



“Betsy” was a production of necessity for motive power in a hurry. In the early days of Castledare Miniature Railway, some 46 years ago now, the railway only had Keith Watsons “Nellie”, the true beginning of what is today CMR and a diesel built by Kevin Perry. Kevin’s engine was withdrawn due to problems so with a field day coming up and only one engine available, things looked grim.

Betsy was thought up and built in 12 weeks. Her first trial run was a week before the 1964 field day. On this trial, she was only a chassis with no covering whatsoever and no idea as to weather or not she would work. She had incorporated in the transmission a 4 speed gearbox from an old Morris 8 and it was envisaged that the train would be driven by “going through” the box like a car, 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> etc. On first trials it was disconcerting to find that the engine barely moved in 1<sup>st</sup> and initial thoughts were of failure. But further trials showed that there were enormous reserves of power in other gears and didn’t even need 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>. In the week leading up to the field day the body was built and painted, with Betsy arriving at the railway on the big day itself and running all day without failure. Due to the design and the speed of construction it was envisaged that she would last a couple of years before needing a total rebuild. This again proved to be incorrect. In the first year of operation, the main chassis was extended to give more room for the driver, this was further extended some 25 years later. A major overhaul having been completed at an approximate age of 35 years of hard work.

The engine is a Fiat 500b water-cooled motor, which aside from having new rings fitted lasted through until the overhaul. The drive is via a centrifugal clutch using flying brake shoes inside a brake drum attached to the engines flywheel. Forward and reverse is all that is needed from the gearbox. The drive is transferred to the rear bogie by means of a heavily modified Morris 8 differential and chain drive to the axles. In her younger days, Betsy hauled 114 passengers on one train.

Currently Betsy is owned by the club, having been purchased from her builder Mr. Jack Stanbridge in the mid 90’s. she is stored operational and sees use on special occasions or busy days.