

DECEMBER 1980 NEWS-SHEET

SANTA GETS INTO TRAIN-ING

Father Christmas turned up at Whitehead, without his reindeer, on Sunday 7 December and took a train ride behind 'R.H. Smyth'. Santa was visited by a large crowd of eager youngsters, who with their Mums and Dads added up to well over 600 people. After talking to Santa in his special 'Grotto on Rails' the kiddies and their parents were taken on a short train ride in a gas-lit 861 before they retired to the diner for suitably festive refreshment. Members and visitors alike all agreed that this first venture by the RPSI into 'Santa Specials' was an outstanding success. Santa departed with a promise to return on the next two Sunday afternoons. Society Treasurer, John Richardson, who had mysteriously disappeared while Santa was on the site, was asked if he thought the day had been a success. "Ho, Ho, Ho!" he replied.

GENERALLY EXTRAORDINARY

A large number of members attended an Extraordinary General Meeting in the YMCA, Belfast, on Saturday 15 November to discuss a proposal for the RPSI to reopen the former Scarva - Banbridge branch line. After lively discussion the voting showed a narrow majority in favour of the motion, but it was felt that, in view of the narrowness of the vote, that further discussion of the matter by the members would be necessary and the subject will be raised again, probably at the Annual General Meeting on 30 January.

5/3" TALL GREMLINS

This batch of circulars includes the latest edition of the Society magazine, 'Five Foot Three', which is free to members. Due to the ubiquitous band of gremlins, (not unknown to this news-sheet) there are a couple of printing errors in the mag. These should be read as follows: In 'News From Council' paragraph No.3 the donation from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board towards the 'lough Erne' Fund should read £1,250. In paragraph No.6 of the same article the item about insurance should read "doubled to £1,650. On page 38 the last two paragraphs of Paddy Mallon's piece on 'The Great Northern 4-6-0' should be in the body of the article.

A-STEAMING NEW YEAR

The provisional dates for 1981 railtours have been decided, so pencil them into your diary. Remember that these are only planned dates and some alterations or postponements may become necessary. Briefly, they are as follows:

11 April: Dublin - Bray return specials with J15 No.184.

16/17 May: Ben Bulbin Railtour, Dublin - Mullingar - Sligo and back with No.184 and S-Class No.171.

27 June: Claddagh Railtour, Mullingar - Galway and back with 184.

25 July, 8 August, 22 August: Portrush Flyer.

5 September, 19 September. Steam Enterprise, Belfast - Dublin and back.

WORKING MEMBERS

While on the subject of railtours, members will have noted from 'Five Foot Three' that the Council has decided to offer free tickets for certain one-day tours to several categories of working members. These tickets will be for unreserved seating in workshop coach 114 only and will be at the discretion of the Council Member responsible for the work of the department concerned. This scheme will be for a twelve month trial period.

A FAVOURABLE IN-PRESS-ION

The editors of several journals from the railway press were passengers on a number of RPSI tours during 1980. It is gratifying to see that they enjoyed their journeys and were also impressed with the RPSI organisation of these events. Mike Harris of Railway World travelled on the South Kerry Tour and published an excellent article on it in the November edition of his journal. Peter Kelly of Steam Railway was on the Portrush Flyer on 9 August and he also produced a most interesting and complimentary article in the November/December edition of that publication.

MY DEAR 'SLIEVE GULLION'

Members who were involved in the filming of scenes for the TV play 'My Dear Palestrina' involving RPSI loco No.171 during July, were able to see the results of their efforts on Friday 5 December when 'Slieve Gullion' duly appeared on the screen when the play went out on BBC2. 171 has also been making TV appearances in a television commercial which was filmed in the Dublin area last August.

USEFUL EXERCISE

Experts agree that after the culinary excesses of Christmas and New Year fresh air and healthy exercise are good for one. The site at Whitehead provides opportunity for both with the ever-continuing work on locos, coaches and track. So why not come along and lend a hand at weekends? You'll not only be helping your society, but also doing yourself a power of good.

QUICK ON THE DRAW

Once again the Annual Draw was a great success. The lucky winners were:

First Prize, £50: Carol Witherspoon, Belfast 15.

Second Prize, £25: David Henderson, Whitehead.

Third Prize, £10: M. Irons, Carrickfergus.

Fourth Prize, £5: Stephen Gillen, Belfast.

Fifth Prize, £2: W. Finegan, Bangor.

TOKEN GESTURE

Lots of book tokens for Christmas? Why not visit the excellent collection of railway books in the Whitehead shop on the following Sunday?

DATES JUDE WANT TO REMEMBER

Just a reminder that the Belfast Area Meetings continue in St. Jude's Church Hall, Sunnyside Street, Belfast at 19.30 on Tuesdays 20 January, 17 February and 24 March, 1981. See you there.

A MERRY CHRISTMAS & A HAPPY NEW YEAR TO ALL

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