

NEWS LETTER

March 1994

AGM

New Faces: The AGM held in Dublin on 26th February was a well-attended affair. By the end of the meeting we had three new members of Council, Murrough O'Brien, Joe McKeown and Heather Boomer, the first female member to climb to those dizzy heights. Welcome, and well done, to all three. The minutes of the AGM are enclosed with this news-sheet.

PSRs: With the new Council comes a new list of members in posts of special responsibility. PSRs to the Secretary: John Creaner (Legal Adviser), Charles Friel (Meetings Organiser), Johnny Glendinning (Museums Liaison Officer), Mark Kennedy (Conservation Officer). PSRs to the Locomotive Officer: Charles Meredith (Locomotive Assistant), Paul Newell (Loco Procurement North), David Carse (Loco Procurement South). PSRs to the Treasurer: Harry Mulholland (Covenants), Caroline Stewart (Northern Commercial), Joe Fitzpatrick (Southern Commercial), Brian Hill (ERDF Claims), David Humphries (Finance Committee).

ERDF Update: Our Treasurer, John Beaumont, would like it to be known that he detected an impression among the members present at the AGM that the Society would be receiving a second series of grants totally £1.4m. He would like to point

out that this is the total cost of the projects that we submitted as a proposed second programme of work. At the time of writing, there has been no reply from the ERDF authorities. It must be remembered that some, or all, of the proposed projects could be rejected.

MEMBERSHIP

Thank You: Very many thanks to all those members who have paid their subscriptions so promptly, and an extra thank you to all who included a donation with their sub.

Standing Orders: Sorry to have to refer to this again, but despite reminders in both of the last two news-sheets, many of the members who pay by standing order have either not paid the correct rate or if they have it is not going to the correct bank account (sterling payments only), causing untold misery for the Secretary who has to untangle the mess. To recap, please check with your bank that the correct amount is being paid and that all sterling payments are going to account No.91104799 at bank 95-01-34.

OPERATIONS

"Easter Bunny": Due to major repairs to No.171, it is not 100% certain that these operations will take place. If they do, it will be as running in trips for the engine.

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Planned operations are: Saturday 2nd April and Monday 4th April, departing Carrickfergus at 11 am and 2 pm for Larne Harbour, fares £5 and £3. Phone (0960) 353567 for latest information.

"Lough Atalia": Still a few places left if you haven't yet booked.

Running In: Another reminder to members that there are likely to be on-going running in trips for No.171 during the spring, and possibly for No.85 in early summer. We will try to keep the latest information on the answer-phone (0960) 353567. As the news-sheets have a long lead in time and are costly to produce, it is generally not possible to publicise such operations unless they are organised well in advance (this is usually not the case).

Summer Steam: it is hoped to include booking forms for the season with this news-sheet. Members are asked to book early as there is a surprisingly high interest in this year's operations from the general public. Indeed, quite a number of bookings have already been taken for operations that have not yet been publicised.

LOCOMOTIVES

No.3 "R.H. Smyth": Work is progressing slowly.

No.4: In process of having new firebox plates welded.

No.85 "Merlin": Maximum effort is being expended on this engine. The boiler has been fitted back into its frames and bolting up is progressing. The tender is now back on its wheels and the platework is being dealt with. Hopefully there will be some running-in by the summer.

No.171 "Slieve Gullion": Needs

new slipper blocks and a new left-hand piston head to be cast. The left-hand cylinder is being bored out. A major effort is being made to have the locomotive satisfactorily run in before the May railtour.

No.461: Big end bearings and the connecting rod have been refitted. Caulking of 100 stays and a new brick arch are being attended to.

Carlow Diesel: Our diesel shunter from the Carlow sugar factory has now moved under its own power for first time in Society ownership. Some reassembly and proper testing is still required.

CARRIAGE & WAGON

Crests: The Carriage Department is looking for contributions towards crests for our carriages. A number of carriages have recently been repainted and require new company emblems. LMS crests are not a problem as there is a firm in England still making them, but GNR or GSR crests would have to be made from scratch, which of course means greater expense. Any member interested in donating should contact Gavin Martin at the editorial address.

MULLINGAR

Facilities: New Site Officer, Murrough O'Brien, lives not too far away from the site at Mullingar, and he is hoping to be there regularly. His first priority is to provide better sanitary facilities, including lavatory and shower. He would be delighted to hear from anybody who can either provide such items or help to install them. Hopefully, these facilities will help to attract more members to Mullingar to help with

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the serious backlog of work on the coaches there.

WHITEHEAD

Sheer-Leas: Dermot Mackie reports that the motors have now been hoisted on to the gantries. Cabling of the equipment is still awaited.

SALES

New Products: Orders are now being taken for the "MGWR History" by member Ernie Shepherd.

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, now 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.

GENERAL

Belfast Meetings: Now that the spring is supposedly here, our thanks must once again go to Charles Friel who organised our winter meetings. The usual varied and fascinating selection of subjects, illustrated by cine, slide and video, was enjoyed by over 800 participants. Anybody in the Greater Belfast who has never attended should make a note in their diary for the next season, starting in October.

Rail Gallery: Following its launch to the public in October last, the Ulster

Folk & Transport Museum's new rail collection was officially opened by the Duke of Edinburgh on 11th February. The guest list was strictly limited but Secretary, Paul McCann, was there to represent the Society. Our photographer, Charles Friel, also managed to wangle his way in as one of the press contingent. The Society's coach No.50, the ex-GNR directors' saloon, featured highly in the surrounding publicity as she was part of the royal train in which the Queen and Prince Philip travelled during their visit to Northern Ireland in 1953

WANTED

Five Foot Three: Those who have read the more recent issues of the magazine will have noted a bias towards the north of Ireland in the non-RPSI articles. This is not a deliberate policy but simply the result of our contributors' area of interest. What we require are articles which can even the balance and we look forward to receiving submissions from members who feel they have something to share in regard to southern topics. Reprints from local newspapers, both old and new, will also be considered for inclusion.

Book Request: Member, Fred Heide, from New Jersey, USA, wants to know how he can obtain a copy of "Irish Railways Since 1916" by M.H.C. Baker. Answers to the address below please.

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