

THE RAILWAY PRESERATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

NOVEMBER 1986 NEWS-SHEET

INDIAN SUMMER It wasn't just the weather - RPSI steam had an Indian summer as well! Attention focussed on the Great Northern main line with the highlight being the triumphant arrival in Dublin Connolly on Saturday September 20 of GN Compound No.85 "Merlin" - her first time in Dublin for 23 years! 85 was in fine fettle for the Belfast-Dublin run and arrival back in Belfast Central was five minutes ahead of schedule! The eight-coach train had been fully booked for at least two weeks beforehand and 85 seemed to have put all her teething troubles behind her with coal consumption highly respectable and acceleration no problem. The loco, which was running with 171's smaller tender, had successfully performed a trial run to Drogheda on September 13, and is now all set for the 1987 season.

But 85 was not the only star of the month - No.4 turned in a sparkling performance on the September 6 Steam Enterprise, something which had the experts running for the record books! No.4 also hauled the very successful Larne Lough railtour on October 5 which featured one of the most dynamic runpasts ever as 4 blasted through Ballinderry station!

ON THE UP AND UP Operations officer Ernie Gilmore has been busy doing his sums and his tot up of passenger figures shows a much improved carrying for 1986. In all, the RPSI's excursion trains (Flyers, Enterprises, Bangor Belle and Larne Lough) carried a total of 3,475 passengers - up by 21 pc on 1985. Of particular satisfaction was a real revival in fortune for the Steam Enterprise which was very well supported. In 1987 it is planned to build on this success by running no fewer than four Portrush Flyers and three Steam Enterprises. Obviously the increased patronage is largely thanks to the efforts of the publicity department who have managed to spread the word through press, television and radio.

YULE BE WELCOME Only five steaming days to Christmas at Whitehead! Santa will be swapping his sleigh for a steam train - most likely 4-4-0 No.171 "Slieve Gullion" making her return to traffic, somewhat gingerly, after axle box repairs. The Santa Train Rides are taking place at Whitehead on Sundays November 30, December 7, 14 and 21, and Saturday December 13 as well. Northern Ireland based members will find a couple of posters advertising the event enclosed in the circular - as usual our appeal is for you to have it displayed in your office, shop, garage or school.

Meanwhile Santa is still on the lookout for some extra assistance and if you ring treasurer John Richardson he'll be able to put you in the picture.

DRAWING A CROWD Many thanks to all those members who supported the Autumn Draw which once again provided a valuable injection to funds. Because of the abandonment of the Belfast area meeting on October 14 due to a power cut, the draw was made at the RPSI Council meeting in Central Station on October 16, with chairman Sullivan Boomer pulling out the lucky numbers. Our congratulations to the winners, who were:

1st prize (£100) - D.J. Thompson, Belfast.

- 2nd prize (£25) - John Foster, Londonderry.
- 3rd prize (£10) - John Beattie, Belfast.
- 4th prize (£5) - G Chard, London.
- 5th prize (£5) - P Tighe, Leamington Spa.

LET THERE BE LIGHT As you will have seen from the above paragraph, the Belfast meeting had to be abandoned on October 14 because of power cuts caused by an industrial stoppage. We have now arranged for the meeting to take place on Tuesday November 25, at 7.30 pm. The illustrated talk on NIR Today will be delivered by Mr Colin McLeod, the NIR Company Secretary, who had kindly agreed to stand in for chief executive Mr Roy Beattie, who was unavailable because of holidays in October.

ACE AXED As you will see from the enclosed message from the chairman, Sullivan Boomer, the Whitehead ACE scheme was terminated on October 31. The Department of Economic Development has withdrawn financial support from the project, as it does not come within the new guidelines laid down. The scheme, which employed five workers full time (two joiners, a welder, a boilermaker and a handyman) had been of tremendous assistance to the Society over the five years of its operation at Whitehead and its demise is a real body-blow. We have appealed to the local MP Mr Roy Beggs and Carrickfergus Borough Council for any assistance they can give in getting the scheme" re-started.

CHRISTMAS GIFTS Some items from the commercial department which would make ideal Christmas presents:

- History of the Great Northern Railway (Ireland) - a reprint of Dr E.M. Patterson's authoritative work. £6.90
- Railway World calendar for 1987 £2.00
- GN book price includes postage.

Do your shopping at the sales stand at the Belfast area meetings on November 25 or December 9. Also available - 85 poster.

FERMANAGH FILMS A date for your diary if you live in the west of Northern Ireland. Charles and Join Friel will be putting on a selection of railway films in a show at the Ardhowen Theatre in Enniskillen on January 31, 1987. The subject will be the railways around Enniskillen and it will cover Sligo, Bundoran and Omagh.

FRIELING FINE Congratulations to Charles Friel upon becoming a daddy. His wife Christine gave birth to a bouncing baby boy on October 14 and both Christine and James John are doing well!

IN THE PICTURE Calling all members who have some spare time on their hands and an enlarger in the attic! Charles Friel (yes, it's him again) has amassed a collection of Irish railway negatives and has the photographers' permission to produce postcard prints for sale in aid of RPSI funds. He would like to hear from any members with an enlarger which can handle 24in square or 35 mm negatives. Get in touch with Charles.

PUBLICATION PENDING Unfortunately Five Foot Three is still with the printers, but it is hoped that we will have it in time for a despatch in the New Year.

SCOTT ON Advance notice of a meeting being organised by the RPSI Dublin area on Thursday March 19, 1987, at 20.00 in IRRS headquarters at Heuston Station. Bill Scott will be presenting a film show.

NEW FACES? Just to update you on some changes in personnel on the RPSI Council. Johnny Glendinning has been co-opted on to the vacant position of site officer. Rory McNamee has been co-opted as Mullingar officer in succession to Denis McCabe who had to stand down for personal reasons. And Jeremy Saulters now wears two hats - as loc. running and coach running officer - following Brian Hill's departure for a two-year stint in Seattle where he is working for Boeing. Our best thanks to Brian and Denis for their efforts on behalf of the Society.

TAKING STOCK The RPSI is continuing its efforts to have CIÉ reconsider the ban on wooden-bodied stock operating between Dublin and Mallow. Our president Lord O'Neill is seeking a meeting with the CIÉ chairman Mr Paul Conlon.

WELCOME MAT Special visits have been arranged at Whitehead for two groups in recent weeks. The Carrickfergus Historical Society came down in September and then at the end Of October the Ulster Riley Club made the RPSI site the destination for a weekend run.

FACELIFT All hands on deck for a clean-up campaign at Whitehead on the weekend of November 15/16 (skip on site) and succeeding weekends.

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