

RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

SPRING NEWS-SHEET 1978

MERLIN TAKES OFF As Robin Morton announced at the Annual General Meeting, we have arranged for G.N.R. No.85 "Merlin" to be overhauled with a view to regular use on our railtours. Since '85' entered Harland and Wolff's engine works, it has been completely dismantled and the boiler tubes removed. Inspection is now almost complete and restoration and rebuilding will soon be under way. When this work is complete, we will assume responsibility for operation and maintenance of the locomotive. It will return to the Transport Museum when not required by the Society.

DROP IN The big news from Whitehead is that the new wheeldrop is now almost complete. The concrete pit has been completed and the lifting gantry erected. A new door is to be installed in the rear wall of the locomotive shed and a short length of track laid to give access to the equipment. As mentioned before, the famous "back room" had to be demolished as part of this project, but its place has been taken by a wooden bungalow purchased from Bangor Shipyard. It was erected after the Christmas holidays and represents a standard of comfort previously unknown at Whitehead. With any luck, some of you will be enticed to come and perform a day's work and sample its luxury. Elsewhere, track is being laid into the new shed, the water column has been re-positioned and a three phase electricity supply is being installed in the stables. Enterprise Ulster have also completed their programme of work with erection of gates at the site entrances.

GRATE NEWS The winter's locomotive maintenance programme has been somewhat limited, due to the need for our available manpower to work on the wheeldrop. In preparation for the coming season, No.4 is receiving repairs to its rocking grate. No.171 will become the first locomotive to use the wheeldrop when, in a few weeks' time, its axleboxes will be examined. The use of the wheeldrop will eliminate the need for many weeks of tedious jacking, which would otherwise have been required.

ON THE CARDS The New Year brings your membership subscription (we hope!) and your membership subscription brings you a new membership card ... but not immediately. We can save a lot of money and effort by sending out membership cards with your tour circulars etc., so don't get upset if it takes a month or two to reach you. If you really want to receive it straight away, send a stamped addressed envelope to Laurence Morrison.

DELHI VISION The Railway Tour of Northern India will depart as planned on 18th February. Of the thirty-five travellers, eight are RPSI members and we will be holding a reception in Delhi for members of the Indian Railways Board and officials of the Indian Railway Museum. We also hope that one of the museum exhibits will be in steam during our visit, possibly the Patiala State Monorail locomotive.

LATE LEAFLETS Apologies to those of you who requested Membership Introduction leaflets. We had hoped to receive the new shipment over a month ago, but printing difficulties have prevented this. All requests will be dealt with as soon as possible. If you want some, send a large S.A.E. to William Coates.

COMING COACHES Work continues on our coach fleet in preparation for the year ahead. It is hoped that ex-GNR K15 No.586 will be able to enter service, and also that the North Atlantic brake No.472 will return to duty. Our "Old Faithful" No.861 is due to receive some refurbishing work - mostly external.

FOR THE RECORD The Irish Railway Record Society will be running two special trains during the coming months. On 4th February, Sulzer loco B101 will take a train from Dublin Connolly (dep. 14.10) to Bray, stopping at Pearse,

Lansdowne Road, Sydney Parade, Booterstown, Blackrock, Dun Laoghaire, Dalkey, Killiney and Shankill. Due back at Connolly 17.10.

Fare: £1.20 (under 16 - 70p)

On 13th May, another special will run from Dublin Connolly (dep. 08.00) to Mullingar, Athenry, Limerick, Foynes, Limerick, Nenagh and back to Dublin (arr. 20.45).

Fare: £8.20 (under 16 - £4.10).

Further details from Oliver Doyle, Dublin 13.

INSIDE INFORMATION What will be happening at the various indoor events over the next few months?

The Dublin Area will hold a meeting at the I.R.R.S., 30 Lower Drumcondra Road on Thursday 13th April at 20.00 hrs. when Derek Jones will present some of his slides of preserved railways throughout the British Isles.

Belfast Area winter meetings continue at Sunnyside Street. On 23rd February, Maurice Gardiner will show his films of the Portrush Flyer and the Spoil Trains, supported by some films and slides by other members.

On 6th April, (note that this is not the customary last week of the month) the Quiz Final will take place. If the first round is anything to go by, the competition will be fierce.

The final meeting of the season will be on 27th April, when Mr Stan Myers from Northern Ireland Railways will talk about current developments in railway transport.

All Belfast meetings are in St. Jude's Church Hall, Sunnyside Street, Belfast, commencing at 8.15 p.m.

R.P.S.I. members will be welcome to attend the meeting of the Isle of Man Steam Railway Supporters' Association on Friday 10th March, when a programme of films will be presented by Flying Scotsman Enterprises. The meeting is at 7.30 pm. in the Y.M.C.A., Wellington Place, Belfast.

REQUESTING RELICS The annual bring and buy sale will be held on the afternoon of Saturday 11th March at Whitehead. So if you have any surplus staffs, lamps, tickets or whatever, bring them along. And, of course, if you want to buy any of these things we will be very pleased to see you. Some of our new sales lines will be available, including matchboxes, notelets with pictures of No.4 and No.186, bookmarks, greasetop caps. Books available from John Richardson include The Clogher Valley Railway (£1.95 + 30p P&P) and Glasgow Underground by David Barzilay (60p + 10p P&P).

FESTIVAL FEATURE On 20th May we will join with Carrickfergus Lions Club to present the "Steam and Vintage Festival" at Whitehead, the first such event we have held since the Steam Gala in 1974. We expect to have all sorts of vintage machinery present, including traction engines, buses, oil engines, etc. and all sorts of models. And we will need YOU to help, too.

UNEMPLOYMENT FIGURES It seems to figure quite a lot when we are looking for members to do things. Any volunteers to look after the Addressograph machine, organise social events, or stuff circulars into envelopes? Contact Robin Morton if you can.