

# ***Railway Preservation Society of Ireland***

## **REPORT OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING**

**Belfast Rowing Club, Friday 11<sup>th</sup> February 1983**

Lord O'Neill presided, and 39 members were present. Apologies were received from Peter Scott, John Friel, John Glendinning, Leslie McAllister, Sam Carse, Charles Friel, Denis Grimshaw, Paul Newell, Jim Mounstephen and David. Humphries.

The minutes of the 1981 AGM were taken as read and adopted on the proposal of Sullivan Boomer, seconded by Ernie Gilmore.

The minutes of the September 10 branchline EGM were taken as read and adopted on the proposal of Alan Edgar, seconded by Jeremy Saulters, with one amendment:

Page two, line 10, to read: "*R. Edwards said the NI Tourist Board would be prepared to partially finance the pilot scheme*".

The Secretary read his report, and it was adopted on the proposal of S.Boomer, seconded by Michael Henderson.

The Treasurer read his report, and it was adopted on the proposal of Nevin Hamilton, seconded by Derek Henderson.

Lord O'Neill said nominations had been received for all the council posts, and that there were no contests. Accordingly, the following were deemed elected, on the proposal of M.Henderson, seconded by Dermot Mackie:

Chairman - Robert Edwards, 61 Ballynahinch Road, Saintfield, Co. Down.

Secretary - Robin Morton, 79 Sharman Road, Belfast, BT9 5HE.

Treasurer - John Richardson, 18 Downshire Gardens, Carrickfergus, Co. Antrim.

Loco. Maintenance - Peter Scott, 17 Finaghy Park Central, Belfast 10.

Loco. Running - Brian Hill, 63 Beechill Park East, Belfast 8.

Coach Maintenance - Alan Edgar, 56 Hopefield Avenue, Portrush.

Coach Running - Neil Hamilton, 10 Lintagh Park, 9 Magheraconluce, Hillsborough.

Whitehead Site - John Glendinning, 2.3 Beechdene Gardens, Lisburn.

Operations - Ernie Gilmore, 20 Chichester Road, Belfast 15.

Commercial - John Beaumont, 30 Strangford Road, Lisburn, Co. Antrim.

Publications - Alan Edgar, 36 Hopefield Avenue, Portrush.

Publicity - John Friel, 103 Wynchurch Road, Belfast 6.

Dublin Agent - Sam Carse, 38 Oakley Road, Ranelagh, Dublin 6.

London Agent - Leslie McAllister, 26 Regent Way, Frimley, Camberley, Surrey.

In the absence of P.Scott, R.Edwards then read out the Locomotive Report, which was as follows:

- 3                      Whitehead. Repairs to leading axleboxes, partial retubing and hydraulic test in progress.

- 3BG Whitehead. Requires retubing and hydraulic testing.
- 4 Whitehead. Heavy overhaul. Due to traffic requirements, locomotive was run to Portrush summer 1982 before being properly run in. This was a gamble since the risks involved were known. In the event, a big end bush and an axlebox ran hot. Because of the inadequate facilities now existing for running in a locomotive, 4's wheels are to be removed again and the journals trued up. This will give the best possible chance of avoiding trouble during running in. The job is at present awaiting the completion of the wheel lathe. It had been hoped to start running in the engine again at Easter, but this will not now be possible due to delays caused by bad weather and shortage of manpower over the winter. It is still hoped to have the locomotive available for the Flyer this year, but availability will depend upon the engine being fully ready for traffic.
- 23 Whitehead. In traffic. Requires painting.
- 27 Whitehead. Requires major overhaul.
- 85 Whitehead. A large number of minor jobs require completion before this engine will be ready for steam testing. Overhaul of the lubrication system and manufacture of superheater elements are in progress. Repairs to the tender tank were started but then shelved while more urgent work was carried out to the tender of No.184. It is hoped to concentrate more effort on No.85 once the wheel lathe is completed and No.4 back in traffic.
- 171 Whitehead. A large number of minor but time-consuming repairs are required on this locomotive in order to ensure reliable operation. At present, the chimney has been removed for renewal, and the draincocks are being overhauled. It is hoped to finance the new chimney through the current appeal to members, so please be generous!
- 184 Mullingar. Renewal of ashpan and minor jobs are in progress. During the autumn, the boiler was retubed and the firehole ring built up and re-riveted. This job was awkward and costly because of the inadequate facilities for maintenance at Mullingar and the necessity to hire in equipment and transfer equipment from Whitehead. The tender is at Whitehead for extensive repairs to the tank, which are being carried out by our ACE boilermaker.
- 186 Whitehead. Awaiting re-tubing, superheater elements and smokebox door.
- 461 Mullingar. Undergoing heavy overhaul together with replacement of missing parts. Work progressing as time permits.
- CSE Diesel Shunter Whitehead. Overhaul of 'donkey engine' used for building up compressed air to start the main diesel engine underway.

## Wheel Lathe

When the locomotive wheel lathe at York Road was being disposed of, the Society acquired it from NIR as it is the only purpose-built machine in Northern Ireland for turning locomotive driving wheelsets. To contract out such work would be extremely expensive. The intention was to store the lathe at Whitehead and to install it as soon as a major job came up justifying its use. This arose sooner than expected when it was decided to machine 4's driving journals after the running-in problems last summer. Work on the lathe began in September with the excavating and casting of a concrete base beside the existing wheeldrop. The lathe was then assembled and a small workshop built to house it. The wheeldrop gantry is at present being extended to service the lathe as well. Provision of a power supply is under way including a rectifier since the lathe is powered by a direct current motor.

Alan Edgar then presented his carriage report, which was as follows:

Most members, even those uninvolved in the work at Whitehead, will be aware of the problems involved in running our engines - problems with items such as boiler tubes and bearings, which have occasionally led to failures. Because as yet there have been no "carriage failures" perhaps because there is less that can go wrong with a coach to prevent it running on a train, there has arisen an attitude of complacency. An attitude of "You can always patch up the carriages so they can run." This point of view, although understandable, is incorrect. We have been running carriages for 10 years. During that time most of them have merely undergone running repairs. I feel we are now at the stage where we must undertake a much more thorough maintenance programme. Fortunately, it now appears we have most of the resources so to do, as I will explain. First I would like briefly to outline the condition of the eight coaches which normally make up our train, in the hope that this will illustrate that as is the case with locomotives, there are problems involved in the maintenance of carriages.

- 861 Has operated since 1972 with only running repairs. Requires new roof, major repairs to wooden framing, partial repanelling, interior and exterior, new floor covering.
- 1327 Overhaul partially completed. Attention still required to roof joints, window scaling, three door panels to be replaced, external repaint.
- 1333 Some panels replaced. Still required: repair of rotten solebar beam, replacement of more panels, sealing of roof joints and windows, internal panelling, re-upholster, exterior repaint. Overhaul electrical system.
- 1335 New gutters, renew roof joints, partial external repanelling, replace all ceilings and most of internal panelling, renew upholstery and lino. Internal and external repaint.
- 88 Major structural repairs required to body framing. New gutters. Interior requires refurbishing in uniform scheme. External repaint required.
- 238 Requires two new gangways, external repaint.

- 241 Major structural repair to wooden framing at ends of coach, due to rot caused by leaking lavatory tanks. Two new tanks, new gangways, lino required. External repaint.
- 114 Requires major structural repairs, probably involving removal of all exterior panels and replacement of about 25% of the framing behind. Requires new roof, gutters, upholstery and complete paint job.

A start on mechanically overhauling bogies will have to be made as soon as possible, or else there is the risk of hot boxes. Lifting gantry will be required to lift the bogies.

In the past year, a combination of volunteer and ACE scheme labour has been tackling the restoration of a number of carriages which were out of traffic. The result is we would hope to introduce to traffic during the 1983 season three “new” carriages. These are:

- 1142 GSWR side corridor 1<sup>st</sup>, 56 seater. Exterior complete, coach repainted in GS&WR style maroon livery. 95% of internal joinery is complete. The coach requires internal varnishing, upholstery, floor covering and fittings.
- 87 UTA built dining car. Interior is now at the painting and decorating stage. Requires external painting and various fittings.
- 91 NCC brake third North Atlantic, side corridor, 56 seats. Exterior panelling complete, painting at an advanced stage, lining out in progress. Internal woodwork in progress. Large capacity water tank being fitted.

In the absence of the Site Officer, there was no site report.

Lord O'Neill mentioned that NIR were proposing to use the Directors' Saloon for a tour of the system in October to mark the bicentenary of the Chamber of Commerce.

E.Gilmore then presented the provisional railtour programme, details of which are given in an accompanying circular.

Referring to the Directors' Saloon, he said he hoped it might be possible to attach it to some of the proposed steam trips on NIR during the year.

Updating the information on the Port Lairge tour, E.Gilmore said No.171 had been barred from the D&SER because of axle weight. In addition, a 25 mph speed limit had been imposed on the train between Waterford and Limerick Junction. He told Tony Gray that time did not permit a trip to Ballinacourty, because of the number of crossing gates, and undertook to consider the suggested alternative of a trip to Kilmacthomas.

Following comments from William Coates, E.Gilmore also promised that as much up to date information as possible would be included in the tour brochure.

It was agreed that a suggestion from Victor Corrie that a formal approach be made to the IRRS to have their Dublin clubrooms open on the days of Steam Enterprise specials would be taken up. Denis McCabe said the IRRS were likely to move premises during the year.

Nevin Hamilton asked about Society policy on allowing local people to travel on part of

the two day tour. E.Gilmore said this was under review. S.Boomer suggested the Gardaí be alerted to look after crowd control at branchline termini.

Malcolm Halliday asked about the possibility of reinstating one-day enthusiast tours based on Belfast. E.Gilmore said the questions of viability and of over-stretching the workforce had to be borne in mind.

Irwin Pryce expressed concern about the number of people crowding onto the footplate on tours, particularly in the Republic. E.Gilmore said it was a question of reinforcing a standing RPSI ban on unauthorised people standing on the footplate.

Dealing with the branchline, R.Edwards said progress had been made on the Scarva scheme, with talks being held with various parties including various landowners, Banbridge Council, the NI Tourist Board, and the NI Department of Economic Development. He said he understood the Council now intended to purchase Laurencetown station site as a picnic site area. The pilot scheme proposal would be considered by the Council. It was agreed on the proposal of Colin Holliday, seconded by Jeremy Saulters, that the authorisation given to the council to finance the branchline sub-committee up to a figure of 10% of the annual budget be extended for a further year.

R.Edwards told T.Gray it was hoped No.85 might have a steam test in Spring 1984, but said it was unlikely she would be available for Traen 150 celebrations.

J.Richardson told Bill Scott that Mullingar Santa train rides had lost IR£1,500. B.Scott then asked if it was worth keeping No.184 at Mullingar at all. J.Richardson said it would be wrong to make an assessment based on just one operation, and said the issue should be examined on a 12-month basis.

R.Edwards told V.Corrie there was unfortunately no possibility of CIÉ turning out No.461 in time for Traen 150.

I.Pryce expressed concern about the increasing numbers of Society members taking advantage of the complimentary travel arrangements. R.Edwards said the arrangement was carefully administered, but said it was up for review later in 1983.

That being all the business, the meeting was declared closed, and members watched a ciné film of the Darjeeling-Himalaya railway made and presented by J.Beaumont.

*Signed:* \_\_\_\_\_ *Chairman*      *Date:* \_\_\_\_\_