

NEWS LETTER

January 1994

MEMBERSHIP

Renewal: Thank you to all those members who renewed their membership before Christmas - this has helped us substantially with our cashflow. To those yet to pay, please remember that your subscription is due on 1st February, especially if you wish to attend the AGM in February or receive further news-sheets after this one.

Standing Orders: Again, please note that those members who pay their subscription by standing order should increase the amount accordingly - please send only a copy of the revised form to the membership address, the original should go direct to your own bank.

Covenants: There seems to be an aversion by our members in the United Kingdom to taking out a covenant in the Society's favour. Let us assure you that it costs nothing other than the time to fill out two forms. You simply pay your annual subscription as usual and the Society reclaims the tax you have paid on that amount. That's all there is to it - painless!!

Welcome Back: Over the past few months many people who, for one reason or another, were members in the past and had let their membership lapse have received letters inviting them to rejoin the Society. We are pleased to report that several dozen so far have come back on board and we welcome them and hope they have many more years with the Society.

OPERATIONS

"Derry To Kerry": The screening of the second series of the BBC's 'Great Railway Journeys Of The World' has

started. The Society's moment of glory comes on 3rd February when Michael Palin's epic journey by RPSI, NIR and Irish Rail is screened. Visits are also made to Shanes Castle and the Tralee & Dingle Railway. Look out for No.171 at Downhill and No.461 rounding Bray Head.

"Santa Special 1": Now that the festive season has passed, let us look back at what pleasure Santa brought to the many parents and children who travelled on our trains. On the Sundays coming up to Christmas Santa delighted over 2,500 people in the Belfast area and sent them home happy, with their belief in Santa restored and looking forward to seeing him again next year. We have already had an enquiry about block bookings for 1994 - let us hope that the new rail link will allow us the time to fit in a few extra trains.

Even the weather proved to be kind on two of the Sundays, the crisp cold and bright sunshine made the time on the platform a real pleasure for the children to ride on the miniature railway provided by the Belfast and County Down Miniature Railway Society.

Our thanks should go to all the people who put in a lot of time and effort to make the trips such a resounding success, and our biggest thanks should go to Santa and his helpers for a great job very well done.

"Santa Special 2": We had hoped that it would be a simple matter to repeat 1992's successful formula for running the Santa trains out of Dublin. Wrong!! With just over two weeks to go Irish Rail belatedly provided the requirements for running after dark. In usual bureaucratic form we were requested to fit GM style headlights (all parts obtainable from General Motors in the USA). After some

discussion a sensible compromise was reached whereby the existing lamps were converted to battery power.

The overhaul of No.461's axleboxes was successfully carried out in the weeks coming up to the first operation, and we will admit that some nerves were starting to fray with the locomotive still in Inchicore with only days to go. However, due to the special effort made by our loco team, and with thanks to Irish Rail in Inchicore, we ran successfully with over 1,800 happy passengers carried over the two days.

"Lough Atalia": Members are reminded to submit their advance booking forms as soon as possible if they want to participate in this year's international railtour. The railway magazines have run the usual adverts and the non-members are starting to book already.

Tickets: Those interested in collecting tickets please note that complete sets of 1993 tickets are available. The price is at least £5 - ring 0960 353567.

BELFAST AREA MEETINGS

(7:30pm at St. Jude's Crescent, Belfast)

"Thirty Years Ago": On 9th February Norman Foster shows slides from his extensive collection.

"Irish Steam Cinema": On 9th

March we get our annual superb film show from Fred Cooper.

SALES

New Products: Now available (all prices are in sterling and include postage): Reprints of various LMS(NCC) working timetables and notes from 1939 onwards, £5.20. Irish narrow gauge books, "Cork To Cavan" and "Ulster Lines", 144 pages, £17 each. The "MGWR History" is expected in late February at £18.20.

Main Lines: A variety of items is always available from H. Beaumont, 148 Hillsborough Road, Lisburn, Co. Antrim, BT27 5QY. The principal lines are: locomotive outline badges, including GSR No.800 "Maebhdh"; books; videos; postcards; posters; drawings of Irish locomotives, coaches and wagons; back numbers of 5'3", Railway Magazine and Railway Modeller; old railway tickets; GNR(I) coats of arms; etc. Send details of your requirements to the above address.

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