

# THE EARL



News in brief for volunteers and supporters of the Welshpool & Llanfair Light Railway

Special Issue – June 2022

## A further special edition of *The Earl*

This is a special edition of the railway's newsletter to alert members to the news regarding the potential arrival of the loco from the Alishan Forest Railway, ahead of an announcement of the loan by the AFR that is expected shortly.

The next regular issue of *The Earl* is due to be published in around 10 days time. This will be the extended edition containing the full report of the railway's AGM on 15th May and the members' forum that followed it.

## Help needed at the garden rail show

Tim Abbott and Andrew Charman will be taking the W&LLR's publicity stand to the National Garden Railway Show, organised by the Association of 16mm Narrow Gauge Modellers at the Peterborough Arena on Saturday 25th June. This show has proved very successful for us in the past with lots of interest.

We could do with a couple more members joining us, to ensure that all present can both staff the stand and have a good look round what is a very interesting show. Andrew will also need to leave the stand at one point as he's judging a couple of classes in the Model of the Year competition.

If any members are interested in helping out can you get in touch via Andrew at [andrewcharman@macace.net](mailto:andrewcharman@macace.net)

## Journal deadline

The press deadline for the July edition of the *Llanfair Railway Journal* is upon us – if anyone has anything they want to be considered for including in it, can they please send to Andrew Charman now!

This is also a gentle reminder to department heads that your reports should be with the editor by now – just in case you didn't see the email reminder sent round!



## Another loco for Llanfair?

Most members already know of the Welshpool & Llanfair's 'sister railway' relationship with Taiwan's Alishan Forest Railway (AFR) (*writes company secretary Michael Reilly*). Established a little over four years ago, this relationship has already seen visiting delegations in each direction, an exhibition about the W&LLR at Alishan station and exchanges of information and best practice, despite the ravages caused by the pandemic. And global politics permitting, it is now poised to take a big step forward.

All being well, the autumn should see the arrival at Llanfair of a locomotive from the AFR on a three-year loan. The engine in question is DL-34, a 25-ton 520hp diesel built especially for the line by Mitsubishi in 1972. One of the most powerful locomotives constructed for service on the 2ft 6in gauge, its distinctive presence should be an attraction for enthusiasts and visitors alike.

Just as importantly, DL-34's arrival will give us some extra and badly needed capacity in the motive-power department, enabling us to take both of our current diesel locos out of service in turn for long-overdue overhauls.

The Alishan line is of course best known for its iconic Shay steam locos, another of which has just been restored to working order, and the romantics among us may have hoped we might have had one of those on loan instead.

DL-34 is, however, a much more practical proposition. It was designed to take loaded trains up gradients as steep as 1 in 16 and on curves as tight as the sharpest on the W&L, while its power makes it capable of rescuing a failed locomotive and passenger train from the steepest part of our own line.

It may lack the romance of the Shays, but its own design is a tribute to them as its builders consciously adopted many of the successful aspects of the Shays to ensure that it would be able to operate successfully over the supremely challenging conditions of the Alishan line. This gives it many distinctive features which should add to its appeal when in service with us.

"We are most grateful to the Alishan Forest Railway and Taiwan's Forestry Bureau for their most generous offer," said W&LLR chairman Steve Clews. "DL-34 will be a welcome and valuable addition to our roster, and we hope that once the pandemic has receded sufficiently, Taiwanese visitors will be able to come and see the loco in action here for themselves."

While we are close to agreement with the AFR on the details of the loan, one major hurdle remains to be overcome. The impact of first the pandemic and then the Russian invasion of Ukraine has played havoc with global shipping demand and for the next few months there is simply no available capacity to bring DL-34 to the UK. But we remain hopeful of being able to welcome a distinctive new member of the motive power fleet to Llanfair by the end of the autumn.



Photos: Alishan Forest Railway/Michael Reilly. Photo at left of sister loco DL-27