

THE RAILWAY PRESERATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

AUGUST 1985 NEWS-SHEET

HIGH FLYER

The Portrush Flyer is heading for a record number of passengers this year, with the figures to date being:

	July 20	August 3
Portrush Flyer	293	305
Castlerock Extension	340	330

Much of the credit for the virtually fully booked trains (the August 17 train was booked up at the time of writing) must go to the RPSI publicity department. Attention has focussed on the RPSI thanks to articles in the press, the Radio Ulster Day by Day live programme from Whitehead, a 15-minute feature on the main evening news programme of UTV, and an interview on RTÉ. Loco No.4 has been performing faultlessly, and the train itself exudes a real vintage atmosphere. The dining car has been a hive of activity on the trips to date, and the sales team have put in a sterling effort (in more ways than one!). So congratulations to all concerned in making this season of Flyers the most worthwhile to date.

A RUN FOR THEIR MONEY The Sunday afternoon steam train rides at Whitehead are also enjoying a busy season following a slow start. The inclement weather seems to have helped boost the crowds as day-trippers are out and about but reluctant to spend their Sunday afternoons on the beach under cloudy skies! On the loco front the changes have been rung, partly because our trusty No.3 "R.H. Smyth" had to be withdrawn in mid-July for some attention to an overheated axlebox. Our visitors have been treated to the spectacle of No.4 and No.85 "Merlin" alternating on the Sunday afternoon shuttle.

JIM'LL FIX IT

A youngster from the Antrim area was due to have his dream come true on Sunday August 11. He had written to the Antrim Forum Jim'll Fix It (based on the BBC TV idea) asking to drive the Portrush Flyer. The RPSI agreed to allow him on the footplate of the train rides engine at Whitehead (under suitable supervision, of course), and to set the train in motion.

LUCKY NUMBERS

Thanks to member Alec Ross from Inverness you'll now be able to make sure you don't miss out on any of the RPSI epistles. We're going to introduce a serial number for the news-sheets so that you can make certain you haven't skipped a circular. As the number at the top of this sheet will make clear, this is the fifth news-sheet this year. The next should be the sixth! The computerised address system is now in full swing and the gobbledegook titles some of you received last time have now been sorted out. If your address is still incorrect please advise Mervyn Darragh. Thanks to Mr Ross for the idea about serial numbers.

WEEKENDING

The Irish Steam Weekends have made a cautious start but those people who did support the venture found it all very enjoyable. The total number involved is unlikely to be much more than around 15 but it's nevertheless a significant improvement on the forerunner of the scheme which only

attracted a handful of visitors in 1981. The Northern Ireland Tourist Board has welcomed the initiative taken by the RPSI and the scheme may be worth repeating in 1986, given more advance publicity. Most of our participants this year have boon from Britain, but there are also two Australians, including Mr Don Potts who led the group from Down Under which came on our South Kerry railtour in 1980.

ALL AT SEA?

Passengers on the September 7 Steam Enterprise who wish to visit the National Maritime Museum of Ireland at Dun Laoghaire should contact Victor Corrie for full details.

TAKING A BOW

The RPSI has landed another award - this time for its contribution to tourism. We received a certificate of merit from the British Tourist Authority in its annual "Come to Britain" competition. The certificate was presented to RPSI London agent Leslie McAllister at a ceremony in London on July 22, the presentation being made by Mr Norman Lamont, a Minister in the Department of Trade and Industry. The Society has now been given a plaque as a permanent reminder of our success in the event. The RPSI was one only five local concerns which were successful.

REM. THE 70 CLASS

Don't spread it about, but the RPSI is organising a diesel railtour. It'll be a farewell special for NIR's sturdy 70 class DEMUs which were the scourge of steam on the NCC when they were introduced in 1966. Now the diesel sets are being replaced by more modern units, and the RPSI is hiring a 70 class set for a grand finale railtour to Londonderry. The date has been fixed for Saturday October 12, and the plan is to start with a non-stop trip from Belfast York Road along the NCC main line to Londonderry Waterside. There will be ample photographic opportunities on the return leg. Full details will be included in the next circular, due to be despatched in September.

DATES FOR THE DIARY

Don't forget these dates:

Mon August 26	Bangor Belle (No.171)
Sat September 7	Steam Enterprise (No.171)
Sat September 21	Steam Enterprise (No.171)
Sat September 28	(Provisional) Maynooth shuttle (No.184)
Sun September 29	Larne Lough railtour (No.171)
Sat October 12	70-class railtour to Londonderry

BROUGHT TO BOOK

Copies of the Permanent Way Institution Centenary booklet commemorating 150 years of Irish railways, which was reviewed in the recent issue of Five Foot Three, can be obtained at IR£1.00 each from Mr Eugene Fox, Dublin.

SOMETHING TO MUSE ON

Newry & Mourne District Council proposes to establish a district museum and hopes to include a display featuring railways in the South Down and South Armagh area. Research officer Mr Tony Canavan has asked any RPSI members who could help supply items such as tickets, posters, nameplates, etc., to get in touch with him at Newry Council offices.

LOCO LOAN

The proposed weekend loan of No.3 "R.H. Smyth" to the Downpatrick & Ardglass Railway Society, referred to in Five Foot Three, has been deferred. DARS had been granted permission to borrow the loco for a promotional weekend of

steam train rides at Downpatrick, but it is now unlikely to take place in the near future.

FUNDRAISING FUN

The RPSI's commercial department has been out and about helping raise those funds which are vital for keeping the RPSI's wheels turning. Most recently they have visited the Shane's Castle traction engine rally and the Markethill traction engine rally, where despite rain and cloud, the RPSI cash register tinkled loudly. Any more volunteers for the team should contact Henry Beaumont.

WORLDLY WISE

The RPSI's successful Cork 800 railtour has been receiving much praise and publicity in the British railway magazines recently. There was also an excellent editorial in the August issue of way World urging support for the RPSI's proposal for a Museum of Irish Railways at Whitehead. The proposals, by the way are still with the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum.

A TASTE OF HUNNI

Last word from Ulster's Gloria Hunniford, in an interview in The Star, on July 27: "The highlight of the year when I was growing up in Northern Ireland was the summer Sunday School steam train trip from Portadown to Bangor." Say no more!

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