

THE RAILWAY PRESERATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

FEBRUARY 1988 NEWS-SHEET

SHANNON "FLOOD"

There has been a "flood" of bookings for the RPSI's Shannon Railtour in May, with almost 200 £10 deposits having been received at the railtour booking office at the time of writing. Outline details of the tour on the weekend of May 14 were given in the January circular. But, just to remind you, if you want to secure a seat on the train, send a cheque for £10 made payable to "The RPSI" to the railtour booking office. But do it now - the deposits are coming in thick and fast! As was the practice last year, we will only be sending the detailed booking form to those who submit deposits - so as to cut down on expenditure and administration. Everything is shaping up for one of the most memorable two-day tours ever - a fitting way to mark the 20th anniversary of the first two-day tour to Athlone in 1968!

MILLENNIUM MATTERS

Looking forward a bit further, here are some additional details about the proposed season of Millennium specials being run this summer to mark Dublin's 1000th birthday. The basic programme is given in the enclosed programme of events. The train will be hauled by our 2-6-4T No.4 which will be based in Dublin, and the coaches will be our Mullingar based set. As well as the mainline runs, local trips will be operating in most cases at the destination. Details are:

July 16 - Local trip between Carrick-on-Shannon and Longford.  
July 30 - Local trip between Athlone and Ballinasloe.  
August 13 - Local trip between Mosney and Navan.  
August 27 - Local trip between Mosney and Drogheda.

David Humphries, our Republic of Ireland marketing and publicity officer, is coordinating the operation and he would like to hear from local members who can help - and in particular from those living in the areas covered by the programme who may be able to assist in local publicity, etc.

MEETING TIME

Don't forget the last of the Belfast indoor meetings which will be taking place at St Jude's Church Hall in Sunnyside Street on the evening of Tuesday March 15 (7.30 pm). Fred Cooper from Portadown will be giving of his best on the cine film front with his "Irish Steam Cinema". And, just in case any eyebrows were raised, the "something blue" in the last news-sheet referred to the Great Northern livery - and nothing else! So come early to get a good seat for what promises to be the usual super show.

DUBLIN GATHERING

And just to make sure that our members in the Dublin area are not disappointed, Fred Cooper will be presenting a film show there too - at 8 pm on the evening of Saturday April 9. The venue will be the Irish Railway Record Society headquarters at Heuston Station, and the programme will include a film on the County Donegal Railway never before screened in Dublin. In addition, there will be films of the Cavan & Leitrim Railway and the Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway. Again, all welcome.

**GREAT CRACK**

Advance notification of the Easter Bunny steam train rides at Whitehead on Easter Sunday, Monday and Tuesday (April 2, 3 and 4). This is a fast-growing attraction and is rapidly becoming as big an event as the Santa trains. An Easter Bunny will be on hand to present gifts to the children, and there will be refreshment for the parents. So, spread the word, and make a date in your diary to support this event. And, if you can lend a hand behind the scenes or in the shop, contact Ernie Gilmore, the RPSI Operations Officer.

**NO TROUBLE**

The Irish Times has reported the proposed transmission dates for ITV's film "Troubles", which features the RPSI steam train and loco No.184. The film, as you will recall, was made last September in the Greystones area of Co. Wicklow. The schedule is for the film to be shown in two two-hour episodes on Sunday April 24 and Sunday May 1. We do not have details of the timing, so watch your television schedule nearer the time. The film, based on a novel by J.G. Farrell, is described as a "love story/comedy" set in Ireland just after World War One, and it is said to depict the decline of the Anglo Irish tradition. Keep the Kleenex handy!

**SCHOOL'S OUT**

Dates have now been fixed for the RPSI Schools' Days at Whitehead. This year the event will be taking place on Tuesday and Wednesday, June 7 and 8. We will be calling on our members to help in a number of ways – guiding groups of children around the site, manning the shop and dining car, and general stewarding. It's always a happy day at Whitehead – and, importantly, it means that we are introducing another generation to the delights of steam trains. Contact Mrs Reta Craig at the Whitehead Railway Project if you can help.

**SALE TIME**

Your last chance to snap up a copy of the NIR InterCity 40th anniversary Enterprise Express booklet, published last August. The last few remaining copies are available at £2.50 each, post free, including packing, from Henry Beaumont, the RPSI commercial officer. Make your cheque payable to "The RPSI".

**SPRING CLEANING?**

If you're having a bit of a clear out at home the RPSI might be able to take a weight off your mind – and off your bookshelves. We are always grateful to take delivery of back numbers of railway magazines, unwanted books and memorabilia, etc., which will be put on sale in aid of RPSI funds. Please contact Henry Beaumont.

**IN THE PICTURE**

Heather Boomer, our chairman's wife, would be pleased to hear from anyone who might have a photograph of the exterior of Lisburn railway station in the early 1960s.

**"TRAIN"ING CENTRE**

Our thanks to Falden Government Training Centre in Newtownabbey which has volunteered to help the RPSI with the restoration and renovation of the former Carlow Sugar diesel loco at Whitehead. This engine, which has lain out of use since being given to the Society by CSÉ, would be a most useful shunter at Whitehead. The RPSI will be removing the Ruston four cylinder diesel engine from the loco (built 1955) and taking it to Falden where it will be overhauled by students working for an apprenticeship recognised by the Road Traffic Industry Training Board. Meanwhile there will be lots of work for willing hands at Whitehead in putting the Carlow

diesel back in business – just turn up any weekend and ask for Peter Scott.

ON THE RIGHT TRACKS Congratulations to RPSI member Dr Godfrey Brown of Ballycastle on being elected Moderator-designate of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland. Dr Brown, Who has been a member of the Society for quite a few years, steps into the hot seat in June. The press release announcing his appointment referred to his RPSI membership and the Society got quite a few mentions as a result.

SHEDDING SOME LIGHT Plans are afoot, for a much-needed coach storage shed to be built at Whitehead, with work possibly starting later this year. The proposal is for a two-track hayshed style shed, accommodating two trains of 10 coaches each. Obviously, if we can get our carriages under cover, they will survive the rigours of the weather which is currently undoing much of the valuable restoration work. Provisional costings put the project at around the £80,000 mark, but the good news is that we have received outline approval for a 50 pc grant from the International Fund for Ireland. Watch this space!

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