

MAID MARIAN LOCOMOTIVE FUND

PROGRESS REPORT

MAY 2025

2025 AGM:

This is a reminder that this year's AGM will be held on Saturday 5 July 2025 at Llanuwchllyn Station starting at the usual time of 1400 hours. Please note the change of month from the previous September slot for reasons explained in the November 2024 Progress Report. You may find that it is easier to travel to Llanuwchllyn and back in the daylight, which is one of the reasons the time slot was chosen. The Committee will review their decision if experience over several years shows that early July is not popular with the majority of subscribers.

FUND-RAISING OPPORTUNITIES:

Arrangements have been made for the Fund's stall to be present at the following occasions in 2025:

Occasion:	Date:	Location:
1) May Bank Holiday	Saturday 24 May / Monday 26 May	Llanuwchllyn Station
2) 2025 AGM	Saturday 5 July 2025	Llanuwchllyn Station
3) August Steam Gala	Saturday 23 August/Monday 25 August	Llanuwchllyn Station
4) Model Railway Show	Saturday 20 Sept. /Sunday 22 Sept.	Ysgol y Berwyn, Bala

You will note that these dates are more evenly-spaced than previously, which will make it easier for the stall to be manned. This year your Fund-raising Officer and your Secretary will both be in attendance at the May Bank Holiday and would welcome any one else who would like to help out on the stall on this and other occasions. Assistance on the evening of Friday 19 September 2025 at Ysgol y Berwyn will also be most welcome to unload the stall prior to the actual opening of the Show on Saturday and in putting the stall away after the end of the Show on Sunday evening. We continue to provide a range of attractive gift items on the stall (See below for new additions) and will give further details of any changes in the stock.

IN MEMORIAM:

PAUL TOWERS:

The Fund is saddened to learn about the recent death of Paul in January of this year. Paul had been involved with *Maid Marian* since 1965 when he was the editor of Model Railway News and had provided an opportunity for advertising the Maid Marian Locomotive Fund at a time when money was being raised were to purchase the loco. He became as subscriber in May 1967 and attended the Handing-over Ceremony at Llanberis and the subsequent trip up the Festiniog Railway (as it was called then) to Tan-y Bwlch in a single coach hauled by *Britomart*. At the 1987 AGM Paul was elected as President of the Fund on a "temporary" basis and remained in post until the 1991 AGM. In 1991, Paul retired to Porthmadog from the Birmingham area; he was nearer to *Maid Marian* and renewed his subscribership of the Fund, enjoying the opportunity to visit the loco at Llanuwchllyn once again. He continued to be active in the model railway world and was frequently seen at events where the Fund's stall was also in attendance. In 2023 he celebrated his 90th birthday by organising a trip for his friends up the FfR to Tan y Bwlch once again, on a train headed by *Maid Marian*, *Britomart* and *Blanche*. His final visit to Llanuwchllyn to see *Maid Marian* was in September 2023, for the AGM, following which he travelled down the line behind the loco for the last time. His failing health meant that he was unable to see the loco again. Paul will be sadly missed by the many friends who knew him in a number of different circles.

PETER WARD:

The Fund is also saddened to learn about the death of another long-term member and supporter of the Fund. Peter was a life-long railway enthusiast who took thousands of photographs of the passing of the age of steam from the 1940s onwards. He volunteered at the Severn Valley railway and also at the Festiniog Railway, where he probably first met with John Firth and Tony Rhodes, who were both founders members of the MMLF. Within a couple of months of the establishment of the Fund in September 1965, Peter was providing the first of many excellent postcards of slate quarry scenes as part of the fund-raising activities to prevent *Maid Marian* from being exported to North America, to where so many Hunslet locos had previously been exported. The initial postcards proved so successful that Peter supplemented them with a

selection of larger prints from his slate quarry archive; all the profits from these sales counted as his subscription to the Fund. His long association with *Maid Marian* involved driving her when at the Bressingham Steam Museum and later when she was based at the Bala Lake Railway. Peter was a regular attender of the AGMs and kept in regular touch with the latest details of her condition. Peter had a wide-ranging interest in his many hobbies which included transport in all its forms as well as travelling and model miniature steam locomotives. He moved to Lilleshall in 1968 to a bungalow with a large garden and lake which attracted a wide range of wildlife. Our condolences go to his wife, Ann, his sons Geoff and David and to his grandchildren Oliver and Chloe.

NEWS OF THE LOCO:

Maid Marian has spent much of the winter season on a carefully-constructed support of sleepers in the main shed as her wheels had been removed and dispatched to Boston Lodge for the fitting of new crank pins. After this work had been carried out, further work was carried out on the axle boxes before she was returned to work. This has been successful and she is now back on the track and in service. Whilst the wheels were off the loco, the opportunity was taken to have them measured so that two sets of tyres could be ordered at a future overhaul. The existing tyres have been on the loco since her quarry days and are heavily worn but the order has to be placed in advance as they are sourced in South Africa (!). A corresponding set of tyres will also be ordered for *George B* at the same time. In the mean time the Railway has taken delivery of two sets of stainless steel smoke box kits, one for *Maid Marian* and one spare as they can only be ordered in pairs. The cost of the other will be taken up by the Railway for use on another loco.

FUND-RAISING GIFTS:

The Fund has recently acquired 50 *Maid Marian* keyrings made by Dapol; these comprise an attractive oval replica works plate made of laser-cut plastic with a black background and brass lettering, size 5.7cm x 4.0cm, and a metal key ring. They can be inspected and acquired at the stall for £5 and may be made available through the post though the cost of postage is almost half of the price of the keyring itself. A new set of excellent Christmas cards featuring 2 snowy Dinorwic Quarry scenes are currently under negotiation with the copyright owner of the photographs, and will hopefully be available for purchase at the AGM or August Gala stall. Another possible gift may be replica brass Hunslet makers plate for *Maid Marian* from the Procast Foundry where the previous castings were made in 2018. Further details will be made available in a later Progress Report.

Hugh Jones
Honorary Secretary