

NOVEMBER 1979 NEWS-SHEET

TRIPLE HEADING: Bright sunny weather was the order of the day on Saturday 20 October when the RPSI operated one of its more unusual railtours of the 1979 season. The "Bangor-Belle" tour was unique from the Society's point of view in that diesel traction was used throughout. The tour was organised as an opportunity for enthusiasts to make a "farewell" journey on a Multi-Purpose Diesel rail-set. The MPD sets are still to be seen in occasional service on the Larne line but their appearances are becoming less frequent and it is not likely to be long before they are only a memory. The "Bangor Belle" was patronised by almost 100 passengers. The train was made up of three of the MPD power-cars still in NIR service, Nos. 51, 63 & 64 (the latter two being double-ended driving cab variations) and the RPSI ex GNR(I) dining car 552. The route was from Belfast York Road via Antrim, Lisburn and Belfast Central to Bangor and back. The appearance of an MPD set at Bangor is a very rare event (RPSI steam specials have been more frequent visitors) and the many photographers travelling wasted no opportunity of recording the event at the many photo-stops en route. One interesting feature was that the whole train had to run round the diner at Antrim and Bangor which provided many more photographic opportunities.

STEAM IN THE EIGHTIES: As usual the Society is planning to operate a number of steam-hauled railtours in 1980 as well as the usual compliment of Portrush Flyers. Provisional dates have been set for these and you might like to take a note of these for next year's diary. Please remember that most of these dates have as yet to be finalised and some alteration may be necessary as time goes on:

The major tour next year will be on the weekend of 17 & 18 May and will operate from Dublin to the highly scenic Mallow - Killarney - Tralee line. Locomotives for this tour will probably be S-class 4-4-0 171 and J15-class 0-6-0 186.

The Portrush Flyer is planned for three dates: a date in July to be arranged and Saturdays 9 & 23 August.

Finally it is hoped to operate steam tours on 12 April, 14 June and 20 September 1980.

DUBLIN DATE: The RPSI Dublin Area have a meeting on Thursday 6 December at 20.00 in the premises of the Irish Railway Record Society at Drumcondra Station. The programme will consist of a film show by Liam Mooney including film of the Paris Metro.

QUICK ON THE DRAW: The Annual Draw was a great success again this year and thanks are due to all the members who helped to make it so. The Society should benefit to the tune of approximately £700 as a result. The winners were drawn at Whitehead on Saturday 27 October and were as follows:

- 1st Prize £50 - Mr V Jackson, Belfast
- 2nd Prize £20 - Mr Ian Conway, Enniskillen
- 3rd Prize £10 - Sir Robert Porter QC
- 4th Prize £5 - Mr Demsey, Dunmurry, Co. Antrim
- 5th Prize £2 - M. Moodie

THE SUNNYSIDE OF WINTER: The Belfast Area Winter Meetings were launched into the 1979/80 season on Tuesday 16 October with a film show. The next meeting is on Tuesday 20 November at 19.30 and the main feature will be an illustrated talk by Mr. Beaumont, of the former Great Northern Railway (Ireland), on civil engineering aspects of railway work. This meeting will be followed on

Tuesday 18 December by a Model Night when a number of model railway organisations such as the Ulster Model Railway Club and the Model Engineers club will be participating. All these meetings are at the usual venue in St. Jude's Church Hall in Sunnyside Street, Belfast. As always, everyone is welcome to these meetings whether RPSI members or otherwise, so come along and don't forget that these meetings are a great opportunity to introduce your friends to the activities of the Society.

ORIENTEERING: Following two successful previous expeditions to India, Williams Travel are operating a third railway-angled tour to the subcontinent early next year. This tour is run under the name of the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland and is titled "The Romance of India by Rail". The eighteen day tour starts on 23 February 1980 and is escorted. This tour will be paying particular attention to two areas which were not covered in such detail on the previous trips, namely the South and the North-West of India. It is planned to include examples of narrow-gauge, metre-gauge, and standard-gauge systems and travel on all three is envisaged. Of course, there will be great emphasis on steam haulage. The planned highlight of the tour is a trip on the spectacular Ootacamund narrow-gauge mountain railway. The fare is £785 from London and some places on the tour are still available.

FARE EXCHANGE: There are plans to make some alterations in the RPSI fare structure in the future. Children under five will qualify for free travel on RPSI tours, provided they do not take up a seat, while those over 6 will be offered junior fares.

STOCK ROLLING: Several items of RPSI rolling stock are presently on their way north from Mullingar to Whitehead. These include coach 114, formerly 114N a BUT brake with a useful large luggage and parcels compartment which was transferred from Whitehead to Mullingar in April 1978 in connection with the film contract, a brake van and a ballast wagon.

MANY HANDS: Now that the railtour season is over and work on the new shed is almost completed, members working at Whitehead each weekend are tackling the large number of jobs required to be carried out on locomotives, coaches and trackwork and extra hands are always appreciated. So why not take a break from TV repeats and spend a few weekends at Whitehead?

SEEN AROUND PORTRUSH: Members may have noticed that for several weeks recently No.171 "Slieve Gullion" at the head of the Portrush Flyer made a brief nightly appearance on the opening credits of the BBC (NI) television programme "Scene Around Six".