

Friends of Rhyl Miniature Railway

Newsletter No. 22

Website: www.rhylminiaturerailway.co.uk

September 2011



1911 – 2011; RMR Centenary Gala featured all six Locomotives built in Rhyl





The RMR Centenary Gala on 28th – 30th May was a highly successful event, attracting over 3,200 visitors despite the weather not being completely on our side. The event marked the beginning of 'Rhyl Week' and was opened by the Mayor of Rhyl, Councillor Win Mullen-James, who dressed especially in period costume (above). As promised. The railway was able to present all six locomotives in Rhyl, together for the first time, together with another original RMR locomotive *Prince Edward of Wales*.

We are very grateful to the owners of the visiting locomotives for allowing us to put the event on. Jim and Helen Shackell provided *John*, in its usual immaculate condition, from its home base at Evesham Vale Light Railway. Austin Moss brought *Prince Edward of Wales* from the Windmill Farm Railway in Lancashire. Austin and Janet dressed up in period costume and were seen entering into the spirit of things.

Special mention must be made of Michael List Brain, from the Steam Museum Trust near Canterbury. He ended up towing his locomotive *Billie* to the event himself; two round trips of over ten hours each; a remarkable contribution to our event.



The Formby entertainers performed on all three days next to 'Central Station'; there was often witty repartee between their MC and departing trains. There were juvenile fairground attractions each day for children to ride on; also craft stalls and a variety of other childrens' attractions, including circus performers. An open top bus brought people to the event. On Monday a short play was performed on the Council's portable stage. We were impressed to find that many of the Monday afternoon trains were still well patronised. This was the biggest community event seen at Marine Lake during recent times, and was organised by our Trust jointly with Denbighshire County Council. The County Council 'Rhyl Week' Committee and the Communities First Trust Fund both contributed financially towards the event, for which we are also grateful.



communities first cymunedau yn gyntaf





From the railway's point of view, *Michael* was the star of the show, running on all three days either single or double headed. Its four coach train was in authentic RMR blue 1960s livery; the back vehicle was new, having only been built in the few months prior to the event.

Cagney No 44 also contributed, hauling a second train throughout the event.

Austin Moss had re-named his locomotive *Prince Edward of Wales* and lettered it RMR especially for us, since this was its identity when it was present at the opening of the RMR in 1911. After the event was over it was posed with *Michael*, right.



Centenary Mosaic presented to Rhyl Miniature Railway



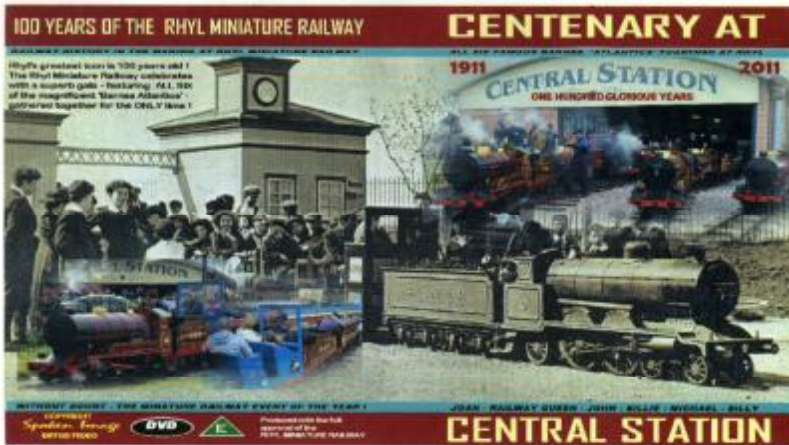
Students from Pengwern College have completed a stunning new mosaic to celebrate the Centenary of Rhyl Miniature Railway. Now displayed inside the 'Central Station' building, it was formally presented to the railway in a ceremony on Thursday 21st July at Marine Lake. The mosaic is made out of 12,000 individual tiles, and was created by fifteen students, over eight weeks, during their art classes at the College. The artwork is one of the railway's locomotives, which is shown with symbolic tracks around it and '1911 - 2011'.

Cllr Joan Butterfield, Trustee of Rhyl Steam Preservation Trust, said 'We are delighted to accept this memorable piece of art, which will be permanently displayed to commemorate the railway's centenary year'.

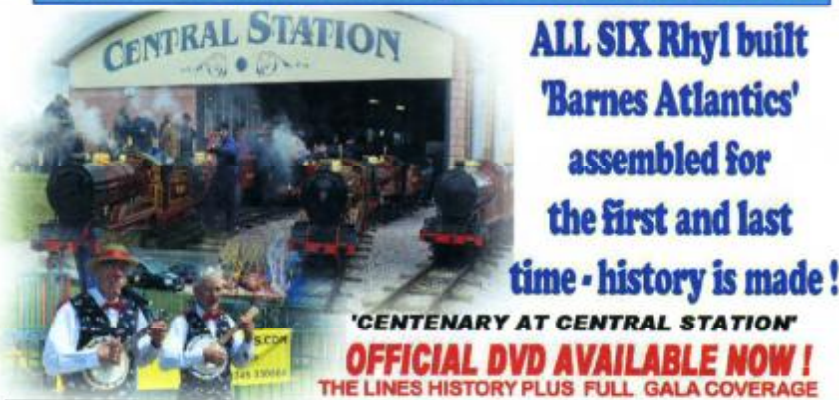


'It is all the more valuable having been hand-created by students at a local College, tile by tile.' She added: 'This presentation is a perfect postscript to our Centenary Gala in May, when the railway carried 3,200 passengers in three days, the busiest that it has been during the last twenty years. All will be able to view this new mosaic, at any time when the railway is open.' Pauline Rowland, Principal of Pengwern College, said 'This mosaic is a good example of the creative nature of our students here. We are pleased that it will find a permanent home in the local community, commemorating the Centenary Year of Rhyl Miniature Railway.'

THE MINIATURE RAILWAY EVENT OF THE YEAR!



A Celebration of Rhyl's Greatest icon !!



ON SALE HERE

Dave Hunter's DVD of the Centenary event is now available from the RMR shop, or by post from 10 Cilniant, Mold, Flintshire CH7 1GG, at a cost of £10.00 + £1.00 postage. Please make cheques payable to Rhyl Steam Preservation Trust.

RMR Carriage and Wagon report

By Justin Bell

A lot has happen since the last time I reported from the C&W department. After last year's gala where we had one blue coach which needed finishing , I had to get on to get the second rake ready for the grand gala at the end of May this year.

The first thing was to finish the first blue coach which needed the ribbing on the seats and floor. Once this was going on two other coaches were rubbed down and painted blue in turn. After they were rubbed down they were spray painted to get the blue paint round and in between the seat ribbing, then the rest of the coach was given three coats of blue paint. In January of this year the eighth and final coach was started. This is another coach which is fitted with a space for wheelchairs, so both rakes can take wheelchairs. This coach was slightly quicker to build as I used the two seats that were removed from coach 4 when I rebuilt it to take a wheelchair. This meant that I only had to build one seat and I had the ribbing as I made six seats when I built coach 5.

Coach 8 was finished in time for *Michael's* renaming on the first May bank holiday and then the rake was fitted with the RMR yellow transfers by Pat Kelly. The two rakes are now finished and will only need loving care to keep them running for many years to come as they were built in 1913.



Restoration of locomotive 'Michael' completed



When the Spring newsletter closed for press *Michael* had failed its boiler inspection due to a cracked bracket on the regulator casting. At the end of the same week we delivered the boiler back to its builder Terry Statham, thanks to Denbigh Timber Products who allowed us to use their van.

We did have some luck in finding a spare casting in our workshop, amongst our 'legacy' supply of spares, and this proved to be easier to fit than Terry had first feared. Our boiler inspector Dave Wothers gave up his time on the day of the Royal Wedding, 29th April, to return to us and certify the steam test, above.



Later on 29th April Pat Kelly and his team swung into action and lagged the boiler of *Michael* then fitted the cladding, cab and splashers, so that the locomotive was complete in time for its ceremonial launch on Sunday 1st May, one hundred years to the day from when the RMR first opened.

The naming ceremony was performed by David Lord and Simon Butler (above), descendants of the Butler family, after whom the locomotives *Joan*, *John*, *Michael* and *Billy* were originally named.

'Michael' Restoration: Chronology

Now that *Michael* is working again it is appropriate to remember the milestones which brought the engine to its current state.

2007

21st October: Locomotive arrived at 'Central Station' from previous static display at LlanfairPG

2008

17th March: Existing boiler inspected and found to be beyond economic repair

8th October: New boiler ordered from TRS Boilermakers

Winter 2008 / 2009: Locomotive dismantled for restoration work to begin

2009

28th February: Old boiler taken to TRS Boilermakers

31st October: Driving wheels returned from Acme Precision Engineering following re-tyring.

13th November: Restoration of tender complete

2010

March/May: Grants received from Communities First Trust Fund and from Rhyl Town Council

Spring 2010: Construction work commences on new boiler

August 2010: Locomotive chassis run on air

23rd September: New boiler delivered to Rhyl

18th December: Locomotive steamed for first time

2011

14th January: First trial runs

6th March: Trial runs with final pipework

4th April: Boiler inspection discovers crack in regulator

9th April: Boiler returned to maker

19th April: Boiler returned to RMR following repairs

21st to 25th April: Trial steamings with repaired boiler

29th April: Locomotive receives boiler certificate for operation on public trains

29th – 30th April: Cladding and cab reassembled

Sunday 1st May: Ceremonial naming by David Lord and Simon Butler

May: Modifications to mechanical lubricator delivery, and other fine tuning

Friday 27th May: Operation of special train for the opening of the Marine Lake Nature & Heritage Trail.

Saturday 28th – Monday 30th May: In operation at RMR Centenary Gala

June 2011: Withdrawn for repairs to little ends and gudgeon pins, to make the engine 'knock-free'

16th July: Engine entered service on four days per week for main summer season.

Although they look similar *Michael* is a good deal different in operation to *Joan*. The firebox bottom is flat and has wide water legs on either side of the fire.

Michael's injectors are mounted underneath the cab floor and they feed to the front of the boiler through internal discharge pipes. These design arrangements have contributed to free steaming and have helped to make the engine pleasingly efficient in operation.

The 2011 season

During 2011 the railway opened to the public on 90 days and has carried 14,000 passengers. This represents an increase in numbers of a third over 2010 before taking Christmas trains and the Gala into account.

We extended the length of the main season for daily running from six to seven weeks, which proved to be worthwhile. Many of the trains during this period were operated by RMR's 'A' team of Pat Kelly, Dave Purvis and Iain Dawson-Cook, seen here on 2nd September.



Another highlight was Rhyl Airshow coinciding on 7th August with the passing of the North Wales Coast Express hauled by 70013 Oliver Cromwell. It was photographed by Stéphanie Durrant with some assistance from Photoshop.

Outing to Kirklees Light Railway



Cagney No 44 was invited to the gala weekend of Kirklees Light Railway over 10th-11th September. There it operated 'Cagney Cannonball' trains over KLR's demanding line, double heading with Lawrence and Jeremy Martin' Cagney from Kent. We are hopeful that we may see this double act repeated at the RMR during 2012.

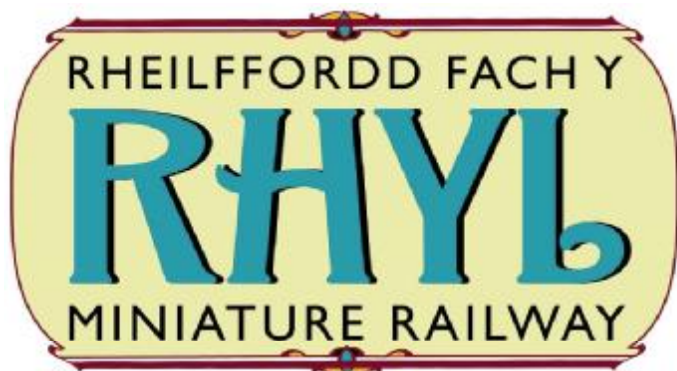
Eric Hughes



Eric Hughes died on 2nd July at the age of 91. Eric was the son in law of the builder of RMR's locomotives Albert Barnes. He was also manager of Rhyl Amusements Limited over a long period, which he described in his book 'Rhyl at the Funfair'. He achieved prominence in the fairground world and latterly held responsibility for other sites including Belle Vue, Manchester, where our loco *Railway Queen* operated. Eric was a very gentlemanly character, and a great authority on all that went on at the Marine Lake and Ocean Beach funfairs. He was very helpful to our Trust during the building of 'Central Station', supplying memories and photographs, including the cine film which visitors can now play in our museum. The photograph of him above was taken when he attended the opening of 'Central Station' on 26th May 2007.



A new character at Marine Lake is the hatted rower, representing the earliest days of the Lake, part of the Marine Lake Nature & Heritage Trail. Photographed with him on 11th July were Albert Barnes's daughter Mrs Eileen Wormald, and her son David Barnes Wormald.



SANTA SPECIALS



SUNDAYS 11TH AND 18TH DECEMBER 2011
AT MARINE LAKE, RHYLL

STEAM TRAIN DEPARTURES
AT 10AM, 11AM, 12AM
1.30PM, 2.30PM, 3.30PM



CHILDREN £9 EACH

Every child will meet Santa in his grotto, and receive a special present.

One Adult free per child, includes train ride and seasonal refreshments.

Additional adults £3.00 each.

To book, fill out the form available at RMR Central Station, or at www.rhylminiaturerailway.co.uk.

Santa's Hotline 01745 360584

Other RMR News

Joan Butterfield

Congratulations to our Trustee Councillor Joan Butterfield for being awarded an MBE in the latest Queen's Honours List. We think that this was deserved for her contribution to organising RMR's Centenary Dinner and celebrations, but we hear that in fact it was for her contribution to the local community over a decade or more.

New Picnic Benches

We are grateful to the Mayor, Councillor Win Mullen James, for making our Trust one of her chosen charities for her Mayoral year. From the Mayor's fund we were presented with two new picnic benches, which have become popular facilities at the RMR.

Marine Lake Nature & Heritage Trail

The Nature and Heritage Trail opened on Friday 27th May. Its sculptures and entrance features have proven particularly popular. At the moment the 'rubbings trail' is due to be re-worked and because of this the Marine Lake leaflet, which forms part of the scheme, has still to be released. Both of these promise to be additional assets for the site during 2012.

RMR Winter Work Programme 2011/2012

Steam Locomotives: The major project this winter will be Cagney No 44. Bell Boilers have agreed to re-tube the boiler at their works in Gloucestershire; the work has been generously sponsored by Rhyl Town Council. We are expecting that much could be done to its chassis whilst the boiler is away.

Work has started on the cosmetic restoration of the Trust thirds 4-4-2 *Railway Queen*. It is not anticipated that this will lead to its return to steam, at least not unless a very wealthy sponsor could be found.

Air Brakes: Work has started on extending and improving the RMR's air brake system with a view to both 'Milnes' rakes of coaches being braked.

'Clara': Two years ago the Trust commissioned Alan Keef Ltd to design a scheme to fit a new engine and modern hydraulic transmission to this diesel locomotive. We have now applied for part funding to progress this rebuild early in 2012, subject to our applications being successful.

Museum Matters: We have been required by CyMAL, regulators for the museum accreditation scheme in Wales, to accession all our archive photographs formally into the Trust's collection. We would also hope to introduce some further museum interactive features.

Education: The Trust has agreed to be a partner in Denbighshire Heritage Service's education programme for 2012, by offering structured facilities for schools during the week commencing 23rd April 2012.

RMR Jubilee Gala 2nd to 5th June 2012



RMR's 2012 event will coincide with the Queen's Diamond Jubilee and will have a patriotic theme.



RHYL STEAM PRESERVATION TRUST Registered Charity No 1103953

Trustees: Les Hughes (Chairman), Carol Hughes, Louise Webster, Lucille Green, Cllr Joan Butterfield JP, Cllr 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 £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 of the Friends is Dave Bell, of 22 River Street, Rhyl LL18 1PT, Tel 01745 339477.

**Friends' Newsletter
Editor: Simon Townsend**

Photographs in this issue by Pat Kelly, John Myers, Dave Holroyde, Jeff Colledge, Stéphanie Durrant and Simon Townsend