

THE RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

JULY 1981 NEWS-SHEET

THE BAD NEWS: As most members will by now be aware, it was necessary to postpone the Ben Bulben Railtour planned for May 16/17. It was a sad moment, particularly as around 220 bookings had been received. The reason was the non-availability of 171 "Slieve Gullion" because of boiler tube trouble. Following the Bangor Belle May 2 railtour it was found that several small boiler tubes required replacement. This ruled the engine out for the two-day tour. On May 9, instead of working the train to Dublin, 171 took the train from Bangor back to base, Whitehead, where it was decided to replace all the small boiler tubes. People who had booked on the tour were advised in advance of the postponement.

NOW THE GOOD NEWS: Work on retubing 171 has proceeded apace at Whitehead, with members giving up their evenings as well as weekends to get the job done. We are now keeping our fingers crossed that the engine might make a reappearance at the Whitehead Steam Gala on July 4. In any event 171 will be ready in plenty of time to work this year's Portrush Flyer specials.

FLYING HIGH: Enclosed in this circular you will find this year's Portrush Flyer brochure. It is the ninth successful season for the Flyer but please don't delay too long before getting your booking in. Already there have been indications of firm bookings from several large parties and all the signs are that the Flyer is set for a record season.

ROCK ON: As usual, there will be Castlerock excursions in connection with the Flyer this year. 171 has to go during the afternoon from Portrush to Londonderry to turn, and will take the train as far as Castlerock to provide an extra attraction. Definite dates are August 8 & 22, and we hope it may be possible to arrange it for July 25 as well.

The Society's thanks are due to Coleraine Borough Council for its sponsorship of this year's Flyer.

SEE YOU IN SEPTEMBER: The Ben Bulben tour will now take place on September 26/27. About half the original participants have let their bookings stand, and of those who cancelled a third to a half intend to re-book. New booking forms for those re-booking and for new clients will be despatched in a circular at the end of July/start of August. This leaves the September programme as follows:

Monday August 31 (Bank Holiday): 171 & tour train, Whitehead to Bangor.

Saturday September 5: 171 & Steam Enterprise, Bangor-Belfast-Dublin & back.

Saturday September 19: 171 & Steam Enterprise, Bangor-Belfast-Dublin & back.

Monday September 21 (provisional): 171 & tour train, Bangor-Dublin.

Saturday/Sunday September 26/27: 171 & 184 & Ben Bulben railtour, Dublin-Mullingar-Sligo & back.

Sunday September 27: 171 Dublin-Belfast.

Monday September 28: 171 Belfast-Whitehead.

Saturday October 3: 184 & Dublin Bay railtour, Dublin-Howth returns.

Full details will be circulated to members shortly.

**FIRST CLASS:** The finishing touches are now being put to the ex-Great Northern Directors' Saloon, coach 50, in NIR's York Road works. Thanks to the generosity of our President, Lord O'Neill, & friends, it has been completely overhauled and refurbished, and is virtually ready for the road again. Hopes are high that it may make its inaugural railtour trip on the first Portrush flyer, July 25.

**DING DONG:** The Bangor Belle, referred to briefly above, proved to be an extremely successful operation on Saturday May 2. The series of round trips between Bangor and Belfast Central were well supported and 171 performed well. The venture was sponsored by North Down Borough Council, to whom the Society is indebted, and the Belle was part of the Council's "Vintage Week". Hopefully the Bangor Belle may have carved itself a place in the Society's calendar in coming years.

**RIDING ALONG:** The Sunday afternoon steam train rides at Whitehead got under way on May 31, a month earlier than usual, and have proved to be the usual popular attraction. The platform has been crowded every Sunday afternoon and No.3 R.H. Smyth has been doing sterling service, as well as receiving a lot of admiring looks. Enclosed in this circular you will find some car stickers publicising the train rides. Please do your bit for the Society and display the sticker in your car, or if not, in your local shop window. They prove amazingly effective.

Your attention is also drawn to the Volunteers Wanted circular - why not join in behind the scenes?

Train rides continue every Sunday afternoon until the end of August, and possibly into September, Whitehead, 2 pm to 5 pm.

**GALA OCCASION:** The Steam Gala at Whitehead was scheduled to take place on Saturday July 4, as previously advertised. So, if this circular reaches you in time, just a reminder to come along.

**BIG AT-TRACTION:** Don't forget the annual Traction Engine Rally at Shane's Castle, Antrim, being held on Friday and Saturday, July 17/18. Bigger and better than ever - and visit the RPSI tent.

**FIVE FOOT THREE:** The next copy of the Society's magazine is currently being prepared for the printer and the expected publication date is August.

**LOOKING AHEAD:** Very provisionally, the 1982 two-day tour date is the weekend of May 15/16, with the possible overnight destination Limerick. More details soon.

**IT PAYS TO:** Many members will have been impressed by the Canada Dry television advert which was filmed at Malahide station last August and which, of course, features our own 171. Now the advert has won a prize at the annual Clio Advertising Awards festival in Amsterdam. It was one of only two Irish entries to land one of the coveted Clio statuettes, which, according to the blurb, is the equivalent in the advertising world to an Oscar. So there!

**GETTING THE POINT:** A feature of the 1981 train rides at Whitehead has been the commissioning of a new mechanism at the main turnout to lock the points, complete with ground-frame signals.

**LATE NEWS:** Members will be pleased to learn that 184 performed successfully on the Claddagh railtour from Mullingar to Galway and back on Saturday June 27. Also included was an afternoon trip from Galway to Athenry, and back. The weather was kind, and all in all it was an enjoyable day.

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