

RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY
OF IRELAND

AUTUMN NEWSHEET - 1975

LOUGHREA TOUR

Unfortunately we have had to cancel the proposed tour with 186 to cover the Attymon Junction to Loughrea branch (between Athlone and Athenry). The branch closes in November and we had hoped to cover the line on November 1st, but the CIÉ Civil Engineer has ruled that the track is unsuitable for any trains over and above the normal service.

One the last day of operation, however, a group of RPSI members will be travelling on service trains and they will be posting Society cards in Loughrea to mark the last day of operation. If you wish to buy a card posted on that day contact John Richardson at Carrickfergus. John has available copies of the book "The Baronial Lines" (which includes the Loughrea branch) at £1.20 (or as a special offer with the RPSI's "Decade of 'Steam" for £2.50 post free).

ANNUAL DRAW

Many thanks to all of you for your valuable support for the ballot - we trust you have again patched up relations with friends and fellow workers who didn't win.

The winners were:

1. E.B.H. Smyth, Banbridge. No 2242
2. E.H. Barnes, Bracknell, Berks. No 15811
3. Billy Cameron, Whitehead. No 4482
4. J.J. Woods, Derry. No 9788
5. Trevor Patterson, Randalstown. No 21310

The winner bought his ticket from Derek Carter - and last year one of Derek's customers was included in the lucky five.

LOCOMOTIVES

186 is currently shedded in the south and work on her has included overhauling of the brake gear. This involved removing the vacuum cylinders to Whitehead where new diaphragms were fitted. It had been intended to have the loco ready for the Loughrea trip and the work is continuing despite the tour's cancellation. 186's vacuum cylinders differ from 171's in that they are fitted with diaphragms in lieu of rolling rings. Our thanks are due to CIÉ for letting us have some suitable diaphragms, despite their long being obsolete on CIÉ. By the time this appears work on 186 should be complete and the engine visually and steam tested by the boiler insurers.

BELFAST MEETINGS

Thanks to the co-operation of St Jude's Parish Church, the meetings will again be held in St Jude's Hall in Sunnyside Street (between King's Bridge and the Ormeau Road at the Red Lion and Errigle Inn). There is ample car parking space in nearby streets, the area is notably quiet and teas will be provided - so why not come along? Meetings will be at 8.15pm on the last Thursday of the month between October and April inclusive (except December).

The first meeting will be a rare chance to see the slide/tape show "Iron Dinosaurs" about steam in Indonesia by the noted photographer Colin Garrett. The meeting is on October 30th.

The November 27th meeting has been hijacked for the Annual General Meeting but keep the dates free, November 27, January 29, February 26, March 25 and April 29. Details later of the meetings.

CHARITY

After several years' negotiations and processing through solicitors, the Society has now been incorporated as a Limited Liability Company.

Special permission has been given to omit the words "Company Limited" from the Company title which will be known as "The Railway Preservation Society of Ireland". This will provide the Society with a considerable number of safeguards. For instance, in the event of the Society becoming bankrupt, or indebt, the individual officers, committee members and members will not be personally liable as was the case heretofore.

Most important of all, the Society has also been recognised by the tax authorities as a charity, which gives us tax and rates concessions and the possibility for members to covenant their subscriptions.

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

This year's Annual General Meeting is being held mid-week and in Belfast rather than in Whitehead - it is hoped that this will suit more people.

The date is Thursday November 27th, and it's being held at St Jude's Hall in Sunnyside Street starting at 8.15pm.

Come along and voice your views on the Society.

SPECIAL GENERAL MEETING

At the request of some twenty-five members Of the Society, a Special General Meeting has been called to be held on Saturday November 15th at the Pavilion, Whitehead (near our premises) at 7.30pm. The main business of the meeting will be to discuss a proposed increase in the annual subscription. The rules of the Society prevent this matter from being initially raised at an AGM without having first been discussed at a previous general meeting. The calling of the SGM would enable the matter to be finalised at the AGM instead of 1976.

COACHES

Already most of the ten bogies we are buying from NIR have arrived at Whitehead. The new vehicles are 358, 561, 562, 581, 583 and 586 (full details on page 4 of Five Foot Three). Unfortunately some of the coaches suffered somewhat from vandals before despatch to Whitehead and there's quite a bit of work to be done to keep the coaching department busy this winter.

URGENT - more bogies are due to arrive very shortly, including the North Atlantic brake and this means that our siding space, will have to be extended urgently - we're issuing a special appeal to you to come and help at Whitehead over the next few weeks. Please do.

PROMOTIONS

Two members of our Operating Staff have just been promoted. Brian Hill and Paul Stevenson both move up from trainee to full Shunter/Guards.

PORTRUSH FLYER

The Society's summer excursion train was an unprecedented success this year. Tickets sold for the four trains totalled 2,200, the best ever. The last two trains set another record; both were ten coaches long - the largest trains ever run by the Society. All the Flyers kept time competently and for the August 2nd run, No 171 proved a successful substitute for 4 which was having superheater troubles (see Five Foot Three for details). 171's train was cut by two coaches to seven, without displacing any passengers and the engine turned in a worthy performance. During the afternoon she ran light engine to Londonderry to turn. No 4 was very much at home on the other Flyers and the trains created an enormous amount of interest and won the Society a lot of goodwill.

ARDEE TOUR

The October 4th special with 171 was a sell-out with tickets being eagerly sought for the last steam out of Great Victoria Street and on the Ardee branch. 171 won more fans with a spirited performance and the train attracted a great deal of public attention. The empty carriages were worked round on the Friday evening and the tour returned to Whitehead on the Saturday evening. 171 returned home without any serious fault. She's had a quite a year, hasn't she? By the way, BBC-1 showed a film of the early stages of the run on the Monday night and we understand this is to be screened again nationally when the "Nationwide" programme visits here for a week sometime soon. By the way the shot of 171 passing at speed with the whistle open was taken at Moira.

TRAIN RIDES

The Sunday Train Ride season was extended to include the first two Sundays in September and attendance through the season were well up on last year - the car stickers seem to have been a good way of getting the word about. The usual engine was the Guinness and she worked the Rosslare brake, 861, up and down the site for the visitors. The Diner did brisk business ably "manned" by mums, wives, girlfriends and female relatives who provided a valuable afternoon teas service. The souvenir shop was kept busy too. Another valuable fund-raising and public relations exercise.

FUND RAISING

On the commercial front, members were busy during the summer at Shane's Castle traction engine rally in July and at the North-West Society's Open Day in September as well as several other events.

SOIREE

This year's get-together will be held on December 19th at the Coast Road Hotel Carrickfergus. Food, fun and familiar faces ... keep this date free.