



November 2014

NEWS LETTER

VOLUNTEERING

Open Day: One of the aims of RPSI 50 is to increase the Society's membership and to encourage more members to become actively involved. This does not necessarily mean getting your hands dirty! Indeed, there must be around 50 ways in which you could play a part and thereby help the Society to become bigger and better than ever.

For example - help in administration, finance, marketing or publicity. Or what about assisting the sales team or perhaps becoming a steam raiser or a carriage steward? There are positions to fill both at Whitehead and in Dublin.

Or maybe you would like to get more involved in the nuts and bolts - by learning new workshop skills or joining the site squad. We need people who are willing to devote a few hours a week or month to the Society - and this is teamwork in the truest sense of the word.

Following the appointment of Alastair Maxwell as RPSI volunteer co-ordinator, it couldn't be easier to help. As part of the Golden Jubilee celebrations a volunteers' day has been organised for Whitehead on the morning (10am) of Saturday 29th November.

There will be representatives of the various departments on hand and they

will be able to explain what sort of jobs are available, what tasks you can get involved in. It will all be very informal - and don't worry, you will not be placed under any obligation.

TRAINS & EVENTS

Maynooth Shuttle: On Sunday 19th October an almost full train made excellent running along the Royal Canal to Maynooth, followed by another good run back to Pearse Station.

The second train was full to capacity, and ran well until Leixlip Louisa Bridge; here the track adhesion was very poor and the locomotive began to slip. The scheduled path from Maynooth was missed but the late departure led to some excellent running on the return journey.

Broomstick Belle: Bookings were slow for the Sunday 26th October trains, but a last minute rush saw the first two booked out while the third was about 80% full.

The weather stayed mostly dry and the crowds arriving at Whitehead enjoyed proceedings there without the need for brollies.

Haunted Gaol Express: On Sunday 2nd November at Connolly one could find a pirate, wicked witch, walking skeletons and even a German police officer in full uniform, including his truncheon!!!

No.461 ran tender-first to Wicklow, where passengers were transferred by road to the Gaol, 4 coaches in all were required.

Meanwhile the train operated a return trip to Greystones before returning to Dublin.

The Blue Train: A private train was operated for Founder's Web Summit on 7th November. It ran from Dublin Connolly to Midleton, Co. Cork.

The train was arranged at fairly short notice and owing to the unavailability of an 071 diesel loco from Irish Rail one was requested from Northern Ireland Railways. However, GM 113 was failed that morning and 233 took charge throughout, apart from 217 operating the train from Midleton to Cork.

The nominally empty return to Dublin Connolly was opened to members and their enthusiast friends.

Santa Special (Dublin): All but two (diesel) of the trains are booked up and tickets have been dispatched.

Santa Special (Belfast & Portadown): At the time of write these trains are very nearly sold out.

Mince Pie Special: Tickets for the post-Christmas wind-down train on Sunday 28th December will be on sale soon.

WHITEHEAD SITE

Whitehead Development: On Friday 24th October the latest phase of construction at Whitehead was handed over by the contractors, Clearys.

The elements delivered include:

- Extension to the engine shed, including wheel-drop area.
- Extension to rear and seaward side of the carriage shed.
- Car park.

NCC Railcar: No.1 has been off the

end of number 3 carriage shed siding for a number of years now, following a shunting miscalculation. With the ongoing extension work to the carriage sheds, and the possible forthcoming other works, it was decided that this vehicle needed to be re-railed. This was not going to be an easy or quick job, as the complete Larne end bogie was buried up to the axles in a mess of soil and mangled wooden sleepers. Work started in early October with the Site squad carefully jacking and packing the chassis of the vehicle. This then allowed the lifting of the bogie with slew jacks and these, together with chain hoists, corrected the twisted alignment of the complete bogie. The next step was to remove all the soil and broken sleepers and insert rail lengths under the wheels in line with the ends of the existing siding.

Once complete and secure, the whole railcar was slowly lowered onto the rails and then it was gingerly chain hoisted in the Belfast direction. All went well and the railcar can now be moved for future work.

LOCOMOTIVES

No.3BG: The appeal for the "Guinness" is progressing well. Please do support it.

BELFAST MEETINGS

12th November: Unfortunately, David Seymour who was booked to address the meeting on the subject of Sunday School excursions became ill (we wish him well) and to fill the gap, Charles Friel talked on the subject of "Rails Around Banbridge". This was followed by his scheduled "Rails around Greenisland".

3rd December: Robin Morton will recall the varied highlights of celebrating our Golden Jubilee year of 2014. Denis Grimshaw and others will bring us up to date with the recent

exciting changes at Whitehead and map out what is planned to further develop it as a working museum and tourist attraction. Alastair Maxwell, Whitehead volunteers' co-ordinator, will explain how you can help and sign up as a new recruit.

GENERAL

Annual General Meeting: Please be aware that there are a number of Board vacancies coming up for the incoming year:

- Vice-Chairman (preferably, but not essentially, from the south of Ireland).
- General Directors.

These positions are open to any paid-up Society members. Please do give serious consideration to getting involved, otherwise it will be the 'same old faces'. Get in touch if you need a nomination form.

1944 GNR Coaching Stock Book: In 2012 the Syndicate published a reproduction of this book (with a supplement) as a fundraiser for the No.171 Appeal.

A single sheet (size A4) of corrections and additional information is now available for free by sending a suitable sized stamped addressed envelope to:

S. Rafferty
30A Bishops Close
Norwich
Norfolk
NR7 0DY

Sales: For the last year, the Sales Team has been selling on Ebay a large collection of model railway items which was bequeathed to the RPSI by a late member. This has brought a welcome boost to our funds.

We are now in a position to accept further donations. By prior arrangement, reasonable quantities can be collected from any Translink railway or bus station, or from any major Irish Rail station. If you have

any items which you wish to donate, please get in touch.

RPSI 50

Bangor Floral Display: North Down Borough Council has said it in flowers to mark the Golden Jubilee of the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland. A spectacular floral display has been created at the appropriate location of the roundabout at Bangor Railway Station. It is designed to mark RPSI 50.

The floral display was officially opened by the Deputy Mayor of North Down, Alderman Anne Wilson, at a ceremony held in Bangor on 31st October.

Alderman Wilson said: "North Down is proud of its railway roots and in many ways, we can count Bangor as one of the first railway towns. The Belfast & Co Down Railway first reached Bangor in May 1865 so next year will mark the 150th anniversary of rail travel to the town. We commend the RPSI for the work it has done in terms of keeping the steam age alive and in letting a new generation enjoy the excitement of travel on board a steam train. North Down Borough Council is pleased to be able to play its part in the Society's Golden Jubilee celebrations by creating this floral display in honour of the Society."

Dr Joan Smyth, a Bangor resident who is vice-president of the RPSI, said the Society was deeply grateful to North Down Council and to its horticulturalist Ian Beaney for creating the display.

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