

Friends of Rhyl Miniature Railway

Newsletter No. 48

Website: www.rhylminiaturerailway.co.uk

October 2024



Gareth Davies, MS for the Vale of Clwyd, visits Rhyl Miniature Railway

Gareth Davies, MS for the Vale of Clwyd, visited Rhyl Miniature Railway on 4th September as part an exercise to get to know local businesses. Gareth showed close interest in how the locomotives operate, as shown in the photo with our Trustees Les Hughes and Justin Bell. He went for a ride around Marine Lake on the tender of our steam locomotive Michael, and asked all sorts of good questions about how our charity Rhyl Steam Preservation Trust operates. We were grateful to receive such support and encouragement for the railway from our local Assembly member.



Busy summer season and August event at Rhyl Miniature Railway



Summer 2024

Our memory of summer 2024 will be how busy the railway became once we got into the peak days of the season. At times there were queues of customers waiting to buy train tickets, crabbing equipment, tea and coffee, ice cream, slush, gifts, and confectionery. This high demand did not happen every day, but it was heartening to see it happen at all given the season's experience of some heritage railways elsewhere. Therefore we can say that the RMR is in good heart despite the rises in costs of coal, energy, and other items that we have seen.

Marine Lake Family Weekend

Justin organised a special event which took place over August Bank Holiday weekend, in the slot that had been occupied in previous years by Rhyl Air Show. Some fairground people attended from Lancashire with a bouncy castle and other juvenile attractions.

We put on a two train service using locos *Joan* and *Michael*. This combination produced on the Saturday a day's record for takings during the last ten years. We thought that this was pretty good, but on bank holiday Monday we ran more trains than before, and narrowly beat the record again.



Billie enters solo passenger service

On the first Sunday of the season we steamed *Billie*, which had run satisfactorily on test. But this plan ended in ignominy when on the right hand side a tapered key which holds the crosshead in place expired.

Following the manufacture of a new piston rod and a new key we tried again on the last weekend of the main season (following more testing).

This time the loco performed well, being free steaming and quite competent with a heavy train of five cars. It also looks great in its DMR livery (Dreamland Miniature Railway). We wonder whether these trains were the toughest challenge the loco has faced since it was built a hundred years ago.

It still knocks a bit, and the boiler is of course the oldest one of the six steam locos that we have in service.

Over the winter we will be applying more tlc to *Billie*



Over the summer Justin completed the cosmetic restoration of Billie by installing working headlights to equip it for night time operation.



It had this headlight feature during its time at Margate, as the archive black and white photo shows.

Look out for.....



Newly qualified guard Garreth Maguire was a regular sight around the railway this summer. At home, he also produced using his 3D printer childrens' models of our loco *Clara* plus coaches; these added to the variety of our sales items and were popular with our customers.



Coming soon to a computer near you!

Other RMR News

Storm damage causes exploration in the watery deep of Marine Lake



Gale force weather on the night of August 22nd found a weak point on a strip of aluminium flashing at the west side of Central Station. This has happened twice before, and last time the missing profile of aluminium was located in the delivery yard on the other side of Wellington Road – once detached it had blown that long distance in the wind.

This time attention focused on a light coloured shape visible on the lake bed of Marine Lake that was not far out from the lake path. A brave soul from our team decided that he could brave the gloomy depths of the lake and by this means the large section of aluminium was retrieved.

Local roofers William Pownall & Son then attended with their cherry picker wagon, and through this means the flashing was reinstated in its place, top right at the west end of our building.

New Archive photograph



This interesting photograph taken by Rae Pickard cropped up – fleetingly – in the listings on Ebay, This must have been taken on a special occasion given the military personnel who are present. The date must surely be before 1920. At the back of the last car the lining, and the small wooden buffers and ring coupling, have never been seen by us before in any other photograph.

New panel about the opening of the Lake



There was a ceremony at Marine Lake on August 16th to unveil a new panel interpreting the opening day of the lake in 1896. The unveiling was performed by the Deputy Mayor of Rhyl, Councillor Alex Walker, together with his consort Miss Florence Feeny. They are seen above with Bill Newton and Betty Smith (Chair and Secretary of Marine Lake Users Forum) and Justin Bell and Dylan Wilkinson from the RMR. This modest project was truly a joint effort, with the railway paying for the artwork and the panel, MLUF paying (via a grant) for the blue plinth, and Denbighshire County Council paying for the concrete mounting of the plinth from its Marine Lake budget.



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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