

# Railway Preservation Society of Ireland

## NEWS LETTER

April 1997

### OPERATIONS

**Crew Training:** Operational activity is usually non-existent before Easter, but this year has seen a number of weeks of activity on crew training. No.171 was in operation, with coaches 1335 and 1916, training a number of potential drivers and one of last year's group of firemen whose training was cut short by illness. The trains ran to Mullingar and back, leaving around 10:00, and returning about 16:00. The current phase of training has now been completed and there is general satisfaction with what has been achieved. The chronic shortage of drivers should now be eased, assuming the trainees are passed out in due course.

**NIR Operations:** As noted in the AGM minutes, NIR have asked the Society to appoint an independent assessor, agreeable to the Company, to investigate the running of Society vehicles on NIR tracks. Particular attention is to be given to 6-wheel tenders. It is hoped the assessor will report back with his recommendations before the end of April. At present it is anticipated that all the season's operations will run as planned.

**Easter Excursion:** Our excursion to Mullingar on Good Friday proved to be highly successful. There was a full train, a full bar, and fine running, with one of the trainees at No.171's regulator for most of the day.

**"Easter Bunny":** The Bunny trains operated as usual on Easter Monday. Unfortunately, as only a seven coach train was in operation, a number of prospective participants had to be turned away from each of the two trains. However, this did not spoil what was otherwise a very successful operation.

**Rosslare:** At the time of writing there is some doubt over the operations to

Rosslare. Following a fire at Ballygeary signal cabin, there is some uncertainty as to whether a passenger steam train can be handled at the Europort. It may be that trains will have to terminate at Wexford for passengers. Close contact is being maintained with IÉ in a bid to have the situation resolved, with the ultimate aim of ensuring we can operate as normal to Rosslare.

**Train Rides:** As a trial for this year, the Sunday Train Rides at Whitehead will start in June. There will be operations each Sunday afternoon from 15<sup>th</sup> June till 31<sup>st</sup> August. Anyone willing to help is welcome to come along any day to offer their services.

**Ticket Outlet:** At the time of writing a replacement ticket outlet in Belfast has not been found. If anybody can suggest a reasonably central outlet, please contact the Operations Officer on (01960 353567) as soon as possible.

### AGM

**Meeting:** It was the turn of Whitehead again to host the AGM. Our thanks to Lord O'Neill who chaired the meeting, and to the 52 members who travelled from all over to attend.

**Steering Committee:** The major topic of debate this year was the report into the structure of Council. Following lively discussion and a few heartfelt pleas for change, it was agreed that the report as circulated with the February News-Letter should be adopted in its entirety, with the exception that the posts of Operations Officers remain as Council posts.

These changes will come into effect from the 1998 AGM.

**AGM Venue:** It seems you can't please all of the people. It was noted that a number of members were unhappy with

the venues for the meetings, both this year and last. If any members have suggestions for the future, please feel free to make them known to the Secretary at the usual address. It will be Dublin in 1998 by the way!

**Council:** Following the meeting, we have to say "Good-Bye" and "Thank-You" to Norman Foster who vacated the post of Assistant Treasurer. David Humphries moved to fill this post and we welcome Chas Meredith who has joined Council for the first time, to take on the job of Mullingar Site Officer.

### FINANCE

**Locomotive Workshop:** Efforts continue to make available sufficient funds to meet the Society's share of the cost of the proposed workshop. It is hoped that an appeal will be made in the very near future. Members are asked to be particularly generous as this may well be the last chance we ever get to build such a facility.

### LOCOMOTIVES

**No.4:** Boiler - Copper water-space stays all fitted. Reaming of firebox tube holes complete. Boiler lifted into frames, marked out for position of expansion brackets and smokebox. Machining of expansion brackets under way. Fitting of tubes under way.

Mechanical - Cleaning and painting frames. Coupling and connection rods dismantled for examination, several bushes re-metalled and machined. Bogie fitted under frames, checked for heights and position of side bearers. Pony truck removed for examination and overhaul, wheels removed and being re-profiled. New friction pads being fitted to side bearers.

Bodywork - Riveting of new left side plate under way. Bunker and tank repairs continuing.

**No.85 "Merlin":** Operated the "Easter Bunny" successfully and kept to NIR's imposed speed limit of 25mph with the help of an electronic speedometer adapted to work on the footplate of a steam locomotive.

**No.171 "Sieve Gullion":** The operational locomotive based in Connolly. It is proposed to return to Whitehead in September for major refurbishment. Minor boiler repairs have been carried out.

**No.461:** In Dublin, undergoing minor boiler repairs.

**DARS Locomotive:** The Downpatrick & Ardglass Railway Society, have awarded the Society the contract for the mechanical over-haul of their Orenstein & Koppel locomotive No.3. The work is due for completion by the summer of 1998.

The locomotive was moved to Whitehead by low loader on 8<sup>th</sup> March, and work has commenced on dismantling. The cab and tanks were removed and the boiler collected by Rory Woolf for repair under a separate contract in Ballymena.

### BELFAST MEETINGS

**All Over:** Another season finished, and our thanks must go to Charles Friel for organising the meetings single-handedly. Charles would like to thank our member, Andy Crockart, who made possible the deal through which the new public address system was acquired. This has made a marked difference to the quality of the sound in the hall (provided nobody trips over the leads, Dermot!).

**Next Season:** As always, Charles is looking for new faces, or old faces with new ideas, for the meetings. So if you know of a likely candidate, or indeed yourself, please contact Charles by early summer.

### CARRIAGE & WAGON

**Mullingar:** The remains of Bredin 1327 and laminate 1445, damaged by fire at Mullingar in summer 1995, have now been scrapped. The GSR roller bearing bogies from 1327 have been retained.

The ceiling has been fitted on laminate 1463. Next to be tackled will be the internal panelling and the fitting of an overall roof.

**Dublin:** Park Royal 1416 has gone to Inchicore for attention to its roof and panels. It is hoped to have it back in

traffic in time for the barbecue special in June. A complete internal refurbishment has just been completed on sister coach 1383.

**Mileage:** The figures below set out the coach mileage for the year 1996 for the Dublin set. 594 miles are accounted for by crew training. Also included are transfers from Heuston to Connolly and Inchicore.

88, 1335, 1916, 2421	1496 miles
1383, 1416, 2423	895 miles
238	245 miles
1142	727 miles

238 was exchanged for 1142 at the Inchicore open day in June.

**Whitehead:** GNR 9 has received much needed new upholstery along with a new roof covering and external painting in the standard maroon livery.

If finances allow, Council is considering the return to traffic of diner 2422, currently in the UFTM at Cultra. This would take the set back up to 8 coaches.

## MULLINGAR

**Locomotive Shed:** A steel shoe is being fabricated to effect a repair to the shed roof.

## WHITEHEAD

**Site Clearance:** Work continues on clearing and preparing the site for the Locomotive Workshop. Over the last two months more than £600 has been raised from scrap collected during this exercise.

**Summer Squad:** The brighter evenings are coming and the site team will be holding their weekly evening sessions beginning Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> May. First on the list of jobs to be tackled over the summer is the main gate into the site. It is planned to make this more secure and to make good the paintwork.

## GENERAL

**Cheques:** Despite the plea in the previous News-Letter, members are still sending combined cheques to a single address for various items. Could we again please ask members to send

Membership, Sales or Railtour payments only to the address given on the relevant form? While you may feel it is inconvenient to do so, it means that Society officers do not have to transfer forms, names, addresses and varying amounts of money between themselves. More importantly, it may prevent cheques, tickets or membership cards getting delayed, or even lost in transit.

## SALES

**Main Lines:** A variety of branded RPSI items is always available from:

RPSI Postal Sales  
45 Drumnacanny Road  
Portadown  
Co. Armagh  
BT63 5LX

The principal lines are: locomotive outline badges, videos, postcards, posters, pencils, rulers, etc.

**For The Collector:** Send details of your requirements to:

RPSI Collector's Shop  
148 Hillsborough Road  
Lisburn Co. Antrim  
BT27 5QY

Typical items are: drawings of a selection of Irish locomotives, coaches and wagons; back numbers of 5'3", tour brochures and various railway magazines; old timetables and tickets; etc. A new version (folded in cover) of the 1927 Clearing House map of Ireland is now available, priced £3.90.

**Book List:** The current book list includes:

"Railway Days in Strabane"	£5.50
"The Fintona Horse Tram"	£6.50
"Isle of Man Horse Trams"	£3.55
"The Warrenpoint Branch"	£5.55
"Irish Metrovick Diesels"	£5.55

All prices include postage.

## EDITORIAL ADDRESS

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