

THE RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

NEWSLETTER

SEPTEMBER 1988

OFF THE ROAD

As many members will already be aware, the return run of the July 23 Portrush Flyer was marred when the tender of Locomotive No.85 "Merlin" became derailed at Kellswater, between Ballymena and Antrim. The NIR crew brought the train to a stop, and both the locomotive itself and the entire train remained on the rails. None of the 220 passengers on board was hurt in the incident, and arrangements were made to transfer the passengers to a following NIR service train for the journey back to Belfast. Thanks to the skilful operation of the train crew, few passengers realised what had happened until the train had stopped. NIR immediately launched an internal inquiry into why the tender had become derailed, and pending the outcome of this investigation No.85 has been withdrawn from traffic by the RPSI, and No.171 operated the remaining Flyers. No.85 was moved light engine to Whitehead where a check for damage was carried out. Following the incident we have been gratified to receive several Letters from passengers praising the NIR crew and expressing appreciation to the members of the RPSI operating staff and coach stewards who made sure everyone was safe and kept fully informed as alternative arrangements were made for the trip home. Thanks, too, to the diner staff who kept everyone's spirits up WITH an impromptu sing-song!

MEGA-MILLENNIUM

The season of Dublin Millennium specials with 2-6-4T No.4 and the Mullingar set of coaches has proved to be an outstanding success, with sell-out trains and a super atmosphere. The venture, which attracted much favourable publicity and comment really caught the public imagination and as a result the RPSI has enlisted quite a few new members and supporters. The programme finished up with "The Boyne" outing to Drogheda and Navan - No.4's second visit to the Navan branch in a fortnight. Many thanks to all concerned for making the Millennium season so memorable!

RAW RECRUITS

Thanks to the Millennium trains and the successful Shannon Railtour in May, the RPSI membership topped the 800 mark for the first time ever in August. At present we have 818 fully paid up members - the highest ever. Welcome to all our new supporters - we value your backing.

MOST APPEALING

The Whitehead Carriage Shed Appeal Fund has got off to an excellent start with donations from members in the first few weeks already standing at the £600 mark. In addition, several members are planning their own fund raising ventures as outlined in the last circular. Member Sean Kennedy from Dublin has set a fine example by donating 200 post cards of No.171 for sale in aid of the fund. And don't forget that part of the proceeds of the Larne Lough Tour will go towards this worthy aim. So, now that the autumn's here, why not start planning your own photographic show to help raise funds?

All donations to:

RPSI Carriage Shed Appeal,
Northern Bank,
High Street,
Carrickfergus,
BT38 1AL

SHANNON SOUVENIR

Here's a chance to bring the memories of the Shannon Railtour alive in your very own sitting room. Railscene Video's professional cameramen followed the tour by road and shot some excellent footage of Nos. 4, 184 and 85 in various parts of Ireland. So impressed were the Railscene editors that they have devoted no LESS than 20 minutes of their latest tape to the RPSI tour. It really is outstanding stuff! Also featured are the latest developments on BR, as well as some preserved steam in Britain. A number of the VHS tapes have been made available to the RPSI to sell (with all proceeds going to the

Society), so if you would like to secure one send a cheque for £19.95 crossed and made payable to "The RPSI", and we will pop one into the post for you. No home should be without one!

WHEN ONE DOOR CLOSES ...

Another one opens! That's what Charles Friel, organiser of our Belfast Winter meetings has found. St. Jude's Hall in Sunnyside Street may have closed but at the time of writing it seems highly likely that St. Jude's Hall at Ravenhill Road will be available. The Hall, which is also run by St. Jude's Parish Church, is at St. Jude's Crescent, near the Rosetta roundabout. The proposal is to hold the meetings on the second Wednesday of each month, starting as usual at 7.30 pm sharp. Please watch the local newspapers or ring the ansaphone at Whitehead nearer the time to confirm the venue. Programme cards will be available at the first meeting and also on receipt of a stamped addressed envelope from the Whitehead Railway Project, Castleview Road, Whitehead, BT38 9NA. The provisional programme is:

Wed Oct 12 - 1963 Rambler.
Charles Friel with a slide show which takes us from Dun Laoghaire to Portadown, Londonderry and Belfast. Features every class of steam loco in 1963.

Wed Nov 9 - Irish Steam in the 1960s.
This time it is a trip by cine film of the Northern Ireland railway scene of 25 years ago. Varied coverage including steam and diesel.

Wed Dec 14 - Members' Christmas Show.
Your chance to let the rest see the best of your 35mm colour slides or 8mm (super and standard) cine. Book your 15 minute slot by ringing Charles Friel before Sat Dec 10.
Prizes on offer!

DUBLIN UP ...

Plans were in hand at the time of writing for the first ever double-headed RPSI Steam Enterprise! No.171 "Slieve Gullion" was due to be the train engine on September 3 and then No.4 was to double head the train at least part of the way home. The purpose was of course, to bring No.4 back to Belfast so that she could operate the Steam Enterprises on September 17 and 24. The remaining Steam Enterprise trains were booking well at the time of writing - so if you haven't got your ticket do something about it pronto.

LOCO FUND ...

The Irish Locomotive Restoration Fund stands just short of £5,000 at present, and the money is all very much needed as the major restoration project proceeds apace on 2-6-0 No.461 at Whitehead. During September the locomotive's driving wheels are to be put back into the engine. If you can help in this exciting scheme, turn up at Whitehead any weekend and ask for Peter Scott.

READ ALL ABOUT IT ...

The August 1988 Railway World was not one to miss - because the front page photograph and the main feature were to do with the Shannon Railtour. Lots of pictures and a very nice article about the tour - and did you notice the '85' logo being used in Railway World's preservation section?

Also on the publicity front, our thanks to Bord Fáilte for hosting a press conference in Belfast on August 25 at which plans for the Steam Enterprise were announced.

LAST BUT NOT LEAST ...

Congratulations to RPSI operating staff members Jeremy Saulters and Karen Cameron who were married on September 3. All the best!

WORKING MEMBERS ...

Recently a member complained that, on arriving at Whitehead, he found the Site locked up. We apologise to him and to anyone else who may have been inconvenienced in this way. During the Operating Season both the Carriage and Wagon and Locomotive departments have duties away from Whitehead, chiefly at Central Service Depot; however during the winter months the Site at Whitehead will be open any Saturday or Sunday from 11.30am. All members will be welcome because there is always a shortage of volunteers to do jobs - anything from painting to joinery, track laying to loco engineering. All this work is done by a small group of people in their spare time. Show them your support and join a work party at Whitehead - ask to speak to Alan Edgar, Peter Scott or Johnny Glendinning.

**Support the Carriage
Shed Appeal - fund
raising effort is
needed NOW!**