

RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

NEWSLETTER - JANUARY 1993

The first item in this issue is a sad one indeed. Although most local members must be aware of it, those further afield may not yet have heard of the untimely death of one of our Vice-Presidents, Lord Dunleath. At the Belfast Area meeting on 13 January Charles Friel paid tribute to his lordship and all present stood in silence as a mark of respect. Charlie made reference to Lord Dunleath's infectious enthusiasm - something which manifested itself in many ways and which is the quality which must have made the greatest impression on all who met him. A further tribute appears in Five Foot Three and it will suffice here to offer our deepest sympathy to the Dunleath family circle.

GENERAL

Unless something goes disastrously wrong, this posting should be a bumper one including Five Foot Three. Since the Society news in the magazine is reasonably up-to-date it follows that this Newsletter should be a slim one.

Firstly, a few items from Hon. Secretary, Paul McCann, who would like to thank all those who paid their subscriptions early and especially those who sent donations. For the remainder, please remember that memberships are now due for renewal.

In the current economic climate we need to extend our membership as widely as possible to ensure our survival. If any members regularly attend functions of a railway, transport or related nature would they consider publicising the Society? Membership forms are available from the Secretary; simply specify the numbers required and these will be supplied.

It should be noted that the difference in membership rates for non-UK residents is not due to currency fluctuations but is a consequence of the substantial increase in the cost of postage to anywhere outside the UK. So please ensure that the appropriate amount on the membership renewal form is paid.

OPERATIONS

Time now for the Hon. Publications Officer to eat humble pie and apologise for causing havoc (and extra expense) by putting out wrong information about the Dublin Santa trains. Our marketing department there must have got the message across though as over 1,900 people travelled over the two days.

In Belfast, our first venture into putting Santa out on the main line was very encouraging with some 1,350 passengers on the two days. Some rethinking of the timings may be required as the 1630 departures did not appear to go down nearly so well as those earlier in the day.

Whitehead member Victor Sweetnam, who was to be seen on the Belfast trains in red robes and flowing whiskers, has since had to go into hospital and we wish him a speedy recovery.

The Belfast Transport Museum has closed pending removal of the railway stock to the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum at Cultra, the plan being to move items by road to Adelaide Yard and thence by rail to the UF&TM. Both the Museum and NIR have expressed an interest in steam haulage and the proposed dates are 31 January and 7 February. Just when you thought it was safe to put your camera away!

The much travelled Michael Palin, last seen in Cape Town having difficulty

with his connection to the South Pole, will be back in Ireland this Spring. The BBC is making another series of "Great Railway Journeys", one of which will be from "Derry to Kerry" (via Rosslare!). Londonderry to Belfast should be on 25 April and Dublin to Rosslare on 2 May. Further information from Hon. Operations Officer, Michael McMahon.

Sharp-eyed members in the Republic of Ireland may have spotted one of the coaches from the RPSI's Mullingar set turning up in unexpected places. Brake coach No.1915 is on loan to Irish Rail for use as a crew coach in their "pole train" which is being operated by the Signalling & Electrical Department and is busy removing redundant telegraph poles for Telecom Éireann.

Last but not least, if you haven't yet sent in an advance booking form for the 1993 "Seán Rí" Railtour don't waver for too long. Around 250 bookings are already in and the tour hasn't been advertised in the railway press yet!

WHITEHEAD SITE

In the heavy lift area, holes have been bored in the concrete around the pit and bolts fitted ready for rail to be laid. Work has begun on the installation of the turnout there and on aligning No.3 road beside the carriage shed.

It has been decided that rather than try to operate Easter Bunny trains in the middle of all the site work it would be better to spend time preparing the Whitehead based train for filming and for the railtour in May.

Now is the time for all good men (and women), etc., etc! A Great Easter Work-in is planned for Whitehead on 11, 12 and 13 April and we would appeal to all who have time to spare over the holiday period to come and lend a hand in order to ensure that the train will be a credit to the Society. Dublin has done it, so where are all the industrious folk of the North?

LOCO REPORT (Update to Five Foot Three)

No.3: The saddle tank has been brought into the loco shed and repairs to its platework have begun.

No.85: Riveting of firebox seams is continuing and work on the manufacture of firebox stays will soon commence. When No.85 joins No.171 in traffic they could be competing for a tender, given that there is something of a question mark over the riding qualities of No.85's large tender, while the one currently running with No.171 will soon need a major rebuild. An option under consideration is the overhaul and rebuilding of a GN U Class tender at present lying out of use at Mullingar, one of a pair we have in store there.

No.461: Worked light engine from Dublin to Whitehead on 16 January for attention to driving axleboxes and other minor repairs.

Carlow Diesel: Although the main engine, has been test run further work awaits the arrival of air compressor parts.

SALES

Two further items for your bookshelf, available from Henry Beaumont:

"Railway Days in Strabane", reminiscences of the Great Northern and the County Donegal by local railwaymen, 92 pages, £5.50 inc. p&p.

Video - "Trolleybus Days in Belfast", featuring archive footage from RPSI member John Laird, £11.50 inc. p&p.