem concerns a worn slide valve which has been causing the locomotive to not 'chuff' cleanly, with consequent loss of power. We will shortly be giving more attention to the locomotive valves and valve chests.



*Inside the left hand side valve chest of Railway Queen, with the heavily worn right hand side valve above*

*Railway Queen* passed its boiler inspection on 14th June and this has enabled the boiler insulation, cladding and cab to be fitted so that the loco is now complete except for a few finishing touches.

Six things that make *Railway Queen* different:

- The very light green livery (we think that the fairground signwriters at Belle Vue re-painted the loco very regularly, with whatever colour paint was to hand).
- The whistle - it is seriously loud!
- The sand boxes (on the running plates on both sides), which are now back on the loco, having been fitted were fitted to it during a spell when the Belle Vue railway was out an out and back run
- The manifold shut off valve – it is so big that the handle sticks out above the cab roof – very unusual!
- The fluted rods, which were much loved by Ken Dove
- The dome and chimney, which are slightly higher than those on its sister locomotives.

## The many faces of *Railway Queen*



*When new, at the Woodland Park Miniature Railway in Kent (named Michael). No images of RQ at its next location have yet come to light – The Saracens Head public house in Cheshire*



*At Belle Vue wearing the very light green livery on which the current restoration is based (Edward Dorricott, July 1973).*



*At Rhyl, with Ken Dove in charge, in 'Great Central black' livery on 18/8/85. Behind are Joan and Michael, and at that time all three locos were in working order.*



*Ken and Railway Queen again, but this time with a full train, and in red livery carrying the splashers from Michael, on 18/8/89. This was the last year in which RQ's 1948 boiler carried a ticket; it now sees service in Derbyshire as a flower pot.*

## Santa Trains 2017

Santa trains during December 2017 at Rhyl Miniature Railway were the busiest ever, with Santa greeting 701 children over four days. *Michael* hauled a five car train including all three enclosed carriages. Virtually all the bookings were made on line, and wrapping all the presents was a leviathan task.

We came third equal in the Rhyl Mayor's Christmas Window competition. We were pleased when the Mayor Cllr Alan James and Mrs Win Mullen James came to present the award certificate to us.



New Treatment plant for locomotive water

With the Christmas receipts being particularly good, the railway was left with a financial surplus which the Trustees decided to invest in a new plant to treat the water for our steam locomotives. We bought the plant from a local supplier and plumbed it into place ourselves – the new holding tanks we placed as high as we could inside 'Central Station'.

Loco water now passes through a softener and is then automatically dosed with additive. This consistency of water treatment should repay its cost in the long term through reducing deterioration of our locomotive boilers.

## Pirates Weekend 2018

Pirates Weekend 2018 on 26<sup>th</sup> – 28<sup>th</sup> May produced a good turnout, as it always does, despite mixed weather on one of the days. On Saturday the event was attended by Crap Radio whilst on Monday we had Marvellous Beasts. Trains were hauled in various permutations by *Michael*, *Prince Edward of Wales* and *Cagney*.



The Easter Egg Hunt on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> April was also successful. On the one day with good weather we were decidedly busy, and easily recovered our costs for putting the event on.

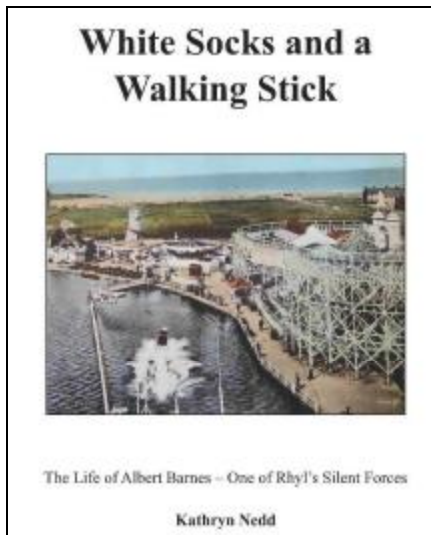
Our next events are the Teddy Bears Picnic on 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> August, then on 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> August the Royal Return. This latter event will feature our two regal locomotives and will be the occasion when *Railway Queen* will be officially re-named.

## White Socks and a Walking Stick

Rhyl Miniature Railway has published a book, *White Socks and a Walking Stick*, which is a biography of Albert Barnes, written and designed by his grand daughter Kathryn Nedd.



The book has 112 A5 pages and 53 illustrations. The book is available at the RMR's shop at a price of £10 and by mail order through the railway's website at £11 including postage.



Albert Barnes is best known at the RMR for building in Rhyl six 15in gauge Atlantic locomotives of which we now give a home to four. Some might also know that he was manager of Rhyl Amusements Limited from 1911 until 1948.



This book is based on much original research combined with family memories of growing up in Rhyl surrounded by the fairground. It tells the story of the Butler family and how their business interests in Rhyl began.

Above all it shows what a life of achievement that Albert Barnes led, through his clever engineering for different fairgrounds worldwide and his contributions to public service.

For anyone interested in the wider history surrounding Rhyl Miniature Railway, this book is a 'must have'. Not many copies of it have been printed and the book is only available from us.

## Billie

Our friend Austin Moss from the Windmill Farm Railway has purchased *Billie*, the 'Barnes Atlantic' which ran until 1979 at Dreamland in Margate. This locomotive visited RMR for our Centenary in 1911, as a static exhibit, and then returned to Kent where it was owned privately. *Billie* arrived at its new home on 14th May.



The boiler and wheelsets have recently been taken to NBR Engineering Services Ltd in Darlington for attention.



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## 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 £8.00 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 of the Friends is Liz Wright, of 6 Bryn Ithel, Abergele LL22 8QB.

### Friends' Newsletter

Editor: Simon Townsend

Photographs in this issue by Justin Bell, Simon Townsend and Edward Dorricott