

# RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

## MEMBERS NEWSLETTER

*June, 1993*

### OPERATIONS

Sundays 25<sup>th</sup> April and 2<sup>nd</sup> May should hopefully result in huge publicity for railways in Ireland and the Society in particular. These were the days of operation when the BBC filmed sequences for their forthcoming second series of "Great Railway Journeys of the World". Michael Palin will be the presenter for the programme provisionally titled "Derry to Kerry", hopefully to be screened in January, 1994. If the helicopter sequences turn out as planned, the shots of No.171 at Downhill and No.461 around Bray Head should be quite spectacular as the weather on both days was perfect at the time of shooting.

This year's "Seán Rí" International Railtour, taking 5 days, was successfully operated over the second weekend in May. Apart from some problems with No.461's recurring hot axlebox, necessitating some late running, the weekend's events ran more or less to plan and all participants seemed satisfied with the whole operation. The main portion of the tour ended with a very spirited return to Dublin from Rosslare Harbour with No.171,

crewed by Irish Rail drivers, brothers Dan and Tony Renehan, both members of the Society and both trained in steam on RPSI tours well after the finish of steam in the Republic of Ireland. The Monday of the tour saw us leaving Dublin for photo stops at all the stations to Drogheda which are due to lose their semaphore signals in the near future. As we had left Dublin late the 11.20 Enterprise ex Dublin was bearing down on us and Operations Officer Michael McMahon, not wanting to miss out on the promised stops, ensured that the times at the stations were not much more than THREE minutes from stop to start. Amazingly all who wanted photographs were able to get them. Definitely one of the better RPSI tours!!

Please note that the "Barbecue Special" operation from Dublin planned for 12<sup>th</sup> June has had to be cancelled. To organise a proper professional event the operation has to rely heavily on sponsorship, which was not forthcoming this year. However, we will try to reinstate the event in next year's programme of operations. Also, the "Jazz Special" operation originally scheduled for Friday 18<sup>th</sup> June has been put back to

Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> July. Apologies to those who have already booked their tickets.

### WHITEHEAD

Now that the summer has supposedly arrived, Dermot Mackie and his squad are turning their attention to the site at Whitehead. From now, and until the dark evenings come again, the squad will be in evidence every Wednesday evening so come on down and lend a hand - all members are welcome.

### NEWS FROM THE DUBLIN AREA

#### "The Sea Breeze"

**Michael Palin / BBC TV**

The special on Sunday 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1993 was fully booked out three days before departure. Advance publicity in the press - in particular The Irish Times - saw to that. The one price ticket did not deter and demonstrated that it is possible to price our tickets to suit the occasion. It is interesting to note that, on a straw poll, a significant number of our passengers were first timers - attracted no doubt by the celebrity on board. In addition the local trip from Wexford to Rosslare Harbour also proved to be a winner. For some it was a disappointment that we could not run with the "Mullingar Set" but given the major overhaul now in progress on the green carriages this was just not possible.

#### **Seán Rí Railtour**

It was a disappointment that in the end (due to late running on the

Sunday) neither our Vice-President Dr. Garret FitzGerald nor Bord Fáilte representative John Roynane could join at Greystones. On a brighter note RTÉ TV covered the event from Limerick Junction to Waterford with a camera crew and on-board interviews.

#### **Mid-Summer Night's Steam**

**12<sup>th</sup> June, 1993**

Regretfully it has not been possible to obtain a sponsor for this operation and we have therefore had to remove it from the programme. Given the high standard of last year's event it was felt that without commercial support this standard could not be maintained.

"The Shannon" operation to Athlone and Ballinasloe on 4<sup>th</sup> July is being run with the support of Athlone Chamber of Commerce & Industry to whom we extend our sincere thanks. This will be a significant event as we will be running our own RPSI stock between Athlone and Ballinasloe.

**Carriages:** A small team of volunteers under the stewardship of Chas Meredith have been toiling hard at Inchicore Works removing window frames from otherwise condemned Park Royal vehicles. These windows are essential to replace those which were stolen from the two GSR Bredins which were stabled at Magheramorne during the building of the carriage shed. It is an unfortunate use of our scarce manpower that this kind of work has to be undertaken. It is sad to have to report that the set at Mullingar has also suffered from vandalism in recent past which again will

necessitate remedial work at the expense of planned restoration projects.

**Publicity:** With the valuable assistance of FÁS training school at Cabra a new Society publicity handout is now available - copy enclosed. Ten thousand leaflets are being produced and will be distributed as widely as possible - libraries, tourist offices, etc. Can you help? Please contact David Humphries at (01) 288 8900 who will be happy to rush you a supply.

**New Members:** A welcome to the 30 new members who joined since the last newsletter - a happy reflection of the interest as the Dublin based operations continued to expand and our "Publicity net" stretches further and further.

### FUND RAISING

We have 4 copies of the Dublin summer steam brochure, complete with photographs of our mainline engines, which were signed by Michael Palin on his recent visit. The 4 highest bidders before the end of July will receive a copy. Any money raised will go towards the new workshop project. Bids should be sent to the Secretary at: 148 Church Road, Newtownabbey, Co. Antrim, BT36 6HJ.

As you are all aware the Society is currently in receipt of a European Regional Development Fund 75% grant towards a number of projects. At the start of the grant period a gross figure of £366,000 was budgeted for on the basis that the Society could raise 25% of this, i.e. £91,500 over the three year period.

Luckily our tour income did indeed amount to what we had allowed for but unfortunately funds from other sources, including sales and appeals have not fulfilled our expectations and some projects have had to be cancelled or postponed, specifically the proposed locomotive workshop. We have had a number of loans from a few members which helped us through our critical cashflow period and to those members we are most grateful - they should be starting to see the return of their money very shortly.

Currently we are submitting proposals to the ERDF for a second phase of grant aid starting in 1994. If successful in our application, our vital locomotive workshop will then become the number one priority. As this project, depending on exact specification, will cost from £100,000 to £200,000 we need to have up to £50,000 on hand to pay for our share come mid 1994.

We must now invite you the members to consider the amount you could lend or donate to the Society to finance this and the other projects which we hope to complete under ERDF. A 75% grant, while not money in our hands, is still too good a chance to miss. We can provide trains and facilities the like of which we have never had before and which we could never aspire to without the grants. So please, let us claim every penny - we may never have the same opportunity again.

### SALES

A variety of items is always available from H. Beaumont, 148 Hillsborough

Road, Lisburn, Co. Antrim, BT27 5QY. Principal items are:

Locomotive outline badges, now including GSR No. 800 "Maedhbh", books, videos, postcards, posters, drawings of Irish locomotives, coaches and wagons, back numbers of 5"3", Railway Magazine, Railway Modeller, etc.

Send details of your requirements to the above address.

### LOCOMOTIVE REPORT

Numbers 3, 4 and 85 all have their boiler repairs progressing.

Number 461 is still suffering from hot driving axle boxes. We are grateful to IR who have offered to weigh the locomotive at their North Wall facility -this may help us to diagnose what is causing the problem.

Number 171 ran well during the Seán Rí tour but subsequently considerable firebox problems became apparent - bent firebars, leaking tubes and other leaks. These have now all been attended to.

### GENERAL

A point raised at the AGM prompted the Council to consider the introduction of a category of membership for families. The idea has been put forward in the past but never acted upon until now. Any family interested can take up membership for GB£35 (Northern Ireland and Britain), IR£30 (Republic of Ireland) or GB£30 (rest of world). Membership will cover two adults and any number of

children but will include only one mailshot per family. The normal discounts available to members on our operations will extend to the whole family and both adults will be allowed voting rights at general meetings.

If you would like to extend membership to include your family before next year, simply return your current membership card to the Secretary along with the difference in subscription rate and your records will be updated.

While on the subject of membership, we are pleased to announce that Bernard Watts of Middlesex has become the Society's 1,000<sup>th</sup> fully paid up member. This is the first time that we have achieved this total in any single membership year. A major contributing factor is the fare structure for the International Railtour in recent years which offers discounts to members with savings greater than the annual subscription. Also, the operations out of Dublin continue to attract a lot of new faces and quite a few then join up. Long may it continue!

Queries / Comments to:

Hon. Secretary  
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148 Church Road  
Newtownabbey,  
Co. Antrim, BT36 6HJ.