

THE RAILWAY PRESERATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

APRIL 1987 NEWS-SHEET

IT'S A WINNER First and foremost, the RPSI landed another major award in the preservation world. The Society has won one of the class awards in the "Steam Heritage" competition which is sponsored by the National Coal Board and the Solid Fuel Advisory Service. The prize, which is worth £500 to the RPSI, is in respect of the restoration to full working order of GN Compound loco No.85 Merlin.

The presentation was due to be made to Lord Dunleath, the RPSI vice-president, at a ceremony at Quainton Road Railway Centre, Buckinghamshire, on Thursday April 2. The awards were being presented by Mr Malcolm Edwards, the commercial director of British Coal.

In all there were five awards for restoration projects involving the use of coal and the top prize went to the 71000 Duke of Gloucester Steam Locomotive Trust.

The winning of this award is another feather in the cap for the RPSI and comes just three years after the RPSI won the annual award of the Association of Railway Preservation Societies. So, well done to all concerned with the Merlin project.

EASTER BUNNY TIME Shake off that snow - it's almost time for the Easter Bunny trains at Whitehead. Local members will find a poster advertising the event enclosed - please try to have it displayed in your local garage or shop. If you would like further copies of the poster, please contact the Whitehead Railway Project at Whitehead 78567. The details are:

Easter Sunday, Easter Monday & Easter Tuesday
(April 19, 20 & 21)

The Easter Bunny Train Rides at Whitehead

- * Train ride for all the family.
- * Present for the children from the Easter Bunny.
- * Glass of cheer for the mums and dads.

Admission: adults £1.00 children £2.00.

Like Christmas, it's dearer for children because they get a present to bring home. The train rides run from 14.00 to 17.00 each day so come early and avoid the crowds. Please tell your friends and family and help make it a record Easter at Whitehead. Don't forget that the King's. Road bridge is still out of commission - you'll have to approach Whitehead via the Slaughterford Road bridge at the Ballycarry side of town. Members who would like to help in the diner or shop should contact John Richardson.

THINKING CAPS ON The winter season of Belfast area meetings finished in fine style on March 10 with a super cine show presented by Fred Cooper and Tony Price. Once again some magic footage was produced, the highlight being some outstanding cine of the County Donegal Railway. Our thanks to all those who made the season such a success.

Now, however, Charles Friel is already thinking about the programme for 1987-88 so if you have any ideas please contact Charles.

FULL TO THE BRIM The Lough Gill four-day international railtour is almost completely booked up with more than 300 £10 deposits having been received to date. Members who have sent in deposits will shortly be receiving their full booking forms which should be returned as soon as possible. As we explained last time, we are not proposing to send full booking forms to the membership in general (to cut down on costs). We may still be able to squeeze a few more on, so if you haven't booked get that £10 deposit off to Ernie Gilmore without delay. Soon we'll be into a waiting list situation.

Members living in the Sligo area who may not be travelling on the tour proper should bear in mind that it is proposed to run an evening excursion from Sligo to Ballymote and back on Saturday May 9. Departure time will be 18.20 and details will be published in the local newspapers.

Obviously we're delighted that the tour has booked so well. As well as the usual contingent from Britain, we're welcoming a group of 25 from the Continent and two intrepid travellers from Australia. Good on yer, cobber!

AUSTRIA CALLING The Continental group on the Sligo tour will as usual be led by our friend Ruediger Reich from the Berliner Eisenbahnfreunde group in West Berlin. Ruediger has asked us to mention that in September he is organising a special from West Berlin to Vienna to join in the "Train 150" celebrations in Austria. Ruediger would be pleased to welcome any RPSI members who would wish to join his party, and he suggests the best way would be to fly to Dusseldorf or Frankfurt to catch the train. The trip takes place from September 3 to September 7 and it costs DM 530 from Dusseldorf, or DM 482 from Frankfurt. If you are interested, please Contact Ruediger at the West German number of 030-693 45 75, (He speaks English.)

Once in Vienna there is a busy programme of events, everything from trams to a steam cavalcade - and some evening entertainment too!

SUREFIRE SUCCESS A plea from our member Margaret Prendergast of Carlow for RPSI members with restored fire engines or trucks to get in touch. Margaret is organising a transport rally in Dublin on Saturday June 20 and she would like some more exhibits.

OBITUARY It is with regret we announce the deaths since the last circular of the following people:

Mac Arnold Railway author and lifelong railway enthusiast.

Harry Ramsey NIR York Road driver, often at the controls of the Portrush Flyer.

Harold Houston Former railway official (LMS-NCC), railway enthusiast, and RPSI member.

Frederick Boomer Father of RPSI chairman Sullivan Boomer.

Our sympathy goes to the bereaved.

INTERPRETATION Council members Ernie Gilmore and Johnny Glendinning represented the Society at a Northern Ireland Tourist Board seminar on interpretive centres, held on March 24. The information they gleaned will be of assistance to the development committee in its

deliberations over the Whitehead interpretive centre. Application has been made to the University of Ulster at Jordanstown to conduct a feasibility study into the RPSI proposals.

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