

RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

NEWS-SHEET - JANUARY 1991

As this Newsheet will go out in the same posting as Five Foot Three, it will be mainly an update of what is already in the magazine

COUNCIL NEWS

Enclosed are details of the 1991 Annual General Meeting on Friday 25 February at 8 p.m., the venue being the usual one of the Belfast Boat Club. This year we are on the lookout for fresh talent on Council. A new and important post of Fund Raiser is to be created, separate from the existing posts. The new Council member will be responsible for major fund-raising and seeking sponsorship, grants, etc., and it is hoped that members with experience in these or related areas will stand for this post.

The members currently responsible for Whitehead Site, Carriage Maintenance (North) and Commercial (North & South) will not be continuing in their present posts. Our thanks for their services in the past are therefore due to Gavin Martin, Jim. McBride, Bob Hunter and Joe Fitzpatrick, respectively. So don't be shy about letting your name go forward.

Secretary Paul McCann would like to thank all those members who have paid their subscriptions early and particularly those who included an extra donation towards the carriage shed project. Those who have not paid are encouraged to do so soon, with a donation towards the carriage shed, if possible. Also, UK taxpayers please take out a covenant using the enclosed form. It will cost you nothing extra!

For the first time in recent years, the Council has decided to offer a limited number of 100 life memberships of the Society. The cost has been kept to a reasonable £200 (£225 in RoI), so get your applications in as soon as possible. This is an offer that will not be repeated. See the enclosed form for details.

WHITEHEAD Etc.

An enterprising group of members is refurbishing the greater part of the coach stores area (The Stables) as a social club. Since one of them advertises his skills in Five Foot Three a high standard of finish can be expected. A grand opening in March 1991 is predicted, so watch this space.

Publicity Officer Sam Somerville is not alone in wondering just what it takes to get some of our members off their backsides. Not a single Northern Ireland member turned up on 12 January the planned sponsored walk along the Lagan towpath. This was to have been a chance for anyone not assisting in other ways to make a contribution to our finances, in this case the Loco fund, but it would appear that Sam was wasting his time. A little simple arithmetic: membership subs bring in around £8,000. This would just about re-tube two boilers - then what do we do?

Better news from Santa, whose train rides at Whitehead were quite well supported. A survey of visitors taken then indicated that 58%

thought the event very good, 32% good and 7% average. The remaining 3% didn't answer; no-one thought it was poor or, if they did, they were kind enough not to say so. Congratulations to all concerned let's aim for the 100% next time!

Congratulations also to Mr. Jim Perry of Donaghadee who won the collection of railway books in the Christmas draw held in conjunction with the Santa Train Rides.

DUBLIN NEWS

Things have gone quiet in the South, although it is reported that Dave Humphries and team have had considerable success in selling next season's trains - yes, already!

What was officially described as a very successful evening was held in the North Star Hotel on 5 December. This was probably not a quiet evening - indeed, with trains rumbling overhead, the North Star is seldom quiet but one would suspect that on that night several may have gone unnoticed. The occasion was a get together for all who had been active in Summer Steam 1990, including IR footplate personnel. A framed photograph was presented to retiring (in the employment sense) driver Tommy Blackwell. Jack Ahern and Dan Renehan also received presentations and an entertaining slide show was provided by Barry Carse and Norman Foster. Encouraged by the success of this pilot operation, the Dublin committee are considering something more far-reaching for 1991.

OPERATIONS

Still in Dublin, the official launch of No.461 is scheduled to take place on her DSER home ground at Pearse (ex-Westland Row) on 16 April 1991.

Unfortunately dates for No.461's running-in trips were circulated a short time before a decision was made, for operational reasons, to alter them to earlier dates, the first of which (20 January) has already passed. On that day the loco was given a chance to show what she was made of, with a 7 coach load to Coleraine. This was probably as stiff a test as she is likely to have to face as the curving climb from Bleach Green to Ballyclare Junction was made on a wet and rusted rail and the bank could not be attacked at speed owing to a PW slack before Whiteabbey. After a few bouts of slipping, driver George Gaw decided that a steady plod was the wisest course. A leaking vacuum connection in the train led to an unscheduled stop at Cullybackey but apart from this the trip ran uneventfully. No records were broken but it should be remembered that in her early days No.85 was involved in some rather low-key operations, including, on one occasion, an extremely poor climb of the same bank.

The advertised envisaged two trips to each destination on consecutive Sundays. The second Coleraine trip has been cancelled since the engine seems to be behaving satisfactorily and it is likely that the same will apply with the Bangor and Dundalk outings. This leaves Whitehead - Bangor on 3 February and Whitehead - Dundalk on 17 February, departures from Whitehead and York Road at 0830 0933 respectively, but check on the Answerphone at Whitehead. Not many passengers appeared on 20 January - maybe they didn't know in time - but at £5 for the round trip it's excellent value, and the Diner operates as well!

LOCO REPORT

Updates to the retort in Five Foot Three are as follows.

No.171 The cracked sections of the angle ring at the front of the boiler have been replaced and overhaul of the springs is almost completed while work on rivets, stays, etc., in boiler and firebox continues. The firebox work has not been helped by the theft from the shed of a quantity of copper bar by some person obviously no friend of the Society. Whilst our insurance may make good the financial loss, in operational terms a more serious aspect is the delay to the stay replacement programme as the copper was of a special specification.

No.461 A broken tender spring has been repaired, brake gear adjusted and sanding gear refitted or replaced as required - the latter standing us in good stead on the 20 January outing, indeed the lack of it was one of the reasons why such a working was not attempted earlier. A cage at the rear of the cab and a deflector above the safety valves have been fitted in preparation for working under the wires in the Dublin area. Cast iron cabside number plates have been made and will replace the present painted numerals. It has been rumoured that original plates were of white metal. The lack of any sign of extravagance on the average CIÉ steam locomotive would suggest that white metal must have cost much less than it does nowadays!

Carlow Diesel On dismantling the radiator it was found that some species of mossy aquatic vegetation formed a carpet in the header tank. Leaks in the radiator core have been sealed; the radiator has been reassembled and re-fitted. Hopefully this locomotive has not too many more surprises in store for us!

No.23 This long-suffering and useful little machine has finally expired with a blown cylinder head gasket (again) which leaves us without a shunting engine. Where are all the diesel men now?

STOP PRESS

No.461 running in trip alterations:

3 February run to Bangor is postponed!

Planned dates are now:

10 February - Bangor:	Whitehead	dep 08.30
	Belfast York Road	dep 09.30
17 February - Dundalk:	Whitehead	dep 06.30
	Belfast York Road	dep 07.30
	Lisburn	dep 09.30