

JULY 1982 NEWS-SHEET

WELCOME BACK: No.4, the Society's 2-6-4T, is due to make her welcome reappearance in traffic at the head of the first of this year's Portrush Flyer trains on Saturday July 24. The locomotive has just undergone a four-year major overhaul at the Society's Whitehead headquarters, the bulk of the work being done by the Society's workforce. She last operated the Portrush Flyer in 1978, so it will be a momentous occasion when she pounds her way up through Monkstown and Mossley en route to Portrush on July 24. Don't miss it - order your ticket now.

HAPPY BIRTHDAY: The Flyer itself enters, amazingly, its 10th year of operation this year. Little did we imagine when the Flyer was launched back in 1973 that 10 years on the train would be a regular feature of the RPSI calendar. The Flyer, of course, has gone from strength to strength and has carved itself a major place in Northern Ireland's tourism programme. This year we are receiving sponsorship as usual from Coleraine Borough Council, to whom our thanks are due.

GOOD TURN: Those of you who keep up to date with affairs on NIR will know that in the course of last winter the turntable at Londonderry was removed to make way for a new road scheme. The Department of the Environment has offered NIR some compensation for this, but unfortunately not enough to reinstate the table at Coleraine. However, the indications are that NIR would be willing to put this sum towards such a job, provided the Society, possibly through Coleraine Council, can secure a tourism grant to meet the difference. Negotiations are about to begin, but obviously the absence of a turntable rules out the use of 171 "Slieve Gullion" on this year's Flyer, and we are relying entirely on 4. With an eye to the future, and the re-appearance of 85 "Merlin", the Society is clearly very keen to see a table going in at Coleraine.

SEASIDE ROCK: Finally on the Flyer, you will be pleased to know that incorporated in this year's programme are two Saturday afternoon extensions to Castlerock. The timetable is:

Portrush	dep. 13.45	Castlerock	dep. 14.30
Castlerock	arr. 14.15	Portrush	arr. 15.00

The Castlerock extension will operate on August 7 & 21, but please note there will be no Castlerock extension on July 24, to allow time in case No.4 requires any attention during the afternoon. The fare on the Castlerock extension is £2 adults, £1 concession.

SEPTEMBER STEAM: September promises again to be an exceptionally steamy month, with the Steam Enterprise being planned for September 4 & 18. Full details will be sent out with the next circular in early August.

But in addition, we are planning an enthusiasts' day trip to Dublin on Saturday September 25, which may involve a trip behind steam over the soon to be electrified Howth branch. The plan would be to leave some carriages at Mullingar for operations over the winter period, as happened successfully last winter.

THOMOND TRIUMPH: As most people will know, the Thomond railtour to Limerick in May was an outstanding success, with 190 passengers, 80 of them from Britain, on board. The weather was reasonably kind, and the train operated largely to schedule; unfortunately on her way into Dublin 171 ran a hot bogie axlebox which meant she had to return light engine to Whitehead, the train being brought north by diesel. But arrival in Dublin

was only 15 minutes late and the bulk of the passengers were unaware anything untoward had happened. The loco has now received attention at Whitehead and is due back in steam during July, in plenty of time for the Steam Enterprise. Congratulations to all those involved in the Thomond, a magnificent success for the Society.

AN EDUCATION: The Schools' Day at Whitehead turned into two days, due to the overwhelming response from the various schools. In the end, some 1,000 children from primary and secondary schools trooped through Whitehead on June 15 & 16. After watching a slide/tape presentation about the Society, they enjoyed a train ride behind 3 and then had a conducted tour of the site - followed by a visit to the shop and diner. It all went extremely well, even though some of the guides were a little perplexed by some of the questions which ranged from whether carriage buffers were magnetic to the number of spokes on the smallest wheel at Whitehead! A group from Coleraine organised by member Arthur Wickham hired their own special NIR train for the visit, their diesel being the second NIR train to arrive at the site within three days - on Saturday June 12 we played host to an IRRS special with 80 enthusiasts on board. UTV's Good Evening Ulster programme featured the Schools' Day, and congratulations to all concerned.

TAKE 171: If you live near the Belfast-Dublin line keep your eyes and ears open for 171 on July 20 & 21. We have been negotiating with RTÉ over the possible use of 171 for filming purposes in the Malahide area on the afternoon of July 21, and it looks as if it might be going ahead. The loco plus two carriages, is planned to travel from Belfast's Central Services Depot to Malahide and Dublin and back on the 21st.

A STAR: Still on television films, many of you will remember 171's appearances on the BBC Northern Ireland production "My Dear Palestrina". Well, undoubtedly because of 171, the film has now become something of an international success, being sold to Australia, Sweden, RTÉ, Holland, Finland and Iceland. So there!

GALAXY: The Whitehead Steam Gala on July 3 proved to be the usual popular event, with several hundred visitors flocking to the site for a look round and a train ride. Among groups who helped make the day a success were the Irish Transport Trust, the Model Engineers, and the TA who laid on an aerial ropeway.

SUNDAY FUN: The Sunday afternoon steam train rides are now in full swing at Whitehead, and going very well they are too. Enclosed you'll find a car sticker (if you live in Northern Ireland) so please display it and help spread the word. If you haven't got a car - what about the window of your local shop?

A GOOD READ: Enclosed in this circular you will also find your copy of Five Foot Three. Apologies for the delay in sending it out to you, but we were awaiting the Portrush Flyer leaflets, which are also enclosed. Editor Alan Edgar would welcome any comments about the magazine.

NIACRO: The RPSI Council has recently given the go-ahead by the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders for a scheme to start at Whitehead this Autumn. Basically it involves having about 22 unemployed teenagers working on carriage restoration for the Society. The youngsters will be supervised by four instructors, and the scheme will extend over two years, the hope being that as well as doing the Society some good, the youngsters may find jobs. The Government pays for all the wages, and the Society provides materials.

PROMOTION: Promoted from shunter to steam raiser is Colin Holliday.

NEW TUBES: Our veteran J15 0-6-0 No.184 is due to be re-tubed in coming months at Mullingar. Work will take place at weekends, and any help would be appreciated. In addition, 184's tender is due to be taken by road to Whitehead for some welding work. Loco boiler tubes are not expected to last much more than five years, and replacing them costs up to £2,000 - so please respond to the next raffle or fund-raising event you're at.

FINALLY: Best wishes to RPSI barman Tommy Dorrian, currently recuperating after an illness. Get well soon!

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