

THE RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

NEWSLETTER

AUGUST 1989

MAINLINE MAGIC ...

Details are contained in this circular of the 1989 Steam Enterprise season which gets under way on Saturday 19 August. No.85 "Merlin" will be back on her home ground for the four Belfast Dublin trips. We return from Dublin in a slightly later path than we have done before, so this will allow passengers a longer afternoon in Dublin - something people have been asking for. The Steam Enterprise picks up at Belfast Lisburn, Portadown, Newry and Dundalk, so please give the 1989 season your support. Why not bring a group of friends and make it a real day out to remember?

ULSTER RAILWAY 150 ...

Plans are being finalised at the time of writing for the week-long celebration on NIR to mark the 150th Anniversary of the Ulster Railway. As outlined in the last circular, No.85 is due to operate a steam train on each of the NIR suburban network lines on the week beginning 7 August - Larne on Monday, Antrim on Tuesday, Bangor on Wednesday and Portadown on Thursday. The events culminate with a shuttle service on the Belfast - Lisburn line on the day of the anniversary, Saturday 12 August.

IT'S A BREEZE ...

Dublin based RPSI excursions been going on full steam ahead this summer with No.4 performing excellently on both the DSER and the Midland. The inaugural Sea Breeze excursion from Dublin to Wexford and Rosslare was a tremendous success and attracted over 300 enthusiasts from Britain who came over for the day. Obviously this opens up a new market for the RPSI and one which is distinct from the two day tour. Since then No.4 has made a successful trip to Sligo and the next Sea Breeze on 12 August is sold out over a fortnight in advance. Still to come is the Maynooth Shuttle on Saturday 9 September, so please give that trip your support.

SEASIDE STEAM ...

Don't forget the Whitehead steam train rides which operate each Sunday afternoon until the end of August. No.85 has been operating the runs in July while work is completed on returning No.3 "R.H. Smyth" to active service for August.

TENDERS CLOSE ...

Tenders for Phase 1 of the £90,000 Carriage Shed at Whitehead are due to close on 1 August so the next stage will be to place the contract for the start of the project. Work will start in the autumn, probably about the beginning of September and the whole project is expected to be phased over two to three years, depending on how fast we can raise the money - more finance means quicker completion. So please have a think now about what fund raising exercise you could organise over the winter time to keep the coffers well filled.

Don't forget that thanks to the International fund for Ireland grant every £1 you raise is worth £2 to the Society Carriage Shed Appeal fund.

SIGNED AND SEALED ...

The RPSI has now signed and sealed an agreement with NIR which will give the green light to steam operation on NIR metals for the foreseeable future. The agreement, which has been the product of several months of negotiation, covers many legal and insurance aspects of our operations and assigns areas of responsibility between the Society and the Company, guarantees continued steam operation and allows the RPSI to plan ahead accordingly.

PUZZLE SOLVED ...

For anyone still scratching their head as to the destination of the mystery train on 18 June, it was ... Dundalk! The purpose of the operation was to swap round 4 and 85 for the summer.

No.85, which had operated the Dublin - Dundalk excursion (The Cooley), ran light to Dundalk while No.4, which had been undergoing boiler work at Whitehead, brought the tour train across the border. The locos changed over at Dundalk and the train headed back to Whitehead with No.85 in charge, while No.4 continued light engine to Dublin. Two express locos on the GN main line in one day - just like the good old days!

WELCOME ABOARD ...

Dr Garret FitzGerald TD, who has accepted the position of RPSI Vice President, had his first trip with the Society on the Sea Breeze excursion on 24 June. Dr FitzGerald, the former Taoiseach, joined RPSI Council members and other guests for an informal breakfast at the Restaurant Na Mara in Dun Laoghaire before travelling with the RPSI special as far as Greystones. At the breakfast Dr FitzGerald confessed to a "strongly nostalgic but strictly non-technical" love of railways, and told guests he had been a train-spotter since the age of two, when his family spent a holiday beside the railway line in Greystones. He said the invitation from the RPSI to become Vice President was one which had given him great pleasure. He said he hoped the railway companies appreciated the benefits they were deriving from the activities of the RPSI, north and south. Dr FitzGerald also spoke of the RPSI's valuable role in the tourist industry and said both Bord Fáilte and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board had a strong interest in supporting the Society. Margaret Cahill, Bord Fáilte's General Manager in Britain, who travelled on the train, said the RPSI obviously had a "first class product" to sell. She said the drama and excitement of a steam train trip had combined well with the Irish ambience and friendliness. All in all a very successful event and a nice feather in the RPSI's cap, which augurs well for future developments.

ROLL UP ...

Joe Fitzpatrick, our Commercial Officer, is trying to rejuvenate our sales operations in Northern Ireland, which have become a little jaded over recent years. He is looking for volunteers who can help with our efforts, and would like to hear from you if you can assist. Contact him either through Whitehead Railway Project or tell either Sam Somerville or Bob Hunter, who can be contacted any Sunday at the Whitehead Steam Train Rides, or on any of the Belfast based Society trains.

FAST FORWARD ...

NIR driver George Gaw would like to hear from anyone with a video or sound recording of the memorable runpast at Greenisland by Nos. 4 and 171 during the Larne Lough railtour last October. George can be contacted at York Road Station, Belfast.

SILVER JUBILEE ...

1989 is the Silver Jubilee Year not only for the RPSI - but also for RPSI member Fr. John Brennan. John, who is based in England, celebrated 25 years as a priest and several RPSI members were there to join in the party.

AND WE HEAR ...

Reports have been reaching us of the refurbishment of RPSI locomotive No.3BG, the Guinness engine, which is on lease to the Downpatrick & Ardglass Railway. The loco has been retubed and has passed her boiler tests, both hydraulic and under steam. We understand that she is now entering service at Downpatrick. Well done lads!

Donations to the Carriage Shed Appeal fund should be sent to Whitehead Railway Project at Castlevue Road, Whitehead.

ULSTER RAILWAY 150 - 12 AUGUST 1989

Belfast dep	0700	1000	1102	1230	1330	1502	1600	1737
Lisburn arr	0721	1016	1118	1246	1350	1518	1616	1755
Lisburn dep	0800	1030	1135	1255	1400	1527	1706	1807
Belfast arr	0822	1048	1153	1312	1417	1544	1723	1830

1230 ex Belfast and 1527 ex Lisburn are VIP specials.

1255 ex Lisburn and 1737 ex Belfast are empty trains.