



February 2015

NEWS LETTER

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Board: In mid-November Niall Kelly was co-opted to the Board to replace Tony O'Shaughnessy as Carriage Offer (Dublin). Welcome to the former and thanks to the latter. Niall was formally elected at the AGM in Dublin on 24th January, as was Bill Garrioch who had been acting as Treasurer since earlier in the year.

The meeting was chaired by Vice-President Nora Owen, and no major items were aired, except ...

Grant: Denis Grimshaw announced to the meeting that the NI Tourist Board had, in principle agreed, to fund the Whitehead development project by £1.4m, bringing the total, with HLF and other sponsors, to £3.1m. If the NITB funding is confirmed it is hoped to start work in August 2015.

TRAINS & EVENTS

Volunteer Open Day: Saturday 29th November's event started at 10:00 as a trickle of prospective members and volunteers started to arrive. By 10:30 there was a group of about 20 new faces standing around chatting and drinking coffee when Robin Morton called the meeting to order. He introduced Alastair Maxwell, the

new Volunteer Co-ordinator, and explained what his role would be. The gathering was addressed by Alastair, who presented a video of the sorts of roles volunteers could perhaps undertake. Charles Friel, Johnny Glendinning, Denis Grimshaw, Philip Lockett, Paul McCann and Henry Ritchie each said a few words about their respective areas of responsibility.

After that there was a tour of the depot, with talks along the way by Dermot Mackie (Site), James Friel (Locomotives) and Phillip Newell (Carriages).

Santa Special: In all, 4,075 passengers were carried on the 15 Belfast and Portadown trains and 5,200 on the 15 Dublin trains (more seats per train available). This was a tremendous feat and all who took part are to be congratulated.

Mince Pie Special: The train on Sunday 28th December was a fitting end to the Society's 50th Anniversary year with a mainline trip between Belfast and Dublin with No.85 "Merlin".

The weather was fine and dry, but bitterly cold - made for great photography though.

The locomotive and crew were in blistering form and it was only a shame that both journeys were

marred by the seemingly unavoidable checks by hot box detectors.

Vice-President, Joan Smyth, rose to the occasion and had a slice of 50th Anniversary chocolate cake for every passenger on the train.

The stalwarts of the day were the on-board stewards who all did a magnificent job catering to the needs of the passengers (including the distribution of cake, mince pies and mulled wine). Well done to them - a fine example of volunteers in action.

The Society's guest on the train was Barney McCrory, celebrating his imminent retirement from NIR after over 50 years working on the railways. Is Barney the last remaining railway employee with steam-age experience?

Marble City: Tickets are on sale for the first public steam excursion of the year, to Kilkenny on Sunday 22nd March.

Easter: Trains will be running to Wicklow and Whitehead on the usual holiday dates.

LOCOMOTIVES

No.3BG "Guinness": The loco has been the subject of an appeal which has raised a healthy amount towards repairing the boiler and also the cracked front stretcher. The intention is to progress this work now that the No.131 overhaul is nearing an end.

No.4: Work is now resuming on getting this locomotive ready for traffic. The boiler has already been steam tested and fitted to the frames after overhaul, and on 22nd November the final major part, i.e. the cab roof was fitted. As well as connecting up pipework, etc., the electrics, including AWS/TPWS must be re-commissioned.

No.85: Minor repairs and preparation for the new season.

No.131: The major news on this locomotive is that it is once more moving under its own steam, the first move in over 50 years (anyone know the exact date?) being on Saturday 31st January. The boiler had been steam tested - first on Saturday 13th December, and again on Sunday 14th. (The first steam test after overhaul is done with the boiler "out of the frames" - the advantage being that all parts of the boiler are accessible if any attention is needed.)

There is still some overhaul work to complete, together with rectification of minor faults and adjustments, but all the essentials were satisfactory and work will now progress to the next stage which is out-road testing, hopefully before the end of February. (And of course, painting!)

The locomotive is paired with No.171's tender until a tender of its own can be built. The 1948 GNR(I) roller-bearing tender underframe is in the workshop to be overhauled prior to a body being fabricated. Funding is invited!

No.171: On Monday 22nd December, No.171's tender returned from overhaul by RRNEL in Shildon, Co. Durham. The locomotive will follow later.

WHITEHEAD SITE

JCB Loadall: For some time now the lack of a fork lifting and handling capacity at Whitehead has become apparent. Most deliveries nowadays come on a wooden pallet on flat bed lorry or trailer. So it was that the Site Officer got the opportunity to purchase a good quality JCB 530 B Loadall. This is an early machine, based on a Perkins 4 litre engine,

with a shuttle gearbox, and thankfully devoid of modern complicated electronics. Also, the machine, unlike many others on offer, came with both forks and an additional, almost new, shovel bucket at a competitive price, which included delivery. Forks and bucket are quick easy hitch types, making for simple and rapid changeovers.

MEMBERSHIP

Bulletin: If you have an email address and don't receive our frequent Bulletins, then send in your address and you will get signed up. Send to:

rpsitrains@hotmail.com

BELFAST MEETINGS

12th November: Charles Friel presented "Rails Around Banbridge" and "Rails Around Greenisland", both excellent shows.

3rd December: "That Was The Year That Was" was a round-up of the 50th anniversary year by Robin Morton, Denis Grimshaw and Phil Lockett.

14th January: "When We Had Goods Trains" by Derek Young and "The Warrenpoint Branch Remembered" by Joe Cassells were followed by film on both subjects by Fred Cooper.

11th February: Once again the much-missed Derry Road is remembered in film. "Farewell The Derry Road" is Fred Cooper's comprehensive film coverage of the line which closed 50 years ago this month.

CARRIAGE & WAGON

26: Not exactly historically correct, but the Mk3 sleeper coach 10651 at Whitehead has been undergoing a makeover to NCC maroon livery, with

a change in identity to 26, the next in the series of NCC caravan coaches.

547: The Whitehead diner is out of traffic for electrical repairs and kitchen upgrade.

1508: The roof has been repainted on this Cravens snack car. The jumping jacks in the droplight mechanisms have been freed up. Missing luggage racks were salvaged from 1529 (spare parts Craven). Seat cushions collected for reupholstering. It's hoped to commence painting of this vehicle into blue and cream livery during February.

1505 & 1532: The Cravens standards have been selected for interior and exterior refurbishment in connection with a forthcoming prestigious charter; work will commence on these in March after 1508's return to traffic.

3173: Overhaul work nearing completion at Mullingar. This van will return to service during the 2015 season. Consideration is being given to completing painting at Inchicore.

3185: This van has completed its ninth Santa season in a row (having been on hire from IÉ for the 2006 season). A temperamental burner resulted in No.461 supplying heat for part of the first weekend of the Santa season. After repair, and despite trying to outdo No.461 for smoke generation, it kept the train warm for the rest of the season. It will cover the early part of the season after which it is intended to swap it in Mullingar with 3173.

Carriage Transfer: On 25th January 2015 NIR GM 112 moved two of the former Gatwick Express carriages from Ballymena to Belfast York Road to join two of their companions. The 8 coaches and generator van have been acquired by the Society. On 1st

February NIR GM 112 moved the four (8943+8944 and 8941+8942) from Belfast York Road to Whitehead Excursion Station.

GENERAL

Fundraising: The income from raffles on recent trains has been earmarked for specific projects:

- Dublin trains, towards the Cravens appeal (yet to be officially launched).
- Belfast trains, towards the No.3BG "Guinness" appeal (launched 2014).

Both appeals have been well-supported and the fundraisers on both trains are to be congratulated. Plus, special thanks to those who have contributed so far.

3D Scanning: Thanks to generous funding by GROW South Antrim, the Society has been able to tender for non-destructive 3D scanning of some of our vehicles.

3D scanning provides a permanent archive, recording and preserving the external and internal detail and condition of these key artefacts. The scans will provide wider access online and will be used in a variety of other digital applications.

In this contract, we are getting 3D scans made of ten vehicles - locomotives No.3 "R.H. Smyth", No.85 "Merlin", No.186 and B142, NCC carriages 68, 87 and 91, the GNR Directors' Saloon, a Guinness grain van and goods Brake van 81.

Each vehicle is being scanned externally, from above and from below (where possible) as well as internally. Each vehicle has had up to 20 separate scans made to ensure complete coverage. The highly-specialised scanning camera records up to half a million infra-red signals a

second and, as each scan can last about five minutes, there is quite a lot of data!

The principal output will be highly-detailed point-clouds which can be rotated on any axis, cross-sectioned in any plane and measured, to the nearest millimetre, between any two points. These will be used to generate plan and cross-sectional drawings as well as form the basis of other 3D model types.

Our contractors, CMC Associates, are also taking thousands of photographs which will be used to add texture to the drawings and thus provide highly-detailed pictures which can also be rotated, cross sectioned and measured in the same way as the drawings.

These pictures are of the vehicles as they are now but the final models could be modified to demonstrate different liveries or configurations.

This project can also be seen as a pilot for making the entire RPSI collection accessible digitally. These assets may also have the potential to generate income for the RPSI through generating small scale models for sale, virtual objects or perhaps future files for 3D printing. Photos of the scanning can be viewed on the website.

Website: The locomotive and carriage pages have had significant new material provided. A page on the foundry has also been added.

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