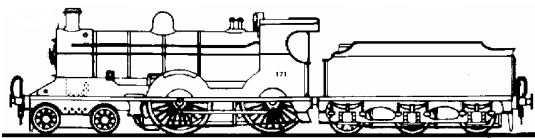


Railway Preservation Society of Ireland



July 2006

NEWS LETTER

PETER SCOTT MBE

Congratulations: On Saturday 17th June, it was announced that the Society welcomed the bestowing in the Queen's Birthday Honours list of an MBE on Peter Scott, its long-serving locomotive maintenance officer.

A small team of members has been working for a number of years to press for some public recognition of the work Peter has dedicated to the Society over the years, and it is with great delight that they find their effort has been splendidly rewarded.

Peter from Finaghy in Belfast has been a railway enthusiast since his days at the Royal Belfast Academical Institution and Queen's University and now works as a mechanical engineer with Northern Ireland Railways. But much of his free time is devoted to the work of the Society, which owns and operates the last surviving mainline steam engines in Ireland.

Chairman Johnny Glendinning said: "We are delighted that Peter has received this well-deserved acknowledgment of all his efforts over so many years. He was a founder member of the Society and has served on Council and in the key role of locomotive maintenance officer for more than 35 years.

"It is thanks in large measure to his expertise that the Society's locomotives are able to continue to operate in a safe and efficient manner, bringing pleasure to the thousands of people who travel on and watch our special steam trains every year.

"Peter is an outstanding and resourceful engineer who has built up a team of volunteer and full-time workers at Whitehead who have literally kept the Society's wheels turning. He has put countless hours of his free time into restoring engines to full working order."

Peter Replies: My name has appeared in the Queen's Birthday Honours list as being appointed a Member of the Order of the British Empire, "for services to the Railway Preservation Society in Northern Ireland".

I am delighted with this appointment, which as well as being a personal honour, confers public recognition on the work and achievements of the RPSI.

In accepting this honour I must acknowledge the vital contribution made by the members of the RPSI over the years since its formation in 1964, and also the Society's full time staff.

As well as that, the co-operation and encouragement of many other organisations and individuals must be acknowledged, principally Northern Ireland Railways with-out whom the running of steam trains on the main lines in Northern Ireland would be impossible.

With this encouragement I am confident that the Society will continue to flourish in the coming years.

HENRY DUNLEATH WORKSHOP

Full Report: Tuesday 4th July was a special day for the Society at Whitehead.

The occasion was the official opening of the Society's locomotive workshop, which has been named the Henry Dunleath Workshop in honour of former vice-president Lord Dunleath.

On a beautifully sunny morning guests registered at a desk on the platform before enjoying tea and coffee in the dining car. On display was No.3BG "Guinness", which was in steam, and No.85 "Merlin", which was positioned at the platform for inspection purposes. No.85, carrying her Enterprise headboard, was Lord Dunleath's pride and joy because he had been the driving force behind the restoration of the locomotive, which had been a museum piece in the collection of the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum.

The 90 guests included representatives of various museums bodies, kindred societies, Translink, Carrickfergus Council, local politicians and a number of bodies with which the Society has been liaising over the years. At 11am they were invited to stroll through the site and the engine shed - all of which had undergone a major tidy-up in recent weeks - to go into the workshop. The depot was looking its best with planters of flowers provided by Carrick Council.

Chairman Johnny Glendinning welcomed the guests and said the opening of the workshop was an important occasion for the Society. Lord O'Neill, the RPSI president, recalled happy memories of his association with his great friend, Lord Dunleath. He said they had first met at Eton College in January 1947 and had quickly established their Northern Ireland connections. They shared a common interest in motor cars and motor bikes and often travelled back to the province by means of the Ulster Express train. Lord Dunleath, he said, was a character with a marvellous sense of humour. He recalled that he had gone as pillion passenger on a number of holidays in France on Lord Dunleath's motorbike, which he still remembered on account of the bumpy rides over many cobble-stoned streets.

In February 1952 both Lords volunteered for Army service and reported to Hadrian's Barracks in Carlisle. Eventually, they joined the 11th Hussars but ultimately, with only seven months of their service contract to go, they returned to Carlisle to be given the

job they really wanted - being put in charge of the motor pool.

Back in Northern Ireland, they joined the North Irish Horse, a Territorial Army regiment, where Lord Dunleath became military transport officer which enabled him to develop his interest in old motor cars. His other main interest was organs, and Lord O'Neill recalled many trips to inspect old church organs. On such visits, Lord Dunleath would play the organ while Lord O'Neill's role was to pump the organ to keep it going.

Lord O'Neill recalled Lord Dunleath's association with No.85 and said that on the day of the launch of the engine at Whitehead his memory was of Lord Dunleath leaping onto the footplate and announcing to one and all: "This is one hot lady." Lord Dunleath, he said, had made a very major contribution to the Society, serving as vice-president from 1981 until his death in 1993.

Mrs Veronica Palmer, the chairman of the NI Transport Holding Company, said it was a pleasure and privilege to be present at such an event. She paid tribute to the "important and vital role" being fulfilled by the Society in maintaining its steam locomotives, and praised the enthusiasm and the dedication of the Society members who were involved in this work.

Mrs Palmer said they were creating a terrific legacy. Mrs Palmer said Translink and the RPSI had complementary roles in that the Society celebrated the culture and heritage of Ireland's railways while Translink supported the Society by continuing to let it operate its trains on the main line. This was good for Translink as a company, and good for the Society.

Sammy Wilson, MP for East Antrim, opened his remarks by observing that the workshop was looking much tidier than on the occasion of his last visit when, he joked, it had been littered with what looked like "junk". He commended the efforts of the Society and said he felt there were major opportunities for the Society to tap into the corporate business market. Mr Wilson said the proposed Lafarge development at Magheramorne offered exciting prospects for the Society to become involved in operating a tourist line.

Mr Wilson said it was very fitting that the workshop should be named after Lord Dunleath. He said Lord Dunleath had been a character, something that public life missed these days. He recalled one occasion in the old Assembly when Lord Dunleath had been Deputy Speaker. During a heated debate one Assembly member had asked Lord Dunleath to stop the other politician "acting like an eejit". After surveying the situation, Lord Dunleath's response was: "I don't think he is acting."

Mr Wilson said that by restoring old steam engines to working order, the RPSI was playing an important part in the local economy. He said that the NI Affairs Committee at Westminster was shortly to investigate the promotion of tourism in Northern Ireland and it was already emerging that steam trains and preserved railways had an important part to play in the tourism market.

Eddie McVeigh, head of the European Commission office in Northern Ireland said all the members of the RPSI were to be congratulated on what they had achieved and for the work they had done in preserving the steam heritage. He commended the Society for creating a skills base which would be of benefit to future generations. Mr McVeigh said the ERDF had been set up to help less developed regions such as Northern Ireland and had aided thousands of projects since 1989 - including the relay of the Belfast-Whitehead railway line.

The Mayor of Carrickfergus, Councillor David Hilditch, said the RPSI had been providing a tourist attraction in Whitehead for the past 40 years. He said the Society had preserved a number of engines which otherwise would have gone to the scrapheap. Mr Hilditch said he was very impressed by the facilities that had been developed in order to keep the steam alive and to enable the Society to run its special trains such as the Portrush Flyer and the Santa specials.

Mr Hilditch also announced that following recent negotiations, Carrickfergus Council had agreed to transfer ownership of the site at Whitehead to the RPSI. The relevant papers were now being prepared for signature and soon the RPSI would have title to its own premises instead of being a

leaseholder from Carrickfergus Council.

Peter Scott, the RPSI locomotive maintenance officer, said the development of the workshop had been a major step forward for the Society because it meant that full overhauls of steam engines and other rolling stock could now be carried out on site.

He said Frank Dunlop, the former NIR locomotive inspector, had put it succinctly in his message of support by saying: "No workshop, no steam trains." All transport organisations needed workshops to keep their fleets on the road, and the RPSI was no different. Mr Scott said that as the Rev Awdry might have put it, Whitehead was the place where engines came to be fixed, and among the engines which had gone through the workshop already were 2-6-4T No.4, No.186, the 1879-built 0-6-0, No.3BG "Guinness", the first engine the Society had acquired, and No.3 "R.H. Smyth", now on loan to the Downpatrick & Co Down Railway at Downpatrick. The current project, he said, was the overhaul of DSER 2-6-0 No.461. Mr Scott said that looking ahead, it would be good to see "Lord Dunleath's engine" - No.85 - back in operation.

Mr Scott expressed thanks to everyone who had helped make the workshop project a reality, including those members who had contributed to the scheme, the ERDF and the general public who travelled on the RPSI's steam train excursions.

Dorinda, Lady Dunleath, said Lord Dunleath would have been proud, pleased and greatly honoured by the tribute that was being paid to him. She said that the previous month she had visited Whitehead and had spent two hours touring the site and had been most impressed by everything she had seen. Lady Dunleath said No.85 had been one of her husband's great passions and she recalled how much he had enjoyed the launch of the locomotive at Whitehead and the subsequent non-stop trip from Belfast to Dublin. The RPSI, she said, should be congratulated for keeping steam railways alive for future generations and it was great to see the Society going from strength to strength.

Johnny Glendinning then invited Lady Dunleath to unveil a plaque to officially

open the "Henry Dunleath Workshop", a task which she performed to much applause. Guests were then invited to tour the workshop and adjacent foundry and to watch a demonstration of some of the equipment in operation.

Guests were then transported by Ulsterbus Goldliner coach to Whitehead Golf Club where, before lunch, they were welcomed by Dr Annette Gordon, the lady president of the club. She said Whitehead, a town developed by the railway company, was proud of its associations with the RPSI.

Johnny Glendinning then read a number of messages from guests who had been unable to attend. These included Frank Dunlop, formerly chief locomotive inspector with Northern Ireland Railways, Richard Gibbon from the National Railway Museum in York, Marshall McKee, director of operations at National Museums Northern Ireland and Keith Moffatt, chief executive of Translink. Fr Eddie Creamer, a member of the Society and a workshop regular, was then invited to say Grace.

After lunch, Lord O'Neill invited Chris Smyth of the Heritage Railway Association to speak. Mr Smyth said he was most impressed by the achievements of the RPSI and had enjoyed participating in a number of trips the Society had organised. He said it was particularly encouraging that the interest in railway preservation at Whitehead was cascading down to the next generation.

Lord O'Neill said one exciting new development at Whitehead was a project to partially restore former Co Donegal Railway 2-6-4T "Drumboe" on behalf of Co Donegal Railway Restoration Ltd. He said the contract, which was being part-funded by the EU's Inter-Reg fund, showed that the RPSI's workshop was now capable of winning work from outside bodies, which was a welcome development.

Lady Dunleath then recalled some happy memories of life with Henry Dunleath who, she said, had a reputation as something of a practical joker. She said his interests ranged from church organs to volcanoes and from vintage cars to steam trains. Lady Dunleath recalled a number of amusing incidents from their trips to foreign parts such as Poland, South Africa and India.

She said Lord Dunleath had been particularly pleased to be part of the project to take No.85 Merlin out of the museum and restore her to working order. She said she was pleased to hear that the locomotive might now be coming up for a refit and said it would be lovely to have another trip behind the engine.

Lady Dunleath said she had greatly enjoyed the day and expressed thanks for the album of photographs of Lord Dunleath and the RPSI which had been prepared by Charles Friel as a souvenir for her.

Sir Ken Bloomfield, the RPSI vice-president, proposed a vote of thanks to various parties including Whitehead Golf Club, Lord O'Neill, to all who had made the RPSI what it was and to Lady Dunleath for performing the opening ceremony so well and for her message of support to the Society. He said the RPSI was an enterprise which ultimately was made possible by the commitment of a lot of volunteers who got stuck in and did not mind getting their hands dirty.

Mary Glendinning then came forward to present Lady Dunleath with a bouquet of flowers. Lord O'Neill thanked all present for attending and announced that the formal proceedings were now concluded. The guests were transported back to the site by Ulsterbus Goldliner coach.

The RPSI Events Committee, which organised the opening ceremony, would like to express their thanks to all who worked so hard to make the day a success. All their aims were achieved in recognising Lord Dunleath's contribution to the RPSI, raising the Society's profile, saying thanks to many individuals and organisations which have assisted the RPSI, and developing new contacts. A job well done!

OPERATIONS

Castlerock: The Luncheon Special steamed out of Belfast Central on time and in fair weather on Sunday 21st May. The train consisted of locomotive No.4 and 6 Mk2 coaches.

There was a great atmosphere on board, with 130 passengers filling out all the carriages. Of those, 103 were booked for the buffet lunch at the Golf Hotel in

Castlerock, an excellent response given that the maxi-mum the hotel could take was 112.

Approximately 70 people chose to stretch their legs and took the RPSI-provided coach from the hotel to the Bishop's Gate entrance to the National Trust's Mussenden Temple. As part of Northern Ireland Museums Month, the RPSI and National Trust had come together for the day.

The train departed Castlerock just after 6pm and the rain had set in. On board a 'Castlerock Crossword' and an 'Art I-Spy' kept the passengers occupied, and the bar and tea bar did good business. An on-time arrival back in Belfast Central saw the end of a very smart day - well done to the crew.

Three Cities: The train operated successfully with No.4 to Dublin and No.186 return to Whitehead, both engines running to time.

About 70 passengers travelled - on what was essentially a locomotive swap - and a good time was had by all.

Larne Alive: The trains on Saturday 3rd June were a great success. No.186 and 6 coaches operated two return journeys from Carrickfergus to Larne. 785 single passenger journeys were made.

Glorious weather throughout made for a great day.

Mid-Summer Night: The Mullingar barbecue train on 17th June with No.4 was the usual great success.

Steam & Jazz: Pleasantly full train-loads of happy passengers enjoyed three nights (16th, 23rd & 30th June) of jazz, wining and dining.

The mystery destination this year was Whitehead, with stops in Carrickfergus on outward and return legs.

Sea Breeze: Slow to fill, but fully booked at the last minute, the train to Rosslare operated with No.4 on 2nd July.

Summer Steam: The train rides will be operating this year on Sundays 23rd July, 13th August and 10th September. A new youthful team is now in charge and great things are expected!!

Michael Davitt 100: 15th and 16th July see

two days of steam travelling to Ballina and back with No.4, with local trips within Co. Mayo.

Portrush Flyer: Tickets are in the usual offices for this year's trains on 29th July and 19th August. For operational reasons NIR have been unable to schedule a third train this season.

Wicklow 400: There will be a day of shuttles between Bray and Arklow on 30th July.

Rosslare Harbour/Fishguard 100: There will be two days of steam with No.4 between Rosslare, Waterford and Enniscorthy on 12th & 13th August.

Bangor Belle: The train planned for 26th August has been cancelled.

Latest News: As always, check the website for the recent additions to the Whitehead Photo News, and for up to date news on forthcoming trains.

The Steam Dates page has a selection of colour posters, and members are asked to print copies and display in suitable public locations.

CARRIAGE & WAGON

Whitehead: Work has started on a standby basis on ex NIR open Mk2 923. It was formerly a first class coach with BR and later purchased by NIR and converted to an open.

The coach has extensive corrosion on the side panels, internal floor and roof. However, the carriage team are now well used to this and have most of the parts required.

Work on diner 547 continues on the electrics and internal decor. Joe Galbraith has done a great job on the roof of brake 463 which was covered in peeling paint and tarry felt. It is now ready for painting. Once this is completed the sides will be rubbed down, primed and painted into RPSI green livery.

Dublin: At Inchicore, work on the new Cravens carriages continues, with preparation for application of a new Society livery.

Anyone who is able to help in this task is

urged to get in touch.

Moves Afoot: On Tuesday 27th June there was a low-loader over from GB. It was sent to Mullingar to collect Park Royal 1419 for delivery to Inchicore.

On arrival in Dublin the crew, after discharging the coach, reloaded with steam heat Dutch Van 3158 for Whitehead. This vehicle is fitted with 2 steam heat boilers and a generator - it will be very useful for pre-heating our train in the winter, etc.

LOCOMOTIVES

No.3 "R.H. Smyth": The locomotive was transferred to Downpatrick on Sunday 11th June.

After loading the locomotive onto a low-loader in the morning, the intrepid team of Charles, James, Jeff, Michael and Peter headed off to Downpatrick to assist with the off-loading. Harvey was in light steam so was able to be driven on and off the lorry with a minimum of assistance.

The locomotive is on hire to operate the Inch Abbey train service for the summer until No.90 is ready in another few months to replace it.

No.461: Work is progressing, with assembly of wheelsets continuing. The locomotive should be wheeled shortly now that the diversion of the Workshop official opening is over.

No.90: On Sunday 4th June, the locomotive, which is being reinstated for the Downpatrick and Co. Down Railway, had its second steam test after minor boiler repairs and hydraulic test. All systems were tested (injectors, brakes, lubricator, forward and reverse gears, etc.). Everything was working normally, although a heavy load has yet to be moved - that will happen after boiler testing is complete and glands packed, etc.

GENERAL

Film: "The Wind that Shakes the Barley", filmed entirely in Ireland in 2005, including J15 No.186 and three RPSI carriages at Killarney, won the top prize, the 'Palme d'Or', at the Cannes Film Festival in late

May.

The film went on general release on 23rd June.

Sales: Engines and Men - Irish Railways: a View from the Footplate, Jack O'Neill. Paperback, 20 x 17 cm, 73 b&w photos, 234 pages, £14.

Hibernian Steam Scene Volume 1 - The GNR(I) Blue 4-4-0s, Brian Stinson. 79 minute DVD, £15.

Ballycastle Railway - New Updated Edition by Dr E.M. Patterson. Paperback, 26 x 21 cm, 2 colour & 115 b&w photos, 160 pages, £14.99.

Rail Roundabout - Northern Ireland Railways from 1975 to 2005 by Sam Somerville. Paperback, 21 x 24 cm, 2 colour & 60 b&w photos, 64 pages, £8.99.

Smoke Amidst the Drumlins - the Cavan and Leitrim in the 1950s by Tony Burges. Paperback, 21 x 24 cm, 62 b&w photos, 64 pages, £8.99.

Please note that "Northern Ireland Steam - the Final Years" is now available in DVD format at £19.95. The VHS version has been reduced from £19.95 to £9.95.

WHITEHEAD

Update: In June NIE re-sited the electricity pole in the middle of the yard. This will enable removal of the earth bank adjacent to the water tower so that a new siding and blast cleaning area can be constructed.

On 17th June, the remainder of the floor in the Workshop was laid with concrete in preparation for its grand opening.

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DRUMBOE THE DONEGAL ENGINE

By Very Tawdry

Harvey could feel the smoke running through his tubes and up through his chimney. He was being lit up again.

The heady smell of burning diesel oil and damp wood mingled with the fresh sea air as Harvey came to life with little creaks and groans. He could see one of the Whitehead folk coming over to talk to him.

"Now listen here, Harvey," said a voice next to his smokebox. "This is a very special day for Whitehead, as a new engine is being delivered today."

A new engine! That was exciting. "Who is it, sir?" asked the green Avonside, his tank churning with excitement.

Harvey was a very sociable little engine, and he had met lots of friends on his excursions onto the main line. Sure, all of his friends had the same name - Tamper, Tamper and then there was Tamper & Liner, but he had met a ballast plough once and that was interesting. Mac the Macalec had been kind to Harvey when he was sleeping away from home, keeping him well fed with coal, but Harvey didn't think that road-rail devices really counted as engines. He hoped it wouldn't be too big an engine. Big engines were very nice in their own way, but Harvey preferred someone his own size. The Guinness engine had been his only friend his own

size until Sugarpuff and No.90 arrived. But Sugarpuff spoke only German and No.90 thought he was far too old to talk to anyone except No.186.

"The engine is a narrow gauge engine," said the voice. "You'll remember him from your time in Londonderry perhaps."

"Peep peep!" said Harvey, "Is it one of those lovely bronze-green Lough Swilly engines?"

"No," came the reply, "it's one of the County Donegal Railway engines."

"Oh," said Harvey sadly, "I was on the wrong side of the river to meet them. I often tried to get over the bridge but my driver always stopped me."

"Well, this engine is called Drumboe and he's in a bad way," continued the man. "I want you to be very gentle with him."

Harvey pulled a face. It was all very well for people to tell him to be careful. It was the driver who told Harvey what to do, although sometimes Harvey would leave his steam brake on for fun to see if he could make the driver say naughty words. Harvey remembered a man who knew more naughty words than anyone else, but thankfully he hadn't seen him since last December or so.

So Harvey's driver oiled round

and made up his fire. The little engine felt ready for anything, and wished the Guinness engine was in steam so he could share the excitement of the new arrival.

Then a big lorry arrived with a very red engine perched on top. Harvey thought the engine must be in a bad way to be that colour - until now the only colours he knew of engines having were green, blue and black. Red meant rust in Harvey's book.

Drumboe didn't feel well at all. His wheels were stiff and his trucks felt sore. He hadn't been kept in a shed for nearly fifty years and he could feel the tinworm slowly consuming him. Then some men came to lift him off the lorry. It hurt a bit and at one point Drumboe thought his trucks were going to come right off, but they chained him securely together. The men worked hard and before long he was hanging in the air. Then Harvey hustled towards him with a flat wagon which had rails laid on it.

"Hello," said Harvey, "My name's R.H. Smyth, what's yours?"

"I'm Glenties, but everyone calls me Drumboe," said the precariously perched engine. "I must look a sight to a well turned out engine like yourself."

Harvey had to admit he was a bit shocked. Drumboe's boiler had no clothes on, and some of his rods were missing.

"Don't you worry," said Harvey cheerfully as Drumboe whirled down onto the flat wagon, "You've got nothing I haven't seen

before."

The new arrival was strangely silent as Harvey, with much excited puffing and tooting, shunted him next to a blue and cream coach and various spare parts for other, bigger, engines.

Drumboe blanched at the sight of the scrap road with various parts of dead railway equipment strewn about.

"When ... will they start?" he asked nervously, tears welling up in his cab windows.

"Start what?" asked Harvey, surprised to see such a big engine crying.

"When will they start scrapping me?" asked Drumboe. "I know how it works - I heard what happened when they cut up my big sister Erne."

"Scrapping you?!" Harvey was amazed. "This isn't a scrapyard, Drumboe! In fact it's quite the opposite! This is RPSI Whitehead, where engines come to be mended! Look over there and you can see another patient!"

Drumboe looked round to see a tiny green engine who was partially dismantled inside a nice dry shed. He certainly didn't look like he was being scrapped, in fact it looked like people were putting him back together.

"He's being fixed for his railway, and we're going to fix you for yours!"

Drumboe smiled for the first time in years.

THE END