

APRIL 1983 NEWS-SHEET

ENCORE, ENCORE: Our veteran 4-4-0 No.171 "Slieve Gullion" played her part perfectly in the filming at Carrickfergus on Sunday March 20 for the BBC drama production "Aunt Suzanne". The play, by Stewart Parker, is due to be screened nationwide in the autumn. For the day, Carrick station played the role of Richhill station on the Portadown-Armagh line, and the filming also involved a number of false starts from Whitehead earlier in the day.

The three RPSI extras should also feature in the finished product. Johnny Glendinning, Ken Pullin and Tommy Dorrian all had their hair shorn and donned porters' uniforms for their star roles. 171 was making her first public appearance with her new chimney - but we bet you won't spot any difference. And the day was also notable for the first appearance outside the site of two of our renovated carriages - NCC North Atlantic 91 and GS&WR all 1st 1142. While both coaches still require a lot of internal work, they have been re-roofed, had rotten panels and woodwork replaced, and have been professionally lined out and lettered. Hopefully they will be in traffic for the RPSI later this year.

\* Unfortunately the day's filming at Carrick was marred by the death late in the afternoon of Mr Jim McAllister, who collapsed and died on the platform while taking part in the filming. Mr McAllister was a member of Carrick pigeon club whose job was to release pigeons across the platform as 171 pulled in. Needless to say, filming was cancelled for the day afterwards.

A DRESSING DOWN: Humble apologies to those of you who are in a state of confusion over the order form for the Great Southern plaques, included in the last circular. Due to an administrative hiccup, as the saying goes, we gave you the wrong address. Orders should go to 56J Sunningdale Gardens, and not to the man at 57J who has been quite baffled by the upsurge in his mail deliveries. The error was discovered in time to re-direct some of the orders, but in other cases members will have had them returned marked "not known at this address". Our apologies to those of you who may have been inconvenienced by this, but please rest assured that we will give your order our urgent attention if you post it back to 56J. Just to remind you, the plaques, and a lovely job they are too, cost £10 each, with postage a further £1 (sterling). And to set the record straight, we would also point out that the editorial address given in Five Foot Three should also, of course, be 56J.

EVENING, ALL: With the clocks having changed, and the evenings starting to stretch again, Whitehead site officer Johnny Glendinning announces the recommencement in April of the regular Tuesday night trackwork sessions. The squad starts around 19.00 each Tuesday, kicking off on April 12. Work is guaranteed to conclude in time for a well-deserved libation in a local hostelry. Much more fun than digging the garden!

MEETING MATTERS: The winter Belfast area meetings finished on a triumphant note with more than 100 coming along to the March meeting to hear Charles Friel's entertaining and informative - and humorous look back at 10 years of the Portrush Flyer. Already we're thinking about the programme for 1983-84 so if you've any ideas drop Charles a line.

TRAEN 150: Latest word from CIÉ about the proposed celebrations to mark in 1984 the 150th anniversary of Irish railways is that, unfortunately, the plans

have been severely trimmed. Definitely out is the Dun Laoghaire steam shuttle and the CIÉ organised two-day tour. Watch out for the RPSI Traen 150 tour!

EGGSTRA HELP NEEDED: Hopefully this should reach you just in time for you to hop out of the house and make tracks for the RPSI Easter Bunny train rides. The dates are:

Easter Saturday, April 2, Mullingar, 10.30 to 15.00.

Easter Sunday and Monday, April 3 and 4, Whitehead, 14.00 to 17.00.

The Easter Bunny is stocking up on the old carrots, and we could use a lot of members to act as his assistants - everything from selling souvenirs, checking tickets, and making sure our Easter Bunny doesn't run out of eggs. So if you can help, and we hope you can spare at least one day, please ring John Richardson for further details.

NIACRO NEWS: The start of the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders scheme at Whitehead should now be only a matter of weeks away. RPSI member Frank Gallagher, who had been a member of our ACE (Action for Community Employment) team at Whitehead, has been appointed to the post of senior supervisor for the project. Other supervisors will be recruited, and the first of the 22-strong group of unemployed teenagers should start arriving after that. The wage bill is met by the authorities, and the Society provides materials for the programme of carriage renovation. The NIACRO work will take place in its own shed within the RPSI site, and we have been granted permission by Carrickfergus Borough Council to make a sub-lease with NIACRO.

DOWN LINE: Members may have read in the press recently about moves by Down District Council to explore the possibility of re-opening the Downpatrick-Ardglass B&CDR branch line. At present the B&CDR Museum Trust is considering whether to support this project instead of its original plan for the Ballynahinch branch. The RPSI was invited to a meeting recently with Down District Council and has agreed that it should, without prejudice, take up the invitation to send a representative to sit on the steering committee to keep a watching brief. Meanwhile a further meeting has been held with representatives of Banbridge District Council over the possibility of establishing a pilot scheme at Laurencetown for the Banbridge Junction Railway.

SPREADING THE LOAD: The following have been appointed to posts of special responsibility (PSR):

Mervyn Darragh	Membership Secretary
Mark Kennedy	Address plates
Alan Love	Portrush Flyer Officer
Denis McCabe	Mullingar coach running
Gregg Ryan	Dublin publicity
Rory McNamee	Mullingar loco maintenance
David Carse	Mullingar loco running

MUSEUM REVIEW: The RPSI will be making a submission to the Galleries and Museums Commission on their forthcoming visit to Northern Ireland.

THE RIGHT DIRECTION: Plans are in hand to hire the directors' saloon (coach 50) and a dining car to the Chamber of Commerce for a tour of the NIR system in September. The first leg of the tour, possibly on Monday September 5, would involve steam haulage from Belfast Central to Lisburn.

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