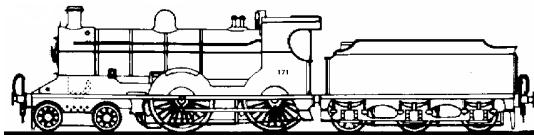


Railway Preservation Society of Ireland



June 2005

NEWS LETTER

'NEW' LOCOMOTIVES

All Ours!: Following the announcement in the last News-Letter regarding the Society gaining complete ownership of No.131, No.184 and No.461, we can now announce further additions to our collection.

In February 2005, Translink wrote to the Society with the information that they were planning to dispose of the surviving Hunslet locomotives 101 "Eagle" and 102 "Falcon" (the third, 103 "Merlin" was scrapped some years ago). Both locomotives have been in store at Whitehead for a number of years in order to facilitate NIR and to ensure their retention for possible preservation.

The locomotives were being offered for sale at a nominal sum and it was decided to bid, on the basis that the Society has an immediate use for 102 as a shunting loco - if it can easily be made operational. It was also felt that the Society was best placed to provide storage for both locos.

In early June we learned that NIR had agreed to sell both locomotives to the Society.

101 is in a seriously cannibalised condition, although, since it has been at Whitehead, the Locomotive Department has been acquiring redundant parts as and when they have become available.

102 is mostly complete and there will be a basic investigation as to whether it can be made to operate or not. There are, however, no big funds available to put the locomotive into service.

The long-term future of the locos will be kept under review, bearing in mind the Society's needs and the interest forthcoming from budding diesel engineers.

THE SUIR VALLEY WEEK

Tuesday 10th May: No.186 kicked off the "Suir Valley" Railtour with the first fringe trip, her first visit to Dublin in probably 30 years.

Bang on schedule, No.186 and five Mk2

carriages departed Belfast Central for Dublin. Despite a delay along the way, the train was only a couple of minutes late arriving in Dublin. There were about 50 passengers who availed of the chance to travel.

This was the first Belfast to Dublin (or vice versa) train using our own carriages since September 1989, when wooden-bodied stock was banned.

It was also the first time No.186 has been in Dublin (in steam) since 28th May 1979, when operating from Dublin to Whitehead after the "Croagh Patrick" railtour.

The last time No.186 ran Belfast - Dublin, as opposed to Dublin - Belfast, would have been 17th April 1971 on the "Slieve Gullion" tour, via Ardee and the Cement Factory at Drogheda.

Thursday 12th May: The two positioning runs to/from Waterford, and to a lesser extent the run from Belfast to Dublin, were, for many, high points of the railtour operations.

The logic behind these trips was to avoid light engine working and to generate at least some income, however modest, from positioning runs which were necessary for the running of the tour.

No.186, having arrived from Belfast on Tuesday, took 5 coaches from the Dublin set to Waterford via Rosslare harbour. The trip attracted a very respectable 140 passengers.

This trip saw the RPSI operate its first all green train in CIÉ green with eau de nil band and flying snail. Coaches were 1916, 88, 1463, 2421 and 1335.

Friday 13th May: The Dublin-area coach tour, conducted as ever by Joe Fitzpatrick, visited the LUAS Red Cow depot as the first leg.

Following lunch in Drogheda there was a visit to Iarnród Éireann's railcar depot there. A very successful day, only marred by the delay due to road traffic around Dublin on the bus to Drogheda.

Thanks are due to Connex and Irish Rail for kindly facilitating these visits.

Saturday 14th May: The railtour proper began at Dublin's Pearse station, when nearly 250 eager

passengers were deposited on an empty platform from their various hotels. Due to DASH work in Dublin, the train stalled overnight at Grand Canal Dock and reversed into Pearse for a quick boarding of the railtour party, along with various essential supplies.

The train, hauled by No.4, comprised the 5 RPSI Mk2 coaches, with the addition of a MK2d open, a restaurant car and a generator van from Irish Rail. To the amusement of many, Train Manager Henry Ritchie took great delight in making full use of the PA system on the new Mk2 coaches.

On board the train the weather looked very pleasant with plenty of sunshine but, as was seen at the first stop to cross at Wicklow, there was a very chilly wind outside. The locomotive was watered at a further stop at Rathdrum.

There were photo stops at Enniscorthy and Wexford, before the ever-popular traversing of the section along Wexford Quay. A further unscheduled photo stop was fitted in at Rosslare Strand.

The train and locomotive were serviced on Rosslare Pier where, due to the rough seas, a number of the coaches acquired a coating of salt from the spray coming over the harbour wall.

There were further photo stops at Wellington Bridge and Ballycullane before eventual arrival in Waterford.

The usual Railtour Dinner took place in Waterford's Granville Hotel, where it was noticed by a few seasoned participants that the party seemed to break up earlier than usual this year.

Sunday 15th May: Sunday started in glorious sunshine and remained that way all day, but with a warmth absent from the day before.

No.186 with 6 coaches (the diner and generator having been dropped) easily maintained sectional times throughout the day.

A stop was made at Clonmel for water but a missing standpipe made a call to a member of Clonmel Borough Council a necessity. A slight delay resulted in a further loss of time, but the obligatory stop at Limerick Junction was still made to turn the locomotive on the triangle there.

The run into Limerick was made tender-first. A quick service and turn-round recouped some of the lost time. Unfortunately, a photo stop at Tipperary had to be cut, but it did mean that the train was more or less back on schedule.

A further stop was made at Clonmel for water. 70 passengers disembarked there to take a coach to Kilmeadan to join the Waterford and Suir Valley Railway for a 12km trip on their line to Bilberry on the outskirts of Waterford. Only part of the line is as yet open to the public so the Society is grateful for the chance to travel the entire length.

Running between Waterford and Limerick Junction was never going to be exciting due to an overall limit of 40mph, but it was further curtailed because of the number of PW slacks due to relaying being undertaken at present. In fact the

line is completely closed for 6 weeks, the tour train being one of three specials allowed through during the closure.

Back at Waterford, after a break for dinner, Charles Friel presented a very well received show of 80 slides illustrating the route of the tour using views from past tours.

And so to bed (for some!).

Monday 16th May: Despite a delay in watering resulting in a late departure, the train now back to its original 8-coach formation, and with No.4 back at the head, soon caught up time.

The first stop was for water just beyond Bagenalstown station platforms. Despite the day being dull and threatening rain, many took full advantage of the first photo opportunity at Carlow.

There was another photo and water stop at Athy, with the water being provided courtesy of a local fire service tanker.

Despite a PW delay at Cherryville Junction and an unscheduled set-down at Inchicore, arrival at Connolly station was dead on time.

No.4 was serviced and the Irish Rail coaches dropped, resulting in a slightly late departure from Connolly with the 5 RPSI coaches. What followed was a very fine run to Drogheda where water was taken. Another fine run to Dundalk was only broken by a stop due to a hot box detector outside the station. As this was a stop and examine situation, the train was shunted here to let the following Enterprise overtake. The opportunity was taken to have a fill of water which meant that the run back to Belfast was only interrupted by a quick set-down at Portadown, there being no need to water at Lisburn.

At Belfast, those on board due to return to Dublin were able to make a very quick cross-platform switch to the Up Enterprise, and hence came to an end the "Suir Valley" railtour for the majority of participants.

Tuesday 17th May: For those on the final optional leg of the tour, it began with the 07:30 service train from Heuston to Waterford.

Departure with No.186 and the Dublin coaches was at 11:16 with about 40 passengers on board - obviously post-tour fatigue catching up on people. The South Wexford line was traversed in spring sunshine with stops at Wellington Bridge and Bridgetown. On arrival in Rosslare the locomotive and coaches were serviced, with departure for Dublin about 10 minutes late. The Down passenger was crossed in Enniscorthy. Despite water stops in Gorey and Rathdrum there was an ahead of path crossing of the 17:30 to Arklow in Bray rather than in Greystones. The run into Dublin was 5 minutes ahead of a DART to the surprise of waiting commuters, and arrival in Connolly was at 19:00 - just as the Enterprise departed. About 45 minutes later 081 hooked on and hauled the train to Inchicore, where it was

secured in the oil siding at about 20:30.

An alternative on the day was the coach trip to Downpatrick where the Society's hosts provided a fine day's entertainment behind their locomotive No.3. Several diesels had been lined up to perform but the consensus was to keep the steam running, and so it was. Lunch was at the very fine restored flour mill at Ballyduggan, just outside Downpatrick, which is now a restaurant and hotel.

To all who participated in, or helped organise, the "Suir Valley" railtour a very big Well Done and Thank You!

OPERATIONS

Sea Breeze: The trip to Wexford and Rosslare with No.4 on Saturday 30th April was well filled despite the indifferent weather.

Arrival was timely, or before time, on the outward and return legs. Water was taken at Rathdrum, Gorey and Rosslare Harbour.

In the now familiar pattern with weekend DART closures, the train operated from Pearse, and was stabled in Grand Canal Dock station, which for the uninitiated has a loop platform which is not yet commissioned for passenger traffic.

The train is back up to its eight coach format, with brake standard 1949 (formerly 9, recently transferred from the Whitehead set) replacing fire damaged Park royal 1416. It looked well in its mostly green livery, with 1142 and 1949 being the odd ones out. 1142 will stay as it is to match 351. 1949 will go green. Some of the other coaches will change colours to accommodate filming contracts but will all return to green eventually.

Charter - 1: On Friday 6th May, 140 delegates attending a conference organised by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board were the latest (the third this year) to avail of a charter trip from Belfast Central to Cultra. No.186 performed in her usual competent manner.

Charter - 2: No.186 hauled a private charter train to Wicklow on Sunday 22nd May in cold weather more reminiscent of March than May.

That aside, it was a civilised day with a 10:00 departure and a 14:50 arrival back in Pearse. The departure was delayed by a bridge strike and the need for inspection, but arrival in Wicklow was on time.

The set was 1916, 88, 2421, 1463, state coach 351 and a BR van. The latter came with the train from Inchicore and as there was nowhere to leave it in Pearse it was brought along for the ride.

Starring Role - 1: No.186 can now be regarded as well and truly run in after a mammoth 3-day trip to Killarney for filming on 25th to 27th May. Filming was on 26th in Killarney, the other days being positioning movements from/to Dublin

Inchicore.

On the first day, the train, consisting of 3 chocolate and cream coaches, 1335, 1916 and 1142, along with a Craven for support crew, left Inchicore and, taking water at Portarlington, Thurles, Charleville and Banteer, ran to Tralee for turning and coaling.

An early start was made on the following day when the train ran back to Killarney for a day's filming.

The train stayed the night in Killarney and returned on the third day. Water was taken at Charleville, Limerick Junction and Portarlington. Good time was made and the train was passed in Ballybroy by the train that was scheduled to pass us at the Junction, and at Hazelhatch by the train that was to pass us in Ballybroy. Arrival was an hour early in Dublin.

Three Cities: About 100 passengers took the opportunity to sample the run to Dublin behind No.4 and No.186 on Monday 30th May.

The train and stock looked really atmospheric waiting for departure on a sunny morning at the bay platform in Lisburn's superb period piece station. There was a good atmosphere on board - the passengers included a handful of English enthusiasts over especially for the event (plus trip to Cultra and Whitehead).

No.4 was in fine fettle with Noel Playfair at the regulator. He has her running very sweetly - superb performance throughout. There was a good crowd of locals and railway workers out to view the water stop at Dundalk. Good station work saw an arrival in Dublin around 15 minutes early, giving people more time to enjoy a break in the city. It was a damp afternoon in Dublin, but the delights of LUAS still prove an attraction.

No.4 and her smart coaches turned heads all the way down the line. On board, catering provided by Rita and her team, with a limited bar service operated by Katherine, was much appreciated by passengers. Ruth Mackie distributed Welcome Aboard leaflets. Robin Morton sold copies of "40 Shades Of Steam". The train stewards collected litter and generally kept the train tidy. The toilets were well supplied with soap, towels, loo roll and water - a good impression. The train interior looking good thanks to Joe Galbraith and team - a good promotion of the RPSI. Train steward Henry was as efficient as ever, making good use of the PA system to explain that we could detrain at Dundalk during the watering stop (to view museum or visit refreshment room).

The train was delayed leaving Dublin because a platform could not be found. The train was eventually shunted into Platform 2 by No.186 herself after the 15:20 departed and narrowly missed getting ahead of a DART to Malahide, which severely delayed our progress.

No.186 was in good form on way home, but was checked by DARTs and locals and was eventually put onto Up road near Skerries in order to be overtaken while on the move on the

inside by an Irish Rail CAF (reckoned to be a first for the RPSI) before returning to the Down line. Then overtaken on coastal road by a Dublin Bus double-decker - what greater ignominy? However, credit to all in IÉ who kept the train moving and allowed it out of Drogheda in front of the 16:50 Enterprise (non-stop to Newry).

Credit too to Stationmaster Brendan McQuaid at Dundalk who arranged for the train to be overtaken while remaining at the platform and who kept the refreshment room open especially for the steam party, which was much appreciated. The Enterprise passed on the Down loop at about 25 mph.

There was a great climb of the Wellington bank but the train slowed and stopped at Kilnasaggart Bridge, to the delight of local residents who came out to wave while the crew had a check round the locomotive. The passengers were kept informed by Henry on the PA, who said there was "an oil pressure problem". Soon on the way again, and No.186 was back on song, running well to Portadown and onward - difficult to believe it was just an 0-6-0 at the head of the train, and a 126-year-old one at that!

It was a beautifully sunny evening as No.186 took water at Lisburn and on to the third city of the day, Belfast. Arrival only about 10 down on schedule.

Suffice to say it was a very enjoyable day out, going back to the atmosphere of the early enthusiast trains. The new coaches ride exceptionally well, and add hugely to the overall enjoyment of day. The GN main line has an enduring appeal and hopefully this trip can be re-created in the not too distant future.

Starring Role - 2: After the recent excursion to Killarney for Ken Loach's "The Wind That Shakes The Barley" - a film on Irish politics in the 1919-21 period, the outing on Wednesday 8th June was closer to home with a day spent in Pearse with "Lassie".

This is being shot in the Isle Of Man and Ireland, and the (human) lead is Peter O'Toole. There are three (!!!) Lassies, all identical, so if there are any canine star tantrums work can continue with another.

Three coaches were involved, numbers 1142, 88 and 1916. The latter two had one side painted to match 1142 and were renumbered 3153 and 5113 respectively. The interior of the diner (88) was magnificently laid out as befitting the diner of the Coronation Scot in the 1930s.

Filming ran late, and although RPSI and IÉ staff agreed to work an extra hour, the last scene, involving a departure with No.4 was omitted.

Causeway Express: A late addition to the year's programme is the "Causeway Express" on Sunday 12th June, the first visit of No.186 to Portrush since overhaul.

The train followed the format of last Autumn, giving the opportunity for passengers to leave the

steam train at Portrush and avail of a short bus journey to the Giant's Causeway. The bus brought passengers back to meet the steam train at Portrush for the return journey home.

The run was notable for the fact that the return was via the 'closed' Antrim branch - a journey requested to allow the whole train to be turned to its pre-railtour orientation.

Steam and Jazz: We are in the middle of a 3 date season this year, with trains on 17th & 24th June and 1st July. It may not be too late to catch the last dates!

Charter - 3: On Tuesday 21st June the Permanent Way Institute have a return steam charter from Athlone to Galway organised through the RPSI and Iarnród Éireann, with No.4 as the motive power.

A limited number of tickets have kindly been made available for this trip priced at €30 each.

Summer Steam: Sunday train rides at Whitehead kick off on 26th June, and again on 3rd, 17th and 24th July.

Mid-Summer Steam: A bit later this year, but the barbecue train to Mullingar will be running on 2nd July.

The Midlander: A new venture this year on the Sligo line on 23rd July, offering a train to Mullingar, and extending from there on to Longford.

Portrush Flyer: NIR have confirmed that the "Portrush Flyer" train proposed for 20th August will not be able to operate due to an engineering possession required for underpass work in the Ballymoney area. So the only dates this year are on 30th July and 6th August. However, 13th August is under consideration.

Make the best of these trains as NIR have indicated that there may be a long-term closure beyond Ballymena in 2006 for track work. These closures are likely to be over the summer months.

Tullamore: On Saturday 20th August there will be a repeat of last year's successful operations with No.4 starting from Tullamore. However, this year the destination will be Athlone.

Bangor Belle: The ever-popular trains will be rounding off the summer season, running on 27th August.

CARRIAGE & WAGON

Dublin: At time of writing, coaches 1335 and 1916 from the Dublin set are painted chocolate and cream on one side to match 1142 for the film contract which took place in May in Killarney.

The plan is to paint them back and to have green as the standard livery. 2423, currently nearing completion in Mullingar will carry this livery. However, 351 and 1142 will continue to carry authentic GSWR livery.

Whitehead (Vintage): LMS full brake 411, which has been on works bogies for some time, has received a new set of bogies from 241, now in England. This will make her easier to move around.

Midland 6-wheel carriage 62M is in the shed for repairs. The vehicle is to go to the Downpatrick Railway and the Society is carrying out some work on contract on it as time permits.

Whitehead (Mk2) - 1: A piece of very good news is that the Society has been successful in its application to the International Fund for Ireland for grant aid towards upgrading the facilities and putting extra coaches into traffic. The grant will allow the Society to spend a total of £400,000 on the coaches over the next few years, 40% of which can now be reclaimed from the Fund. Obviously, the big challenge is find the Society's share of the money over that period. To that end Council has co-opted Derek Young to help seek additional grant funding for this and other projects.

Whitehead (Mk2) - 2: The Society is now in receipt of the official certificate from Irish Rail in respect of approval of the 6 Mk2 coaches to operate over their network.

Certificate Of Rolling Stock Approval

Vehicle Numbers:

180 (1st Class)
181 (1st Class)
300 (Standard open)
301 (Standard open)
302 (Standard open)
460 (Standard open brake)

Belonging to the following organisation:

Railway Preservation Society of Ireland has been considered in accordance with the Iarnród Éireann Standard Railway Standard No.48 Draft 5 with the result that Iarnród Éireann is pleased to record its

APPROVAL

Signed By:

John McCarthy
Chief Mechanical Engineer

Whitehead (Mk2) - 3: Diner 547 - work at present on this vehicle includes laying of a new floor throughout the vehicle as the old one was lifted for attention to floor corrosion. With help from the Site Team a work party recently removed a defective external door from and fitted a new one from 4112, recently arrived from Irish Rail for parts. The inside walls and floor have all been painted and hopefully will prolong the life of this for years to come. Many thanks to Joe Galbraith for doing this as well as filling in and priming the outer skin of 547, which has in the past been a target for stone throwers. 4112 has also donated buckeye couplers to 547 and will shortly lose some of its double glazed units, also to 547.

Mk2s On Tour: The coaches arrived in Dublin on

Tuesday 10th May, which was the first time northern coaches had been there since 1989. Also, over the week of the tour they were hauled or shunted by no less than 6 locomotives, 2 steam and 4 diesel.

At Waterford they were parked beside the Southern wooden-bodied set - when was the last time 10 Society coaches were together on the railway system?

The coaches appear to have been well received by the passengers, and also by the Safety Manager of Irish Rail who inspected the vehicles at Connolly and was well impressed by the standard of overhaul.

LOCOMOTIVES

No.3 "R.H. Smyth": Undergoing assessment for overhaul.

No.4: Undergoing normal running repairs and maintenance in Dublin.

No.186: Undergoing normal running repairs and maintenance in Lisburn. No.461: Major boiler work in progress at Whitehead.

Workshop: Wiring extensions in progress.

ON-LINE

Bulletins: Some members who submitted their email addresses to be added to the Bulletin list have not replied to the joining instructions they were sent. Please note that you can only join the list by actively replying to the invitation, or by sending your own request by Yahoo. Those members still receiving invitations should follow the instructions circulated.

Website: The Society's website has an up-to-date programme of trains and full booking information.

Suir Valley: Photographs from the railtour can be found on the Whitehead Photo News section of the website.

Many thanks to all those photographers who took the trouble to send in a shot or two.

MEMBERSHIP

Standing Orders: A number of members have been affected by a glitch in the on-line access to the bank accounts which the Society uses for receipt of membership standing orders.

Around 15 payments did not show up on the on-line statements. It was only when paper copies of the statements were received that the missing payments came to light.

To those members, our sincere apologies for the delay in processing their payments and sending out cards.

WHITEHEAD

Life Goes On: Just to prove that life does still go on at Whitehead in the absence of the locomotive and carriages, there is a new page on the Whitehead Works Photo News section of the website. See:

www.rpsi-online.org/wdphotonews

And On: The Mid-Week Summer squad has started again at Whitehead. All volunteers welcome. Turn up at Whitehead from 6:30pm any Tuesday evening and ask for Dermot.

And On: An open day was held on Saturday 28th May at Whitehead for RPSI members interested in seeing the activities being undertaken by volunteers and interested in volunteering themselves.

The day was encouraging with around 20 members turning out for a guided tour of the workshops and a chance to drive resident 0-4-0 "Guinness" themselves. It is hoped that some of those who called down will be encouraged to volunteer their time at Whitehead or join our on train teams. No matter how much time our volunteers give, it is always mutually rewarding.

With "Guinness" in steam, the opportunity was also taken to assess three of our trainee Firemen and in the process move No.171 and the tender of No.461. This periodic moving is necessary to prevent bearing damage occurring whilst the vehicles are stationary for long periods.

Visitors: On Thursday 19th May a group of 20 engineering staff and students from Queen's University came for a tour of Whitehead. They were given an in-depth guide to the locomotive and carriage sheds, the workshop and foundry and then had a trip in coach 68 hauled by the Guinness engine. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves, and the proceeds will go to the No.461 appeal.

GENERAL

Council: Following a recent Council meeting there have been a number of co-options onto Council. On Council's behalf:

- Norman Foster will liaise with Irish Rail for steam crew training.
- Bill King-Wood will negotiate with Carrickfergus Borough Council regarding the sale of the Whitehead site to the Society.
- Derek Young will administer grant aid applications.
- Paul Newell will continue to carry out Carriage & Wagon (North) duties until a successor can be found.

Publicity: The new NIR timetable has been issued and it is recommended that members have a look at the inside back cover for an advert

promoting the Society.

Photos: There is a great on-line source of shots of RPSI trains at:

groups.msn.com/IrishRailwayNews/rpssteam.msn

The earlier pages in this gallery are always worth reviewing as the shots are in chronological order and every now and then an interesting relic of a previous Society operation turns up - for example, No.186 on Fenit Pier in 1972.

If you have an old photograph of a Society train which can be scanned and added to the gallery, please do so. If you are not sure of the exact date, reference to "Forty Shades Of Steam" will solve most queries. You do have a copy, don't you?

Downpatrick Offer: To celebrate the opening of the Inch Abbey line and the formation of the Downpatrick & County Down Railway Society, all RPSI members, and 3DT participants who are not members, can avail of a very kind offer of unlimited free travel on the railway any operating day in June, July, August or September this year. A valid RPSI membership card, or a used ticket from this year's 3DT has to be produced as proof.

Railway Modeller: The June edition of Railway Modeller magazine which hit the shops on Thursday 19th May had an attached CD which contains video footage of, amongst other railway related topics, the RPSI.

The short video was produced and commented by Edward Friel, with footage from James Friel, Liam Mooney and Phil Lockett. Given the time restrictions he had to work in, Edward has neatly provided a brief overview of RPSI operations and locomotives, North and South.

Hopefully, the attachment to this magazine will broaden the RPSI appeal to an audience probably not targeted by the Society before.

Donation: The Society has just received a very generous donation of £2,000 from "The Syndicate" towards the No.461 Appeal.

The Syndicate is a long-standing informal group of RPSI and IRRS members who have been raising funds for many years now. Its members are Lance King, Robin Linsley, Leslie McAllister, with support from David Stirling. They are based in the south of England and run a volunteer business selling second-hand and remaindered books on railways and transport subjects to raise funds for Irish railway preservation. So if you see them at any functions please support their good work.

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