

RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

NEWS-SHEET - NOVEMBER 1990

GOOD NEWS

Yes, believe it or not, there's quite a lot of that to report this time which makes a pleasant change after a year that most people would like to forget. Whilst our problems are by no means over, at least there are a few shafts of light to penetrate the gloom.

In Dublin the national Heritage Council, which administers the funds raised by the Irish National Lottery, has been kind enough to give a grant of £5,000 towards the restoration of No.461.

Also, the Society has been granted charitable status in the Republic which means that we are no longer liable for Corporation Tax there. Both this and the £5,000 grant are the results of prolonged negotiations by Dave Humphries, to whom our congratulations and thanks are due.

Dublin member Peter Emmett has been co-opted on to the RPSI Council to serve as Mullingar site officer.

At Mullingar a £2,000 project for the rewiring of the shed and the installation of new lighting and a compressor is benefitting from a 50% ESB grant. A clear-up and sale of scrap from the site should raise the remaining £1,000 so the whole thing will cost the Society nothing. Nothing, that is, except for the efforts of those who pursued the grants and gathered up the scrap.

OPERATIONS

As you would expect, things are fairly well wound down by November but here there is good news too.

After a few displays of temperament by the ageing prima donna, No.461's running-in programme resumed in October and, after a couple of Sundays on the Larne line, she did a successful run to Coleraine on 18 November in weather which alternated between beautiful and evil. In the circumstances, her inaugural visits to the turntables at York Road and Coleraine must have been even more appreciated by her crew than by the photographers! No further main line outings are planned until early 1991, followed by her Official Launch in April.

In Southern parts it had been rumoured that the three Greystones shuttles planned for 23 September might have to be reduced to two due to the difficulty of obtaining paths, owing to civil engineering work between Dun Laoghaire and Dalkey, and this was agreed with Irish Rail. What had not been bargained for, and gave nightmares to our Dublin publicity department, was IR's last minute wish that the destination be changed to Enfield! In the event, the citizens of Dublin and elsewhere turned up regardless, more than filling the two trains, with about 100 disappointed people having to be turned away from the second one.

Another little Southern snippet was the beer advert, mentioned in the August newsheet. As suggested then, it was not for the dark stuff and has turned out to be for Satzenbrau. Although even the keenest student of coaching stock would be hard pressed to identify them from the TV ad, we

- and our bankers - are gratified that our coaches were selected for the job.

From beer to punch - and presents. Don't forget the Santa Train Rides at Whitehead on Sundays 9, 16 & 23 December!

COUNCIL NEWS

The International Fund for Ireland, who are grant-aiding to the tune of 50% the construction of the Carriage Shed at Whitehead, have confirmed a one year extension for the project. This has eased considerably the pressure on Society funds and has allowed the locomotive refurbishment programme to proceed without any delay. The Northern Ireland Tourist Board, who administer the Fund have also indicated that we may qualify for a European Regional Development Fund tourism promotion grant aid for some of our locomotive repairs, which would also ease the burden of some of this work. An application for this source of aid is currently in preparation and we hope that there may be more good news to report in the not too distant future.

Since the carriage shed is unlikely to be always filled to capacity with coaches it is possible that it may also be used to store one or more locomotives currently out of use and suffering by standing out of doors in all weathers.

Northern Ireland Railways recently approached the Society with an offer of two of their three Hunslet diesel locomotives, the other being offered to the Downpatrick & Ardglass Railway Company. At a tripartite meeting details of the permanent loan of the locos was agreed and NIR is presently drawing up an agreement between the parties. It is proposed that initially all three locomotives will come to Whitehead, along with the company's stock of spare parts, and that the two Societies will refurbish them to running condition in a self-financing operation before one goes to Downpatrick.

At the same meeting agreement in principle was reached that the RPSI could arrange for the dual braking of a NIR Mark II set of coaches, which would provide rolling stock capable of beating the "wooden body" ban on Irish Rail, and which could be hauled by either diesel or steam locomotives owned by the Society. A possibility of grant aid for the conversion work was also discussed and is currently being progressed.

On the subject of coaches, Gary Cosby has been appointed PSR for coach running at Whitehead.

Irish Rail have told us that a C class Metrovick diesel locomotive could be made available to us. We don't yet know the precise terms of the deal but it appears to be a very favourable offer and one we could not, in decency, refuse.

Membership secretary Paul McCann urges all UK taxpaying members to consider using the enclosed form to covenant their annual subscriptions. It costs nothing and benefits the Society enormously. Currently only about 20% of eligible members covenant.

LOCO REPORT

No.3 "R.H. Smyth": Awaiting remove of saddle tank from boiler, to be followed by lifting of boiler for examination and overhaul.

No.4: In Dublin at present but due to return to Whitehead in early December. The loco will then be taken out of service for examination and eventual overhaul of boiler and firebox.

No.85: It is hoped that expert assessment of the firebox situation will take place within the next few weeks.

No.171: Good news again! As this loco's front tubeplate required, replacement we were faced with the unwelcome prospect of an expensive outside contract for machining the new tubeplate as we do not have the facilities to do it ourselves. However, an approach by our Southern Loco Department to Irish Rail was met with most generous offer to have the job done at Inchicore Works at no cost! The steel plate has been purchased, cut to size at Whitehead and delivered, with the old tubeplate, to Inchicore. Meanwhile, work continues at Whitehead on the replacement of numerous firebox stays and rivets, along with de-scaling and general overhaul of the boiler. No.171 is very much a priority task as the loco is required to be back in traffic in time to work the May 1991 railtour. Despite the exploits of No.4, this is one of the engines that draws people from England and further afield to our tours so it is up to all members who can give a hand to come along and do so.

No.184: At Mullingar; a general tidying-up of this loco, including the removal of old boiler tubes, is in progress.

No.461: During the initial running-in trips in September crankpin bushes and driving axleboxes ran hot - though not all at once. Remedial work included a visit to the wheel-drop so that the driving wheelset could be removed for the re-machining of journals and axleboxes. Unfortunately the wheel lathe was itself in need of repairs and all this combined to put an end to whatever chance there had been of running to Dublin. The loco was tested at Whitehead on 28 October, then on the Larne line on 4 & 11 November before running successfully to Coleraine and back on 18 November. It is hoped to continue the running-in programme, with increased loads, in early 1991.

Carlow Diesel: The side and rear cab sheets have been replaced, leaving some work required on the roof. The main engine has been overhauled at Felden Training Centre and is ready for installation whenever we are ready to take it. Before this is done the radiator will be removed for test as this would be more difficult with the engine in place.

Thanks are due to Housemen Ltd of Derriaghy for the donation of a quantity of "Oxytreat". This is a preparation which is added to boiler water in order to combat scaling and corrosion and to facilitate washing-out.

TAILPIECE (No livestock this time!)

Mr Fergus Hogan is preparing a catalogue in connection with conservation and is anxious to obtain information such as photographs and/or history of any railway station buildings still in use. Given these terms of reference it seems unlikely that Northern Ireland will take up too much space! However, anyone who can assist is asked to contact Mr Hogan as soon as possible.