

THE RAILWAY PRESERATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

OCTOBER 1985 NEWS-SHEET

AGONY & ECSTASY

The RPSI Steam Enterprise 1985 certainly showed the many sides of mainline steam operation! On September 7 it was a day of trials and tribulations as 171 was taken off the train at Dundalk on the journey to Dublin with an overheated axlebox. The loco was worked back light engine to Whitehead and No.4 was taken round to Central Services Depot in readiness for the September 21 trip. Meanwhile the September 7 Steam Enterprise continued under diesel power, firstly with a CIÉ diesel and then with an NIR GM loco, the homeward run being delayed by a bomb hoax near Newry. A day best forgotten!

But what a contrast awaited the participants on September 21. No.4 was in sparkling form and turned in a record performance on the return run. Her time of 27 minutes 24 seconds for the 22.5 miles from Drogheda to Dundalk included 13 miles at more than mile a minute. Despite having to unhook and run-round to the up platform to take water at Dundalk, arrival at Belfast Central was three minutes ahead of schedule!

Each of the Steam Enterprises attracted a passenger complement of around 250 people, so the trains were well worthwhile running.

BOYS OF THE LOUGH

With No.171 sidelined it was left to 4 to round off the railtour season in style with the Larne Lough railtour of Sunday September 29. About 200 passengers were on board for the Sunday afternoon run from York Road to Larne Harbour and the boat express style non-stop run home. It was a relaxed day, a fine way to round off the season.

DROPPING

Meanwhile at Whitehead No.171 was due at the time of writing, to go over the RPSI wheeldrop so that the driving axle can be removed and the hot box examined in closer detail.

DR DISEASAL

Shame on you - bookings are flowing in for the October 12 Farewell to the 70 Class DEMU tour to Londonderry! Passengers on the Larne Lough tour had a brief foretaste of the delights to come when the surviving 70 class set was on hand to shunt the RPSI train and release No.4 at Larne Harbour. By the way, intending passengers should note that unfortunately it will not be possible to have any RPSI catering on board the special - so be prepared!

WELCOME, WELCOME

The news goes from bad to worse. At the time of writing it was hoped to organise an informal "Welcome to the 450 class DEMU" special, courtesy of NIR. The company has generously offered to let the RPSI have a trial run on board one of the new sets probably from Belfast Central round to Belfast York Road. The good news is that it's all free (although we might fit in a quick raffle to catch the unsuspecting) but the bad news is that it may have happened by the time you read this! If you're interested, ring the Whitehead Railway Project and they'll tell you the exact date and time. Hopefully this circular will have reached you in time. The Society is very grateful to NIR for affording us this chance for a 450 class run.

ROAD UP

Dig this - if you want to help put the RPSI on the right road make tracks for Whitehead on Saturday October 19. The squad, under Johnny Glendinning, is going slightly off the beaten track to patch up and repair the access road to the site, which suffered a little from depression, when loco No.461 arrived on a low loader last November. If you can lend a hand please report with sandwiches, tea, and donkey jacket at 11 am.

YULE BE THERE!

The first Santa may not so far have been sighted, but there's no doubt Christmas is coming! Don't forget to fit a visit to Whitehead into your busy Christmas calendar, because we have it on the best authority that Mr Claus will be paying us a visit as usual. RPSI Steam Train Rides which include a visit to Santa's grotto will be taking place this year on:

Sundays December 1, 8, 15 & 22, and Saturday December 14.

The train rides will be in operation from 1.30 pm to 4 pm and we're expecting huge crowds. As usual Santa could do with some help out behind the scenes so if you're free even on one of those days please contact the RPSI Commercial Officer, Henry Beaumont.

TICKETS, PLEASE

Thanks to those members who have already sold their ballot tickets and returned the counterfoils and cheque. There's still time to sell your tickets but you'd better get moving smartly if you haven't started. The grand draw is at Whitehead on Saturday October 19 at 3 pm. If you're not in, you can't win, so get your skates on.

ON THE RIGHT LINES Some items from the sales desk:

Railway Lines of CIÉ & NIR by Doyle & Hirsch. A comprehensive guide, mile by mile, to the system.	£4.95
Map of Irish Railways, 1927, the perfect companion.	£2.50
Colour poster showing five RPSI steam locos.	£1.00
Merlin car sticker.	50p

All the above are available by post from Henry Beaumont, RPSI Commercial Officer.

GOING TO PRESS

The next issue of Five Foot Three is designed to be a special 21st anniversary commemorative issue. So if you've any memories of the early days of the Society, now's your chance to put pen to paper and record them for posterity. The deadline for contributions is October.

WILLKOMMEN

Already the proposals for the RPSI 1986 two-day tour are exciting interest across the world. Well, what we mean is that the Berliner Eisenbahnfreunde from West Berlin who came with us to Galway would like to come again on the trip to Westport on the weekend of May 10/11. They say they've happy memories of the steam ... and the Guinness as well!

WEEKENDERS

And the provisional dates for Irish Steam Weekends for 1986 are for the weekends of July 19 and August 25 centring around the Portrush Flyer.

AN ACE CARD

At its meeting of September 26 the RPSI Council formally renewed the ACE (Action for Community Employment) scheme, which is operated under the auspices of the Department of Manpower & Economic Development. We have five employees, whose

wages are 90 pc sponsored by the Government. At present we have two joiners, a fitter, a boilermaker and a handyperson.

SIGNALLING A MOVE

Moves are under way to relocate the former Great Northern signal cabin from Lisburn station at Whitehead Excursion Station. The proposal is that NIR should move the cabin and re-site it with the help of Enterprise Ulster, and at present planning permission is being sought at Whitehead. The RPSI would then have custody of the box and the plan would be to restore it all to working order. The project is being backed by the Ulster Architectural Heritage Society.

A GOOD TURN

Thanks to those members who have supported the Coleraine Turntable Appeal, which has so far brought in almost £400. We are hoping for good news shortly from Coleraine Borough Council.

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