

Railway Preservation Society of Ireland



October 2008

NEWS LETTER

H&S COMPLIANCE APPEAL

Update: Following the reminder which appeared in the August News-Letter, please, if you have not already done so, consider making a donation to the Health & Safety Compliance Appeal. Income is slower than hoped for and is urgently needed to facilitate the work currently being undertaken.

Full details can be found at:

www.steamtrainsireland.com/appeal

The address for donations is:

RPSI Safety Compliance Appeal
9 Kenilworth Avenue
LISBURN
BT28 3UG

OPERATIONS

Sea Breeze: Another successful operation ran on Sunday 24th August. The weather was fine and the train comfortably full, with everybody seeming to enjoy the day out.

With no special stops en route to pick up parties, No.4 just made the usual calls on the outward leg for water before Wexford. There, most of the Dublin passengers detrained and made way for a large number of local passengers, making the short trip to Rosslare Strand and return.

As is now usual, the train ran on empty to Rosslare Harbour to turn and service the locomotive and clean the stock.

The journey home was a difficult one for the footplate crew as No.4 started to display the symptoms of the mechanical fault which resulted in its eventual return to Whitehead in

September. Despite this, every effort was made to keep as close to time as possible. Some excellent hill climbing was achieved, and the sound effects on the climb to Rathdrum gave no indication that there was any problem. Some time was lost, but most of this could be attributed to having to follow a stopping train from Bray to Dublin Connolly.

The Dublin Committee are most grateful to Dan and Tony Renahan (and the trainees who had another worthwhile day's experience) for persevering in difficult circumstances to get everybody home as near to time as possible.

Bangor Belle: The second Bangor train of the season operated on Sunday 24th August. With No.186 hauling, the first train was full, with slightly less on the second. The two return trips ran successfully in good weather with No.186 putting in the usual competent performances.

Summer Steam: Despite the weather on Sunday 31st August, there was the usual steady flow of visitors. A good turnout of volunteers meant that everything went according to plan. No.3BG "Guinness" was the day's motive power.

European Architectural Heritage Day: The annual open day for architectural enthusiasts had train rides and guided tours of the Society's 101-year-old buildings. It attracted a sizeable crowd, a good number having included the Society's Whitehead premises as just one of the buildings being visited on the day.

No.186 did the honours to allow a bit of running-in following recent attention to slipper blocks. Ivan the Brake is now a standard feature on the train rides.

Visitors were able to view work being carried out on:

- External preparation of coach 303.
- Repairs to Dutch van 462.
- Painting of sheer-leg gantries.
- Milling of connecting rods for No.5 "Drumboe".
- Tarry being treated with external wood preservative.
- The wheelsets from Strathspey No.17 "Braeriach" positioned in front of the Tarry, ready to be collected for return to Scotland.

Country Comes To Town: The annual festival was on 20th September this year. In perfect weather, No.186 and its train of 5 Mk2 coaches plus van operated the shuttles between Lisburn and Portadown. All the trains were full and everything ran according to plan.

The particularly attractive fare of £4 was solely due to NIR supporting the train, by not levying their charge to the Society. This support is very much appreciated.

Dundalk Works 50: To mark the 50th anniversary of the closure of the Great Northern Works in Dundalk the Society operated trains from Dublin and Belfast to Dundalk, plus local trips from Dundalk to Drogheda, on Sunday 28th September.

On view at Dundalk station were a GNR double-decker bus and a traction engine, plus a display of Dundalk-built carriages (9 and 88) and the GS&WR Irish State Coach 351 built at Inchicore in 1902.

Buses transported visitors to Dundalk's Marshes shopping centre where there was an exhibition of 7mm GNR models by Society member Harry Mulholland.

It turned out to be a day of very fine weather. Despite the substitute of a NIR diesel (112 "Northern Counties") for the failed No.4, there were very few cancellations, and trains were well loaded throughout. The local trips from Dundalk, especially, were very full.

No.186 was in fine form and gave an excellent climb of the bank south from a virtual standing start at Newry.

Ghost Train: For the first time, the Dublin team, in association with Belvedere House, will be running a Halloween train.

On Sunday 26th October a train will operate

from Dublin to Mullingar and return. The all-in fare of €30 includes: train, coach transfers to/from Mullingar station to Belvedere House, Forest of Fear, Trick or Treat Trail, Meet the Ghosts of Belvedere.

Broomstick Belle: Also on Sunday 26th October will be the Belfast-based Halloween trains. Tickets are available from Belfast Welcome Centre (028 9024 6609 or via RPSI website).

Santa Special (Dublin): As usual, these trains sold out very early and from mid-September all the tickets had been allocated.

Please note that tickets are not mailed until a few weeks in advance of the trains. So be patient!

Santa Special (Belfast): The tickets for Ballymena (29th November), Portadown (6th December) and Belfast (29th November, 7th, 13th, 14th & 20th December) trains will be on sale in the usual outlets from the end of October.

Steam Enterprise: It is intended to repeat last year's very successful post-Christmas Mince Pie & Mulled wine train from Belfast to Dublin on Sunday 28th December.

CARRIAGE & WAGON

Dublin: Over the summer, the pressure was on in Inchicore (and Mullingar) to keep one set in traffic and pushing to get another prepared for traffic.

Cravens: Work is being completed on the fitting of cisterns to all the Cravens, which will eliminate the problems always experienced when they were fitted with Victory valves, i.e. the rapid emptying of the tanks. On Saturday 30th August, with the help of the IE fire department, all the tanks were filled to check for leaks following the work done. Due to the quality of workmanship none were found.

For the first time in RPSI ownership a set of Cravens was marshalled, with the usual assistance from IE in Inchicore, and all the electrical connections, brakes, and heating were finalised. The generator in 3185 (BR steam heat van) has been repaired and serviced.

Coach 1508 has now been fitted with a bar ("The Long Bar") at the opposite end to the tea counter - four bays of seats have been removed to facilitate this. The usual creamy pints of the black stuff were dispensed on the Dundalk trains without bruised legs, kegs on

seats, pumps clamped to tables, and all the fun that went with that.

Coach 1541 got its final coat of paint in early September. Unfortunately, as it is not in the set it had to be shunted before the brakes and electrical connections could be tested. It had been hoped that it would travel to Dundalk as part of the running set but that was not to be, but it was on display there complete with its distinctive new blue livery. The operational Cravens set is: 3185, 1539, 1508, 1523, 1532, 1505.

In the meantime, a separate crew is working on removing more than 40 years of dirt from the floors, windows, aluminium panels, and seats. With the painting of 1541 now complete, the team is to transfer to washing the exterior of the Cravens set. This entails hauling water as required as there are no facilities where the set is stabled.

The Mullingar crew are now spending time in Inchicore. However, they have completed the conversion of 1522 to a diner. It is hoped to bring this back to Inchicore in November when another Cravens coach will go to Mullingar for conversion to a dedicated bar. On its return, 1522 will be externally repaired and painted.

Dublin Heritage Set: Running repairs are being carried out following the outings to Wexford and Rosslare. The set is next due to travel to Mullingar in October. In the meantime, 88 and 9 joined 351 on display in Dundalk as examples of GNR carriages. Prior to travel they were cleaned and sparkled.

So quite a busy time in Inchicore and thanks are due to all who are involved. This includes the young lads, the not so young lads, the newer volunteers, and those who are neither young nor not so young. Despite all the hard work everyone still manages to have a bit of craic and to go home smiling, even if ready to fall into bed.

LOCOMOTIVES

No. 1 (DCDR contract): The Orenstein & Koppel locomotive is undergoing renewal of steam pipes and overhaul of feed pump.

No. 4: After the final Rosslare excursion, the locomotive was prepared in Dublin for examination of a suspected valve problem. Repairs were attempted by Whitehead teams who travelled to Connolly. However, workshop facilities were required and the

locomotive travelled north for repairs on Saturday 27th September. Immediately on arrival the valves and pistons were removed and inspected. The problem was found to be broken piston rings. Repairs are under way.

No. 5 "Drumboe" (CDRRL contract):

Completion of grant aided work. Fabrication of dome casing, cab doors, machining of coupling rods, etc.

No. 17 "Braeriach" (Strathspey contract):

The three sets of wheelsets, which arrived at Whitehead in July were attended to throughout August and early September. The work involved machining of the big end journals and crank pins, plus the fabrication of one new crank pin. The wheelsets returned to Aviemore in late September.

No. 186: Following the August trains, the locomotive had a boiler washout (by a dirty and wet youth team). Following this, dismantling of frustratingly uncooperative right-hand slide bars began - for fitting of new slipper blocks. Fitting of on-train monitoring and recording (OTMR) equipment was also completed.

Foundry: Some contract castings and firebars for No. 4, etc.

WHITEHEAD

Sheer-Leg Gantries: Progress continues, albeit more slowly than had been hoped. The leg repairs are complete. Work is concentrating on repair and renewal of hoist mechanisms, and painting and preparation for re-erection.

Stores: In early September there was a good clean-up and a couple of scrap drives in preparation for the Architectural Heritage Open Day and to make room for the arrival of additional storage containers.

Ballcocks: The ballcock on the water tank on the Down platform at Lisburn has been fixed.

Previously, filling the tank entailed a trek out of the station and a few hundred yards up the road to operate a stopcock in the pavement. The tank now fills and turns itself off so the water can be left turned on for a longer period.

Signals: The Society has been very fortunate in being able to negotiate the purchase of a large amount of redundant mechanical signalling equipment from Irish Rail.

Its availability arises from the recent re-signalling of the Westport line. The sources are:

Roscommon - Mechanical detectors for points, cast alloy roller A frames and rollers and a small amount of galvanised channel rodding.

Ballyhaunis - Used attachments for pole signals which have been cut off the poles. Point motor and double-bracket signal casting.

Claremorris - Full pole signals (including brackets), shunting dollies, pulleys, wire pulleys on concrete mounts, drums of signal wire, lever frame, two groundframes.

Castlereagh - Small number of pole signals.

Volunteers are scheduled to help load and unload three complete lorry-loads of equipment over 4 days in mid-October.

GENERAL

Bachmann RPSI Mk2 Coaches: Members are reminded that the model Mk2 coach sets are selling fast - there are now less than 40 of the 500 limited edition sets left. Please place your order as soon as possible to allow all the income to be released to the No. 461 fund as planned.

The Old Cambrian Society: The Old Cambrian Society has published on its website a series of articles on Garratt locomotives in Africa. In researching this they came upon the articles in Five Foot Three by our late member Archie Morrow. Permission was given to reproduce the article.

Old Cambrian, Martin Langley, says, "We were fortunate enough to get a couple of pictures of Archie from his son Lawrence, and those pictures have added another dimension to his story, i.e. puts a face to the name. Certainly his story is one of the centrepieces of the article and I am very glad that we came across it on the web. There have been a few edits and additions since July, including some pictures of Herbert William Garrett himself which was also a welcome addition.

"I have received an enthusiastic reaction from folk who lived in East Africa and used the trains there and would welcome feedback from any of your members who may have served with Archie in East African Railways or any feedback of a general nature in relation to the article."

The articles can be found at:

www.oldcarnbrians.com/Train4.html

Heritage Railway: A new group of enthusiasts has been meeting to discuss the possibility of operating a 5ft 3in preserved line in the Republic of Ireland. So far, they say, things are looking very positive and a website has been launched to compliment the project. The address is:

www.heritagerrailway.ie

On Screen: On RTÉ 1 on 19th September, the Nationwide programme broadcast a special railway edition featuring the Society's Barrow Bridge Railtour.

Those who cannot get RTÉ 1 might like to know that the Nationwide programmes are available for up to 6 weeks at:

www.rte.ie/news/nationwide/index.html

Sales News: These items have been added to the order form:

DVD - Belfast to Londonderry - Driver's Eye View, 130 minutes, narrated by Eamonn Holmes, £19.95. The Portrush branch and the Giant's Causeway Steam Railway are also included.

DVD - Trolleybus Days in Belfast. 35 minutes, £9.99

Fermanagh's Railways - Second Edition by Charles Friel and Norman Johnston. Paperback, 26 x 21 cm, 250 b&w photos, 176 pages, £18.

Great Northern Railway (Ireland) - Some Gen from the Past by Cecil Carson. Paperback, 30 x 21 cm, 84 pages, £5.

Barrow Bridge Railtour Brochure edited by Charles Friel. £3.

Ulster in the 1950s - photos from the UTA Archive 2 by Norman Johnston. Paperback, 20 x 24 cm, 60 b&w photos, 64 pages, £8.99.

You can order these items by post and pay by cheque or you can order on line and pay securely by credit card. To make a purchase, and to view our full sales stock, log on to:

www.steamtrainsireland.com/shop

EDITORIAL ADDRESS

148 Church Road, Newtownabbey,
Co. Antrim, BT36 6HJ.

www.steamtrainsireland.com
rpsitrains@hotmail.com