

# THE RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

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



## NOVEMBER 1984 NEWS-SHEET

RINGS A BELL? Yes, it's that time of year again and Santa is busy dusting the snow off his sleigh before making tracks to Whitehead. He will be in residence for the Santa Claus Steam Train Rides which take place on Sundays December 2, 9, 16 and 23, as well as on Saturday December 8. Running time each of those date is 1.30 pm. to 4.30 pm, and admission is £1.50 children and 75p adults. Children qualify for a train ride and a present, while adults get a train ride and a complimentary glass of punch. Accompanying this circular will be a form for any would-be elves who would like to help out at the grotto. There is also a poster advertising the event (if you live in Northern Ireland, that is), so please do your bit and spread the word. And why not round up a group of friends or neighbours and make for Whitehead yourself?

LOOKING BACK: The RPSI's Traen 150 night at St Jude's Hall on November 20 promises to be a night to remember! We look forward to welcoming two top speakers for illustrated talks. First will be Mr Geoffrey Wigham of Dublin, long time RPSI member, and an enthusiasts since 1919. His reminiscences will include a piece on a precursor of the DART system - the steam hauled D&SER suburban commuter trains between Westland Row and Bray in 1924! Mr Wigham will also be reflecting on the World War II days on the Great Northern, when he was based at Dunmurry. This will be followed by Mr William Robb of Belfast, another well-established RPSI member, who will be addressing us on the Belfast & Co. Down Railway. Mr Robb lived beside the B&CDR for many years and has a host of memories to draw from. So it's a night of nostalgia at St Jude's Church Hall, Sunnyside Street, Belfast, at 19.30 on November 20.

JUST THE TICKET: Sincere thanks to all those who took part in the RPSI Grand Autumn Ballot by selling their tickets. The record goes again to member Derek Carter of Newcastle who single-handedly raised a magnificent total of £106 for the Society. Well done, Derek! The total income this year was a very commendable £1,276, giving a profit of £1,000. It's a welcome boost to funds for the winter programme of maintenance work. The winners were:

1. Paul Hughes, Bessbrook.
2. Julian Durore, Essex.
3. Mr Gorman, Londonderry.
4. S. Moore, Letterkenny.
5. M.F. Gunn, Eglinton.

Well done to the winners!

TV TIMES: So far the final schedule for the screening of the BBC Traen 150 programme has not been decided. But producer Ken Savidge advises us that it is likely to go out in Northern Ireland on Sunday December 16 or possibly Monday December 17. The 50-minute programme features the RPSI strongly, so it'll be one for the video machine!

**TANKS A LOT:** Our overhauled and rejuvenated 2-6-4T 4 certainly turned up trumps on the Steam Enterprise this year. With a full train of eight bogies on each run, No.4 turned in record runs on both occasions, with the running between Dundalk and Drogheda in particular delighting the timers. The Steam Enterprise run was being chalked up as an all-time record for steam over this section. With the DART electric trains having started in July, it was also the first occasion on which steam and electric trains crossed each other in Ireland. If any member managed to get a shot of No.4 beside a DART electric train while on the move between Howth Junction and Dublin, our publicity officer John Friel would be pleased to receive a copy.

**BIRTHDAY RUN:** Although few of those on board may have realised it, there was cause for celebration on the Larne Lough railtour on Sunday, September 30. For it was 20 years to the day since the meeting in Belfast was held to form the RPSI! To mark our 20th birthday we're holding a 20th anniversary dinner in the Drumkeen Hotel, Belfast, on Saturday December 1 - see attached circular. The Larne Lough tour itself proved to be very popular and with beautifully sunny weather it was a nice, relaxing day out with steam all the way!

**A LITTLE SIDELINE:** Those who had a wander round the site on the Larne Lough tour day noticed a big change - namely that large quantities of the site are no longer there! While No.4 and the tour train were based at Central Services Depot, Belfast, for the month of September, use was made of the opportunity to bring contractors on site to undertake the mammoth task of re-aligning the bank between our site and the Larne line and also levelling and stoning the ground in readiness for this winter's project of laying an extra 10 carriage siding. In all, some 1,620 cubic feet of spoil was shifted from the site, and the bill for the job has cost the Society £11,000. Unfortunately railway track does not lay itself so any aspiring permanent way engineers who wish to lend a hand should come to Whitehead any Saturday morning where they will find a warm welcome and a useful task to do. No special skills are needed, just old clothes and stout boots.

**PRESENT TIME:** Why not avoid the crowds and do your Christmas shopping through the RPSI's postal sales department? Some ideas:

Steam Train calendar for 1985, last chance	£1.50 & post
Transport in Ireland 1830-1910, last few	£5.00 & post
G&SWR carriage diagrams, only five left	£5.00 & post
RPSI logo horse brasses, ideal gift, straight	£2.50 & post
on leather	£3.50 & post

We have also secured a number of black and white railway prints, mostly Great Northern. If still unsold, these will be sent out on approval to you, 25p each. Please make out your order, plus a cheque for the right amount made payable to "The RPSI" and forward it to our new commercial officer; he is Henry Beaumont. Henry has been co-opted onto the RPSI Council, and we're delighted that he has filled the vacancy!

**SETTLE UP:** Many of our members will already be aware of the campaign being waged in England to save the Settle & Carlisle Railway, and many of you may well already have expressed support. Anyone in Northern Ireland who wishes to help is asked to contact Michael WL Barnes at 95 Crawfordsburn Road, Bangor, Co. Down.

**TELLING THE WORLD:** Some of you may have missed a nice letter about the RPSI in the November 1984 Steam Railway magazine. Mr D Keenan of Ossett, West Yorks, writes to say the September Steam Enterprise was one of the best railtours he has ever experienced. He added: "No artificial speed

restrictions, photograph where you like, no private coaches, no-one fighting for windows - and the friendliest people I have ever met. Sincere thanks to the RPSI and to the many people north and south of the border who gave my companion and me such a warm welcome, and to all those who asked 'Are you going to come again?' I say: 'We'll see you next year!'" Well said, Mr Keenan!

**DOWN LINE:** Plans for an EGM to discuss the Downpatrick & Ardglass Railway Society's approach for RPSI backing have been shelved until apparent problems with landowners have been resolved. The RPSI Council was due to hold a meeting with the DARS representatives in Downpatrick on November 21 to try to clarify the situation. The latest developments will of course be reported to you at the AGM, which, as can be seen from an accompanying circular, is on Friday February 15, 1985.

**TAKING STOCK:** The RPSI's carriage and wagon department has been far from idle in recent months. In between turning out the running coaches for the Flyer and Enterprise, the squad has been busy putting the finishing touches to the restored carriages, a task somewhat akin to painting the Forth bridge, since the combined effects of lack of covered accommodation and the wear and tear resulting from the carriage of passengers create a host of minor difficulties. Of course, we do not have any more problems than the railway companies, to whose standards the RPSI must work, but it underlines the fact that our vehicles while historic vehicles are still for the public to see, touch, and ride in. No.9, our ex GNR(I) open 3rd has had most of her rotten timbers replaced by the ACE scheme joiners, and it is hoped to have her externally complete by early spring. A lot of work will still have to be done on the interior and the running gear.

**ROLL UP, ROLL OUT:** In September the Whitehead Railway Project, our youth training scheme, staged a roll-out ceremony for ex NCC composite 68 which has been restored by trainees (both male and female!) under the watchful eye of Frank Gallagher and his team of supervisors. Each of the Railway Project supervisors is a tradesman in his own right and so he can pass on his skill to the group he is organising. The standard of work on 68 is most impressive now the vehicle is being completed internally while the Railway Project shed is occupied by Bredin 1335 (1327's scruffy twin!) which is having some tinworm-afflicted steel panels replaced and a general refurbishment!

**THE BURNING QUESTION:** Interest is intensifying on the progress being made by the RPSI loco department on the return to traffic after 21 years of our 4-4-0 Great Northern Compound, No.85 Merlin. Work is progressing slowly but surely towards the first steam test, but no date has been set so far and it still seems to be some months distant. The most noticeable change in recent months has been to the paintwork - the loco has now been fully restored to her magnificent Great Northern blue livery, courtesy of our ACE scheme professional painter. The big hold up at present is the tender, which is up on special jacks to allow removal of the wheels. The wheel sets are being re-profiled on the RPSI wheel lathe at Whitehead, which is now really proving its worth. Watch this space!

**HOT STUFF:** With the British coal strike still depriving us of our favourite Rossington steam coal from Yorkshire, the RPSI has been forced to try alternative types of coal in order to keep our trains moving. Unfortunately the household coal which No.4 was burning this summer has taken its toll on the firebars. The coal clinkered severely and the result has been a set of melted firebars. A new set has been ordered but this little job is expected to set the Society back some £1,250. So it's a bitter pill after all the good running. To this end, anyone who would like to give the Society a special donation in order to get our 2-6-4T

back on the road again should send a cheque to our treasurer, John Richardson, marking the envelope "No.4 Firebar Appeal". We will be very grateful for any assistance.

ONE DOOR OPENS: Train rides loco No.3 R.H. Smyth is being groomed for her next turn of duty on the Santa trains. This time the loco will be fitted with a new smokebox door, to replace the existing one which was bearing a few patches!

GET STUCK IN: Now that the garden's stopped growing, and the leaves have all been swept up, why not sweep down to Whitehead one of these weekends and lend a hand. How many times have you said: "I'd love to help but I don't know how to go about it"? All will now be revealed. Just turn up at Whitehead any Saturday morning and you can join the loco, carriage, or site squads. An extra pair of hands would make all the difference to the regulars who carry a heavy burden. You'll be made very welcome, and no special skills are needed other than old clothes and a desire not only to work but to enjoy yourself. Contact Peter Scott for loco work, Jeremy Saulters for the carriages or Johnny Glendinning for site work. Write or telephone the weekend before if possible so that we can sort out a useful task for you to do. Anyone can join the fun, young or not so young, male or female. Write to the department heads at c/o Whitehead Railway Project, Castleview Road, Whitehead, or phone Whitehead 78567 and leave your name and phone number on the ansaphone.

SELLING A LINE: Another way to help the Society is to get involved in the sales activities in your local area or on board the RPSI trains. This provides much needed cash to finance the whole operation and standing behind a shop counter is just as important as driving the engine at the Santa train rides.

TURN THE WHEELS: A reminder about our six-wheeler appeal which was set up in this, the year of Traen 150, to preserve what few remain of these fascinating vehicles. We have already saved some examples, including an ex B&CDR 3rd which is at Limestone Youth Training project in Belfast. Make your cheque payable to "The RPSI" and send it to Jeremy Saulters. Don't leave it to somebody else - they could be leaving it to you!

ON THE MOVE: Loco 461, our D&SER 2-6-0, is expected shortly to make a trip of 120 miles - without turning a wheel: Yes, the mogul is due to be transported by low-loader lorry from Mullingar to our loco overhaul centre at Whitehead. Restoration is expected to take at least three years, and will cost in materials alone an estimated £6,000.

WHEEL SHOW YE! If you're visiting the Scottish Railway Preservation Society's preserved line at Bo'ness in coming years, take a careful look at the wheel-drop. Reason is, the SRPS has just borrowed the plans originated by our own Peter Scott for the Whitehead wheel-drop, so impressed here they by Peter's ingenuity! Follow that!

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