

THE RAILWAY PRESERATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

JANUARY 1988 NEWS-SHEET

HAPPY NEW YEAR

Apologies for the break in transmission since the September 1987 news-sheet but we had been waiting for the latest edition of Five Foot Three before doing the mailshot. Unfortunately the latest issue, which had already been delayed so as not to miss certain key articles, is still with the printers. But do not despair – we hope to have Five Foot Three, complete with colour cover, with you within the next month. Our main problem has been that the unexpected extension to the operating season (caused by the extra film contracts) meant that certain contributors were committed on the operations front when the magazine deadline fell due.

SHANNON RAILTOUR

It was hoped at the time of writing that we would be able to include in this circular the advance booking form for the Shannon Railtour in May. Just in case, the broad details are that the tour will be operating over the weekend of May 14/15 this year. The route of the main tour train will be Dublin-Ballybrophy-Limerick (overnight); Limerick-Athenry-Dublin-Belfast (overnight); and on the Monday, either Belfast to Coleraine or Drogheda. All being well, this will represent the return of steam to the GSR main line for the first time in four years. If the Bord Fáilte advance booking form is not to hand now, we will have it with you as soon, as possible. So keep the date free!

TOP OF THE AGENDA

As you will see from the enclosed circular, the AGM is to be held at Belfast Boat Club on Friday February 19, starting at 20.00. Please mark the date in your diary and come along to hear all about the exciting plans the RPSI has for 1988. And, of course, you will also have a chance to air any views you may have about the Society. As is noted on the agenda, the Council has decided to expand its numbers to reflect the increasingly important role being played by our Mullingar base – particularly on the coaching front. Two new posts have been created – Mullingar coach maintenance and Mullingar coach running. At present these positions are posts of special responsibility but from the AGM they will be full Council posts. So, if you are interested in this or any other position on the Council, please fill in the nomination form and return it to Robin Morton.

SNOW JOKE

Santa is now having a well-earned rest following a super Christmas season at Whitehead with the two Sundays before Christmas setting new records in terms of attendance. Once again the Santa train rides created a happy family atmosphere and showed the Society off at its best. Many thanks to Santa and all those who helped make the occasion such a success.

A BIG DRAW

Congratulations to the winners of the RPSI Grand Autumn Draw. They were:

- 1st prize (£100) – David Humphries, Dublin.
- 2nd prize (£25) – Kevin Love, Belfast.
- 3rd prize (£10) – The Pop-In, Ballyclare.
- 4th prize (£5) – Roger Weatherup, Armagh.
- 5th prize (£5) – Diane Wallace, Coleraine.

The winning tickets were drawn out of the barrel at the opening Belfast area meeting in October. Many thanks to all those who helped sell tickets and to those who supported the event. It made a most useful contribution to RPSI funds at a time of year when railtour income dries up.

GARDENER'S QUESTION Anyone got a spare garden hut which they might like to donate to the RPSI? The Irish Railway Record Society has generously given an Edmundson ticket press to the RPSI on long-term loan, but we need a home for it at Whitehead. By using the press we will be able to produce traditional railway card tickets for our special trips. Contact Johnny Glendinning if you can help.

BELFAST AREA

The 1987-88 season of indoor meetings in Belfast is now in full swing. We had excellent attendances of more than 100 at the autumn meetings, details of which were given in the September news-sheet. Thanks, in particular, to those members who participated in the December meeting, at which various photographers gave us a show of their best slides and cine. Refreshments this year are being provided by a group of ladies in aid of two worthy causes - Dr Barnardos and Arthritis Research, and we even had home-made mince pies at the pre-Christmas meeting.

The programme for the spring is:

- | | |
|-------------|--|
| January 19 | Foster's Favourites. Norman Foster shows a selection of slides from 20 years ago - and beyond. Scenes from the steam era on CIÉ, BR and abroad. |
| February 16 | Twenty years of the two-day tour. Joe Cassells gives an illustrated talk About the RPSI two-day tour, which first ran in 1968. |
| March 15 | Irish Steam Cinema. We Welcome back Fred Cooper, who will be rounding off the season in style with "something old, something new, & something blue". |

The venue for the meetings, which are on the third Tuesday of each month, is St Jude's Church Hall, Sunnyside Street, Ormeau Road, Belfast, and the starting time is 7.30 pm. All welcome.

TAKE FOUR

The RPSI has been well and truly in the picture over the past year, with no fewer than four film contracts successfully completed. In November 1986 85 was in Dublin for the "Remington Steele" film. But this autumn it has been the turn of 0-6-0 184 for the limelight. As outlined in the last news-sheet, filming took place at Greystones in September for the film "Troubles". Then, later the same week, 184 travelled via Rosslare to Waterford for filming sequences in the film "Echoes" which took place at Carrick-on-Suir. In a real "Circuit of Ireland" tour, 184 then took her train from Waterford via Limerick, Athenry and Athlone back to base at Mullingar. She was in steam every day bar one for a week - and performed excellently, taking the marathon tour in her stride. But there was no rest for 184 - on October 15 she was back in business for a filming sequence in connection with "The Old Jest" production. Watch your television schedules for news of any of these films being screened! Congratulations to all those involved in the restoration work on the coaches used in

the films and to those involved in the smooth operation of the train.

MUCH MERITED

The RPSI has finished the year on a winning note by landing a certificate of merit in the annual NI Tourist Board Tourism Endeavour awards. The certificate was awarded to the Society in respect of the 50th Portrush Flyer which ran in June. Chairman Sullivan Boomer and treasurer John Richardson were at a function in Belfast's Europa Hotel on November 27 at which the certificate was presented. Cheers!

DIY JOB

Following the receipt of detailed costings from Enterprise Ulster for the shear-legs jobs at Whitehead, the RPSI Council has decided on a "do it yourself" approach. We have already had contractors in to do some earth moving and now it is proposed that the membership should tackle the shear-legs job – saving the Society valuable cash. Soon the job will be in progress so if you can help please contact Johnny Glendinning.

GET WELL SOON

Carriage running officer Neil Hamilton is currently recuperating after a coronary and we wish him well in his return to full health.

--oo0oo--