

THE RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

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



JULY 1984 NEWS-SHEET

SOARAWAY FLYER: This year's Portrush Flyer trains got off to a tremendously successful start on July 21. Around 280 passengers were on board as No.4 pulled out of York Road station on a beautifully sunny morning. The weather deteriorated in Portrush (cloudy and chilly) but not the crowds. The Castlerock extension afternoon run attracted a passenger load approaching the 270 mark. So well done all those who helped to spread the word about the Flyer. No.4, happily back on her home territory, was on song all day and arrived back at Whitehead with no major faults to report. Bookings are coming in steadily for the next two Flyers so don't leave it too late if you intend to join us.

RIGHT ON CUE: Travelling with us on July 21 was a BBC crew which is making a film about "Traen 150" for transmission in December. They interviewed the NIR crew as well as various RPSI personalities, seeking without success a solution to the great unanswered question of "Why is it you are interested in railways?" Our chairman Sullivan Boomer confessed he "hadn't a clue" and operations officer Ernie Gilmore wasn't much more helpful. Anyone who can provide a succinct answer which will help the media men in their quest should contact Mr Ken Savidge at the BBC, Belfast! The BBC team were also in Whitehead on July 15 for a session at the train rides. Also recording the Flyer on July 21 was a UTV cameraman.

MAKING HAY: Because of the way the calendar fell this year, it turned out that the Shane's Castle traction engine rally was on the same Saturday as the Flyer. The clash just couldn't be avoided and we are all the more grateful to those worthy members who opted out of the Flyer to man the RPSI sales stand at Shane's Castle. Their efforts on the Friday and Saturday were much appreciated, and certainly brought a smile to the face of our treasurer, John Richardson.

MAKING TRACKS: The Whitehead steam train rides have been enjoying a steady season with many family groups turning up each Sunday for a short spin down the siding behind No.3 "R.H. Smyth". The train rides continue each Sunday until the end of August so make sure you drop in one weekend in the coming weeks. We could do with some helping hands in the RPSI shop so if you could spare us a Sunday afternoon please contact Michael Henderson, the "co-ordinator of co-ordinators", to give him his full title.

TOP CLASS: The Schools' Day, which was about to happen when the last news-sheet went out, proved to be a great success, despite same decidedly un-June-like weather. A total of 831 sticky-fingered children made their way through the site over the two days, all emerging suitably impressed. The event was also covered on both the local TV station evening news programmes. Our thanks to those who helped!

RING THE CHANGES: You'll note from the enclosed circular that the Society is running another "Bangor Belle" train on Monday August 27. It's the first visit by No.4 to the Bangor line with an RPSI passenger train since 1976,

so it's an occasion no-one will want to miss. Why not take advantage of the members' all-day ticket?

ELECTRIFYING MOMENT: Now that the new DART electric trains are running in Dublin, the visit to Connolly by the Steam Enterprise on September 1 and 15 will be an even more noteworthy occasion. No.4 running under the wires and slotting in among the new electric train service! Enclosed in this circular you'll find your steam Enterprise booking form so send it off as soon as possible to make sure of your seat. Also, if you're going to travel on both trains, don't forget to make use of the members' season ticket. At the time of writing it was expected that the Great Northern directors' saloon (built 1911) would be attached to both the Steam Enterprise trains in a bid to satisfy the growing demand for the hire of the luxury coach by private parties.

SEPTEMBER PLANS: So far detailed plans have not been made for the proposed Dublin area railtour on the weekend of September 29, but if a decision is taken in time for this circular we'll add in a late bulletin. Details will in any event be circulated before the end of August.

A CLOSE SHAVE: The Society landed another film contract in July - this time it was for the American detective series Remington Steele. Once again it was 184 which was groomed for stardom, being turned out at short notice by our Mullingar workforce. It proved to be a fairly brief encounter, with filming taking place on Wednesday July 11 at Blakestown level crossing, near Maynooth. 184 simply had to glide through the gates with two CIÉ coaches in tow. The only untoward moment came when one of the stars forgot his lines temporarily and grabbed for his camera as 184 lumbered into sight. A secret enthusiast. Our thanks to all those who got the engine out in such quick time.

VIP SPECIAL: The Lord O'Neill Portrush Flyer special on Saturday June 30 proved to be a very worthwhile and auspicious occasion. Among our president's guests was Mr Adam Butler, the Minister of State at the Northern Ireland Office, who seemed most taken by train travel RPSI style. The train, hauled by No.4, included the directors' saloon, the dining car and all-1st 1142, and the whole rake really looked its best. After the guests detrained at Antrim on the return journey they went off for a trip on the Shane's Castle Railway. Some useful contacts were made and all on board were interested in and impressed by the RPSI!

IMPRESSIVE: This year's Portrush Flyer and Steam Enterprise trains have received a publicity boost thanks to our tourist organisations. The Northern Ireland Tourist Board hosted a press conference for the Flyer on July 2 and Bord Fáilte is to do likewise for the Enterprise on August 1.

CORK 800: Sadly it doesn't mean that we've waved our magic wand and extracted 800 Maeve from the Belfast Transport Museum. No, it's the title of the 1985 two-day tour to Cork on May 11 & 12 next year and the name signifies that 1985 is the 800th anniversary of Cork city. One up on Galway 500 in 1984, perhaps?

AWARD TROPHY: The ARPS award trophy has now been moved from the NI Tourist Board offices in central Belfast to the Bord Fáilte offices, also in the city centre.

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