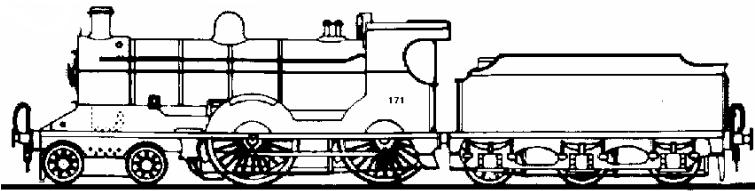


Railway Preservation Society of Ireland



March 2013

NEWS LETTER

VICE PRESIDENT

Sir Kenneth Bloomfield: Our longest-serving Vice-President has had to step down from the post on health grounds.

We have had a long and fruitful association with Sir Ken over the years and he will be sorely missed, and most certainly very hard to replace!

We wish him well in the future.

TRAINS & EVENTS

Winter Enterprise: A late run on tickets (thanks all!) meant that it was a surprisingly full train which left Belfast behind GM 112 on Sunday 3rd February.

After a few hours in Dublin the train set off again with No.461 at the head. The locomotive coped well although the schedule may have been slightly tight as about 20 minutes were lost on route.

Apart from that, a great day out!

Exhibition: The RPSI had a stand at the Northern Ireland Tourist Board's "Great Days Out Fair" on Saturday 9th February.

The Fair was attended by hundreds of organisers of group excursions eager to see what Northern Ireland would be offering in 2013.

The RPSI stand was smartly decorated with headboards from the "Enterprise" and "Portrush Flyer" and manned by Henry Ritchie, John Lockett and John Friel.

Starting at 09:30 in Enniskillen required no small amount of dedication and the continuous stream of interested event organisers left the RPSI volunteers exhausted by 14:30 when the doors closed. It is estimated that nearly 300 event programmes were handed out and nearly 100 email addresses collected to add to the mailing list. A very worthwhile publicity activity.

Steam Trials: On 16th and 17th March, a series of test trains is being operated over two days. Both locomotives, No.186 and No.461, will be in steam at various times over the weekend.

The reason for the tests is twofold: further running-in tests for No.461 and further experience for the new fireman trainees.

Easter Shuttles: On Easter Monday, 1st April, there will be an Easter Egg trip from Dublin to Wicklow and return. Also, there will be a local trip from

Wicklow to Greystones. Tickets for the former from the usual Dublin ticket address. The latter tickets are being sold through Track One music shop in Wicklow.

Easter Eggspress: Again this year, these trains will operate over two days, trains departing Belfast Central at noon and 2:20pm on Easter Monday and Tuesday. Tickets online or via Belfast Welcome Centre.

The destination will revert to Whitehead now that exterior work is mostly complete on the new station.

Golden Vale: Interest in the May railtour has been very high - there are already over 150 advance bookings for Limerick. So if you are considering travelling on the main weekend tour to Limerick or the diesel-hauled Ben Bulben tour to Sligo it is recommended that you reserve your seat as soon as possible.

LOCOMOTIVES

No.4: The boiler is being dismantled for lifting out of the frames. This work is being undertaken because at the moment there is Workshop capacity available prior to commencing the overhaul of No.171, for which further funding is being sought.

No.85: The boiler was given its first steam test (out of the frames) on Sunday 6th January. It was brought up to about 90 psi (enough to work injectors). Several minor leaks were identified which will be attended to before the next test. The boiler had to be cleaned and painted prior to fitting. This is a major milestone in the overhaul of the loco and rapid progress should now be possible.

There was a major shunt on 16th February to carry on from the previous weekend, when the boiler was lifted into the frames.

This time all the bits were moved from the locomotive shed to the workshop, where the overhead crane was available to lift the boiler cladding and cab into place. Fitting of the boiler insulation was well advanced by the end of Saturday. No 461 obliged as the shunting engine.

Once the cladding and cab are in place, work can proceed with the rest of the re-assembly, principally the fitting of pipework.

No.186: After working the Belfast Santa trains and the last operation of the year (the Mince Pie Train), on 24th January the locomotive had its annual boiler test followed, the next day, by a steam test. The locomotive passed both tests so should remain in traffic until the end of 2013 when it will be withdrawn at end of its 10 year ticket.

No.461: Operated the first of the Dublin based Santa trains but unfortunately a problem with an injector clack valve resulted in the last trains being diesel worked. The problem was easily rectified and again highlights the current difficulty of trying to maintain locomotives at arm's length and without suitable facilities in Dublin.

After working the 3rd February train to Whitehead, the locomotive will be subject to running tests on 16th and 17th March.

WHITEHEAD SITE

Whitehead Excursion Station: The station building construction is

progressing very well, and is currently several weeks ahead of schedule. The walls are now complete, the roof trusses in position and the roof fitted. The windows are also fitted and glazed. The website has been updated with the latest views of the new Whitehead Excursion Station building (roof complete and scaffolding removed).

Track: It is anticipated that future work will put pressure on rolling stock storage space at Whitehead. So to preempt problems it was decided to install an extra siding alongside the NIR line to Larne. Work commenced in mid-January and the spoil removal and foundation ballasting for the siding have been completed.

BELFAST MEETINGS

14th November: The meeting was a slide show by Norman Foster who showed an amazing variety of 35mm colour slides from his travels in 1962, mostly in Ireland but including some steam on Welsh lines and on former LMS and LNER lines. His Irish material included much not seen before in colour and made many wonder how he managed to do any timing at all. In better economic times, he could surely produce several Irish colour albums.

5th December: A Fred Cooper film show, the first half of which was mostly RPSI tours in the 1980s. His second half was vintage stuff in every sense of the word and included footage that had never been seen before. The shot of the Holywood Motor Train tearing past was a highlight but there were enough BCDR and NCC locomotives in action to satisfy everyone - and an unbelievable

amount of film of the Listowel and Ballybunion.

9th January: The main attraction was Richard Whitford's 35mm slides going back to the early 1960s. They included all sorts of regular trains, excursions and specials all over the island, including many RBAI railtours. Many of the pictures were in places no longer on the railway map or from spots that would not be allowed today. He included some pleasing stuff on the Isle of Man, including the Donegal railcars in action.

13th February: In the first half, Tony Ragg made his debut as an RPSI speaker. He brought the audience back through the generations to recount the railway careers of Bowman Malcolm and Tony's maternal grandfather H.P. Stewart. It was an intriguing tale of the two families at both a professional and a personal level made all the closer when Tony's grandfather married the Malcolm children's governess. One upshot was that Tony's godfather was a Malcolm. Tony also charted Bowman's Malcolm's use of compounding and the development of NCC locomotives in general. He shared a rich archive of letters, drawings and papers (from both families) as well as several photographs that have never been seen in public. He also highlighted the problems that his grandfather had with senior management when it came to ordering new locomotives in the late 1920s; a battle which H.P. Stewart lost shortly before his retirement and early death. It was a poignant tale with many unexpected twists and nuances that deserve to be in print. And Tony did it with warmth and a humour that brought many a giggle.

After the break, Derek Young went back to the 1960s. Using many newly-scanned negatives from his Halina camera, he conducted a tour of the familiar and the not so familiar. From the last day of the Warrenpoint branch to the doings of the VSs, and from football specials on the NCC to some early RPSI railtours, Derek's camera often sought out the things that were taken for granted. He showed too how he had tried to emulate Colin Gifford's "Just a Glimpse" style of photography. The result was several very evocative shots of a fog-laden Portadown at sunset, which proved that you didn't need the sun coming over your shoulder for the photograph to work. As Derek said, "It was just over 50 years ago - but it doesn't feel like it."

Next Year: As always, send in your suggestions for the next season.

GENERAL

Research And Archive: The Contents page of the Society's website has been extensively updated. It now contains a "Research And Archive" section which should be of help to those carrying out railway and genealogical research. It is hoped to add more to this section in due course, including hopefully some surprises.

Consultation Paper: The NI Department of Regional Development has launched a consultation paper on the future investment priorities for NIR into the 2030s. Surprisingly, options for reopening lines into Tyrone are included. Have a look on the publications section of their website and send in any responses you feel appropriate:

www.drdni.gov.uk/index/publications

Waterside Station: Translink has issued a public consultation where the public can vote for which option they most want for a new L'Derry railway station:

www.translink.co.uk/watersidestation

Looks like "Option 3" is the one to go for!!

MEMBERSHIP

Reminder: Members are reminded that subscription payments were due at the end of January.

Membership cards, if not already sent, will be dispatched in due course, probably tucked into the envelope with the next posted circular.

Standing Orders: These have all been processed. As with 2012, it is noticeable that significant numbers have not been updated to reflect the new rates:

Republic Of Ireland and EU

Adult	€42
Senior (Over 65)	€33
Junior (Under 18)	€24
Student	€33
Family (2A+2C)	€102

United Kingdom

Adult	£30
Senior (Over 65)	£25
Junior (Under 18)	£18
Student	£25
Family (2A+2C)	£72

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