

THE RAILWAY PRESERATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

JUNE 1988 NEWS-SHEET

- CLEARED FOR TAKE-OFF The Portrush Flyer is about to take wing for the 15th successive and successful summer season – a record for any mainline steam excursion anywhere in the British Isles. The Flyer first ran in 1973 and no-one would have dared hope that it would still be in being 15 years on. But, as we all know, the Flyer has proved to be highly popular with enthusiast and public alike and now we look forward to celebrating the Flyer's 15th birthday. This year, of course, the train operates from Belfast Central, calling at Lisburn and Antrim to pick up, and it will be running on Saturdays July 9 & 23, and August 6 & 20. No.85 Merlin will be at the head of the train – so make sure you're on board.
- MILLENNIUM MAGIC Off to a successful start is the season of special steam trains being operated by the RPSI to mark the Dublin Millennium. No.4, our 2-6-4T, has already been to Dundalk with the Cooley and Clonsilla with the shuttle train, both events operating without a hitch. Still to come are:
- Sat July 16 – The Shannon to Carrick-on-Shannon and Longford
Sat July 30 – The Lough Ree to Athlone and Ballinasloe
Sat August 13 – The Tara to Navan and Mosney.
Sat August 27 – The Boyne to Drogheda and Navan
- Full details from David Humphries.
- MAKE TRACKS FOR The Whitehead Sunday afternoon steam train rides will be operating throughout the month of July, with loco No.3 "R.H. Smyth" in charge. More helpers are still needed – so why not drop a line to Ernie Gilmore to offer your services?
- SHED SOME POUNDS In this circular you will find the Whitehead carriage shed appeal for which we would seek your support. Why not follow the example of 13-year-old member David Higgins from Westport who completed a sponsored walk and raised £20 on behalf of the fund? Well done to David and thanks also to the London syndicate run by Leslie McAllister which has got us off to a super start by making a donation of £1,500 – the proceeds of various book sales and other fund-raising events. Thanks too to Dublin area for £45 raised at a film show. Next, please!
- A MATTER OF TRUST A London based charitable trust has given the RPSI a major fillip by making available to the Society a £4,000 grant to cover the cost of materials used by the Whitehead Railway Project in its coach restoration project over the past year. Under the arrangement reached with the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders, the RPSI is responsible for providing materials for the young trainees, while NIACRO funds wages and other overheads. So this offer of grant aid, which came as a result of the RPSI's recent decision to join the Northern Ireland Council on Voluntary Action, is very welcome news indeed for the RPSI. The Trust concerned wishes to remain anonymous in keeping with its policy of maintaining a low profile.

ENTERPRISING IDEA

The RPSI council has arranged for contract tickets to be made available to RPSI members and friends travelling by service train to take part in any of the Millennium outings or other Society-connected events. Thanks to NIR Intercity's co-operation, the tickets are available at £10 return / £5 single but they must be purchased in advance. If you would like to order a batch – or even just one – send an SAE to either Sullivan Boomer or Ernie Gilmore. Enclose a cheque payable to "The RPSI" and give a week's notice.

A VOTE OF THANKS

Thanks to all those members who took the trouble to write to the Society to express their satisfaction with how everything had gone on the Shannon International Railtour. It was most gratifying to know that the effort put in by a lot of people had been appreciated. Don't forget to buy a copy of the July Steam Railway which features a couple of lovely colour pictures of the event. And keep an eye out for Railway World in the next couple of months – it is due to carry a major article on the tour.

* Just for the record, did you know that the Shannon International Railtour acted as a service train for part of its journey? On the return run from Portrush to Belfast, the RPSI train ran in the path of the 14.39 NIR service train from Ballymena to Antrim. Several somewhat bemused passengers needed quite a bit of persuading by staff before boarding the steam train – wonder if anyone believed them when they got home!

DIB DIB DIB!

No.85 was back in Portrush on June 11 when the Boy Scout movement hired the RPSI steam train to operate the Mafeking Express from Belfast Central. The weather was glorious and 85 performed well, but unfortunately the organisers did not sell as many tickets as they had hoped and there were rather too many empty seats on the train. Still, from the Society's point of view it was a useful test trip for 85 to make to Portrush.

Thanks, meanwhile, to those members who supported the Sunday Afternoon Steam run from York Road to Central on June 5 – a good time was had by all.

MULLINGAR MUSINGS

Well done to the Mullingar-based workforce who have been increasing their numbers by leaps and bounds recently. The recent appeal to members in the Dublin area to roll up their sleeves resulted in about 30 positive replies. If you would like to get involved, please contact David Humphries.

Meanwhile, the RPSI is in discussion with AnCo, the Republic's youth training scheme, with a view to starting a coach restoration project at Mullingar. Watch this space!

FEASIBLE MOVE

Carrickfergus Borough Council has voted unanimously to give the RPSI a grant of £2,000 over two years to help with the proposed feasibility study at Whitehead. The study's remit is to examine the development of Whitehead as a tourist centre, with the possibility of a railway museum adjacent to the RPSI site being the main attraction. It is expected that the study will cost a total of £12,000, and negotiations are under way to see if the European Community will offer a grant to cover 75 pc of the cost (£9,000). That would leave £1,000 for the Society to make up, but various possibilities

are being followed up to see if some outside body will cover this cost. The Carrick Council grant came after a delegation from the RPSI attended a council meeting to outline the Society's plans.

A NEW VENUE

Our programme of Belfast indoor meetings will have a new home this coming winter. Sadly St Jude's Hall, our base for the past few years, has been closed down because of lack of use and is now on the market. Charles Friel, who coordinates the meetings, is checking various other halls in the area to see which would be the most suitable venue. We hope to have some firm news in time for the next circular in September – but if anyone has any good ideas, why not ring Charles.

Meanwhile, members who attended last year's meetings will be interested to learn that the ladies who provided tea and coffee at the interval were, as a result of your support, able to make donations of £63.70 each to Dr Barnardo's and the Arthritis Research Northern Ireland charities. Thanks for your help.

THE LAST WORD

Congratulations and best wishes for the future to RPSI members Paul Newell and Ann Beaumont who were married at Hillsborough Parish Church on June 18. Paul is a former Council member and Ann is a daughter of former commercial officer Henry Beaumont. On the right tracks!