

THE RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

President: The Rt. Hon. The Lord O'Neill
Vice-President: The Rt. Hon. The Lord Dunleath



APRIL 1984 NEWS-SHEET

SUPER SHUTTLE: Some emergency repair work to 184 saved the day for the RPSI Traen 150 Enfield Shuttle on Saturday April 7. Our 1880-built 0-6-0 had blown a piston gland en route from Mullingar to Dublin to work the Enfield Shuttle. For a time it looked as though the whole day was doomed but the RPSI team set to and got the engine back in full working order in time for the afternoon shuttle. Sadly, the morning shuttle had to be cancelled, and our apologies to anyone who was inconvenienced by this. Some of the passengers who had booked for the morning run were able to transfer to the 13.45 departure, and the train left on schedule with about 250 passengers on board. The whole event was filmed by RTÉ for a TV news programme. So well done all those who helped pull the fat from the fire!

MOVES AFOOT: Not that the Enfield Shuttle was the only RPSI train movement to take place on April 7. The NIR 70 class DEMU which had hauled our train from Belfast Central to Dublin for the trip was then employed to bring RPSI carriages 861 and 241 back north. The two coaches had been worked in from Mullingar, where they had been since last autumn, by 184. 861, our veteran 1906-built Rosslare brake, is being taken out of traffic for some maintenance work.

IN COMPANY SERVICE: No.4, our 2-6-4T which is currently running in preparation for this summer's Portrush Flyer, has been back "in company service" for NIR. The loco's earlier exploits on the NIR materials and ballast train in February have already been well chronicled in the British railway enthusiast press. But on Friday April 6, which was working the RPSI stock round to Belfast Central from Whitehead for the Enfield Shuttle, did an extra job for NIR. The company wanted five four-wheeled brown parcels vans worked round to Bangor from York Road for a sponsored bicycle run later in the month. (The idea being that the exhausted cyclists can dump their bikes in the vans for the train trip back to Belfast.) So 4, shunting the yard at York Road as in the 1960s, hooked the vans onto the front of the RPSI train and off the whole lot went to Bangor. The years were really rolled back as a 2-6-4T pounded up Monkstown bank at the head of a train of the familiar brown vans. Once at Bangor, 4 shunted the vans into the bay platform before returning to Central Services Depot with the RPSI stock. It was our 2-6-4T's first visit to Bangor since 1976, the time she operated a special from Bangor to Londonderry. Most people remember that trip because on account of a greasy rail, 4 took 18 minutes to reach Banger West. No such trouble this time - No.4 stormed out of Bangor and charged through Bangor West in fine style! The loco returned light engine to Whitehead.

FRAMED: John Taylor asks us to point out that photos of him in the last Five Foot Three were not, as suggested, taken by him as well! He's not a miracle man after all, and the photographer was member Pat Bott.

THE USUAL FORM: As you will have noticed, your booking form for the RPSI Traen 150 Galway Bay railtour is enclosed in this circular. Apologies for the delay in publication, but it took much longer than expected to get all the salient facts together. The starter signal is now off, however, so don't delay in completing your form and sending it in. Interest in the tour has been unusually high, and apart from the members we've received around 200 inquiries from would-be passengers. See you on May 12/13/14.

BROUGHT TO BOOK: Word from treasurer John Richardson that he has managed to lay hand on a copy of Alan McCutcheon's Volume II Railway History of Ireland. It is a much sought after book and the fairest way of disposing of it is to put it up for auction. Offers by April 30, please, to John Richardson.

NO REST FOR THE: Our eager beaver team from the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders at Whitehead took time off from their many and varied RPSI jobs (such as photocopying, addressing, collating and despatching this circular) recently to run a most successful open day at Whitehead. Among the 100 or so visitors on April 6 were our president, Lord O'Neill, our vice-president Lord Dunleath, and the NIACRO director, Mr Michael Warden. Visitors were given a conducted tour through coach 68, the NCC side-corridor which occupies the NIACRO shed. The NIACRO team have been busy re-roofing, re-building, refurbishing and re-painting this 1920s vehicle. Visitors saw compartments in various stages of renovation, and came away duly impressed. The carriage is unusual in that it features two "half-compartments" as well as the standard eight-seater compartments. Anyone who knows the authoritative answer as to why this design was chosen should write to the Secretary, Robin Morton. No prizes but you might get mentioned in the next news-sheet. The coach of course, was one of those which originally ran in England but which was sent over to York Road after the Belfast blitz. The NIACRO squad, under supervisor Frank Gallagher, now numbers 25 and great inroads have been made into the work on 68. Our thanks to Frank and the other NIACRO supervisors, Reta Craig, Jimmy Robinson, Derek Cairns and David Stevenson, for their hospitality and help.

MAGIC: An update on the work in progress on loco 85, the GNR(I) Compound 4-4-0 built in 1932 and currently on long-term loan to the Society from its owners, the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum. As members will know, Merlin was in Harland & Wolff for a heavy overhaul from 1977 to 1981. She is now at Whitehead, and it is possible she will have a steam test in late summer, provided all goes well with No.4. Work on the tender has included the replacement of 75 pc of the sheet-metal, and there's still a lot more to be done. Peter Scott, our loco maintenance officer, has given the following details of work in progress:

Locomotive - overhaul of lubrication system, including manufacture of missing valves, atomisers and pipework; overhaul of vacuum cylinders, renewal of brake blocks and pins, re-metal and fit brake shaft bearings; manufacture set of superheater elements; complete overhaul of boiler fittings, replace missing parts; build footplating; fit main steam pipe, blast pipe, vacuum exhaust, smokebox brickwork; repair chimney; make and fit fusible plugs, ferrules, fire-box brick arch; remove and rebuild splashes; fit rear footsteps and brackets; fit injector pipework, make and fit unions for water feed; prepare and paint surfaces; overhaul and fit firehole door; remetal And fit brasses to centre big end, face up journal.

Work on the tender is as follows: Overhaul vacuum cylinder, reservoir, pipework and flexible connection; overhaul brake rigging, new blocks, pins and bushes as required; replace tender sides, and top, and repair

baffles; de-scale drag casting, remove old buffer springs, make and fit new springs, bushes, and spring seats; prepare and paint surfaces; replace bunker and locker doors; renew handbrake spindle and nut; remove wheelsets, re-profile wheels; renew drawbar pins; build up horn faces.

Lord Dunleath, our vice-president, is generously funding the project - otherwise 85 would still be tucked away in Belfast Transport Museum. Our best thanks to him. However, the ball is now in the RPSI's court. As you can see from the list there are stacks of jobs still to be done and many of them require time as much as skill. The work is in progress every Saturday and Sunday at Whitehead and if you want to see 85 out on the road again you can help by joining the squad this weekend.

THE GOOD SHEPHERD: Many members spent an enjoyable few hours at "An Evening with David Shepherd OBE" which took place at the Ulster Polytechnic on March 15. In all some 400 people attended, a strange mixture of railway enthusiasts and World Wildlife Fund supporters. David, who had earlier spent the morning making a conducted tour of RPSI headquarters at Whitehead, was an enthralling speaker. He also had some very kind remarks to make about the RPSI. The proceeds of the take at the door have been split 50/50 between the Society and the WWF. Our thanks to the WWF and the Cancer Research Campaign for their help.

WE WON THE CUP: The Association of Railway Preservation Societies' trophy which the RPSI holds for the current year has been on the move. It spent six weeks gracing the front window of the NIR Travel centre at Belfast Central Station and then went to the window of the Gateway Building Society at Chichester Street in the city centre. Next move will be to Whitehead where it will have a place of honour at the Easter Bunny train rides. And in May we'll be bringing the trophy to Galway. The trophy, a coat of arms from a Royal train, has been the subject of much favourable comment.

THE BLACK STUFF: The RPSI 1984 tour programme is unlikely to be affected by the miners' strike in England. At the time of writing it seemed that we would have to do without our beloved Rossington coal from Yorkshire (the steam coal also used by some of the preserved lines across the water) but we will be able to get household coal from Cawoods in Belfast.

TAKING STOCK: Under preparation at present is an RPSI stock book. The booklet will include a short introduction to the Society, and then pictures and details of locos and carriages. Something, you'll agree, we've needed for a long time. It is hoped the publication will be funded by advertising, and we're hoping members who run businesses or shops may like to help sponsor the publication by buying a page (cost around the £100 mark). It'll be a high quality production and one which will be on the market for several years, and of course, it's all in a good cause. Contact our NIACRO office for further details.

--oo0oo--