

Friends of Rhyl Miniature Railway

Newsletter No. 47

Website: www.rhylminiaturerailway.co.uk

June 2024



Trust Chairman Les Hughes celebrates his Eightieth Birthday

On 4th April 2024 Les Hughes was at the railway in celebration of his eightieth birthday.

Les first bought four of the Marine Lake trains in 1980. When Rhyl Steam Preservation Trust was formed in 2000 he became its Chairman, so he and his family members have been key contributors to Rhyl Miniature Railway for over forty years.

In the picture at right Les (centre) was attending the opening of RMR Central Station on 26th May 2007.



Locomotive Projects 2024

Wheels wheels wheels: Up to date guidance from the Office of Rail and Road requires locomotives and rolling stock to undergo annual examinations. These examinations must include assessment of wear on components such as wheels, which must be compared to the railways' standards.

During winter 2023/24 we undertook our most detailed examination to date of all our wheelsets on locomotives and passenger carriages, which has resulted in two carriages from the 'red set' being temporarily withdrawn from service.

Clara: Our passenger diesel *Clara* does the greatest annual mileage of all our locomotives, and a wear pattern was apparent on its driving wheels. It was therefore decided to remove these wheelsets and take them to Alan Keef Ltd to be turned to our profile.



Here is one of the wheelsets, with its tyres re-profiled, bearings renewed and a new drive sprocket fitted.



Having re-assembled *Clara* we also gave it a re-paint and it re-entered service during March.

Lister locomotive: This loco performs important duties on PW trains. Its engine was worn and had become difficult to start. We have therefore swapped this for a reconditioned engine, which we fitted to the loco ourselves.



Prince Edward of Wales: On 23rd September, during our gala weekend, our Little Giant locomotive unexpectedly failed, and it was found that the failure was caused by a broken valve bridle. The valve bridle moves the valve back and forth. On this loco the valves are mounted vertically inside the valve chests, underneath the loco smokebox.



Small springs hold the valves against the valve faces. The valve chests are for certain original components fitted in 1909, and represented new territory for us having not before been opened up during our ownership of the loco.

In attempting a repair we were rescued by David Colley from the Sherwood Forest Railway, who said he could design new bridles using CAD, print them out on his 3D printer and then send them to his foundry to obtain new castings.



Here are the castings, new - old - new - old.

After the new castings had been machined we then had to set them in place and time the valve events correctly - a difficult job, for which we removed the locomotive boiler from the chassis to obtain access and visibility.



We also had to reinstate the springing arrangement inside the valve chests. *Prince Edward of Wales* re-entered service on 16th June.

It will not be too long before we have to dismantle this loco again to re-tube the boiler.

From the Archives



This artistic composite postcard shows at top right Marine Lake just after it opened. Close scrutiny shows the north and west shores packed with visitors. How accurate was that and are the roof lines beyond Marine Lake correct?



This undated photo shows a train on the original (pre 1969) railway weaving its way around the corner of the old sea wall. The wall is still there now, but of course the building and the big dipper (both in the background) are only memories. The train would have been six cars and seems to be full – as per usual in that period.



Easy to forget about now is the water chute which arrived at the lake in 1910. This card of it was posted in 1913.



Ken Dove was running the railway when this photograph was taken on 15th August 1985. Billy Blackmore is the driver and the train is where the blue arch is now. The loco is Ken's favourite Railway Queen, in black livery.



This card was posted on 28th July 1921. By then the new larger locos would be operating but this heavily re-touched card shows either Prince Edward of Wales or George the Fifth. The interesting thing is the train of five full 'cars de luxe'. Was the little loco really pulling a load as heavy as that? What do you think?



Who remembers the 10¼ gauge railway by Ffrith Beach in Prestatyn? The two locos built by Fenlow, Rhuddlan Castle and Conway Castle, are still giving good service elsewhere. All of the images on this page were purchased from Ebay during the last few years.

Other RMR News

Christmas Trains 2023



The Christmas trains were again very successful in 2023, with 942 children visiting Santa in RMR's grotto. The new booking and ticketing system worked very well, it was provided by the Dutch company Fareharbor.

Railway Queen hauled the train, fitted with lights for the early evening trains. This was the first time that our enclosed set had all four vehicles to our new tall standard.

In John Myers' photograph above the train is heading for the bypass line at Central station, something which only Santa trains do as they go round the circuit twice.

Car parking charges at Marine Lake



A sign of our times was the introduction of pay and display parking charges at Marine Lake from 22nd March 2024. We decided not to oppose this as it would seem fruitless. We work closely with officers of the Council based at Rhyl harbour, who are regularly helpful to us.

It's on, it's off, it's on, it's off

The news in mid March from Welsh Water was that they are not going to seek site possession at Marine Lake this summer.

The reason for the further delay to the required works to the storm relief tank has not been made public.

Railway Gala 2024?

We have not announced any railway gala this year like the one in 2023, but we do intend organising a family fun weekend on 24th to 26th August, which will probably see a two train service in operation.

Thank you to Pete and Liz, Hello to Graham

At the last AGM of the Friends of Rhyl Miniature Railway, Liz Wright retired as Secretary of the group. Since then she and Pete have re-located to Burton on Trent, where we wish them well for a long and happy retirement. They will be missed and we are grateful for all that both have done for the RMR.

Graham Hoyland has indicated that he is prepared to succeed Liz as Secretary of the Friends, and he has been appointed by the Committee pending election at the next AGM meeting. Graham was Membership Secretary for the Llangollen Railway Trust for many years. He is now retired from that and from his steam driving duties at Llangollen, but he also volunteers for the Welsh Highland Railway Society. We look forward to the experience which he will bring to our RMR group.



RHYL STEAM PRESERVATION TRUST Registered Charity No 1103953

Trustees: Les Hughes (Chairman), Carol Hughes, Louise Webster, Lucille Green, Simon Townsend (Secretary), Justin Bell. Enquiries about railway operations should be addressed to the Trust Secretary, 10 Cilnant, Mold CH7 1GG, Tel 07940 261910.

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.

Chairman of the Friends is Simon Townsend
For Subscriptions and Enquiries: Secretary of the Friends is G J Hoyland, 'Llys-y-Fron', 4 Ffordd Tan'r Allt, Abergele, Sir Conwy. LL22 7DQ.

Friends' Newsletter

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Photographs in this issue by John Myers, Justin Bell, Simon Townsend.