



September 2019

NEWS LETTER

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Change: The meeting at the Irish Railway Record Society premises in Dublin on Saturday 21st September was a quiet affair.

The only change to the Board was the retirement of Dermot Mackie. Many thanks to him for his service to the Society at this level over many years.

TRAINS & EVENTS

Steam & Jazz: The first of the late summer trains was on Friday 23rd August.

Both No.4 and No.131 required attention during the preceding week, but as No.4 was needed in Dublin for the Steam Dreams charter in September, work was concentrated on getting it ready.

The evening began with a 'false start' at Whitehead for the benefit of a BBC film crew.

The rest of the night went well with an appreciative passenger contingent. The band too was well received.

30th August was a showery evening which didn't dampen the spirits of the

passengers and a good night was had by all.

This was the end of another very successful season of Jazz trains. Thank you to all those members who travelled or organised parties.

See you next year.

Marble City: There were a number of issues to be sorted before the train on Saturday 24th August.

The most serious was the GNR turntable at Connolly Station. One piece of rail in the table was in a very poor condition and had to be repaired as No.85 had to be turned. A possession was put in place on the preceding Monday morning on the turntable road and remained in place until the Friday.

The points were clipped and scotched with a stop board at the entrance to the table road. A special thanks to John Ferguson and James Spurle from HEI who did magnificent work on both the turntable and with the superheater elements on No.85. A CME Infrastructure team got the table in a serviceable condition, and No.85 was turned on the Friday afternoon.

The Sir Henry Inglesby Fife and Drum Corps from Carrickfergus played to

the waiting passengers on the concourse at Connolly station on the Saturday morning and then marched to Platform 5 where they further entertained passengers and those waiting for DART trains.

On the platform at Kilkenny No.85 and its train of passengers was greeted by a group dressed in World War 1 British Army uniforms, nurses and civilian attire of the period. There was also a large amount of props on the platform. They were commemorating soldiers from Kilkenny who fought in the WW1.

There is a commemoration plaque on the wall of the station with the names of all who fought; the ones that were killed were marked by a cross beside their name. Our band played beside the soldiers "It's a Long Way to Tipperary".

Steam Saturday: The train rides continued to the end of August and a satisfactory financial outcome resulted. These are small, but worthwhile operations, providing a boost to café takings, train fares, crew training and grade progression.

Volunteers who arrived early for the 31st August event found that the gazebo that the jazz band had been playing in on the Friday night before had been blown away - over the station building and into the nearest garden - in spite of the gazebo being weighed down with sandbags!!

Well done to our volunteers for their part in promoting the Museum. If you can help distribute some of the Museum leaflets then do get in touch. Over the autumn, winter and spring it

is hoped to operate one day a month (usually the last Saturday).

Confirmed dates: 28th September (Volunteers Day), 26th October and 30th November (Victorian Street Fair).

Locomotive Transfer (1): A busy three consecutive days of steam ended on Sunday 25th August with the light engine movement of No.4 from Whitehead to Dublin.

Charter (1): A private booking for the museum, café and train rides took place on Sunday 8th September. The visitors were about 50 staff and families from Herbert Smith Freehills, one of the world's leading legal businesses, who have offices in Belfast.

Train rides, catering, site tours and face painting were provided as part of the package.

Steam Dreams: The carriages selected for this tour were 1505 and 1532 (Pullman style, with carpets, curtains, antimacassars and table lamps), 1522 (kitchen, curtains, antimacassars and lamps), 1506 (Premier Dining, carpets, curtains and antimacassars), 1514 (bar, curtains, antimacassars and lamps), 1508 (antimacassars and curtains), plus generator van 3173.

The set was shunted in to that order in Inchicore Works on Thursday 5th September. Steam Dreams staff loaded and dressed the carriages.

Friday 6th September: Dublin Connolly to Killarney with No.85

On route, the train was shunted to the pocket loop on the Limerick line and the engine was turned to work

tender-first into Killarney.

Saturday 7th September: Killarney to Cork & return, with No.85.

Sunday 8th September: Killarney to Galway.

No.85 to Limerick Junction, where it was detached to run light to Dublin. In the event there was a brake issue near Sallins which required towing the locomotive from there to Dublin. At Limerick Junction Pocket Loop a diesel was attached for the section to Limerick. There, No.4 hooked on and ran to Galway via Ennis, changing ends in Athenry.

Monday 9th September: No.4 ran light from Galway to Westport. A day off for the on-train crew.

Tuesday 10th September: Galway to Westport & return.

The outward leg of the trip was by diesel. At Westport, No.4 once more took charge for the run back to Galway, via Athlone.

Wednesday 11th September: Galway to Dublin Connolly with No.4.

The trip covered 880 miles, 726 by steam (No.85 = 386, No.4 = 340) and 154 by diesel (081 = 22, 071 = 132). We travelled through 13 of the 26 Counties.

The success of the trip was a credit to the RPSI volunteers of all departments. A special thanks to all Irish Rail staff in each station who were magnificent, and to the Regulators who assisted in providing alternative paths when there were delays.

European Heritage Open Day: 168

people took advantage of free museum admission for Open Day on Saturday 14th September. Train rides with No.131 had their third busiest day of the year.

A group of 6 donors to the 131 Appeal were entertained to lunch, a museum visit and a footplate ride on No.131, ably guided by Tom Mathers.

Locomotive Transfer (2): On Monday 16th September No.85 made its return to Whitehead.

It was needed in Whitehead to haul the Steam Enterprise later in the month as No.131 is not approved to cross the border.

Charter (2): On Sunday 22nd September No.4 hauled a one-way trip to Greystones for Joe O Reilly Tours. The set had been dressed in Inchicore the previous week with table lamps table cloths and antimacassars.

There were 120 guests from India on board.

This was a very successful operation in conjunction with a long-standing partner, Joe O'Reilly Tours. It was also our first operation serving the increasingly important Asian tourist market.

Volunteers Day: Train rides and events for existing and prospective volunteers at Whitehead will take place on Saturday 28th September.

Following last year's event a number of new volunteers emerged and it is hoped this event will be equally successful.

Steam Enterprise: The trip on Sunday 29th September was approaching sold

out at the time of writing.

Cobh Rambler: Everyone involved is looking forward to Saturday 5th October for this exciting double-headed diesel railtour.

Tickets still available.

Broomstick Belle: Tickets for the Sunday 27th October trains are on sale.

Model Railway Day: Planning for the event is ramping up.

It will take place on Saturday 9th November between 10am and 5pm.

At least two dozen model railway layouts have already accepted the Society's invitation to exhibit. The layouts will be displayed at various locations throughout Whitehead Railway Museum, including in the Stables and the Carriage Gallery.

There will be steam trains rides at the platform for most of the day allowing visitors to experience the real thing as well as the enjoying the fantastic selection of model railways on show.

The Edwardian Tea Room will be open for the event serving food and drink. Additionally, there will be tea and scones in one or both of the dining cars in the Carriage Gallery.

Highlights of the show will be a layout of a distillery build by Peter Smith coming over from England for the first time.

Another hoped-for first is North Down Model Railway Club's new "Antrim" layout.

Tony Ragg's O gauge layout "Stanfording" features many vehicles and buildings that can be seen for real

at Whitehead. A promotional video has been created using Tony's models.

We are also looking forward to a new N gauge layout in a briefcase featuring a tractor factory.

Admission prices are £10 for adults which includes admission to the Museum to see the layouts and steam train rides. Visitors arriving by NI Railways on the day will get a 20% discount on production of their train ticket. We also hope to put in place an online pre booking option in due course.

This will be a busy day for the Society with lots of work required before, during and after the event. We would welcome help from members with this. It promises to be a very popular day and a very worthwhile one, bringing many new visitors to Whitehead.

Put it in your diary!!

Santa Special: Tickets for Dublin trains were due to go on sale on 28th September.

Belfast and Portadown tickets will be released around the end of October.

LOCOMOTIVES

No.3BG "Guinness": The engine operates train rides at Whitehead.

It is usually the 'go to' shunting locomotive.

No.4: In traffic, currently based in Dublin. New tyres recently fitted.

No.85 "Merlin": In traffic at Whitehead. Rectification of a fault in a bypass valve seems to have resulted

in improved performance.

The brake issue experienced on the Steam Dreams trip was dealt with on return to Dublin.

No.131: In traffic at Whitehead. Adjustments to injectors under way.

No.171 "Sieve Gullion": Partly completed overhaul work has now been resumed at Whitehead, and an appeal launched.

Main outstanding work is renewal of boiler stays and tubes, replacement of one valve liner, attention to pistons, valves and big ends, general refurbishment.

(Nos. 131 and 171 should take over from Nos. 4 and 85 so that overhaul work can be carried out on them.

Hopefully Nos. 131, 85, and 171 will overlap briefly to achieve three GNR(I) locos in traffic at once.)

No.461: In store at Whitehead pending overhaul. Recent steaming performance has not been up to scratch and is being investigated before the overhaul plan is finalised.

No.105: NCC Mogul project. Work has been progressing on rebuilding boiler G824 (which can be used either for No.4 or No.105).

Patterns for major castings on the loco are under way. Some of the steel castings have been made including the motion brackets and horn blocks.

The main frames have been profiled and partly drilled. The frames and some of the castings are now at Whitehead.

In Store: No.184 and No.186 are in store, also No.27 and LP&HC No.3. The latter is being cosmetically

restored for display pending eventual overhaul.

Stored locos are of course on display as much as possible to visitors.

Whitehead Diesels: Little has been achieved over the summer due to volunteers being busy with operational duties, but now those are (mostly) over and some work has been done (see below).

Carlow: Problems with the donkey engine are unresolved, so a small portable electric compressor has been acquired to enable the starter air tank to be filled.

Testing of the loco gearbox has not progressed any further since Easter. It is hoped to do so soon.

Planet: This is potentially the most useful diesel shunter of the fleet, but is the worst as far as condition is concerned.

Needs engine rebuild, gearbox rebuild, total rewire, air system rebuilt, and significant bodywork.

Unilok: The Unilok has had a new starter fitted. The fuel system from tank to carburettor has been totally replaced, including fuel pump, and carburettor rebuilt. The engine was started successfully on 7th September, and machine moved under own power.

Work continues to tidy up some wiring, and testing of hydraulics. Needs braking system reinstating before going in to traffic (most of braking system is mysteriously missing).

Will be moved inside over winter to allow work to continue.

B142: Saturday 7th September was a busy day for the Diesel Department at Whitehead. With train rides mostly over, it's time to get some work done!

The morning began at 10:30 by firing up GM B142 and performing a small shunt to bring the Mk2 rake to the platform for the Afternoon Teas. We also pulled out No.3BG "Guinness" so it could be prepped for the private charter train rides on Sunday. This also involved shunting the train Ride set, which was parked in the meantime in 1 Road. B142 was then stabled in A Road for the afternoon.

Back to B142, and the missing windscreen on No 2 cab needed some work to the frame before refitting the glass. Due to the unusually thick glass (15mm, triple laminated and bullet-proof), we have had to get custom rubber made. We have received the sample extrusion, which needs to be test fitted before a full batch can be made. James Robison attacked the very corroded frame with the grinder and flappy wheel, and removed the bulk of the rust and scale around the frame, and also a little rust around the headlight on the same cab. Rust conversion primer was used, and once dry an undercoat applied. This should allow the windscreen to be refitted in the next week or so, and if this is successful we will be able to replace all four screens

Once screens are refitted, the locomotive only requires sanding down, cleaned, and the gloss paint applied. Hopefully this can be achieved before the weather gets too cold.

At around 4pm, once the aftermath of afternoon teas was cleared away and the Carriage Squad had finished with stripping out seats in 301 (they're replacing the cushions), the Mk2 rake was shunted back in to the carriage shed, and the train ride set shunted in for easy access on Sunday morning by No.3BG. B142 was finally stabled at 4:30pm.

New brake blocks are being produced at Whitehead, as the type used were only used on 121, 141, and Metrovick C (201) locos, so no longer made by Inchicore, and not available elsewhere.

Future repairs, which are not in any way urgent, is replacement of No.1 cab floor, to match No.2 cab. No.2 cab floor fell through and was replaced, No 1's floor is in better condition, but getting spongy.

The Diesel Locomotive Officer would be happy to hear from any members who have an knowledge or experience of vehicle bodywork, or with painting, or diesel engine and generator sets, hydraulics, or indeed petrol engines - we have nearly as many small petrol engines needing some TLC as diesel engines! We have diesel engines ranging from the 2 litre 3-cylinder in Planet, Perkins generator sets, through 4 cylinder Lister air-cooled, to big 6 cylinder Cummins generator sets, right up to the 1,150 hp 80 litre V8 2-stroke in B142.

If interested, you can talk to someone from the Department on the Volunteer Open Day on 28th September, or indeed most Saturdays - but please email via the usual

address before coming down as you may miss us.

WHITEHEAD SITE

Whitehead Development: A forklift truck has been generously donated (cost £1) by the Larne Harbour port authorities.

Site Officer Dermot Mackie is very grateful for the latest addition to his ever-increasing collection of heavy metal gadgetry.

WHITEHEAD RAILWAY MUSEUM

Success: The Treasurer reported at the AGM that income and visitor figures had shown a very encouraging increase.

He urged members to support all events being held at the Museum.

New Post: It is hoped to appoint a Marketing Officer in the coming weeks.

Afternoon Tea: Now that the busy summer train rides season is over, there will be Afternoon Teas at Whitehead on occasional Saturdays.

The most recent was on 7th September, and the next is Saturday 19th October. Please spread the word on these.

Events: It is hoped to introduce further evening events at the Museum during the coming months.

BELFAST MEETINGS

New Season: The Society's winter season of Belfast meetings will resume on Wednesday 9th October

2019 and will run on the second Wednesday of each month until March.

The venue will again be Orangefield Presbyterian Church at 464 Castlereagh Road, Belfast, BT5 6BH. Full information on dates and directions of how to get there can be found on the on the Meetings page of our website.

As before, the meetings start at 19:30 sharp and finish by 22:00.

There is one change this time. Because our meetings are so popular (our average attendance last season was 102), we are moving upstairs to the Main Hall which is bigger than the Parke Hall where we have been meeting since October 2009.

There will folk on duty on the first few nights to direct people to the Main Hall which is closer to the Church's front door.

The new hall is again fully wheelchair accessible and there are again ample toilets close by. The change should lead to less crowding and, hopefully, there will be easier movement at the interval when the queue for refreshments and the browsers at the shop sometimes had to engage in close - but friendly - combat.

The poster for the 2019/20 series of meetings is now available to download. Please do so - and display as many as you can in appropriate public locations.

GENERAL

Galleries: More new photo galleries have been added to the Members

section of the website, including a picture of the frames for locomotive No.105.

Well worth a peruse if you are internet connected.

Timetables: Remember, we aim to have full timetables for all our trains available on the website's Members section.

Volunteer Co-ordinator: The purpose of having a dedicated person to act as Volunteer Co-ordinator is to ensure that, across the organisation, volunteers are appointed to positions which best suit their skill sets.

There will be key requirements of the post-holder, these being; to ensure that there is a constant and consistent drive to attract additional volunteers, especially in areas where there has been an identification of need; to ensure that appropriate training is provided so that volunteers are supported in terms of Health and Safety and personal development; and, to act as the central contact point for all works co-ordinators throughout the Society.

Main Roles and Responsibilities

- To liaise with works co-ordinators to determine needs in their areas with a view to placing volunteers in roles which are relevant to the needs of the Society.
- To actively promote volunteering for the Society and ensure that all documentation relating to volunteering opportunities is up to date.
- To respond to all inquiries regarding volunteering and keep

updated all information on current volunteers.

- To ensure that all volunteers undergo a signed off induction.
- To ensure that all volunteers are issued with the correct uniform/PPE and to inform the General Manager of any additional requirements in relation to ordering same.
- To organise, in conjunction with the General Manager, any relevant training for volunteers – Health and Safety, Tour Guiding, First Aid, Defibrillator, etc.

The post-holder will be expected to uphold the ethos of volunteering whilst expediting all of the functions as listed above.

Members interested in volunteering for this post are invited to get in touch.

Sales News: We have obtained a supply of these books from Colourpoint in mint condition at discounted prices.

- Locomotives of the LMS NCC and its Predecessors by William Scott, £12/€13 (reduced from £25/€28).
- Steam in Ulster in the 1960s by Richard Whitford and Ian Sinclair, £5/€6 (reduced from £8.99/€10).

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