



March 2010

NEWS LETTER

TRAINS & EVENTS

The Diesel Do: The inaugural railtour with what are destined to be the Society's first operable mainline diesel locomotives took place on Sunday 21st February.

About two weeks prior to the date a rather drastic change to the trip was advised by Iarnród Éireann when they changed the destination from Enniscorthy to Longford. It should be stressed that the RPSI had no involvement in the change. It was apparently due to engineering works of which members of the railtour committee were not aware, nor had been advised of, when the details were being negotiated and agreed with IÉ.

B141 and B142 were painted specially for the occasion in their original 1960s livery. And very well they looked too!

A full train included guests of the two sponsors of the locomotives, Paddy Murphy of Dublin and Philip Martin of Carrickfergus. There was a presentation to both gentlemen by Vice-Chairman David Houston on the return journey. Our thanks to both.

Operationally, the day went well despite the countryside being coated with snow, until Enfield anyway. The tour was certainly well received if the

comments on the web groups are anything to go by.

ITG Charter: The ITG tour to Sligo took place on Saturday 6th March. The trip featured the RPSI's heritage set, the Society now being the only provider of traditional loco-hauled carriages.

The ITG had hoped to have 141 haulage but were advised by Irish Rail late on the previous evening that an 071 would substitute.

The above aside, the day went very well and timekeeping was excellent. The train was about two-thirds full.

Movement: No.186 was scheduled to move from Whitehead to Dublin on Sunday 28th March.

Easter Eggspress (Dublin): On Easter Monday 5th April No.186 and the heritage set will operate from Dublin Connolly to Mullingar. There will be an Easter Egg hunt in the grounds of Belvedere House divided into 3 different age groups. Tickets from EBS Offices at Malahide, Drumcondra and Dun Laoghaire, and Pearse Station.

A local trip will operate from Mullingar to Killucon.

Easter Eggspress (Belfast): On Easter Monday 5th April No.4 will operate two return trips from Belfast to

Whitehead. Tickets from Belfast Welcome Centre.

Trains depart Belfast Central station at 12:35 and 14:45.

Charter: A private charter for the NI Housing Executive is scheduled to operate from Whitehead to Coleraine and return on Wednesday 21st April.

Maynooth Shuttle: No.186 will haul two return trains from Dublin to Maynooth on Sunday 25th April.

Dalriada Railtour: The first train of the railtour 'weekend' will be the diesel-hauled positioning run from Whitehead to Dublin on Thursday 6th May.

The next day will see the South Wexford diesel railtour, featuring the very scenic Dublin and South Eastern Railway line and rarely used South Wexford line (currently under threat of closure). The route is: Dublin - Rosslare - Waterford - Kildare - Dublin. This train was originally planned to operate to Limerick but engineering works at Ballybrophy rendered this unfeasible. Motive power will be Irish Rail 071 class General Motors diesel. The out and back timings are Dublin Connolly 09:35 and return 18:45.

The main weekend trains will operate from/to from the north with No.4 and No.186, the first May railtour to operate there since the foot and mouth crisis in 2001.

Booking forms for the main tour and, separately, for the diesel day are available on the website.

Twelve Counties: On Saturday 22nd May the Modern Railway Society of Ireland will be running a diesel railtour from Whitehead to Tralee and return using the RPSI Mk2 set.

Sea Breeze: The first train of the main season will be the traditional DSER outing to Wexford and Rosslare with

No.4 on 30th May. Two further trains will operate on 4th & 25th July.

Steam & Jazz: Dates are Fridays 11th, 18th & 25th June and 2nd July.

CARRIAGE & WAGON

Scrappling: Mk2 coaches 916 and 923 were cut up on Monday 15th February, having had all their reusable parts removed.

Dining Car Appeal: Work is underway at Whitehead on renovating UTA Dining Car No.87, and we need your help!

During Whitehead open days one end of the vehicle will be used as a coffee shop, while the bar area will contain a display about the history of dining cars in Ireland - and this is where you come in!

We are looking for objects to display in this area, from any railway in Ireland, of any age. In particular we are keen to hear from anyone with:

- Cutlery or crockery from a dining car, station refreshment room or railway hotel, especially anything marked with the railway's name or crest.
- Paperwork such as menus or advertisements from dining cars.
- Photographs of dining cars, especially of dining car staff and customers.
- We would be especially keen to find an original dining car attendant's uniform.

This is your chance to make a huge contribution to the project, which will play an important part in the development of the RPSI's 'museum' role, which attracts essential funding for all manner of RPSI activities. (We are, of course, always interested in any object you would like to place in

the care of the RPSI collection, even if it is not related to this project.)

So if you have any objects you would like to donate, or photographs that we could copy, please get in touch.

Royal Visit: The exhibition "King Class, Majestic Journeys" will open on 15th April to 5th September in the Netherlands Railway Museum in Utrecht. Among a number of carriages from European royal trains will be the Irish State Saloon 351.

LOCOMOTIVES

No.1: As part of a repair contract for the DCDR the Orenstein locomotive is being prepared for hydraulic testing.

No.3 "R.H. Smyth": The locomotive has received attention to its spring hangers at Downpatrick.

No.3BG "Guinness": The locomotive suffered a broken buffer casing - the casing showed evidence of previous repairs. Both rear buffers are to be renewed with longer casings to provide better support for the large buffer heads fitted to this locomotive. Annual boiler inspection.

No.4: Boiler inspection and steam testing. The fitting and certification of TPWS equipment has been done, but other electrical work requires completion.

No.5 "Drumboe": Work continues whenever possible as it is a valuable contribution to both training and maintaining staff competence. The bogie is being overhauled with new frame plates to replace the existing badly corroded metal.

No.85 "Merlin": Boiler now in locomotive shed, positioned on stands.

Schedule of work and costs being prepared. Condition of working parts still to be assessed. Dismantling of

motion, etc., preparatory to lifting off wheels.

No.186: Mid-life retubing is now complete. Both pistons were removed to allow the piston rings to be replaced. Other minor repairs included overhaul of regulator valve which tended to blow past when shut, to the irritation of the driver, and hydraulic testing.

No.461: Re-metalling and machining crossheads.

B141 & B142: Renumbered and painted in their original 1960s livery by Irish Rail in preparation for the railtour to Longford, which they operated successfully.

Contract: Work is under way to re-profile wheels from a 4ft 8½in gauge J27 locomotive belonging to the North Eastern Locomotive Preservation Group.

Scraping: Two thousand litres of red diesel were removed from Hunslet 101 prior to its scrapping on 25th January.

WHITEHEAD

Carriage Shed: During the big freeze in early January 20 tonnes of stone was delivered for the carriage shed floor (the rear of the shed is not concreted). It was impossible to do the necessary shunt to spread this because all water supplies for the steam engines were frozen.

Rail: A donation of 150 bullhead concrete sleepers recently arrived from NIR following rationalisation of their Ballymena PW yard.

Facilities: Plastic drainage piping has been laid at the foot of the blast area retaining wall which will be back filled.

Track: Thanks to the recent spell of good, dry weather, and lots of experienced help, the Site squad is making excellent progress on the

relaying of the main road at Whitehead between the bridge and platform crossover points.

This piece of track was in a poor state of repair and the timely gift of 150 concrete sleepers from NIR has made the project possible. Two days in early March saw completion of three of the five 60-foot panels that require replacement, and partial dismantling of the remaining two.

The project is well on schedule and should be easily finished in time for the busy Easter season.

BELFAST MEETINGS

9th February: The monthly newsreel began with a flashback 26 years to 1984 when the Society won the ARPS award, and then featured Ivan and the gang picking up the HRA Wagon Award at the NRM York on 6th February. The plaque was on show too.

It was then Derek Henderson's turn to share some of his films. He opened with his sound film of South African steam which included many Garratts and other vintage steam in use on some vast colliery lines. His second film was a compilation of steam in Scotland in the mid-1960s. The shots included at least 15 classes of engine. After the break, there was footage of a huge stationary engine at a mill in Wigan and the paddle steamer Waverley on a trip out of Belfast and around the Copelands.

10th March: Following the usual interesting newsreel of recent events, the final meeting of the season saw author Martin Bairstow present his take on the 'oddities' of Irish railways as viewed from a GB perspective. His use of mostly unpublished material was a delight.

Next Season: As always, if you have

ideas for subject matter for the coming autumn then please do get in touch, because as good as Charles Friel is, he does need your help!

GENERAL

Membership: For the second year quite a number of standing order payments have been received with no names attached. Most of these were identified last year after quite a lot of investigation. All affected members were informed and asked to modify their payments to include their names. Unfortunately, it would appear that few, if any, complied and hence those members will not have received a membership card.

If you have not, then please send your renewal as soon as possible to help the Society fund another season of steam. Remember that despite the credit crunch the rates have been held for yet another year.

All members with payments outstanding will have a membership form enclosed.

Thank you to everyone who has already renewed - and many thanks for including a donation.

AGM: See the attached notice. All Council posts are open for nominations. Simply send in a note to the address below, signed by yourself and two other current Society members. Nominations should be mailed by return.

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