

Friends of Rhyl Miniature Railway

Newsletter No. 49

Website: www.rhylminiaturerailway.co.uk

June 2025



Santa trains at Rhyl Miniature Railway feature night time running

Santa trains at the railway operated on December 7th and 8th, and then every day from December 14th until 24th. All of the trains were pre-booked, and they sold out several weeks in advance. Each day included trains in the early evening, as illustrated by these scenes from our youtube video about them.

The main Santa locomotive *Railway Queen* is fitted with strong headlights. This season's trains also featured *Billie*, as shown below.



Major track renewals at RMR during January to March 2025



Step One: all of the fishbolts along the long length were undone, then the track panels complete were slewed off the trackbed. Some of this was done in poor weather! Some dud sleepers were identified and were replaced at this stage.



Step Four: The track panels were slewed on top of the new base, and were connected up. This proved to only take a few days.



Step Two: The soiled ballast was dug out of the trackbed using a mini digger. The digger transferred the material into a dumper truck and it was then tipped and ultimately left the site altogether.



Step Five: Extra ballast was brought in one wagon load at a time – latterly this had to be shovelled both into and out of the wagon. This was used to level and fill the new track. Each sleeper had to have stone pushed underneath it to create track that was level and stable.



Step Three: New ballast was delivered to the lake site perimeter, and then delivered to the trackbed in small piles. These needed to be raked by hand to make a ballast base.

New museum exhibits at RMR Central Station

During the closed season 2024 – 2025 we spent a lot of time on cyclical repainting of walls and floors at Central Station.

We also revisited items that are on display in the glass case in the museum room. A range of items from the history of the railway are now on public display for the first time.

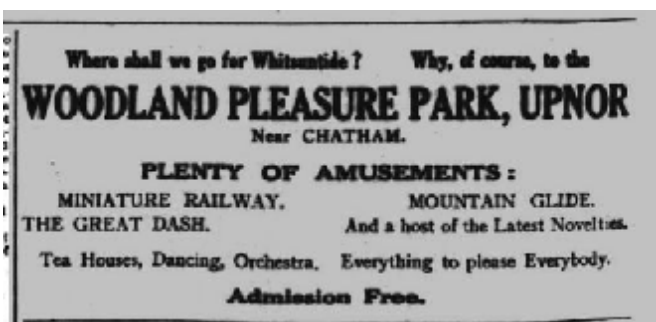
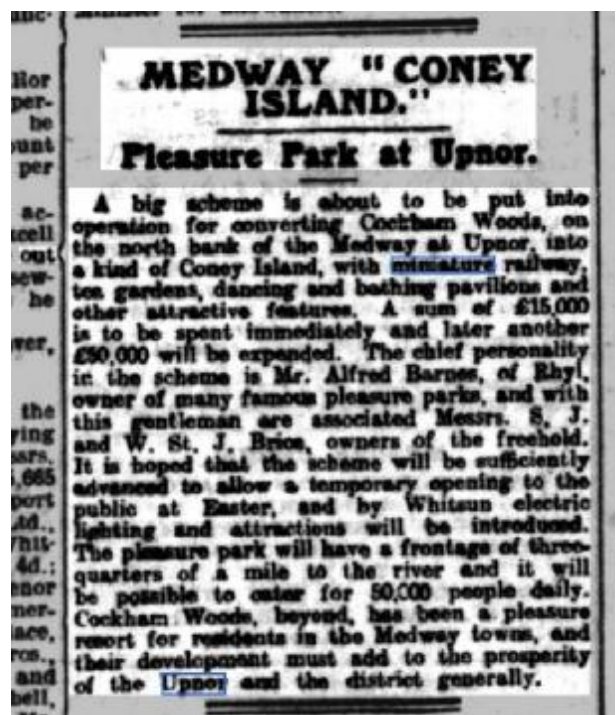
Important amongst these is the commemorative key given to Albert Barnes when he opened the Plaza Cinema in Rhyl on June 29th 1931. This key is part of the Trust's collection; it was very generously donated to us some time ago, through the good offices of Friends member Kathryn Nedd.

Also now on display is a flyer from the first season of re-opening of the railway in 1978, and a sign from the railway ticket box from the 1980s.



New information on the history of RMR loco *Railway Queen*

Some mysteries still surround the early history of some of the locomotives built by Albert Barnes. Several postcards are in existence showing the railway at Woodland Park, at Upnor in Kent. The locomotive is clearly named *Michael*, and there seems little doubt this is the train which later moved to Cheshire and thence to Belle Vue, where the locomotive became *Railway Queen*. New research by Peter Scott in newspaper archives has shown that Albert Barnes had much to do with the Woodland Pleasure Park. What is most new is that this attraction definitely opened in 1923.



Other RMR News

During Autumn 2024 the track gang carried out the usual spot re-sleeping. They also **re-laid** a section just after the blue bridge crossing, and removed the two non standard rails which had been in the main line further down. This section of the track had been moving around due to expansion of the rails in hot weather. The new gentle sweeping curve is a great improvement compared to what was here beforehand.

A feature of the closed season 2024 – 2025 was the weekly contribution at RMR made by three **engineering students** on work placement day release from Rhyl College. On one day per week we have also had Ben who was with us from North Wales Training's future skills scheme.

In addition pupils from Rhyl High School worked with us for one week undertaking work experience.

The main locomotive project for winter 2024 – 2025 was the **rebuilding of the Stephenson's valve gear on Joan**. The various parts were removed and despatched to Peirianeg Deudraeth Engineering Limited where every bearing was renewed, and most of the machined pins were replaced.



Engineering students Archie and Filip were largely responsible for reassembling the locomotive, which was then run in and re-entered service.

At the moment some main motion parts from *Billie* are away being machined to similar high standards. Once they return it is likely that some parts of *Michael* will be visiting the machine shop, and it may be that *Michael* will not feature very much in passenger service this year.

The 2025 season began unexpectedly early, when it transpired that schools in Liverpool and Manchester began their Easter holidays a week earlier than schools in Wales. This caught out our intended schedule as on our leaflet, but fortunately we were ready and were able to open for most of a week before our official season began.

There will be no enthusiast's gala event at RMR during 2025. We will however be staging a **family fun event**, which is scheduled for 19th – 21st August.

A major job behind the scenes has been a new Forward Plan for the railway, together with other documents required for a submission to continue with **museum accreditation**. It is hoped that this will lead to a further period of full accreditation once the awarding panel meets next month.



This photograph shows the **new floor covering** fitted into RMR's shop during March.

An innovation this 2025 season has been the new traffic lights protecting RMR's crossing with the access road onto Marine Lake. More details in the next newsletter.



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 £10.00 per annum and runs to 31st May each year, including newsletters due in April and September.

Chairman of the Friends is Simon Townsend
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Friends' Newsletter

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