

# THE RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

## NEWSLETTER

MAY 1990

### IN MEMORIAM ...

Most members who have travelled on Society trains will be sorry to learn that we have lost two of our most enthusiastic members over the past few months. Sam Carse was the Dublin Agent of the Society from its very beginning, and knew everyone on CIÉ - at least that was the way it appeared - and he was indispensable in smoothing any difficulties which arose in organising trips. Lavens Steele was a member of the mid-week carriage restoration team, our senior citizens who have done so much to turn out our coaches in fine order, and who are currently tackling 1097, the ex-GS&WR saloon coach. Lavens was also a regular member of the Whitehead permanent way squad at weekends. To the families of both we offer our deepest sympathy for their loss. We have lost two very dear friends.

### CHEERIO AND GOOD LUCK ...

Following this year's Annual General Meeting there have been a number of changes to the Council, as you can see from the accompanying minutes of the meeting.

One particular farewell was to Robin Morton, who leaves the Council after 17 years' service. Robin joined the Council in 1973, and has held the onerous post of Honorary Secretary since 1976. He felt it was time for someone else to bear the burden, and has retired to the rank of ordinary member. As a token of appreciation he was presented with an engraved tankard, which we hope will act as a constant reminder of his time in the "hot seat".

Another departure at the same meeting was Johnny Glendinning from the post of Whitehead Site Officer. Johnny has been responsible for the gradual development of the facilities at Whitehead for many years, and has been one of the people responsible for much of the Society's success.

Since the meeting there have been two other

departures. Our Publicity Officer, Michael McMahon, has resigned for personal reasons, although he will continue to serve on the Operations Committee, and maintain an active interest in the Society. Alan Edgar, our Coach Maintenance Officer, has left to take up employment in Cambridge, which he assures us is not as a quality tester for Guinness, although he will be "taking the waters" in every sense, as he is now employed by Anglican Water! Alan's dedicated work in restoring our vintage train to its original condition is much appreciated, and he will be sorely missed. He assures us that he will be keeping an eye open on the mainland for any artefacts which may be of use to the Society, and intends to keep as much involvement as possible.

The Council has co-opted Sam Somerville to fulfil the Publicity post and, and Jim McBride to take on Carriage Maintenance. We offer our sincere thanks and best wishes to those who have left, and wish good luck to their successors.

### C&W REPORT ...

Progress has continued on maintenance of this year's "running rake" of coaches at Whitehead, which have now been inspected and passed for mainline use. The ex-GNR Dining Car No.88 was used successfully for the Easter Bunny train ride operation, and the running gear has been completely overhauled, including renewal of all axle bearings. The internal refurbishment is virtually complete, and by the time she runs on the northern portion of the "Comeragh Railtour" she should be just about finished! Over the last few months work has also continued on the major restoration programme on the first RPSI owned coach, No.861. All regular railtour passengers would have difficulty in recognising our regular Dining Car No.87, which has been gutted out internally. This is the first stage of a major restoration

programme planned for this important coach during this year.

Many jobs have been tackled over the last few months but there are still many small but time-consuming jobs to be dealt with during the year. We need more volunteers to help restore our coaches to an ever higher standard. If you're able to help out in any way, and you don't have to be an expert at anything, turn up at Whitehead on your next free weekend and you will be made most welcome by the small band of regular workers.

#### **BROWNIE POINTS ...**

Saturday 5 May was a busy one at Whitehead. No.4 set out at 09.20 for Dublin to be in position for the "Comeragh" Railtour, and the Derry engine was lit up to be ready For 14.00, when a party of around 90 Brownies and their leaders arrived for a visit. They were given a conducted tour of the sheds, and a train ride, before leaving at around 16.30. At 15.30 a party of Curators of British Engineering and Transport Museums arrived (they are in Northern Ireland for their AGM), and after a slide show by Charles Friel, which gave a short history of the Society and its activities, they had a conducted tour of the sheds and facilities, ending up with refreshments served in Dining Car No.88. They left around 17.15, after which the hard pressed operating crew started to assemble the train for use the following Sunday on the railtour. A very busy day for all concerned!

#### **DERV ON SUNDAY ...**

An unusual title this year for the "empty stock" working in connection with the "Comeragh" Railtour, but appropriate since the Vintage Set leaves Whitehead on Sunday 12 May at 14.00 for Dundalk hauled by an NIR MV Class diesel-electric locomotive (ex-CIE C Class). Members who wish to travel on this train are welcome to do so, and the fares are £10 for the complete journey from Whitehead to Dundalk via Central, returning on the main tour, or £5 if travelling only as far as Central. To facilitate modern enthusiasts and MRSI the train will arrive at Central at 16.50 to connect with the 17.00 to Dublin, on its last day of operation. Tickets will be available on the train, so pay on the day.

#### **COMING TOGETHER ...**

No formal locomotive report this time, but members will be delighted to know that No.461's boiler has passed its hydraulic test with flying colours, and on Wednesday 2 May was lifted back on to the locomotive's frames. Final assembly is very much the order of the day now, although this will take some time and will be very manpower intensive - just think of all the pipework for the lubrication system alone which has to be replaced. Help will be most welcome, as always, and even if you only know which way round to hold a paintbrush then Peter Scott has a job for you, at whitehead any weekend from 18 May onwards.

#### **FUNDRAISING (S)TEAM 90 ...**

Volunteers wanted - Our fundraising income in Northern Ireland must be considerably increased in order to meet our many heavy commitments. Commercial activities are to be substantially upgraded and a strong and active team is needed. We will be attending traction engine rallies and other outside events, and staff are now being recruited. The crack's good and you will have the chance to attend interesting events which often feature much to appeal to the railway enthusiast. If you would like to help then contact Bob Hunter today!

Ideas wanted - Up to now our fundraising has largely been confined to selling articles of railway interest, children's toys and the like. We need to broaden our horizons and look at different ways of bringing in cash. You are asked to consider other fund raising ideas and send in suggestions; after all, 900 people should think of more things than just 2 or 3! Look at the fund raising ideas and activities of any other organisations of which you are a member and pass the details on to us. We don't want to know the organisation, just the idea. You could also consider organising some event which needn't have any connection with railways, provided it raises the finance we need to take steam into the 90s (dates, not speeds ... yet!).

Events wanted - There are two types. Please let us know about any events which our fundraising team could attend as soon as possible. And we hope to have some additional attractions at the Sunday Train Rides this summer, particularly involving

other transport interests, so let's hear from members involved with vintage vehicles of all kinds, model railways (in any scale) or other models, such as road vehicles, ships or aircraft. If you follow your interest through a club or society then send us the name and address of the secretary. All ideas and information, and your own availability to help our fund raising operations, should be sent NOW to Bob Hunter. Write today!

#### **PURE GOLD ...**

Those of you who have already purchased "Steam's Silver Lining", the book by member Joe Cassells celebrating the Society's first quarter century of steam operations, will already know what a treasure this publication is. If you haven't bought a copy then write now to The Syndicate, enclosing a cheque or postal order for £4.95, and a copy will come winging its way to you. This reviewer has been involved in Society train operation for all of those 25 years, and this book brought back many memories; some happy, some sad; some of successes and some of close run failures. Obviously the book tells the story in a personal way, as the author and his collaborators remember things happening. I know that in one or two cases ... well, let the hare sit, and don't let's raise any old ghosts. Factually the book is very good, and lists every movement of Society engines and coaches since we started all those years ago. If there are any errors (and I don't believe that the author will claim to be infallible), they are only very minor ones, and in the quick read through that I have had, given the time constraints to get this into print, I have only found two minor typographical errors which are not serious enough to confuse the reader. The photographs, by Joe, Bill Scott and Charles Friel are all excellently reproduced and are evocative of all our operations. I know about phone calls at 5am, about writing a complete new schedule on the train as we are travelling (due to a failure), and all the other horrors that an operating society has to face, but the book shows how a well organised team can overcome almost every problem to make a tour happen. Apart From a fine commemoration of a quarter of a century of first class steam operation, this book is a tribute to all those members who, over the last 25 years, have worked

together to make the RPSI the foremost steam operator in Western Europe. Get your copy today!

#### **AND FINALLY ...**

Postal sales are advised separately with this newsletter, but don't forget our offer of original GNRB locomotive splasher crests at only £10 unmounted and £20 mounted. This offer applies while stocks last and is genuinely unrepeatable.

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Donations to the Carriage Shed Appeal Fund should be sent to Whitehead Railway Project at Whitehead.