

THE RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

NEWSLETTER

MARCH 1990

AGM TIME ...

Don't forget to attend the AGM, which is at 20.00 on Friday 23 March in the Belfast Boat Club, Lockview Road, Stranmillis, Belfast. Enclosed are the various reports and the audited accounts which will be considered at the meeting. Please come along and hear the latest at this important point in the Society's history. And if you've any views to put forward, this is the time and place for you. Please remember to bring your membership card with you. Please also note that RPSI members do not have to sign in individually at the door at Belfast Boat Club. Simply tell the official on duty that you are part of the RPSI party.

ON THE RECORD ...

With the changeover of Secretary at the AGM, the Council felt it would be an opportune moment to preserve some of the RPSI's own history - namely the Council Minute Books. Sadly the original Minute Books for the period from 1964 to 1968 have long since gone missing, but we do have in our possession Minute Books from 1968 to the present day. It has been decided to lodge these in the Public Record Office for Northern Ireland at Balmoral Avenue in Belfast, but to place a 30 year limit on them. This means that Volume 1, from 1968 to 1971, will be accessible to the public in 2001, and the other books will be progressively released in succeeding years. Some future historian will be grateful to us! By the way, if anyone can help trace the original Minute Books from the first four years we would be delighted to hear from them.

IN TRAINING? ...

An opportunity for any responsible member who wishes to become involved in Whitehead events is to be held on Saturday 31 March 1990 at 2.30 pm. The first of what is hoped will be an annual event for those who want

to work with our customers in the shop, or ticket office, or diner, it is designed as an informal get together for any member who hasn't yet helped the Society, but would like to in a practical way. Other members who have helped are also welcome. The chance will be provided for you, the member, to tell us what you think of Whitehead events. If you are interested, please contact Sam Somerville as soon as possible. Depending on availability, it might be possible to have a dining car available on the day for complimentary tea and coffee. We look forward to seeing you there.

A CEREAL STORY ...

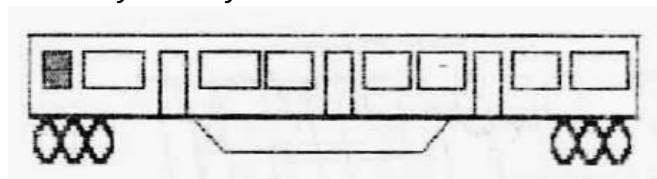
Those of you who eat Kellogg's Cornflakes may be a little surprised over the next couple of months, as apparently the RPSI is going to be on each and every packet! Well, it surprised us as well, but the explanation is really quite simple. This July we will be operating a shuttle service between Bray and Greystones, but it is not an RPSI promotion. In fact we are hiring the train out for the day, a bit like a film contract. And it wasn't until after everything had been signed, sealed and agreed that we heard who was putting up the money! But at the end of the day, it's all publicity, and what would it have cost us to put an advert on every cornflakes packet? Quite a coup for our Dublin Operations team - well done lads!

BELFAST AREA ...

Thanks to everyone who supported another successful season of meetings at St. Jude's Hall over the past winter, and thanks also to those who entertained us. Charles Friel, who organises the programme, would now like to hear from anyone with ideas for the 1990-91 season. Contact him if you have any suggestions.

A YEAR AWAY ...

Actually it was nearer 18 months to go when the Society signed an agreement for a train we are going to operate in the late summer of 1991! Yes, the financial guarantees are signed and the railway company have said there should be no problems in operating the "Treaty 300" special from Rosslare to Limerick. If anyone needs an incentive to see No.461 on the road then this must surely be it. Let's hope that the completion of her overhaul and running goes smoothly this year.



FROM THE CARRIAGE SHED ...

Help is urgently required at the Carriage Shed if we are to avoid using outside contractors for all our work. Everything being done at Whitehead currently is in the hands of only a small group of dedicated volunteers who are desperately overstretched. Unless the situation improves, it will become necessary to employ contractors in various parts of the work. Above all else this is very expensive, and the Carriage budget cannot expand indefinitely.

In the past, pleas like these have gone on the whole unheeded because, no matter how much we seem short-staffed, the coaches are ready for the season's running. This involves late-night work for the few who venture down to Whitehead in the run-up to the start of the season. PLEASE help these people this year before it is too late!

The Carriage Shed is, and should be, a fun place to work. Unfortunately, it has become a duty for the regulars rather than a hobby. If you can't lift a paintbrush, plumb a sink, lay floor coverings, service coach lighting (or if you know an expert in overhauling brake gear) come to Whitehead some weekend and lend a hand. Even if you don't know how to use a paintbrush, someone there will be able to show you!

Enough about that! You want to know what is actually happening at the moment in the run-up to the "Two-Day Tour" ...

No.88 GNR dining Car has had a full

mechanical overhaul, which is now nearly complete. All the brake gear has been removed, overhauled and replaced. She has new brake shoes and new pins. However, all her bearings now need remetalled. Currently underway is an overhaul of the vacuum gear, and her gangways too are undergoing repairs. For those of you volunteering for less arduous duties, 88 needs her communication cord repaired, the corridor requires a new floor covering and the dining area would look much nicer with curtains. So come along all you budding interior designers.

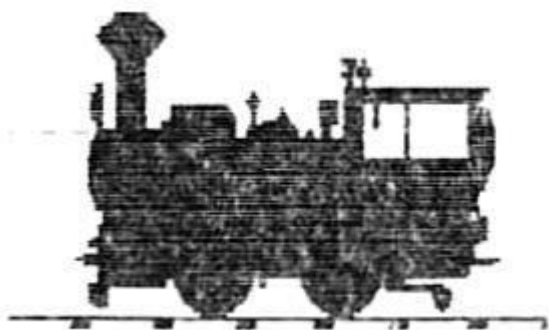
No.861 GSR composite brake is in the shed again, this time for a new roof. Members will remember that she underwent an external transformation for a film contract but her interior was left untouched. This time, while removing the old roofing felt, it was discovered that her clerestory windows were still intact and, in the first class compartments, these are engraved with the GS&WR crest. It is hoped to reinstate these to their former glory - but in the meantime we are concentrating on making the carriage waterproof. Once she is capable of sitting outside the shed we will be looking for volunteers to take on the task of refurbishing her internally. Watch this space...

No.87 NCC dining car is due for a major refurbishment which will start shortly, and for which we have been promised some sponsorship. She requires a full mechanical overhaul. Currently there are bits of her floor missing but these should be back in time for volunteers to renovate her interior. No.88 will run on this year's Tour in order to allow work to continue in Whitehead on No.87. It is hoped to have her ready to run later this year, but that depends on you.

No.91 has a toilet which was out of use for most of last year's season because of problems with the overhead water tank. We would dearly like to bring this toilet back into use but with all the other work underway at present it is taking a low priority. Briefly, the problem is that the tank has split at the seams (again). There is a spare tank at Whitehead which could replace it if anyone would care to fit it. Similar problems are found in Nos. 68 and 241. Anyone wishing to take any of these on

as a project should get in touch.

We're waiting to hear from you!



THE LOCO SHED ...

It seems appropriate that as we are approaching an AGM we should review the overall position in a little more in a little more detail.

LP&HC No.3 "R.H. Smyth": Currently in traffic, but the boiler certificate for the 'Derry Engine' expires at the end of the summer, and the engine will then be withdrawn from service for renewal of the inner firebox patches. At the same time some mechanical work may also be carried out; after all, "Harvey", as the engine is known to the crews, has given sterling service with minimal attention for quite a few years now, and richly deserves some refurbishing.

LMS(NCC) No.4: This year's main performer, No.4 came back last year with her driving springs in a sorry condition, but these have been completely renewed and refitted. Likewise the right trailing crankpin bearing which failed at the end of last season has now been remetalled and refitted, but this will require some running-in before we ask the engine to tackle the Comeragh Railtour. Some crown stay nuts on the firebox were also wasted, and these have been replaced to see her through this season. In the autumn, however, No.4 will be taken out of traffic and her boiler will be lifted out of the frames for a thorough inspection and overhaul, prior to retubing.

GNR No.85 "Merlin": Regrettably, out of use due to the wasting of her inner firebox sides. This was already reported, but fuller details are now available. The original copper plate was $\frac{5}{8}$ " thick, but has now wasted down to $\frac{1}{8}$ ", and our insurers will not allow the engine to operate. The

wasting is considered to be too extensive and severe to allow for any simple "patching up" to be done. The only safe and reliable way to repair the engine is either to renew the firebox sides or to fit large patches which have to be stayed and riveted in position. Either way, if we were to contract the job out to a specialist firm the cost would be of the order of £40,000. We will have to lift the boiler out of the engine's frames, since these are covering the outside heads of many of the firebox stays which will have to be replaced when the new platework is fitted inside the firebox. The "Whitehead Boiler Shop" is becoming very experienced at the overhaul and repair of boilers, and it looks as if this job may well keep them out of mischief during 1991.

GNR(I) "Slieve Gullion": Last month was pulled out of the shed and her boiler lifted out of her frames. It has now been thoroughly inspected and the good news is that the firebox plates are in extremely good condition. The bad news, however, is that many of the stay heads are badly wasted and this means that they have to be replaced. At the last count over 200 copper stays needed renewal! Also to be replaced are the firebox seam rivets, the foundation ring rivets, some crown stay bolts, some palm stays and repairs are necessary to the firehole ring. The boiler longitudinal seam has been x-rayed and some building up will be necessary at the smokebox tubeplate, as well as the renewal of some rivets at that end. Finally the boiler will need to be retubed. As well as a complete boiler overhaul some mechanical repairs are needed. The expansion link rivets in the valve gear have slackened, the leaf springs require overhauling, and repairs will be needed to the drag gear between the engine and tender. The working parts of the locomotive are generally in good order, since there has been quite extensive repair and renewal work carried out over recent years.

DSER No.461: The general overhaul on this locomotive is progressing very well. The boiler refurbishment is now completed and the boiler has been re-tubed and prepared for its hydraulic test. Among the repairs carried out were the renewal of the lower seam rivets in the firebox, all the foundation ring rivets were renewed, as

were the studs, the washout plugs were re-fitted, repairs were carried out to the smokebox tubeplate, some wasting on the floor of the boiler barrel was made good, and the longitudinal boiler stays were renewed. This last job was a "typical Inchicore" one, as the threads varied in pitch at random between 9 and 10 threads per inch, which made fitting very slow indeed! Currently a new smokebox and ashpan are being assembled. A drop grate has been fabricated, along with a hopper ashpan, which will make servicing a lot easier. The smokebox door is posing some problems, however, as the original is badly corroded. A new one is needed, but it is a difficult shape to fabricate, and it must look acceptable since it is a very prominent feature. We could have one made, but this would require the use of special dies and a large press, and would be very expensive. Has anyone got a good idea for making this which would avoid this expense? Most of the mechanical work is now completed or well under way. The final assembly of the valves and motion is currently being carried out, but we still have to renew the front buffers, which have been bent at some time in an accident, and the drawgear still requires to be overhauled.

DIESEL LOCOS ...

A word or two should be said about our diesel locomotives, which provide us with motive power for a lot of the unglamorous maintenance duties.

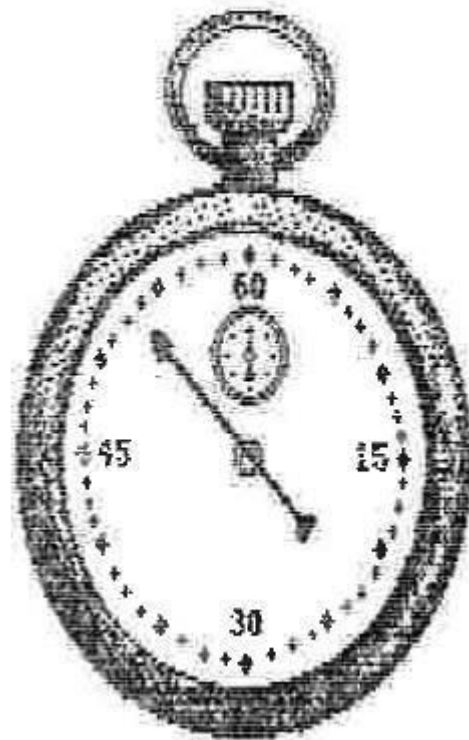
No.23, the Planet diesel from Irish Shell is currently in traffic, but is only running on 2 of her 3 cylinders, due to a broken tappet. After some difficulty, as parts are now getting scarce, we have obtained the materials to carry out the repair, but this will involve a major dismantling job. Unfortunately it will have to be put off at present, and will be tackled when it is convenient.

The "Carlow" diesel, which was CSÉ No.4 (we think) is also progressing steadily. The engine had been removed and sent to the Government Training Centre at Felden House for overhaul, and this work has now been completed. The wheels are presently being reprofiled at Whitehead on the wheel lathe. These were so worn that they had developed double flanges, with one on the outside of the rim as well as the intended one on the

inside. Turning this out has reduced tyre thickness so that they will never take another turning, but at the rate we use our diesels we should get at least 20 years before we will need to think about a new set of tyres! The air receivers have been removed for inspection and testing, as these have to hold air at 300 lbs/sq in for starting the engine, as well as air at 30 lbs/sq in for the brakes. The cab panels which were badly corroded have also been removed and some new ones are being fabricated. The engine is, however, nearing that satisfying stage where reassembly may soon start, and return to traffic is within sight.

MANPOWER ...

Help is always welcome, and in particular there will be a lot of and cleaning and preparation for painting, not to mention the final painting and lining, to be done over the next couple of years. As you can see from this report, several locomotives are going to be returning to traffic after major refurbishment and restoration, and volunteers to assist in any of the jobs, ether skilled or unskilled, will be very welcome. Just call in at Whitehead on a weekend with some old clothes and say "I'm here to help"; you'll be given a job!



**HERE'S TO GOOD RUNNING IN
1990 AND BEYOND..!**