

# Railway Preservation Society of Ireland



December 2011

## NEWS LETTER

### VICE-PRESIDENTS

**Welcome:** The Board of the Society is very pleased to be able to announce the appointment of two new Vice-Presidents, Joan Smyth and Robert Guinness.

The Board has had plans for some time to broaden the Society's influence among the 'powers that be' in Dublin and Belfast. To that end, they have been seeking to strengthen the 'top team' with new blood and to recruit members whose experience in those circles would be of assistance.

Plans are at an advanced stage to appoint a second Vice-President from the Republic of Ireland; a further announcement in this regard is expected shortly.

**Dr Joan Smyth CBE:** Joan graduated from Queens University, Belfast with a BSc (Econ) and began work in the private sector as a statistician. She subsequently trained in personnel work and industrial relations and specialised in this when she set up a small consultancy with a partner in 1990. She is a Companion of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.

In 1992 she was invited to become Chair and Chief Executive of the Equal Opportunities Commission for Northern Ireland and remained in this public appointment until 1999. For her work she was awarded the CBE by the

Queen and given an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws by the University of Ulster. She remains involved with a number of organisations which promote issues in relation to women's place in society both locally and nationally particularly Soroptimist International where she has been Federation President of Great Britain and Ireland.

In 1999 she was appointed the Chairman of the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company, the parent company of Translink. She held the post until 2005 and as such saw the delivery of the new trains and a number of other developments which benefited the railway infrastructure. On leaving she was honoured with a small presentation from the RPSI on board a Jazz Steam Train which was the venue for her leaving party.

She is currently Chairman of the Progressive Building Society and has been a member of the Board for 9 years. She is also a Board member of Eirgrid the all-Ireland electricity grid operator and of Trinity Housing Association.

She is NI President of the British Red Cross and President of North Down Guides.

**Robert C. Guinness:** Robert has always loved steam, and feats of engineering, scientific instruments and equipment; he also enjoys people who, like him, use their hands. He is most happy motoring, travelling by train,

taking walks and picnics, visiting sites, listening to music and the broad experience of the life of others. He has travelled extensively.

Robert, who comes from the banking side of a large family, learnt to see the sense in financial figures whilst working in that field. He later ran a cabinet making business for many years in Dublin. In 1988 he initiated the removal of a parish church due for demolition, but associated with Inchicore Railway Works. This building in the neo gothic style, was rebuilt by 1992 at Straffan, Co. Kildare, and now houses The Steam Museum, which displays full size and large scale artefacts from the steam age.

Robert is passionate about our industrial heritage and that revolution, but in particular about bringing education in these subjects to the greater public in Ireland. Since there is no Science Museum in Ireland he is keen to expand the scope of the Steam Museum, and give the opportunity to the youth of today to learn the early history of mechanics, and of technology in Ireland.

The Steam Museum Collection was consequently formed to show these achievements of the Industrial Revolution and today provides a bridge between the old and the new technology of the computer age. Recently he acquired a complimentary model collection of early land vehicles and stationary engines. He is a council member of the Industrial Heritage Association of Ireland.

Robert lives with his wife Sarah, on an inherited property, twenty kilometres from Dublin. In conjunction with current thinking on the environment, he has planted hardwoods over most of the land. He has five children and eight grandchildren.

Robert is honoured to be considered as a suitable Vice-President of the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland, and will

give his full attention to helping the Society to fulfil its objectives.

### CARRIAGE & WAGON

**State Coach Exhibition:** On Friday 28<sup>th</sup> October invited guests of Iarnród Éireann and the RPSI attended the launch of an exhibition of the two former state saloons at Dublin Heuston Station. We were very honoured to have the opening ceremony performed by outgoing Irish President, Mary McAleese.

After visiting both coaches, 351 followed by 5408, the President took to the podium where the first speech was made by Dick Fearn, the Chief Executive of Iarnród Éireann. He thanked the President for attending and congratulated the RPSI on the work they have done, and continue to do.

The President then spoke about the excellent work in presenting both coaches for exhibition; she praised the Society, Irish Rail, and the attendants who had worked on 5408 on the occasions on which she had travelled in it. She noted that railways were an instrument in bringing peoples together and she hoped that during her time as President she had helped to do likewise.

Sir Kenneth Bloomfield, RPSI Vice-President, spoke on behalf of the Society and congratulated President McAleese on her many achievements during her incumbency, then nearing its end.

That being the end of the speeches, the guests took the opportunity to view the carriages.

351 and 5408 transported heads of state and foreign dignitaries over the past century, 351 from 1906 up to the early 1970s, and 5408 from the 1970s to the 2000s.

Those who have travelled on the coaches include: King Edward VII,

President Mary McAleese, President Eamon DeValera, Emperor Haile Selassie of Ethiopia, President Dwight D Eisenhower of USA and Queen Margrethe II of Denmark. As 5408 has been retired, President McAleese will be the last Irish Head of State to have travelled in a State Coach.

Iarnród Éireann and the RPSI created a special exhibition of photographs and mementos of the State Coaches and members of the RPSI were on hand over the Irish bank holiday weekend to provide guided tours.

Iarnród Éireann has confirmed that 5408 will be transferred into the care of the RPSI by way of 50 year licence agreement similar to that pertaining to 351. The carriage will move to Whitehead in due course.

**Dublin Set:** Inchicore was a hive of activity recently with a range of tasks in hand. These included preparing State Coach 351 for its exhibition over the October Bank Holiday weekend, completing the overhaul of 1506, and of course keeping the running set spic and span.

Work carried out in recent months includes the following:

**Steam Heating:** Replacing some of the heating pipes in the Cravens, thus ensuring that the train is warm for the Christmas operations.

**351:** Batteries installed. Preparing the carriage for exhibition. Buffers have been greased, axleboxes oiled, interior cleaned and exterior polished for her big weekend.

In early October she was shunted from her usual home in the Carriage 1 building across the traverser into the Carriage 2 shop for her annual exam prior to movement to Heuston. All was declared well, and she returned to her home in Carriage 1 in the company of Presidential Mkt 5408.

**1506:** With the repairs to the Dublin end

roof dome complete, the fibreglass has been given a coat of special paint (actually designed for yachts!).

Minor repairs have been carried out on the Cork end roof dome. In the process of doing this it was discovered that the down-side water filler pipe was damaged near the roof. Not a problem, the team quickly devised a solution, which consisted of cutting away the damaged section and replacing it with a piece of PVC pipe. The new piece initially proved difficult to fit, but after placing it in a container of boiling water it became more pliable and in no time at all it was successfully attached to the main pipe work. This was then secured using Jubilee clips, and presto, the carriage can be watered again!

On Friday 11<sup>th</sup> November the Cravens set was hauled by an IE GM to Connolly for its annual exam, which took place the following day. On Saturday afternoon the carriages were returned to Inchicore by GM 075. The set included recently the out-shopped 1506, which was making its first run in RPSI ownership.

**1508:** When the Cravens set entered RPSI service back in September 2008 a temporary bar was fitted to one end of this carriage, with four bays of seating having been removed to accommodate this. With full bar facilities now available in 1514 the temporary bar is no longer needed, so it has now been removed and four bays of seating restored in its place.

**1523:** With the vestibules now repainted in blue and cream, attention is currently being focused on repainting the toilet compartments. The Cork end bogie is now repainted, thus completing the exterior cosmetic restoration of this vehicle.

**1539:** Out of service.

**3173:** Re-panelling work on the van is well underway in Mullingar shed. Such is the industriousness of the team that

they managed to fit a new panel during the layover of the Trinity Foundation charter!

**Whitehead:** The main work in recent months was in preparing 303 and 463 for approval by NIR.

**304:** Seat frames being painted. CDL to be fitted, batteries, etc.

**305:** Reconstruction stopped due to lack of volunteer labour.

**462:** Some work has also been carried out on the boiler wiring.

**463:** All compartments completed except for detail painting and window side arm rests delivery due. Exterior painting required.

**861:** Work continues on the overhaul.

## TRAINS & EVENTS

**Mystery Train:** Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> October was a day of very poor weather, and with advance bookings already below expectations, it was no surprise that the number of patrons turning up at Connolly station to purchase tickets was small. This was despite considerable publicity in the media and the usual Society efforts.

However, the day was, for the most part, a success with 072 putting in an excellent performance on the outward journey -necessary to keep the tight timings.

The weather in Limerick was only slightly better than in Dublin so the patrons were probably glad to get on board again for the return to Dublin. 080 was provided for the return, and again a very lively run was delivered until Hazelhatch when problems with the locomotive started to impact on performance.

The train managed to get as far as Heuston Platform 10 where 080 gave up the ghost. On what was by now a miserable evening a replacement

locomotive in the form of 081 was summoned from Inchicore and the entire train got on the move after one hour's delay. A disappointing end to what had been an excellent performance from the front end.

Trackside conditions were unpleasant for coupling up the rescue locomotive, but guard Mark Tyrrell got on with it and after some difficulty with the brakes the show was on the move again for the short run to Connolly. Well done Mark!

**Broomstick Belle:** The 3 trains had sold out a few days prior to the date of operation (Sunday 30<sup>th</sup> October).

Over 700 passengers travelled and most gave every sign of enjoying themselves with the opportunity to view No.186.

It was unfortunate that the platform at Whitehead was not the most welcoming, being used as a base for the contractors carrying out platform extension work at the NIR station.

The day's operation ran mostly to plan, a slight hiccup being a 45 minute delay on the final return to Whitehead.

**Victorian Day:** A blustery day with a few light showers greeted the small band of Society members who ran the Train Rides in connection with Whitehead's Victorian Street Fair on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> November.

Although timed to start at 2pm, visitors started arriving about 1:15pm, but seemed content to soak up the atmosphere sitting in the carriages.

No.461 provided the power and spectacle, with carriages 460 and 181 in tow.

In total 205 passengers took advantage of the train rides with the shop having a good day as well. Darkness came early and stopped play, the last run finishing about 4:30pm.

**Santa Special (Belfast):** The trains on Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> December from Belfast to

Whitehead operated successfully in clear dry weather which added to the atmosphere on board.

The afternoon trip was a charter of the complete train by a major bank, and that proved very popular.

All trains were sold out within 3 weeks of going on sale.

**Santa Special (Dublin):** The first weekend of operations went well despite the non-appearance of one of the stars of the show. However, the passengers took it well, and having been forewarned that diesel haulage was a possibility, complaints were almost non-existent.

All the other attractions were available as usual, and the feedback was generally very positive. It has to be said that the now rare sight of class 071 haulage on passenger stock got the photographers out in some numbers, and even some passengers were overheard expressing satisfaction at the sight of a black and silver loco at the front of the train!

It has not yet been confirmed whether or not No.461 will make it to Dublin for any of these trains.

**Santa Special (Portadown):** Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> December was a bit dull, but remained dry until the way home - when it started to snow! Shades of 2010!

Operationally, the sold-out trains were very successful. This has now become an important market, with a significant number of passengers travelling from south of the border.

## LOCOMOTIVES

**No.4:** Awaiting a decision on scheduling and funding of overhaul.

**No.85:** Boiler repairs, mechanical repairs and reassembly under way.

**No.171:** Moved into workshop, dismantling under way by volunteer

labour.

**No.461:** After its first steaming there was a myriad of small jobs to be carried out during the autumn: fabrication of fire iron holders for the tender; lining out; painting the numbers (4, 6 and 1!) on the front buffer beam; steam heating; provision of cab tarpaulin. And that was before running-in even commenced.

The locomotive was officially launched, together with carriage NCC 68, on 13<sup>th</sup> October at Whitehead. To mark the occasion a number of our funders and railway personnel were invited to Whitehead to celebrate the event.

The first mainline test was on Sunday 13<sup>th</sup> November:

- 1) Tender-first to Carrickfergus hauling Dutch van 462. The locomotive ran round there and both returned to Whitehead.
- 2) Whitehead to Belfast Central (No.461 + 462 + 4 Mk2), involving several brake tests at various speeds and checks on the locomotive itself.
- 3) After return to Whitehead, the train did a round trip to Carrickfergus to finish the day.

There was an NIR official on board conducting the several braking tests and what appeared to be checking clearances at the new platform extensions (platforms are currently being lengthened to take 6-piece railcars).

No.461's first official duty was the Victorian Day at Whitehead on Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> November. NIR approval to operate was received on Monday 28<sup>th</sup> November.

At the time of writing, some further work is being carried out on the pistons. A comprehensive period of running-in will follow on the remaining Santa trains. Unfortunately, due to a number of delays the locomotive was not in traffic in time for the Dublin Santa trains.

**B142:** Running well and earning its keep. Anti-freeze will be required for the winter.

**Contract Diesels:** Work on Hunslet 102 and Sulzer B113 on behalf of the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum is more or less complete. The plan is to transfer the locomotives to Cultra in the new year.

## WHITEHEAD

**Whitehead Development:** At the No.461 launch on 13<sup>th</sup> October, also on show were the plans for redevelopment of our Whitehead headquarters. The key elements of the project are:

- New station building, based on the former Whiteabbey station
- New NCC-style signal box
- Installation of a 60ft locomotive turntable
- Extension to Dunleath locomotive workshop
- Extension to carriage shed
- Provision of a purpose-built carriage workshop facilities
- Visitor centre

Due to delays awaiting the results from the site investigation, contamination survey, asbestos survey and ecological survey, and potential minor design changes which could arise therefrom, the formal HLF 2020 Application has been delayed until the new year.

The station building work will still have to be started as previously scheduled, however, due to the requirements of the GROW funding.

**Dundalk Development:** A site meeting was held on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> November with representatives from Iarnród Éireann and CIÉ Property. The Society has been asked to submit a formal application for the lease of both a minimum and a maximum area of the

overall site, so that comparative costs can be ascertained, and linked to a potential business case for the proposed museum and vehicle storage proposal.

**Mundane:** Work carried out during the autumn included the hand digging of a trench to allow re-direction of the electrical supply to the sand blasting shed.

Repairs to the bottom hinge and bracket of a yard gate and replacement of a sleeper in 5 shed road were all facilitated by Peter Scott and the workshop staff.

Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> October saw the appearance of McLaughlin and Harvey, the civil engineers, who were to spend the rest of the month using the platform and tracks as a base for the extension of Whitehead NIR station platform.

The team finished jacking and packing our repaired tracks into the carriage sheds during this week, in time for the launch of No.461 and coach 68.

On the morning of Thursday 20<sup>th</sup> October the JCB dug a deep hole at the back of the site to ascertain the depth of the water table, which was found to be in excess of 2 metres.

As part of the preparations for the HLF project at Whitehead Dermot Mackie has been liaising with the architects and the ground survey team to arrange a series of test borings around the site to ascertain both the quality and depth of the sub strata. This work has been completed and it is pleasing to report that preliminary findings confirm the water table at between 2-3 metres and dense boulder clay at 4 metres below ground level. The former will obviate the need for piling while the latter should make for excellent foundations. None of the bore holes produced obvious evidence of pollutants, but final results will await laboratory analysis - all part of modern building regulations!

November saw the squad replace two

large timbers under the points which give access to the Carriage and Locomotive shed roads from the platform crossing. A large sleeper in No.5 shed road has also been replaced.

The platform lights have been refurbished by the electrical squad, in time for the Santa train season.

As part of the ongoing preliminary working up of the HLF contract Asbestos and Wildlife surveys of the Whitehead site have been undertaken.

## MEMBERSHIP

**Increase:** The Society's financial year runs from 1<sup>st</sup> November to 31<sup>st</sup> October, and as we have just started another year the Board has announced that membership rates should increase for 2012.

It has always been policy to hold rates constant for as long a period as possible and make the increase that bit larger to maintain income. This is the first increase since 2004 and we hope you will understand and stick with us.

The new rates are:

Adult	£30	€42
Senior (Over 65)	£25	€33
Junior (Under 18)	£18	€24
Student	£25	€33
Family	£72	€102

**Note:** If you pay by standing order then please note that action is required by you to contact your bank to have the annual payment rate changed. The Society cannot do that for you!

## BELFAST MEETINGS

**12<sup>th</sup> October:** The evening opened with the now traditional video News-Reel, featuring: life extension work on No.4's tubes (late spring); No.4's farewell trip to Portrush, stunning sound effects included; No.186 in action on the Steam & Jazz and on a charter train to Cultra;

No.461's first boiler test and eventual return to steam.

The main item of the evening was a feast of Irish steam by Fred Cooper, probably one of his best shows, featuring:

- RPSI Port Lairge tour to Waterford in 1983, with No.171 and No.184 double-heading between Carrick-on-Suir and Limerick Junction.
- 1950s colour footage at Dundalk, Newry, Strabane, Bundoran, Greenore and Waterford.
- County Donegal narrow gauge (CDR and Swilly). - Portadown, Warrenpoint and the Derry Road in the 1950s.
- Cinema and TV news-reel footage of: wartime cross-border security; new GNR railcars; NCC; 1889 Armagh disaster; Tralee & Blennerville; last day of Shane's Castle Railway; 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Enterprise.
- The second half of the show was vintage cine from Englishman James Boyd on his travels to Ireland in the 1950s and 1960s: CDR and Swilly; Arigna; Ballaghaderreen; Valentia; Courtmacsherry; Kenmare lifting train; Tralee & Dingle.

**Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> November:** The night began with the usual Newsreel - stills featuring the State Coach Exhibition at Heuston, No.186 on the Halloween trains, work on No.85 and decorating the train for the forthcoming Santa season.

The night consisted of two talks by Charles Friel. Part One took a detailed look at the line between Dundalk South cabin and 'the first metals' where the DNGR crosses the Castletown river and including the docks. Many of the 100 pictures and maps have not been seen in public in living memory, including rare shots of the lines on Dundalk Harbour quayside.

After the break, it was a journey in 94 pictures from Larne Harbour to

Ballymena on the narrow gauge and including both the branch to Doagh and the Larne Aluminium lines. Pictures are unfortunately sparse between Ballyboley Junction and Ballymena, but what was shown was fascinating.

## GENERAL

**No.171 Calendar:** Don't forget your 13 month 2012 calendar. It can be obtained via the online shop or from the usual sales address.

**Second Hand Models:** Members are asked to raid their lofts, cupboards, etc., to unearth model railway equipment of any gauge (within reason) which is no longer needed.

Please consider making a donation of this to the RPSI with a view to the Society selling it to raise funds. We now have an outlet for such items - all proceeds go to the Society.

One of our members is willing to travel to a railway or bus station in any major town in Northern Ireland, or to Dublin Connolly, to collect items for resale.

If you have something to donate, please get in touch and someone will reply to make arrangements. Write to the Editorial address or send an email to:

[rpsimodels@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:rpsimodels@hotmail.co.uk)

**Sales News:** These items have been added to the Online Shop:

- 1927 Railway Map of Ireland, 69 cm x 47 cm, £8.
- Railways in Ireland Part Four by Martin Bairstow. Paperback, 24 x 18 cm, 8 colour and 156 b&w photos, 5 maps, 112 pages, £15.95.
- Diesel Multiple Unit Compendium (includes Ireland) by Colin Boocock. Hardback, 30 x 22 cm, 125 colour photos (including 30 Irish), 78 b&w photos (including 29 Irish), 128 pages, £19.99.

- Silvermines Diesel Railtour by Charles Friel. Dublin - Nenagh - Limerick - Dublin, 39 black & white photos, 38 pages, £3.
- Province of Leinster Railtour by Charles Friel. Dublin - Kilkenny - M3 Parkway - Docklands - Mullingar - Dublin, 33 black & white photos, 54 pages, £3.
- The Gleam of the Lines by Tom Ferris. Hardback with dustcover, 25 x 15 cm, 108 colour photos, 56 b&w photos, 7 maps, £21.99.
- In Time of Civil War, the Conflict on the Irish Railways 1922-23 by Bernard Share. Hardback with dustcover, 27 x 25 cm, 100 b&w photos, 152 pages, £10.
- Turbine Steamers of the British Isles by Nick Robins. Paperback, 28 x 22 cm, 2 colour and 175 b&w photos, 12 diagrams, 80 pages, £8.
- Waterford and Limerick Railway by C.E.J. Fryer. Paperback, 21 x 15 cm, 153 b&w photos, 7 maps, 160 pages, £10.95.
- DVD by Brian Stinson - Province of Leinster Railtour, including the Silvermines Diesel Railtour. In widescreen format (16:9), can be played in normal format (4:3) 55 minutes, £12.
- DVD by RAILFILMS - Manx & Irish Lines by James Boyd. 59 minutes, £20.

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