

# THE RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

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



## JULY 1985 NEWS-SHEET

### THE RIGHT TRACKS

The RPSI did itself proud on Sunday June 9 when our tour train of restored carriages and two of our steam engines were hired in connection with the annual conference of the international Permanent Way Institution which was held in Portrush. The train was hired by NIR who were taking the 200 delegates from Portrush to Cultra for a day out which included a luncheon at the Culloden Hotel and a visit to the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum. Simple enough, you might think, but don't forget the train had to start and finish the day in Whitehead - and we had to change locomotives at Antrim in both directions in view of coal capacity. So it was in fact just about the most complicated mainline operation in Northern Ireland the Society has ever attempted. But, thanks to the painstaking planning and timetabling, it all went like clockwork. No.4 left Whitehead with the train at 5.50 am and ran empty to Portrush, where the excursion proper started at 9.30 am. At Antrim No.171 "Slieve Gullion", which had run light engine from Whitehead, took over for the trip to Cultra and on to Bangor, where the loco left the train and ran light to Belfast Central Services Depot for servicing. Meanwhile No.4 had returned to Whitehead light engine for servicing, and as it was a Sunday our 0-6-0ST No.3 "R.H. Smyth" was busy on the Whitehead train rides. On the way home, everything operated along the same lines - 171 took the train as far as Antrim, where 4 was waiting for the Portrush trip, and the eventual arrival time home at Whitehead was a little short of midnight - what a marathon! Needless to say, all the conference delegates were bowled over by the train, which had been specially spruced up for the occasion by NIR staff at York Road. The guests included some important railway-men from Britain and abroad, including a top executive from the Swiss Federal Railways. Also on board were Sir Myles Humphreys, the NIR chairman, and the NIR chief executive, Mr Roy Beattie, and the Society came in for some very warm tributes at the luncheon from Sir Myles. So, well done all concerned!

### INDUSTRIOUS LOT

A group from the Industrial Railway Society who were visiting Northern Ireland on the weekend of June 9 for a visit to Whitehead, Shane's Castle and other sites landed on their feet! They managed to fit in a trip from York Road to Ballymena on board the empty stock section of the PWI special.

### THE WELCOME MAT

Following in their footsteps are enthusiasts who have been booking for the Irish Steam Weekends programme being run by

the RPSI this summer. Bookings are coming in for all three Flyer weekends and we're looking forward to our new role as package tour operators!

#### THE NAME GAME

The more astute among you will have noticed the demise of the RPSI Addressograph machine which has at long last been replaced by the welcome computer. All paid-up RPSI members are now on disc, which should help avoid a lot of mix-ups and duplications. The names and addresses come out on sticky address labels, which are then stuck onto envelopes by the Whitehead Railway Project. Our thanks to RPSI member Peter McBride for the use of the computer. And if your address is incorrect, advise Mervyn Darragh.

#### RADIO-ACTIVE

The Radio Ulster morning programme "Day by Day" came from Whitehead on Monday July 1 and the Society was featured in a big way. Originally, as outlined in the last news-sheet, the plan had been to broadcast from the Flyer but in the end the technical problems could not be overcome to the BBC's satisfaction. So, instead, the BBC decided to broadcast from Whitehead with the steam train rides in full swing. The programme compere was John Bennett, who interviewed a number of RPSI personalities about the Society's activities. One man in his element was Tom McDevitte, whose regular weekly spot on railway history on the "Day by Day" programme has done much to increase interest in and knowledge about trains. Our 2-6-4T No.4 was busy on the train rides and they continued in the afternoon to take advantage of the publicity which had been generated. Not that the afternoon session was out of the limelight - UTV were down to shoot some film for a television programme featuring the RPSI.

#### COMPOUND INTEREST

No.85 "Merlin", our restored 4-4-0 Great Northern compound, has been continuing her running in by handling the Sunday afternoon steam train rides at Whitehead - much to the delight of our visitors. No.85 put in an appearance on June 2 and June 23, and will be rostered again on occasions over the summer. The train rides themselves have got off to a slower than usual start because of the poor weather but we're hoping that the "Day by Day" publicity will help bring in the crowds over the summer.

#### CHARITY BEGINS

In the end the June 29 Charity Flyer was opened to RPSI members and quite a few took advantage of the deluxe travel. The Flyer was swinging to the sound of a jazz band and the atmosphere was excellent. Proceeds are to be divided between the RPSI Restoration Fund and the East Belfast Rotary Club's charity - the Dr Jack Kyle Aid for Zambia Fund.

#### TAKING STOCK

The Society has just purchased a total of nine ex CIÉ coaches. The vehicles, which are at Mullingar, comprise a diner, a buffet car, a brake coach, and six open standards. They will need some attention before going into traffic but it means our 0-6-0 No.184 may soon have a train of her own to haul!

#### DESTINATION BANGOR

Don't forget the Bangor Belle, which the RPSI is operating on Bank Holiday Monday, August 26. The train, hauled by No.171, will be leaving Whitehead at 09.20 and then there are two round trips between Belfast Central (dep. 14.00) and Bangor (dep. 14.45). Fares will be the same as last year - £7.00

adult £3.50 concession for an all-day ticket and £3/£1.50 return for a round trip between Belfast and Bangor. Tickets will be on sale from August 5 from Mullans Bookshop, Donegall Place, Belfast, and McCullough's toy shop in Bangor. A circular outlining the full details will be sent out to the members in early August.

AND DOWN THE LINE      You'll find with this circular details of the 1985 Steam Enterprise trains which run on September 7 and 21. You'll also find the particulars of the Members' Season Ticket and the Newry connection.

A CLEAN SWEEP          Already our coach cleaning squad have been making a big impact on the RPSI tour train - but more help is always welcome. It's all happening at Whitehead on Tuesday nights and, if you would like to be included just drop down or else contact Michael Henderson.

BROUGHT TO BOOK        Plans are on the drawing board at present for a much-needed RPSI stock book. To this end, we're on the look-out for photos and information about our locos, coaches and wagons in company service, so that we can do a "then and now" section. We're particularly short of such shots of our ex CIÉ stock. So if you can help, please drop a line to Gavin Martin, c/o Whitehead Railway Project, Whitehead.

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