

NOVEMBER 1983 NEWS-SHEET

PACKING A PUNCH: Enclosed with this circular you will find (if you live in Northern Ireland) a couple of posters publicising the Santa Claus steam train rides at Whitehead. Please do your bit by asking your local shop or garage to put one of the posters in their window, or else have one displayed at school or work. If you think you could make use of more posters, please contact the RPSI publicity officer, John Friel.

Just to recap, the Santa train rides will be in operation at Whitehead on the following dates:

Saturday December 3

Sundays November 27, December 4, 11 and 18.

13.30 to 16.30.

Fares: £1.25 children, 75p adults. Complimentary glass of seasonal punch for the adults, present for the children, steam train ride for all the family.

The Santa trains are now one of the biggest events in the Society's calendar so tell your friends and take a tip - don't leave it to the last minute if you want to avoid the crowds. Locomotive-wise our Whitehead workforce is busy getting our 2-6-4T No.4 back in operation in time for the Santa trains. 4's driving crank pins have been turned by Harland & Wolff, the big ends given some attention, and now the engine is being reassembled and tested. As recorded in the last news-sheet, 4 came to grief on the September 3 Steam Enterprise, and now the long and tedious process of running in is starting all over again. There's also a chance, by the way, that 4 may put in a week on the NIR Larne line ballast train in the New Year as part of the running-in. Follow that, SLOA!

BUS-SHED FIRE: Local members will have heard through the media of the fire which destroyed the bus shed at Whitehead early on October 1. The bus shed, which was outside the RPSI compound, was owned by Carrickfergus Borough Council, but the RPSI had commandeered about three-quarters of the premises for storage purposes. Pending the signing of a lease the Society had not taken out insurance cover on the materials stored there. We should stress that the fire was not believed to have been started maliciously. Forensic experts thought an electrical fault may have been to blame. The most serious loss was the destruction of carriage spares - a total of 20 doors and five sets of batteries were burnt. Two spare lorry cabs owned by the Society were burnt out, and a bus owned by a member was engulfed in the flames. Two narrow gauge diesel locos being stored by the Society for the DoE Conservation Branch suffered scorch damage. Loco spares such as boiler tubes and superheater elements survived the fire. Now the shed has been pulled down and the site cleared, leaving us with something of a storage problem within the RPSI site.

DUBLIN BAY - PHEW! Phew, what a crowd was what they were saying on the Dublin-Bray shuttle on September 24. The venture was a phenomenal success and hearty congratulations to all concerned. Space on the train was at a premium because coach 861 had to be taken off the train after receiving a red ticket from CIÉ for a suspect gangway end (not, as one Sunday paper had it, metal fatigue). Workshop coach 114 was hurriedly substituted, but it has only 21 seats compared with 861's complement of 56. However, all the passengers thoroughly enjoyed their taste of steam under the wires

and it's a venture we might repeat in April 1984 if the full electric service is delayed.

MILLIONAIRES' CLUB: Many thanks to all those members who helped sell ballot tickets for the Society's Autumn Draw on October 22. Treasurer John Richardson reports that the draw raised almost £1,100 this year - a most useful boost to the funds. A special word of thanks to members Derek Carter (Newcastle) and Arthur Thompson (Londonderry) who sold £58 and £26 worth of tickets respectively. The winners were:

First prize (£75) W.A. Freeman, Portadown  
Second prize (£25) C.K. Irvine, Dromara  
Third prize (£10) J.P. MacCrossan, Belfast  
Fourth prize (£5) J.R. Lamb, St Helen's  
Fifth prize (£5) B.A. Robertson, Carlisle

Congratulations to all the prize-winners who should by now have received their cheques.

IN THE PICTURE: Thanks also to all those who contributed to the members' slide night at the Belfast meeting in October. Our best thanks go to Bertie Roberts (Zillertal and Achenseebahnen), Jim Cairns (BR steam today), Denis Grimshaw (APT TGV), Tony Ragg (Adelaide shed and Scarborough Flyer), Des FitzGerald (Swiss and. Austrian steam), Gordon Harvey (West Highland in winter), Evan Pameley (Irish, BR & US miscellany), Victor Corrie (GNR in the early 50s) and Charles Friel (South African sunsets). A selection which kept the audience of 100 plus glued to their seats. Also on the agenda was an illustrated update on events at Whitehead on coaching and site fronts from Colin Holliday and Johnny Glendinning respectively. They are both hoping to see some new faces to join the gang at Whitehead. How about it?

TARRY A WHILE: The wall of our mess-hut at Whitehead is now graced by a colour painting of a French channel port scene, with SNCF steam looming large. Our thanks to member John Milligan, for donating the picture.

BUILDING UP PRESSURE: Appointed as steam-raisers at Mullingar are members William Roe and Denis McCabe.

ACTION: Our venerable class J15 0-6-0 No.184 (built 1880) notched up another film on October 14 when she starred in the TV Channel Four production "The Irish RM". The new series, featuring Peter Bowles, is due to be transmitted in the spring. Filming took place at Moate station on the Mullingar-Athlone section, which was also the location for some of filming of "The First Great Train Robbery". This time, thanks to some speedy changing of station nameboard signs, Moate plays the part of three different stations.

A NEW CHAPTER: The RPSI VIP train of coach 50 (the directors' saloon) and dining car 87 played a new role on October 7 when they provided the setting for the launch at Belfast Central of a new Appletree Press book "150 Years of Irish Railways" by Fergus Mulligan.

NEVER ON A SUNDAY: The idea of making a mini-railtour out of the stock movement from Belfast Central to Whitehead by extending the route to Larne and running the trip on a Sunday paid off. Quite a few members made a day out of it, including a group from Lady Victoria rowing club who hired the directors' saloon for the day. Also, for the record, the second Steam Enterprise on September 17 was an outstanding success, a well-filled train and an incident-free journey behind 171.

TRAEN 150 DATES: To give as much advance notice as possible, listed below is the provisional railtour programme for 1984, Traen 150, the 150th anniversary of the start of railways in Ireland.

Sat April 7	Dublin suburban tour, Bray or Enfield	184
Sat April 21	Claddagh tour, Mullingar-Galway	184
Sun April 22	Easter Bunny train rides, Whitehead	3
Mon April 23	Easter Bunny train rides, Whitehead	3
Sat May 5	Whitehead-Mullingar stock working	171
May 12	Traen 150 Galway Bay railtour. Dublin-Mullingar-Claremorris-Galway (overnight)-Athlone-Mullingar-Dublin-Belfast	171 & 184
Mon May 14	Belfast Central-Larne-Whitehead	171
June-August	Sunday train rides, Whitehead	3
Sats July 21, Aug 4, 18	Portrush Flyer	4
Mon Aug 27	Bangor Belle, Whitehead-Bangor-Belfast	4/171
Sats Sept 1, 15	Steam Enterprise	4/171
Sat Sept 22	Dublin area trip	184
Sun Sept 23	Larne Lough tour, Belfast-Larne-Whitehead	4/171
Sun Nov 25, Sat Dec 1, Sun Dec 2, 9 & 16	Santa trains, Whitehead	3

A busy year in prospect. Please bear in mind that the above details are provisional, and that firm details will be circulated to members as soon as they are available. Non-members wishing details of specific trips should send an SAE to Ernie Gilmore, RPSI Operations, stating which trip they are interested in.

SALES ITEMS: A couple of sales items for those doing some early Christmas shopping:

Dalesman 1984 Railway Calendar	£1.60
150 Years of Irish Railways, Mulligan	£10.00

Orders to Irish Steam Scene.

NEW (F)ACES: The end of another successful year of the ACE (Action for Community Employment) and our thanks to the squad who left us at the end of September. Four new workers have been recruited (under the terms of the ACE scheme people can only be employed for a period of 12 months). The new recruits are Tommy Dorrian (handyman), Irvine Craig and William Binding (joiners) and boilermaker John Ferguson. Our good wishes to all four.

NIACRO NEWS: Meanwhile the ranks of the NIACRO (Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders) scheme at Whitehead are also swelling. Altogether there are almost 20 teenagers involved in the project now. Work in coach 68 (NCC) and full brake 616 is keeping the squad busy, and foundations have gone in for the NIACRO coach shed.

DIARY DATES: Don't forget:

Tuesday December 13	Model Railway Night, St Jude's Hall, Sunnyside Street, Belfast, 19.30.
Friday January 27	AGM, Belfast Rowing Club, 19.45.
Thursday March 1	Liam Mooney, railway films, IRRS clubrooms, Heuston Station, Dublin.

YEAR OF THE COACH: The RPSI is planning to enter several of our splendidly restored carriages for the Association of Railway Preservation Societies' Year of the Coach competition in 1984.

SEASON'S GREETINGS: As this is likely to be the final news-sheet of the year, may we wish all members and their families the season's greetings.

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