

LOCOMOTIVES

186: The boiler repairs are almost complete and at the time of writing the engine has just passed her hydraulic test. 186 should have been in traffic early in the summer to give plenty of opportunity for testing her before departure for Sallins, but work was held up for several reasons. The most serious delay arose because of the poor condition of many of the firebox tube holes, a large number of which had to be reamed out and fitted with copper liners before the tubes could be expanded.

It was also discovered that the twelve 5½" tubes are in a much worse condition than had been supposed, and that two would require immediate replacement due to wasting at the smokebox end. New tubes were made by Harland & Wolff at a cost of £20 each. Ideally all twelve would have been replaced, but owing to the expense involved it was decided to leave the remainder for the time being. Trouble may well be experienced with these, but it is hoped that two or three more years' service can be got from them.

Close examination of the smokebox revealed that it would be as quick in the long run to replace the top half of the shell as to attempt further patching, so it was decided to proceed with this job. Quarter inch plate was obtained, cut and rolled to the correct dimensions and the old plate was removed just inside the rivets front and rear and just above the handrails on either side. The new plate was then set in and welded. For this operation the chimney was removed and for convenience placed on the roof of the Guinness engine, where it remained for several weeks.

4: The tank engine has just worked the two first Portrush Flyer trains and at the hands of Alan Robinson and Percy Mitchell put up some lively running with eight packed bogies. However, it is becoming clear that considerable overhaul work will be necessary over the winter. This concerns principally the cylinders, pistons and valves and parts of the valve gear. The extent of the work will only become apparent when the cylinders are dismantled.

While working the Sunday train a week before the first Portrush Flyer, No 4 blew a tube and subsequently others have started to leak. Retubing may well be essential, especially if the engine is to work regularly next summer. No 4's leading bogie wheels were replaced by NIR. This job was straightforward since the new journals were of the same diameter and the engine was in the shops for three days only.

171: While working the Massereene Railtour, 171 let the side down by blowing a gland. After this the oil feed was altered and the packing modified and the engine then worked the BBC-TV train at Moira without giving any trouble.

The vacuum brake has been improved by the addition of a steam filter. This removes from the steam any boiler scale which in the past quickly clogged the ejector cones.

There are now about thirty leaking tubes and the Portrush Flyer on August 18th is likely to be her last run before attention by the boilermakers.

BG3: There is a well-known saying that it never rains but it pours and therefore it is not surprising to relate that No 3's tubes are also giving trouble. One began to leak badly during a Sunday Train working and was replaced.

P.A. SCOTT

SITE REPORT

Over the years Whitehead has increasingly taken on the look of a proper railway depot but now it is beginning to look like a secret research centre with the high fence round the shed and approach roads. The fence is now almost complete except for the gates across the running lines and platform. The carriage siding material has now been delivered and we are now awaiting the arrival of a turnout. We hope to use one of the two or possibly three which we have been given by Magheramorne Cement Works together with several hundred yards of rail.

A temporary coaling ramp has been put in commission using the water tank bank and the roof of the track hut (the erstwhile Inglis container). The method of coaling involves the tractor picking up a scoop of coal from a wagon or convenient stockpile and then gaining the necessary height up the bank before wheeling sharp right onto the sleepers laid on the roof of the hut. The tractor arms easily reach well over the tender or bunk and already the Flyer engine has been coaled without any difficulty. This method will save the platform from being constantly dug up by the tractor continually spinning off the grass surface. A.H.J. GLENDINNING

COACHING STOCK

Since the appearance of the last issue of Five Foot Three the Society has acquired five new coaches, four from CIÉ and one from NIR. All were worked to Whitehead from Lisburn on 10th June when 171 and some of the vehicles were used for a BBC-TV filming train at Moira.

The CIÉ coaches are Bredin-designed seconds built in 1937. Three are side-corridor 56 seaters, Nos 1327, 1328 and 1335. The other coach is an open, No 1333. These vehicles were selected in mid-May while they were still in traffic around Dublin except 1333 which was then working out of Dundalk. The vehicles were withdrawn from traffic over the weekend of May 19 and left in Dundalk where groups of our Dublin members carried out preliminary maintenance work over the following two weekends before the coaches were worked to Lisburn as a special. The four selected were the best of six offered.

The ex-CIÉ vehicles were joined at Lisburn by ex-NIR Diner 552 (formerly GN No 88) which last worked in a Rugby special in the spring of 1972. Although the CIÉ vehicles required the very minimum of repair work before use, the Diner required considerable work before being 'steamed' for the Steam Gala when she provided a snack service. Her gas fittings were put in working order and then inspected and checked by Calor/Kosangas. Before the Flyer trains, however, the Diner's BUT ends had to be changed back to conventional corridor connections, while the batteries and wiring were replaced.

Work in 861, the compo-brake, has consisted mainly of attention to the new shop which is proving a great success both operationally and financially! The restoration of the gas lighting approaches completion, following close co-operation with Calor/Kosangas. One of 861's toilets is to be replaced while the centre toilet is in use a shop store.

All of our coaches have been in use on the Flyer trains with the exception of the Directors' Saloon, which is to be the subject of a generous carpet donation by the Ulster Carpet Mills of Portadown. The Mills are to supply and fit a Turkish Red pattern carpet. Otherwise little has been done to 50.

Full details of our rolling stock will appear in the next Five Foot Three.

NEWS FROM COMMITTEE

The Special General Meeting on 1st June, 1973 decided that the Society should formally apply to become a Limited Liability Company to be known as RPSI Limited and that we should seek to gain Charitable status. The Society will also apply to drop the 'Limited' from its trading name, if and when the company is formed. It was also decided to introduce Life Membership for £25.

The Committee have been particularly concerned with the shortage of operating staff in almost every spectre of the Society's operations, particularly the Grade of Shunter/Guard. More members are urgently needed in the front line and steps are to be taken to encourage more members into the field of play from the sidelines. The organisation and running of the Portrush Flyer trains proved a successful one and more details will appear in the next issue of our magazine. As a working basis, it has been decided to allow 121 hours for engine checking every 50 loco miles or 3 hours. The Three Rivers Railtour seems to be a financial success, even at this early stage; it is hoped to use our own Diner throughout. In the painting field, 171's lining is being left until the winter while the coaches are to be painted maroon, similar to both GSWR and NCC colours. The problem of people sleeping in coaches has been causing some concern and it has been decided that this is to be allowed only when a Committee Member is present and in a coach to be

designated. A close eye is being kept on water columns and turntables on both NIR and CIÉ whose co-operation in maintaining these facilities is greatly appreciated.

100 CLUB

May	J. Glendinning	£5	June	T.J. Mounstephen	£5
	A. Sutton	£5		J. Friel	£5
	D. Carter	£10			

APPROVED EXPENDITURE

Postcards of 4 for Flyer £20

Tubes for 171 £385

J.A. LOCKETT

DUBLIN AREA

Our Dublin Representative, Sam Curse, would like to record his thanks to those members who worked on our coaches while they lay at Dundalk before their journey north.

FIVE FOOT THREE

The winter issue of our magazine is due in October/November. Would contributors of letters, articles, photographs, advertisements, etc. please try to let the Editor have them as soon as possible or at least before October 15th?

YOU WILL APPRECIATE that this Newssheet has been put together in the midst of the Society's busiest ever summer and an operating season due to end in the grand finale of the Three Rivers Railtour (have you booked yet?). For this reason this newsletter has been somewhat delayed between cutting the stencils and posting of the finished product. Some of the items included are already out of date or not quite all the story. A full round-up of the summer's activities will appear in the next Magazine.