

RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

NEWS-SHEET - JUNE 1991

COUNCIL NEWS

The big news is that the application by the Society to the European Regional Tourism Development Fund, referred to in the last Newsheet, has been successful! At its 30 May meeting the Council unanimously accepted the Fund's offer - a grant of 75% of approved expenditure up to a total of £366,000.

The scheme, entitled Plan 2000, will cover 4 years, commencing on 30 June 1990 and for the first year relating only to locomotive No.171. Related to the costs of materials and subcontracted work, from 1991 onwards the scheme will extend to cover Nos. 3, 4, 85 & 184, as well as coaches Nos. 87 (GN diner), 150 (GN directors' saloon) and GSR 1097 which it is planned to adapt for use by handicapped people. Also included in the plan is the construction of a loco workshop incorporating a smithy, erection of sheer-legs and relaying of track at Whitehead, where the sheer-legs and smithy equipment have been in store for some time. At Mullingar the plan will aid site development and the renovation of 8 coaches. The dual braking of NIR MkII coaches is also included.

At first glance it might appear that we have suddenly become affluent and that financial worries are a thing of the past, but it's not quite so simple as that. While the Fund is prepared to come up with around £275,000, this doesn't amount to a bag of money being dropped in our laps with best wishes for the future. Plan 2000 consists of a phased programme, with various amounts allocated to the project. We will be able to claim almost immediately in respect of the past 12 months of work on No.171; after that the grant will be paid quarterly in respect of approved expenditure - we have to spend money in order to get 75% of it back. Nor should it be forgotten that our share, i.e. the net cost to us spread over the 4 years, will amount to some £91,000 so it is plain that if we are to obtain maximum benefit we can't afford to just sit back. It will still be necessary for as many members as possible to support all aspects of our activities in every way they can.

Assuming that things go according to plan, it will now be possible to go ahead with a planned programme of work which will stand us in good stead for many years to come. Our thanks are due to all those who were instrumental in achieving this desirable state of affairs.

Now for something completely different ... Secretary Paul McCann has changed his address.

Still with Paul, members are reminded that their membership details are held on computer and the Society is registered with the Data Protection Registrar in the UK. The information is used solely for membership record-keeping, mailshot labels, railtour booking and for recording details of Members who have offered their services in various ways. Information held on computer is strictly controlled and officers of the Society only have access to it when genuinely required. The mailing list and other details will not be passed to any other body. Any member requiring access to their own details should apply in writing to the Secretary; a fee may be charged for this service.

A limited number of Life Memberships are still available; UK £200, Republic of Ireland, IR£225.

The following Southern PSRs have been confirmed by Council: Charles Meredith (loco maintenance), David Corse (loco running), Tim Moriarty (catering) and Joe McKeown (safety & marshalling).

OPERATIONS

As many of you will know, the official launch of our DSER 2-6-0 No.461 took place in Dublin on Tuesday 16 April when, on a gloriously sunny morning the resplendent locomotive pulled into Pearse station to the accompaniment of the Garda band. A couple of Glenn Miller numbers were followed, somewhat predictably, by "Are ye right there, Michael?"

Among the VIPs and guests present from both sides of the Border were Irish President Mary Robinson, chairman of the National Heritage Council Lord Killanin, former Irish prime minister and RPSI vice president Dr Garret FitzGerald, High Sheriff of Belfast Councillor Joe Goggle, Lord Mayor of Dublin Alderman Michael Donnelly and various representatives from Irish Rail, Northern Ireland Railways and the Department of the Environment.

After the launch by President Robinson the locomotive and four spotless RPSI coaches took the party the six miles to Dun Laoghaire, along the loco's old stamping ground. On the footplate were drivers Nicky Moore and Dan Renehan who handled the controls like true masters of their craft.

On arrival the President, her husband and Dr FitzGerald met the RPSI Council members at a buffet at the former DSER Restaurant na Mara. Both President Robinson and Dr Fitzgerald paid a very warm tribute to the work undertaken by the Society and wished it continuing success in the future.

As a matter of interest, we believe that the Presidential train was the first time a head of state travelled behind Irish steam since Queen Elizabeth's visit to Northern Ireland in 1953. Some of the coaches used on that train have since been saved for preservation by the RPSI.

Congratulations are due to our Dublin members who prepared the locomotive and train beforehand and not least to our Dublin Publicity & Marketing Officer, Dave Humphries, who organised the entire event in an exemplary manner.

In May came the RPSI's annual big event, this year the Decies Railtour. No.461 appeared to thrive on the Dublin diet of small coal and put in a spritely performance - for a while! Sadly, this was not to last as by Rathdrum considerable heat was detected in the driving axleboxes and by Gorey it was clear that to continue was to invite serious damage. Thus, for a second year, tour participants sampled an IÉ diesel. (Connolly MPD must have had a disturbed Saturday as the diesel loco of the following Rosslare train also failed!) As most will know, the tour was already to have diesel (bus) from Wellingtonbridge to Waterford as molestation by a ship had misaligned the Barrow bridge!

By the morning of Day Two, not only had Michael McMahon and team prepared a new schedule including a trip to Tullamore but had had it typed and photocopied for distribution - congratulations to all

concerned. Steam reappeared in the shape of No.4 at Thomastown and the tour was completed without further major upset. None of our sporting tour travellers complained and indeed some sent complimentary letters to the organisers.

The third day of the tour was believed to have been NIR loco inspector Roy Stanfield's last steam run before his retirement. However, after the tour were a couple of light engine runs, when No.461 came to Whitehead for repair and No.4 went South to replace her, so was it his last? In any event, we will miss Roy's tolerance and unobtrusive assistance on our outings and wish him a happy retirement.

No.4's transfer was certainly worthwhile as she ran a very successful day of Maynooth Shuttle trips on Sunday 26 May, some 1,200 passengers travelling in the four trains.

No.461 is now scheduled to work two Portrush Flyers, on 3 & 17 August, before returning to Southern parts to operate the Limerick 300 trains in September for which bookings are already coming in.

Running-In Trips

Following repairs this month, it will be necessary for No.461 to have another series of running-in trips to ensure her fitness for publicly advertised trains. These eat into our resources so everyone is encouraged to join the train for an easy-going day out, i.e. no big speeds, and stops here and there to check that all is well. The following runs are planned; all based on Whitehead:

30 June York Road & Larne Line

7 July York Road & Coleraine

21 & 28 July York Road - Antrim - Lisburn - Dundalk

Fares: Larne line £5, others £10. As before, no guarantees are given and things may change so check with the Ansaphone at Whitehead 53567.

COMMERCIAL

Some items from the Commercial Department:

1. Coloured poster ,approx. 25" x 18" of No.461 at Westland Row, ready to depart on a train of the Mullingar coaches, price inc. p & p Stg£1.40.
2. A number of back issues of Five Foot Three. Price depends on age. Please state your requirements.
3. Copies of "Steam's Silver Lining" by member Joe Cassells, 76 pages of notes and photographs of the RPSI tours 1964 - 1989, plus a lot of other happenings you mightn't have known about! Price inc. p & p Stg£5.20.

SITE REPORT

Our Site Officer, Dermot Mackie, has been very busy recently. Despite his new post having removed him from the clutches of the loco department he is still assisting in the reassembly of No.23's engine. Not only this, but weeds have been sprayed, defective point levers repaired and the JCB, reportedly terminally ill, has received what an Ulsterman would term "a good reddin' out" so that it now performs its duties once again. However, there's still a lot of work to be done on the track at

Whitehead and it's not a one-man job so why not come down now that the weather's good and give Dermot a hand?

CARRIAGE & WAGON

The grant will help things along in this department as in recent times activities have been severely curtailed by lack of money. A priority with C & W is to get diner No.87 back into traffic. Although stablemate No.88 was splendidly restored its smaller bar area is a definite drawback as many of our passengers appear to be more afflicted by thirst than by hunger and it is easier and more profitable to cater for the former condition! A side-effect of the reconstruction of the bar of No.87 will be the disappearance of a corner occupied for many years by a certain well-known timer. It is to be hoped that this disruption of his life style will not be reflected in his logs!

LOCO REPORT

Carlow Diesel: The main engine has been reinstalled but pressure of other work has prevented further progress.

No.23: The cylinder block and cylinder head of the engine have been machined. Hopefully this will cure the problem of blowing cylinder head gaskets. The engine is currently being refitted and the return of this loco to traffic should obviate the need for unseemly antics by the loading shovel.

No.4: As reported elsewhere, replacing No.461 in Dublin where its smokebox door is being rebuilt. Over the years the door had become progressively weaker, to the extent that it could no longer be fully tightened. This allowed air to be drawn in, causing burning of the door and impairing steaming. An unusual defect occurred on the Dublin - Belfast leg of the Decies tour when part of a snifting valve broke, permitting the escape of steam en route to the cylinder. This valve is designed to prevent vacuum in the cylinders when the engine is coasting and, on No.4, is responsible for the characteristic clinking noise which occurs then. A spare part was in store and was fitted before the Monday run.

No.85: In the light of the favourable outcome of the European Fund application a decision will be made in the near future as to the nature, scale and venue of this locomotive's firebox repairs. The same applies to No.3 "R.H. Smyth".

No.184: The work referred to in the last Newsheet continues at Mullingar, prior to commencement of a major overhaul.

NO.171: Fitting of firebox stays and rivets is almost complete. Riveting of the boiler is complete; the new tubeplate has been fitted and the longitudinal boiler stays installed. Some studs for the mounting of boiler fittings have still to be replaced. A new set of small tubes is ready for fitting while the large tubes in stock will require to have their firebox ends reduced before fitting. Superheater elements have been examined prior to being hydraulically tested. The main steam pipe and regulator valve have still to be installed in the boiler which has also to be hydraulically tested. A new smokebox has been fabricated and is ready for fitting. Some cracks in the cylinder block casting require welding and a few slack rivets in the locomotive's framing need attention.

No.461: The unexpected axlebox problem which developed on the tour has meant that this locomotive has had to return to Whitehead where the driving wheelset has been removed and placed in the wheel lathe. Re-metalling and machining of the axleboxes is under way. Attention to the big ends and eccentrics will also be required. After reassembly a further period of running-in will be necessary - see Operations report.

Finally, something special for our members living in Great Britain. You don't often get the chance of direct involvement, but now you can, as Locomotive Running Officer Brian Hill is investigating different steam coal supplies for availability and quality. He asks if any member is actively involved with main line steam operations on British Rail, or has definite knowledge which would assist, could you please contact him? What he wants to know is:

- (1) Which engine(s) have you experience with?
- (2) What coal do you use?
- (3) Where do you get it?
- (4) How does it perform?
- (5) And if you know ... what does it cost?

Brian will then be able to get analyses and specifications from the suppliers. And you thought coal was just black stuff that burns!

Brian is also looking for an electrically driven centrifugal water pump to feed the tower in Whitehead. It will need to be able to lift about 20 to 30 feet on the suction side, and pump to about a 70 feet head on the deliver. Do you know a source of such a pump? If so, please let Brian know.