

RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

NEWS-SHEET - SEPTEMBER 1990

FIRST STEPS

On Sunday 12 August it looked as if the Train Rides had generated an unusual amount of interest, if the number of cameras in the area was anything to go by. However, it was not humble 'Harvey' but No.461 which was causing the excitement as word had got around that after her successful test steaming on 28 July, she was going to make her first moves under her own power.

As soon as the train rides were over the photographers took up their positions and No.461 emerged from the shed area to a great clicking of shutters. After the loco had cautiously traversed the site several times the photographers departed and a lovely evening sun came out - to the disgust of the writer, who was still around but had finished off his film!

After some adjustments No.461 was out again the next Sunday, this time getting the feel of a few coaches behind her. On 22 August she finally got out of the site and on to NIR metals for a successful insurance examination. Although this test was successful, a stop at Carrickfergus disclosed heat in some crankpin bearings so it was decided to return to base where remedial measures were taken the next day.

A run to York Road and Larne Harbour was organised for Saturday 25 August, the train to include recently renovated dining car No.88 in which there was to be a celebration buffet for Council members and those who had been involved in the restoration of No.461. In the event, although the buffet ran according to plan, the train did not as a recurrence of the bearing problem meant that the Larne Harbour leg had to be cancelled. After further attention the loco was back in action the very next day, working the final day of Sunday train rides.

Congratulations must go to Peter Scott and his small but dedicated team for a very fine effort. A more ambitious series of trips is now planned - see elsewhere.

Congratulations and sincere thanks are also due to another team who probably get less publicity than they deserve. In England our London agent, Leslie McAllister, and his 'Syndicate' are very active on behalf of the Society and recently presented the Treasurer with a cheque for £1,700 to help fund the running-in of No.461. Can other groups of members get together and do likewise?

MEANWHILE, IN DUBLIN ...

While No.461 has been grabbing the limelight No.4 has been earning our bread and butter in the South with a very successful 'Sea Breeze' excursion on 11 August, 400 passengers travelling from Dublin to Wexford and 300 to Rosslare Harbour.

Another 'Sea Breeze' will run on Saturday 8 September. Fares are Adult IR£15 and OAP/U16 IR£7; from RPSI Tickets, or just turn up at Connolly station and take a chance; departure time 10.00 am.

'Greystones Shuttle' trips will run on Sunday 25 September, three returns from Connolly Station - see Dates for your Diary.

While based in Dublin, No.4's needs are being attended to by our loco department members living in that area. In addition to the mighty effort of replacing boiler tubes in May/June other more routine matters such as boiler wash-out and work on injectors, brakes and lubrication are being carried out at Connolly shed where the help and enthusiasm of the workshop staff and shed drivers has been invaluable and greatly appreciated. Work has even extended to the redecoration of No.4's crew locker, a gloomy receptacle whose innermost parts are seldom seen!

Mullingar site officer/loco rep Rory McNamee has resigned from the RPSI Council. A familiar figure on most outings, Rory has over the years given tremendous help to the Society. Fortunately he will remain an active member and we hope to see him on operations to come. David Carse has been appointed PSR in charge of loco running in Dublin while Charles Meredith will have a similar role in looking after Mullingar lease negotiations with Irish Rail.

NORTH AGAIN

The 18 August 'North Coast Flyer' ran more or less as planned - the more being that this time it ran to time, the less being the number of passengers as compared to what had been hoped for. Unfortunately Hunslet No.101's suburban exercises appeared to have left her exhausted rather than invigorated and a Metrovick had to be substituted.

It is imperative that as many members as possible get down to Whitehead this winter in order to ensure that never again are we left in a position like this summer, with only one main line locomotive, as it seems clear that neither the public, the modern traction enthusiasts or even our own members are prepared to support diesel-hauled Portrush Flyers.

Whitehead site officer, Gavin Martin, is organising a clear-up operation there for the last Saturday in September. Why not come down and become better acquainted with the parts that train rides do not reach, as well as some that they do? The idea is to make the place more presentable by removing things that shouldn't be there and, hopefully, to raise some much-needed money from the sale of scrap. Although skips will be provided for the heavy stuff a few bin bags mightn't go amiss but all you really need is a little willingness and perhaps a pair of old gloves.

Carriage & Wagon officer Jim McBride has two coaches which he would very much like to run in next year's trains, but there's a problem. The passengers would either have to stand or risk damage by sitting on bare boards! Are there any upholsterers who could lend a hand?

LOCO REPORT

The running-in programme of No.461 is proceeding quite satisfactorily. A blow of steam in the smokebox caused concern at an early stage. It was traced to an incorrectly seated joint between a superheater element and the header which, after being attended to, has given no further trouble. Other minor steam blows from various sources have also been remedied and are not unexpected in a newly assembled locomotive.

Paradoxically, it appears that the overheating of the crankpin bushes may well have been due to over-lubrication! Whilst this might sound like an impossibility it must be remembered that only a limited quantity of oil is carried in the cups in the coupling rods and if this supply should become exhausted while the loco is running there will be trouble. Steps have been taken to prevent excessive use or leakage of oil and it is hoped that there will be no further trouble from this source.

After being exposed to the public gaze in a variety of piebald liveries, No.461 is now approaching a state of respectability, i.e. unlined black, courtesy of Dulux. Urgent research is now being carried out in order that the correct type of numerals and CIÉ motif can be applied.

Having usurped her train ride duties on 26 August, No.461 then shunted No.3 'R.H. Smyth' into the shed, along with the Carlow diesel.

Work on removing the wasted firebox patches from No.3 has already begun, prior to dismantling and boiler lifting later this year. It was decided by Council that we could not afford to be without this loco. At present it seems that repairs will not be too expensive although, of course, this can only be confirmed when the

boiler has been removed from the frames for a full examination. Attention to mechanical parts will also be required to eliminate the knocks and wheezes which have accumulated over the years.

The Carlow diesel continues to provide surprises. The metal sheet forming the rear part of the 'bonnet' proved reluctant to be removed. It was found that in addition to its obvious function part of this sheet formed the top of the fuel tank, the square base of which was only supported on two adjacent sides. Why such economy of materials should have been felt necessary by the makers is not clear but it would suggest that lack of consideration for fitters on the part of designers did not die out with the steam locomotive!

The reason why the sheet had to come off in the first place was to gain access to the cylinder which contains compressed air for starting the main engine and which is charged to around 300 psi by a separate small engine. Obviously a vessel carrying such a pressure must be tested as must those connected with the air braking system. Just for good measure the fuel tank began to leak at one end while emitting not a drop from the feed pipe at the other!

Within the next few days work will commence on replacing the side and rear cab sheets and doors which were severely corroded.

No.4 will continue to work until the end of this year, when a boiler inspection is due. The re-tubing was entirely successful but some other leaks remain which, while not critical at present, are undesirable. It is possible that this loco may be able to operate for another season, depending on the outcome of the inspection.

An examination of No.85 by a qualified person is to take place later this year with a view to assessing the extent and cost of firebox repairs.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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| Saturday 8 September | 'Sea Breeze'; Dublin (Connolly) - Wexford - Rosslare Harbour |
| Sunday 9 September | No.461 running-in trip; Whitehead - York Road - Coleraine |
| Saturday 15 September | As 9 Sept, but this time to Portrush - a Flyer at last!? See separate sheet for timings, etc., of these two trips. |
| Sunday 23 September | 'Greystones Shuttles'; Dublin (Connolly) - Greystones, three returns. Depart Dublin 10.45 am, 2.00 & 4.15 pm. Fares Adult IR£5, OAP/U16 IR£3, tickets from usual Irish Life Building Society outlets. |
| Saturday 29 September & Saturday 20 October | 'Steam Enterprise'; Belfast (Central) - Dundalk, No.461 with Whitehead coaches and on to Dublin with IR Cravens. Depart Belfast 9.15 am. Depending on the outcome of negotiations with Irish Rail, No.4 may participate, but not necessarily on the 'Enterprise' - keep in touch for more details! |

TAILPIECE

This time it's of the feline variety. Some weeks ago a bedraggled little specimen appeared at Whitehead where kindly persons supplied it with shelter and nourishment. It was soon apparent that its increase in size was due to factors other than its new found food supply and a fortnight ago it produced five fine kittens; most, like 461, in unlined black livery but some, with traces of white. Would anybody like one? Applications to Whitehead Wildlife Park, Castlevue Road.