

THE RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

NEWSLETTER

APRIL 1989

RPSI VICE-PRESIDENT ...

As members present at the AGM were told the RPSI is delighted to be able to announce the appointment of the former Taoiseach, Dr Garret FitzGerald, as its Vice President. Lord O'Neill, our President, has made contact with Dr FitzGerald, who has long been a railway enthusiast, and has secured his agreement to accept the position. This means the RPSI has two, vice-presidents - Lord Dunleath and Dr FitzGerald. Dr FitzGerald said in a letter he hopes to touch base with the RPSI, possibly during the Mount Brandon railtour.

GOING WEST ...

Plans are being finalised at the time of writing for the Mount Brandon International Railtour to Tralee over the weekend of 13/14 May. The two-day tour will be our first visit to the scenic Killarney / Tralee area since 1980 and we're keeping our fingers crossed for good weather. More than 300 passengers have booked for the tour and among them are contingents from Germany, Austria, Australia and America, as well as Britain. No.85 has been passed by the Civil Engineering Department for her historic first ever visit to the Cork main line and Tralee, and the trip down the Kerry Road will be a first for No.4 as well. As always we have an awful lot of behind the scenes preparation work to do on both engines and coaches to make sure everything will operate as planned. So if you can spare some time in the coming weekends, please come to Whitehead or Mullingar, or contact the appropriate Council members if you can help. There are countless little jobs to be done, skilled and unskilled, clean and dirty, so please join the team and make the Mount Brandon a weekend to remember.

LOCAL NEWS ...

Don't forget that even if you're not booked on the main tour, you can still have a slice of the action on the Mount Brandon.

First of all there is the Whitehead to Dublin trip with No.85 on Sunday 7 May. The planned departure from Whitehead is at 10 am, with passengers from Dublin joining off the service train at Lisburn. You can get back to Belfast on the evening service train. Belfast passengers may also wish to travel on the Monday portion as in previous years. If you're interested then contact Whitehead and get a booking form. If you. Prefer, you can always pay on the train anyway. And on the weekend of the tour itself there will also be a steam-hauled local trip from Mallow to Killarney. Watch the local newspapers for details.

STERLING WORK ...

Congratulations to member David Stirling (a regular two-day tour participant with the ARPS party) who won a free ticket on the Mount Brandon tour. His reply to a questionnaire on the destination of the 1989 tour (handed out on the 1988 Shannon tour) was the lucky one drawn from the hat at the AGM.

THE BELLE TOLLED ...

Members are advised that the proposed Bangor Belle trips on April 29 have been CANCELLED. There were two reasons for this. One was a delay in getting some of the running certificates completed, while the second was that the Society was offered a rather lucrative film contract in the Republic - and this proved to be the more attractive option.

No.4 and coaches 861, 1142 and 1097 (the RPSI film set rake) went south on Saturday 21 April for the filming of scenes for "The Real Charlotte". No.184 will be used for static sequences at Moate for one day, while the coaches on their own will be used for a night sequence in Heuston station. We regret any inconvenience this change of plan may have caused members, but trust that it will be accepted this was a wise decision.

INSURANCE NEWS ...

Negotiations are continuing with NIR at the time of writing on a legal agreement to cover the Society's operations in Northern Ireland for 1989 and ensuing years. Progress is being made and we look forward to tying up the remaining loose ends without undue difficulty. Already our insurance cover has been increased in line with NIR requirements, and we now carry £15 million of public liability insurance as well as £1.5 million of accidental damage cover. As part of the new arrangements, the Cornhill insurance company is carrying out the annual safety inspection of the RPSI tour train at Whitehead, and the first part of this exercise took place during the week beginning 17 April. The NIR board has given its approval in principle to the new arrangements.

CARRIAGE SHED ...

Our thanks to Carrickfergus Literary and Scientific Society for a most generous donation of £1,500 to the Whitehead Carriage Shed Appeal Fund. We are also grateful to the Northern Bank and the TSB who have taken out corporate membership for the year with a subscription of £250 a time. For this, each of the companies will be entitled to the use of one compartment for one outing on either the Portrush Flyer or the Steam Enterprise. Would your company be interested in lending support to the Society's efforts in this way?

And now that the summer is approaching, why not organise a barbecue or party in aid of the Whitehead Carriage Shed Appeal?

We have now received planning permission and building control approval and currently are preparing tender documents with a view to having work start at Whitehead in July. Our thanks to all those members and friends of the Society who have given us so much help, and who are continuing to do. Now the ball is in every member's court! It's up to you to help raise the rest of the money. If we get enough into the Fund in the next month or so phase one of the work will begin. This involves major excavations at Whitehead to remove the earth bank between the carriage sidings and the Larne line, the erection of a new fence, and the construction the shed's foundations. This will leave us ready to erect the shed itself next year.

END OF AN ERA ...

At the AGM Lord O'Neill made a presentation of an engraved crystal vase to outgoing Treasurer John Richardson who was retiring after serving in the position for an amazing stint of 24 years. Life membership was also conferred on John to mark the significant contribution he has made to the Society on many fronts. John thanked the Society for its gesture and wished it well in the future. John, who had to undergo a procedure in hospital last year, is also standing down from his position as dining car organiser. Our thanks to John for all he has done, and our good wishes to Bill Scott who has taken over as Treasurer.

SALE TIME ...

Our new Commercial Officer, Joe Fitzpatrick is keen to hear from all those, north and south, who are interested in joining the 1989 RPSI sales team. All those in the Republic are asked, to ring Joe any evening or to drop him a line. Members in Northern Ireland who would like to get involved are invited to attend a meeting at the RPSI shop in Whitehead at 15.00 on Saturday 27 May. Joe will be travelling up to meet with Northern Ireland members to discuss plans for this year. Anyone who would like to help but who cannot attend this meeting is asked to write to Henry Beaumont.

A NEW CHAPTER ...

An appeal is also made by our Commercial Officer for members currently spring cleaning their bookshelves to keep the RPSI in mind. Joe is trying to expand our collection of second hand railway books, all sold in aid of the Society, and would be more than willing to take any spare volumes off your hands. Give him a ring.

TAKING STOCK ...

Publications Officer Nelson Poots is setting about remedying the absence of a comprehensive RPSI stock book - a publication which is long overdue. He is proposing to publish a booklet with a colour cover and plenty of photos which will include details of all the RPSI's locos, coaches and wagons. At present he is thinking in terms of a print run of around 3,000 and hoping to offset some of the production costs by inviting adverts for the booklet. The prices will be £100 for a fullpage and £50 for a half page and

members wishing to book a space on behalf of their company or product should contact Mrs Linda Turkington at the Whitehead Railway Project.

GIVE US A CLUE ...

Enclosed in this circular are the answers to the Grand Christmas Irish Railway Quiz, devised by former chairman Laurence Liddle. Our thanks to those members who entered - and let's hope it gave a lot of you a chance to test out the old grey matter. A completely correct entry would have scored 54 points, but congratulations to the top three, who were:

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|---------------------------|-------------|
| 1) Des Fitzgerald, Armagh | 47.5 points |
| 2) Conrad Natzio, London | 42.5 points |
| 3) Robin Barr, Lancashire | 35 points |

And special thanks to Des Fitzgerald for donating his £50 prize to the Carriage Shed Appeal Fund; a gesture which was much appreciated.

CLOSE SEASON ...

The Belfast area meetings have wrapped up for another season, the finale being an excellent look back at 1988 from Joe Cassells. Our thanks to all those who took part in the season and to Charles Friel for organising the meetings. Anyone with ideas for the 1989-90 meetings should contact Charles. Members will be interested to know that donations have been made to two charities from the proceeds of the interval refreshments provided by Mrs Norma Gordon and her team. The sum of £70 was divided between Dr Barnardos and the Island Day Centre. Thanks to RPSI members for their support.

DEVELOPING PLANS ...

The Council has been discussing the order of projects to be undertaken in the ongoing development of Whitehead. After the Carriage Shed has been built there will be two major schemes which are essential to keep us running through the 1990s and beyond the turn of the century.

One is the construction of a machine shop and smithy for the locomotive maintenance department. Members will know of the miracles performed by Peter Scott and his merry band with cramped and limited facilities, and we don't want that to continue any longer than necessary. These facilities will allow us to carry out repairs and maintenance to both locos and

coaches much more efficiently.

The second need is the erection of the shear-legs to allow us to lift coaches (or tenders or small locomotives) for repairs and servicing of the running gear and wheels; we could even lift boilers out of the frames of the main line locos for repair and examination.

GRANT US ...

Mullingar has not been forgotten in any of these plans, for applications have been lodged for grant aid from three different sources. We have approached the National Heritage Council, the National Lottery and Bord Fáilte (for European Community Tourism Development Aid) for grants to repair the shed at Mullingar and construct a carriage shed and maintenance facilities. If the aid is forthcoming then our southern base will soon rival Whitehead and be a self-contained operation. That will please those who have had to haul trailer-loads of materials over 130 miles of indifferent roads!

PLEASE ...

**SUPPORT THE
WHITEHEAD
CARRIAGE SHED
APPEAL FUND
TODAY!**

**ALL DONATIONS CAN
BE SENT TO
WHITEHEAD RAILWAY
PROJECT OR ANY
COUNCIL MEMBER
NOW!**