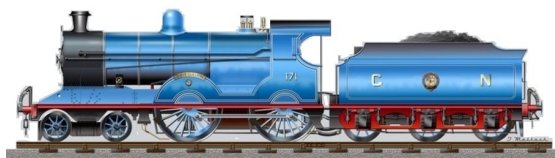


Railway Preservation Society of Ireland



July 2017

NEWS LETTER

WHITEHEAD SITE

Signalling: On Tuesday 9th May the former lever frame from the recently-closed Castlerock signal cabin was delivered to Whitehead.

Film Contract: On Tuesday 27th June, filming by Zephyr Films for "Trautmann" took place at Whitehead, using locomotive No.186, ex-LMS NCC 1st/2nd compartment coach 68, ex LMS NCC Diner 87 and ex LMS NCC Brown Van 697. All of these vehicles are a result of the RPSI's own work and show that the effort and foresight of volunteers can produce very big results. The film contract generated a decent boost to the Society's coffers.

The film will tell the story of Bert Trautmann, a German paratrooper who fought on various fronts in World War 2 before being captured by the Allies and transferred to a prisoner of war camp in England. There he undertook various labours before, upon release, he refused repatriation and revealed a knack for goalkeeping with St Helen's Town football team before being spotted and signing for Manchester City, with whom he broke his neck while playing in the 1956 FA Cup final, but somehow managed to stay on and help see the team through to a 3-1 victory over Birmingham City. Throughout this period he had risen courtesy of his talent from hostile initial receptions on

the football pitch, where he was looked upon as 'the Enemy', through to legend. Trautmann died in 2013 having picked up an OBE for his promotion of post-war Anglo-German understanding.

Over the ten days prior to 27th June, Whitehead Excursion Station was transformed by the film company into St Helen's station of the 1950s, with extensive cladding used to cover the recently-built station building and signal box to make it look more authentic. A large smoke machine and generator were brought in and piping set up to carry the smoke and steam effects to No.186.

On Sunday 25th June a major shunt took place using No.3BG "Guinness" to extract the heritage stock from the museum and place it at the platform for filming. This process was greatly aided by the mainline set being off-site operating the "Sea Bangor" trains, leaving the platform road free, into which the carriage shed B and C Roads could be emptied to get to the museum stock. The film train having been formed up and ready by 15:00, it was parked on the turntable road until the Bangor train's return at 18:45. No.85 was dispatched to the engine shed for disposal and the Mk2s were split and shunted away from the platform; three went into the space left in the carriage shed by removal of the heritage stock and three went into the loop road to provide a background screen to the train so that internal filming in 68 would not pick up

anything distracting in the background. Finally, the film train was placed at the platform.

A space was left in the carriage shed for the film company to place a small caravan which they screened off with dark shrouds so they could film a night scene inside. The caravan had been at Murlough Bay the previous day for filming of daytime scenes.

The film train was static throughout its role and the attendant smoke machine and pipes provided the effects. There had originally been talk of No.4, being more typically British in appearance than many of our engines, coming north to star as the film engine but the logistics of this were avoided when, at the last moment, the film makers spotted No.186 in the museum shed.

One of the main scenes filmed was where Bert Trautmann is leaving St Helen's football club and heading to join Manchester City football club ... it is a big move for him and as he leaves the railway station his wife tells him that she is pregnant ... a joyous moment, etc. The father of his wife is the St Helen's manager and he bids him farewell also in another scene.

Bert Trautmann is played by German actor, David Kross; Margaret his wife is played by Scottish newcomer actor Freya Mayor and the St Helen's Manager and his father-in-law is played by well-known Manchester actor John Henshaw.

On Wednesday 28th June, film company and caravan having departed, a shunt with No.3BG re-formed the Mk2 train and returned it to its stabling point at the platform whilst placing the film train in B-Road for temporary storage before the bulk of it is returned to the museum, keeping 68 out for train rides duties with brake van 81 (informally "Ivan").

The RPSI in its small but growing Whitehead rake of restored vehicles (coaches 68 and 87, wagons 81, 602 and

697) has a set of assets which can produce results such as the above.

TRAINS & EVENTS

Marble Tribesman: The diesel railtour on Saturday 8th April departed Connolly with GM 081 up front. The weather was beautiful with the sun shining.

First stop was at Kildare, three passengers picked up and an on-time departure, and thence to Portarlinton, the first photo stop, followed by a crossing in the loop at Geashill and a rare photo stop in Clara.

A crew change in Athlone was followed by a photo stop in Ballinasloe. After a crossing in Woodlawn there was a photo stop at Attymon, a favourite for the photographers as the road bridge is an ideal location.

After departing Galway there were stops at Woodlawn, Ballinasloe and Athlone. The train stopped in middle road at Kildare for the locomotive to run around. At Kilkenny GM 088 was waiting; it coupled up and gave a great run back to Dublin Connolly.

Dublin Riviera: No.4 and No.461 were both lit up early in the morning of Easter Monday, 17th April, and both were in good order, but No.4 was the locomotive used. The two trains started from Dublin Pearse for Greystones.

This was the first trip from Dublin to use online booking, and it worked extremely well with no problems encountered.

Easter Eggspress: On Easter Monday and Easter Tuesday, 17th & 18th April, a total of four full trains operated to Whitehead behind No.85, with no operational issues.

At Whitehead Excursion Station the Stables building was opened for shop and toilets, with passengers being able to view the exhibits there.

Old Newry Society: This charter was a one-way trip from Whitehead Excursion Station to Newry on Saturday 22nd April.

After an afternoon spent elsewhere, the excursionists were transported to Whitehead by coach, where they boarded the train, hauled by No.85. At 18:05, the train departed. The first stop was at Lisburn Down water column where the tender was topped up. After that it was non-stop to Poyntzpass (first visit since May 2014) to set down some passengers.

After Newry, where the majority of passengers detrained, it was a tender-first empty carriages working back to Whitehead, setting down crew at Portadown, Lisburn, Belfast Central and Carrickfergus.

Shannon & Suir Railtour: The tour weekend began on Thursday 4th May with the usual positioning run from Whitehead to Dublin. No.85 “Merlin” was in charge and the train of the Mark 2 set was well filled. An increasing number of cross-channel participants now stay in Belfast or Carrickfergus the night before.

Arrival in Dublin was on time at 13:45, and those who stayed around the station had the additional bonus of seeing No.85 going on shed, then hauling out No.4 to be turned for the weekend. The shunt also involved No.461, so for a short time all three engines were seen together.

The Friday diesel tour continues to grow in popularity, and this year GM 086 was the motive power for the “South Kerry” day trip to Killarney.

The set for this trip, and the rest of the weekend was 1508, 1505, 1514, 1522, 1506, 1541 and van 3173. Following a delay at Inchicore due to a failed set, the Cravens were transferred to Connolly at 10:47, one and a half hours late.

Locomotive 086 eventually got away 45 minutes late, but Joe McKeown’s ‘four minute rule’ for each photo stop, together with some smart running, had the train on time at Mallow without the loss of any scheduled stops. Arrival at Killarney was a few minutes early.

The return trip was scheduled for just one

stop at Mallow, but early arrival at Banteer led to a stop there to await a crossing. There was a non-stop run from Mallow to Dublin, taking almost exactly the 160 minutes scheduled.

On Saturday morning, as passengers arrived at Connolly, they were somewhat disappointed in the news from the shed that No.85 had been failed due to an issue with a big end bearing.

No.4, already in steam, deputised and the main tour began from Dublin on a dull and overcast morning only 17 minutes late. There was a brief stop at Hazelhatch to allow the 10:15 Waterford to overtake, followed by a smart run to Portarlinton for water in the Up platform where a Dublin Civil Defence team on exercise made a very expert job of watering the engine (we were to use them again in Gort). After a stop in Tullamore, arrival at Athlone was just 18 minutes down.

After watering, departure was on time, and driver Ken Fox gave another smart run non-stop to Woodlawn Loop, then on to Athenry, where a delayed departure was down to the late-running 13:45 from Galway, which preceded the special to Limerick. There was a very fine run to Gort - just keeping the tight schedule. After crossing the Limerick - Galway there was a clear run to Limerick where GM 074 was on hand to shunt the train.

Sunday morning dawned dull and chilly, but the train left right on time at 09:10 for a bunker-first run to Waterford. The first stop was at Tipperary, giving one of three opportunities to photograph some of IE’s remaining semaphore signals on this attractive route. A water stop at Clonmel had a generous allowance, and with plenty of time for photography departure was slightly early. After Carrick on Suir, Waterford was reached five minutes early despite a stop at Dunkitt to allow the Waterford - Dublin to leave the station.

There is now only one platform for all services at Waterford, and GM 088

quickly shunted the RPSI train into the yard, releasing No.4 to follow and take coal and water. No sooner was this complete, than the luxury Belmond Grand Hibernian train arrived from Dublin - hauled by an immaculate 081. Once its patrons had departed, 088 took the BGH train to the yard, and No.4 propelled the Cravens back to the platform.

A fine run to Kilkenny saved five minutes on schedule. There, the original plan was for No.85 to replace No.4, but since No.4 was now working through to Dublin she was serviced and turned via the Lavistown triangle. This delayed departure by just over 40 minutes. No time was lost in the subsequent running, and indeed the photo stop at Carlow was honoured - though Joe McKeown ensured it was for just four minutes! After water at Athy, the lateness was reduced to less than 30 minutes. There was a brief stop at Kildare for the 16:35 from Cork to overtake, and then a clear road all the way to Dublin, arriving just 29 minutes late.

On Monday, No.4 took the train of Mk2s north, departing at 11:32 from Connolly. Following a leisurely run to Dundalk, where No.4 took water, there was a good run to keep the tight 41 minute booking to Portadown. A final water stop at Lisburn was followed by a clear run into Central, where the train arrived right on time. The last lap to Whitehead was punctually done, and the weekend ended on-time at Whitehead Excursion Station.

For the die-hards, and those in no rush to get back to work, Tuesday 9th May was the end of tour with the traditional coach trip, which is always a relaxed and varied experience.

After departure from the Europa Bus Station into the busy Belfast streets the bus headed to Grey Point Fort on the south shore of Belfast Lough. This is a wartime gun emplacement which protected the seaward approaches to Belfast, now maintained and operated as

a museum. A quick dash followed to the Transport Gallery at Cultra - always plenty to see, and difficult to get visitors away!

The coach departed for the north shores of Belfast Lough and lunch in Whitehead, followed by a visit to Whitehead Railway Museum, and a behind the scenes look at the new facilities.

To round up the day, the coach took a detour to show participants the fine scenery of Islandmagee over Larne Lough and as far as Brown’s Bay, before heading back to Belfast to end the tour with a post mortem in a local hostelry.

Howth 170: Sunday 28th May was a glorious day and the crowds began arriving early at Connolly for the train.

Train 1 was hauled by No.461 for the run to Howth. The passengers on this train were due to return to Dublin Connolly on the 13:35 departure ex Howth.

Train 2 started from Howth, hauled by GM 088 to Connolly - there are no run-round facilities at Howth. In the meantime, No.461 returned light to the shed for watering and servicing. The return leg of Train 2 departed behind No.461. Passengers for the return of Train 1 now departed Howth behind 088.

For Train 3 No.85 was in charge. This was a trial after repairs to the bearing which ran hot on the Shannon & Suir. It was an excellent run, resulting in what would appear to be the second visit of a V Class Locomotive to the Howth branch; the first time was in GNR days. Examination of No.85 by RPSI volunteers at Howth discovered that more work needed to be done on the bearing. Again, 088 brought the train back to Connolly and No.85 returned light to the shed there.

Midland Compound: Saturday 3rd June began in Connolly shed with an air of hope for No.85. During the preceding week, repairs were carried out by RPSI staff and volunteers. The centre big end bearing was taken down and dressed. The

entire fire grate was removed to allow attention to be given to the lower stays inside the firebox. Both the big end and grate were refitted to the locomotive on the Thursday.

To add to the situation, No.461 had also suffered complications which ruled her out of traffic, but she also received attention which got her back to serviceable status.

As a precaution, both No.85 and No.461 were in steam. No.85 left the shed early for a series of light engine moves to help run in the bearing. These took the locomotive onto new ground for a V class compound. First heading very leisurely to Clonsilla, and then two return trips from Clonsilla to Dunboyne/M3 Parkway. Several stops were made along the way to check the temperature of the bearing and it was decided No.85 was fit to take the public train to Maynooth and No.461 was stood down for the day.

The afternoon trip was another first for the locomotive with a passenger train to Maynooth. Things were taken slowly going out, with stops along the way (Navan Road Parkway and Clonsilla) to make sure all was well. Even with the stops Maynooth was reached 5 minutes early. On the way back to Connolly a further stop was made at Clonsilla.

Steam Enterprise: A good run from Whitehead and Belfast on Sunday 4th June behind No.4 resulted in an on-time arrival in Dublin. However, the run home was more difficult for the crew because poor quality coal started to come down to the shovelling plate. Steaming was adversely affected and time was steadily lost on the run, being 30 minutes late in Belfast.

Steam & Jazz: The early season programme of 4 trains has now finished. Everything went well operationally, with booked out trains throughout.

This year's itinerary was Belfast Central to Lisburn for the first music stop, then to Whitehead Excursion Station for an

extended stop where a marquee on the platform allowed the band to be under cover.

The exception was the train on 23rd June which followed last year's itinerary: Belfast - Lisburn - Portadown - Lisburn - Belfast. Temporary unavailability of Whitehead platform due to film work led to this change.

There is another train on 25th August, but this is already sold out.

Emerald Isle Explorer: The Steam Dreams charter consisted of June dates:

Thu 15	461	Dublin-Rosslare
Thu 15	GM	Rosslare-Dublin
Fri 16	85	Dublin-Killarney
Sun 18	85	Killarney-Portarlinton
Sun 18	4	Portarlinton-Westport
Mon 19	4	Westport-Claremorris-Ballina-Claremorris-Westport
Tue 20	4	Westport-Dublin
Tue 20	85	Dublin-Belfast
Wed 21	85	Whitehead-Belfast-Bangor-Portadown-Belfast-Whitehead

Wed 21 GM Whitehead-Dublin

A huge amount of work went into preparing the train: BR Van 3173, 1543, 1514, 1532, 1506, 1522, 1505, being fitted with carpets, curtains, antimacassars and table lamps in the open and bar carriages.

On the Thursday, No.461 hauled the train to Rosslare. Most of the passengers were dropped at Wexford, although a few opted to travel to Rosslare Strand. The return was with GM 075, which had travelled from Inchicore to Wexford the day before.

Friday's train left Dublin in beautiful sunshine with No.85. The first stop was at Hazelhatch to check the locomotive, and again at Ballybrophy. After arrival in Thurles loop, No.85 uncoupled and set off

to Limerick Junction to turn and be serviced. GM 084 arrived and hooked up and brought the train to Limerick Junction. The special was overtaken in Charleville. After Mallow there was a good run to Killarney where the special arrived only 3 minutes behind time.

Saturday was a local trip from Killarney to Tralee, and ran in fine Kerry weather.

Sunday was a long day with an early start. Water was taken at Thurles and it was on schedule all the way to Portarlinton where No.4 arrived at the same time. No.4 proceeded onto the siding behind the Up platform to take water. All passengers were disembarked and No.85 brought the set into the running loop, where No.4 coupled up and brought the set back to the Up platform. No.85 then proceeded into the siding for water and servicing.

At Athlone the engine and dining car were watered. Another water stop in Ballyhaunis, and it was onwards to a Westport arrival at 17:20.

Monday was a trip between Westport and Ballina. On arrival at Claremorris, all the passengers had to transfer to Platform 3 (Tuam platform) to where the train was shunted. On arrival at Ballina the set was shunted to the freight yard for servicing as local trains to Manulla Junction departed. No.4 ran boiler-first again to Claremorris and then chimney first to Westport.

There was a very early start (07:45) from Westport on Tuesday. Stops were made in Ballyhaunis, Roscommon, Athlone and Kildare's middle road. Eventual arrival at Connolly was at 13:45, just in time for passengers to observe NIR GM 112 arrive with the RPSI Mk2 set into Platform 4.

No.85 hooked up and departed on time at 14:45. After a short stop at Drogheda to check the loco, the train arrived in Dundalk and was shunted in order for the Down Enterprise to overtake. Thence it was on to Lisburn for water, and Belfast

Central, 16 minutes late.

On Wednesday No.85 and train departed Whitehead Excursion Station at 09:35. As passengers had got caught in traffic to Whitehead a stop was made at Carrickfergus to pick them up. The train departed Belfast Central at 10:33, and there followed a magnificent run to Bangor.

During the shunt there, NIR announced that a local train from Bangor to Portadown was cancelled due to problems with a signal. As the steam train was non-stop to Belfast, NIR took up the offer of help and 30 of their passengers were carried to Central. They could even avail of tea and coffee on the trip!

After Central it was on to Portadown, with a stop at Lisburn for water. There then was a great run back to Whitehead Excursion Station arriving there on time at 15:42.

While the passengers visited Whitehead Railway Museum. RPSI volunteers and Steam Dreams staff prepared the set for the run behind GM 112 to Dublin Connolly. Departure was at 17:45, calling at Belfast Central. A great run followed, like the diesel Enterprise of old with the Mk2s, arriving on Connolly Platform 6 at 20:45. 112 ran round and departed just before 22:00 with the empty carriages back to Whitehead.

Engine Transfer: No.461 moved from Dublin to Whitehead on Sunday 2nd July. It is the intention to examine the engine with a view to the possible renewing of its tubes.

Sea Breeze/Arklow Adventure: Sunday 9th July was a clear hot sunny day as the train left Connolly behind No.4. After arrival in Arklow, passengers left for the delights of the town and another trainload boarded for the short trip to Gorey. After a good run to Gorey the train arrived on time.

No.4 was serviced and the train departed on time for Arklow. The departure for

Dublin was held up by a late running train from Dublin. Arrival in Connolly was at 18:17.

Summer Steam: As reported above, the filming of "Trautmann" on 27th June involved the extraction from the museum of heritage ex-LMS(NCC) coach 68. Rather than return 68 to the museum, the opportunity was taken to switch her with Irish Rail presidential saloon 5408 so that 68 could be used for the summer train rides season. In a monster shunt to rearrange the carriage shed on 12th July, 68 was duly re-united with ex-GNR(I) 20-ton brake van 81 ("Ivan") for the first time since 2013 - we think. To complete the first dedicated heritage train rides set since 2011, on Saturday 15th July No.3BG - aka "The Guinness Engine" from the recent appeal - pulled 68 and 81 out of the carriage shed and into the train rides service - which they were all overhauled to work.

Following a long absence of routine train rides in Whitehead, there had been some speculation as to how well the day might go; would there be any visitors and passengers to keep the day interesting and make it worthwhile of the train crew's time? In the event there was nothing to worry about; there was a constant stream of passengers in weather that could have gone either way, but fortunately went the right way! No.3BG and stock behaved very well and it was pleasing to finally see them again on public duties.

There were some significant differences to train rides this time as opposed to past years. Firstly, they run from 12:30-15:30 - they used to be much later. Secondly, there is the new restaurant in the station building. The earlier timing seemed to link in very well with a lunchtime rush on the station restaurant; the new restaurant and the train rides every 20 minutes at lunchtime complemented each other very well. Thirdly, but by no means least, there

is the much improved site tour over what was offered in the past.

It is possible to do any combination of eat in the restaurant, have a tour of the museum or travel on the train rides for the next 3 weekends: 22nd & 29th July and 5th August.

The Boyne: On Sunday 23rd July there will be trains from Drogheda to Dundalk and Skerries, with a connecting train from Dublin.

Portrush Flyer: This year's season will be Sundays 30th July and 6th, 13th, 20th & 27th August.

The Slaney: On Sunday 6th August there will be a train from Dublin to Enniscorthy, with a local trip to Wexford.

IRRS Charter: This year's charter of diesel-hauled Cravens will be on Saturday 12th August, visiting Howth and Sligo.

Radio Train: The popular train to Kilkenny will be operating on Sunday 20th August.

East Coaster: In partnership with the Modern Railway Society of Ireland, there will be a diesel-hauled railtour on Saturday 9th September from Whitehead and Belfast through to Rosslare with the Mk2 set.

Steam Enterprise: To commemorate the 70th anniversary of the Enterprise there will be a trip to Dublin on Sunday 24th September. It is hoped to run the return leg non-stop, although this latter has to be confirmed.

Munster Double: On Saturday 14th October it is planned to run a double-headed 071 tour to Cork and Tralee.

LOCOMOTIVES

No.85 "Merlin": Unfortunately, following the operation on Thursday 4th May, No.85 was declared a failure on inspection in Dublin.

A team of RPSI volunteers dismantled the bearing to assess the extent of the

heating. Once it was stripped down it was clear that repairs could not be effected in time to allow No.85 to bring the tour train to Belfast on the Monday.

The brass bearing was brought to Whitehead on the Saturday afternoon for detailed assessment. RPSI volunteers and Heritage Engineering Ireland staff worked together on re-metalling, machining and fitting the bearing.

Running in (Howth and Maynooth) and further repairs were carried out prior to a fine performance on the Steam Dreams trains.

Move: GNR(I) tender No.43 was moved from Mullingar to Whitehead on Thursday 11th May. It was loaded by a local mobile crane onto a low-loader and was then off-loaded at Whitehead using the gantries.

A storage location is to be decided, but for the present it is on the gantry road with the buffers next to Belfast to facilitate shunting.

It will need some cleaning and investigation of condition of bearings, etc., before further moves. At the very least it will need cleaned out, bearings examined, two springs replaced and some protection work carried out.

GENERAL

Annual General Meeting: The AGM in Dublin on Saturday 13th May was a busy affair, with Whitehead Railway Museum expenditure being the main topic of interest from the floor.

Changes to the Board saw the retirement of Johnny Glendinning and new recruit Edward Friel joining. David Houston has agreed to remain as Vice-Chairman for one further year only.

Curatorial Committee: The Society's "The Gift of a Lifetime" circular (and on the website) outlines how members and supporters can leave financial donations to the Society in their wills.

In addition to money, the Society is often offered gifts of railway artefacts and items of railway heritage and interest from members and non-members alike and, sadly, their executors.

While all of these offers are greatly appreciated, and many will be useful in the new Museum, donors should bear in mind that our display facilities and storage space are very limited.

As a result, the Curatorial Committee would like to encourage all members and supporters, who may be contemplating leaving a bequest of railway memorabilia to the Society, to discuss the nature of the bequest and its suitability for the RPSI collection with a member of the Curatorial Committee before deciding on a course of action.

Such a discussion would be entirely confidential and, in the event that items are not appropriate for our formal collection, the donor would then be able to make alternative arrangements for their bequest. This might include permitting the RPSI to dispose of items for the Society's benefit.

The Curatorial Committee appreciates the help and understanding of all RPSI members and supporters in dealing with this sensitive matter and looks forward to hearing from members and supporters when the time is right for them.

An email to the Committee will set things in motion:

rpsimuseum@gmail.com

Vacancy: The Events Co-ordinator at Whitehead, Sean Conlon, has decided to move on, thus creating a vacancy.

EDITORIAL ADDRESS

148 Church Road, Newtownabbey,

Co. Antrim, BT36 6HJ.

Company Registration: NI010798

Charity Registration: NIC102389 (NI), CHY6141 (RoI)

www.steamtrainsireland.com

rpsitrains@hotmail.com