

THE RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

MARCH 1979 NEWS-SHEET

WHAT A BRAY DAY! More film work has been arranged for the Society's J15 Class 0-6-0 184. The production in question is a television film being made by an American company and based on the book "The Flame is Love" by Barbara Cartland. 184 is required for filming at Bray and on the Bray - Greystones line on Thursday 22 March. The "vintage" coaches, specially constructed for "The First Great Train Robbery" and now stored at Bray, will be hauled by 184 in the film sequences. When 184 leaves its Mullingar base to travel to Bray it is planned to use the opportunity to transfer some RPSI rolling stock to Dublin on the first stage of its journey to Whitehead. This stock will consist of a hopper wagon, a brake van, a container flat and BUT Brake coach 114. This mini goods train should be leaving Mullingar for Dublin at 10.30 on Wednesday 21 March, arriving at about lunchtime. The engine will spend the night at Fairview prior to running light to Bray on Thursday morning before the start of the "rush hour". Departure time from Fairview is planned for 04.30. The return time from Bray after filming is not yet decided but will probably be about 19.00. After another night in Fairview 184 will depart at 14.00 on Friday 23 March to return to Mullingar.

BOXING NEWS Work on the Society's two mainline locomotives at Whitehead continues. The new bronze axleboxes for 4-4-0 171 which are being cast at a Larne foundry will soon be complete and ready for fitting. Meanwhile a new ashpan and piston rods are being fitted to 2-6-4T 4 as part of its major overhaul.

TRACK EVENT Also at Whitehead, work has started on the laying of No.5 Shed Road. This length of track will form the remaining link from the new section of shed to the rest of the site. Connection will be via a turnout near the end of the platform.

NEW ARRIVAL Dining car 550, which had been undergoing some initial restoration work at Northern Ireland Railways' premises at Belfast York Road, arrived at the Whitehead site on 25 February. Other coaches at Whitehead which are currently receiving attention include the North Atlantic Brake 472 and Bredin side-corridor 1327.

HOT FINE One of the problems of an organization such as ours is that it is difficult for members of the public to obtain information by telephone. A call to our Whitehead number will, as often as not produce no reply. To remedy this situation it is planned to install a machine on the Whitehead phone which will play a pre-recorded message when the number is called. It is hoped to use this to give information on railtours, Flyers, meetings, membership, etc. It would be very useful if this message was to include a number which could be rung with more detailed inquiries on tour-bookings, etc., especially during the spring and summer months. If you are usually convenient to a phone and would be willing to have your number specified for these inquiries for a short period of time during the coming season your assistance would be greatly appreciated. Hopefully, a rota of volunteers will be drawn up to cover the whole operating season but in any event no number would be left on the recording for longer than a clearly agreed time. You would only be expected to note details of enquiries, booking requests, etc., and pass them on to the appropriate person. If you would like to help the Society's efforts in this manner please ring Alan Love.

DRAMATIC EXPERIENCE The new book about Belfast's trams, "Gone But Not Forgotten", which the Society has published jointly with the Irish Transport Trust to mark the 25th anniversary of the last trams was launched by the Lord Mayor of Belfast, Alderman David Cook, at a reception at Belfast Transport Museum on 27 February. The book has proved immensely popular both with enthusiasts and the general public. A promotion mounted by the two organizations in Arthur Square, Belfast on 3 March attracted big crowds who were fascinated by the magnificent model of an open-top red tramcar kindly loaned by the Transport Museum. The book is selling fast so don't waste time in getting your own copy. Also on the subject of tram books: The Society has encouraged the publishing of "The Bessbrook & Newry Tramway" by A.T. Newham which is due to be launched by the Oakwood Press about now.

MULTI-PURPOSE TOUR The Society is hoping to organize a tour in one of Northern Ireland Railways' rapidly disappearing Multi Purpose Diesel railcar sets. It is hoped to run this tour later in the year.

CLEANER GRADES In order to involve new members of the operating grades in closer contact with steam locomotive operation it is hoped to roster such people to assist the steam raiser when a loco, is being prepared for a shunting operation or tour. The "starting off" grade has been renamed Trainee Shunter/Cleaner to reflect this policy. The following grade promotions have been made: Thomas Charters to Steam Raiser; Alan Love and Dermot Mackie to Shunter/Guard.

FILM REPRIEVE Good news for those who were disappointed when it proved impossible to screen the 16mm BBC film by Nick Lara at a Belfast Area Meeting earlier this Winter. This film, which features the latter days of NIR steam, will now be screened at the meeting on 27 March. This meeting also features the story of the making of the film "The First Great Train Robbery". The last meeting of the season is on Tuesday 24 April when it is hoped to feature developments on CIÉ. Both meetings are, as usual at Saint Jude's Church Hall, Sunnyside Street, Belfast at 19.45.

GALA TIME This year's Steam & Vintage Transport Gala at Whitehead is planned for Saturday 2 June. These events are always very popular with the public and include many other organizations along with the RPSI. This year our centenarian J15 186 should be present at the Gala as it will be hauling the "Croagh Patrick" tour train from Dublin to Whitehead on the previous Monday. If you would like to offer your services in assisting with the operation of the Gala, either on the day or during the proceeding months when a vast amount of planning and organization is necessary please contact Sam Somerville.

TARRYVISION Have you got a monochrome television set in working order that is surplus to your requirements? If you have the Whitehead regulars would be pleased to find it a home in the tarry, where, in the evenings after a long day's work, they sometimes relax and like to enjoy the simple pleasures that a TV can bring. If you do have a TV you would be willing to donate to the tarry please contact Johnny Glendinning.

A GOOD ADDRESS The Society is at present in the process of updating its addressograph plates. If you have recently changed address and find that your circulars from the Society are not arriving or that you are getting circulars at both your old and new addresses please send details of your present address to Robin Morton.

APPENDIX TO THE MARCH 1979 NEWS-SHEET

ANCIENT HISTORY Due to circumstances beyond our control this present set of circulars has been somewhat delayed in being dispatched to members. Consequently some of the information contained in the accompanying News-Sheet has been overtaken by events. This sheet contains some updated information on the items covered and some new points which have come to notice in the intervening time.

BACK IN THE LIMELIGHT The involvement of 184 in the making of the American television film "The Plane is Love" took place as planned on Thursday 22 March. The relevant part of the plot for which the railway sequences were required is set in France. So for a short time last Thursday Bray Station became Le Havre while 184 hauled the former "First Great Train Robbery" period coach set for the benefit of the cameras, much to the puzzlement of passengers on local trains. After the completion of the external sequences of 184 and its train at Bray Station further filming took place from inside one of the coaches. Since it was necessary to have views of passing countryside through the carriage windows, 184 assisted in the filming of these scenes by hauling the train along the section of "chemin de fer" from "Le Havre" to Greystones. The filming proceeded very smoothly with 184 running very well throughout the day. One variation from the plans outlined in the original news-sheet was that it was not found possible to transfer some R.P.S.I. rolling stock from Mullingar to Dublin with 184. It was originally hoped that these vehicles might be started on their journey to Whitehead when 184 set out for Bray from Mullingar on Wednesday 21 March.

SUMMER STEAM Once again we will be operating our Sunday afternoon Steam Train Rides throughout the coming summer. This year the Train Rides will commence on Sunday 17 June and continue each week until Sunday 9 September. This extension of the season beyond the months of July and August was first tried experimentally last year and proved to be a great success. The engine which will handle most of these Sunday operations will be 0-6-0ST "R.H. Smyth" but our centenarian J15 186 may make an occasional appearance during the period it will be spending at Whitehead this summer. As usual, afternoon teas, etc. will be on sale in the dining car 552 and the sales team will be in action on the platform. Of course, there will also be train, rides operating at the Steam & Vintage Transport Gala on Saturday 2 June.

DOUGLAS DIESELS Members may be interested in some information we have just received from the Isle of Railway Association. An excursion in the ex-County Donegal Railway diesel railcars is being organised for Tuesday 17 July. Departure from Douglas is at 14.50 and the excursion runs to Ballasalla returning at 17.00. In connection with this run a steamer excursion is being operated from Belfast. Bookings for the steamer may be made at Rigbys in Howard Street and the railcar excursion may be booked through Mr Sydney Glover, Dunmurry.

CIE LOW-DOWN At the Belfast Area meeting on Tuesday 24 April it is hoped that our guest will be Mr. Frank Timmins, an executive officer of the Rail Development Department of Coras Iompair Éireann, who will be giving us an illustrated talk on developments taking place on CIE. Also it is hoped to screen the postponed BBC steam film at this meeting as we were, after all, unable to do this at our March meeting. A reminder of the time - 19.45 at St. Jude's Church Mall, Sunnyside Street, Belfast.