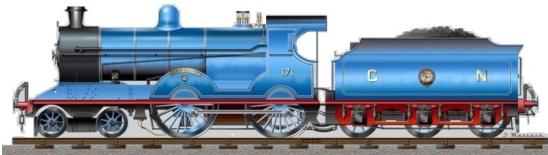


# Railway Preservation Society of Ireland



February 2020

# NEWS LETTER

## MEMBERSHIP

**Subscriptions:** Now due for 2020. There should be a reminder along with this circular if your payment is outstanding.

Thank you to those who have renewed (check Five Foot Three envelope for your card), especially to those who included a donation.

Don't forget, if you are sending in a cheque for payment of any of membership, sales or the railtour, please send individual payments for each category to the address given on the relevant form. For instance do not send a single cheque for membership and railtour booking.

**Volunteer Seminar:** On Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> February, over 50 working members from Whitehead and Dublin gathered in the Loughshore Hotel in Carrickfergus to discuss the future strategy of the Society.

After a welcome by President Joan Smyth, our Health & Safety Director, Michael Guest, gave a short talk on how members should keep each other and themselves safe both at home and while volunteering.

A series of active round-table discussions took place on the subjects of:

- Reflection on the changes within the RPSI.
- Clarification of Staff roles.
- Identification of the RPSI's future priorities.

**Volunteer Dinner:** In the evening, at the same venue, around 90 volunteers and partners gathered for a drinks reception hosted by our President.

Following that the members sat down to dinner, with guests Richard Knox and Hilton Parr of Translink also present.

After dinner an auction was held where various donated prizes were sold to the highest bidder. It was hosted by Ryan Downey.

And then, the awards ceremony, also hosted by Ryan. The winners were:

- Volunteer Of The Year (North): Dermot Mackie
- Volunteer Of The Year (South): Joe McKeown
- Young Volunteer Of The Year (North): Adam Lohoff
- Young Volunteer Of The Year (South): Nicky Cox
- Volunteer Team Of The Year: Dublin Fundraisers
- New Volunteer Of The Year (North): John White

- New Volunteer Of The Year (South): Alex Duggan
- Fundraiser Of The Year: John Richardson
- Lifetime Achievement: Peter Scott

A selection of photographs from the dinner and auction has been posted on the Facebook page.

## TRAIN & EVENTS

**Steam Saturday:** The first public steam of the year will be on 14<sup>th</sup> March with Saint Patrick's weekend train rides, including a treasure hunt at the Museum.

Further train rides days will be on 26<sup>th</sup> April, 2<sup>nd</sup> May (a commemoration of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of steam in Ireland) and 30<sup>th</sup> May.

**The Midlander:** On Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March there will be two return trips from Dublin to Maynooth.

**A Peculiar Tea:** A very special Mother's Day event at Whitehead on Sunday 22<sup>nd</sup> March.

**East-West:** On Saturday 4<sup>th</sup> April will be the latest diesel railtour to raise funds for the restoration of locomotive B134.

It is scheduled to depart from Dublin (Connolly) at 08:20 and head north from the capital operating via the running loop in Skerries and the bi-directional line to Balbriggan.

There will be a passenger pick up stop in Drogheda and then on to Dundalk. Here the loco will run around before heading back south again to Dublin. Along the way there will be photo stops at Laytown and Skerries.

A loco change has been requested in Dublin before the train once again sets off, this time heading west to Galway.

There will be a number of photo stops along the route and a break of 1½ hours in Galway. A swift return to Dublin will have the train back in Dublin or 19:45.

It is requested that motive power on the day will be from the 071 fleet. Tickets are priced at £60/€70.

**Easter:** The usual trains will be operating on Easter Saturday (Belfast) and on Easter Monday (Belfast and Dublin).

**Lough Foyle:** Preliminary bookings are coming in for the May tour weekend. Don't forget yours if you wish to travel! Details and advance booking form were included with the last circular; also available from our website.

**Help Wanted:** The Marketing Officer is seeking help in marking the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the end of steam on Northern Ireland Railways.

The last public steam-hauled timetable passenger trains in the British Isles operated between Belfast (York Road) and Whitehead at Easter 1969 and the final stone trains ran on 2<sup>nd</sup> May 1970.

If you can help with stories, artefacts or photographs then please contact the Whitehead address or email:

[marketing@steamtrainsireland.com](mailto:marketing@steamtrainsireland.com)

## LOCOMOTIVES

**No.3BG "Guinness":** On Sunday 9<sup>th</sup> February the locomotive was in steam to rearrange a few carriages and place a fresh one (301) under the heavy lift for maintenance; a job it has performed several times so far this year to ensure the Carriage Officer does not run out of work.

The opportunity was taken to test the newly installed steam heat connection (fitted to rear end only), a 100<sup>th</sup> birthday

present to the engine. The test was to flag up any problems, but it seemed to work okay apart from the way the bag is hooked up, which will be altered so as to be less obstructive to shunter access.

Rearrangement of the steam-castle valves to accommodate one for steam heat has unexpectedly produced a large improvement to the vacuum ejector, which sometimes seemed a little sluggish. This is also a non-original fitting which was added in the 1980s and has now been found to have been taking its steam supply from a rather small valve intended for the whistle. This has gone back to the whistle and the ejector has gained its own new, larger valve.

**No.105:** The project to reinstate the NCC Mogul has been progressing as time permits - normal overhaul and maintenance has to take priority.

The following locomotive work is under way:

- Frame plates being drilled for rivet and bolt holes for attaching parts.
- Motion plates marked out and machined.
- Front buffer beam marked out for drilling.
- Cylinder block pattern equipment complete, awaiting castings.
- Horn guides being cast, machining started.
- Horn stays part machined.

Work on boiler G8.24 (which will fit either mogul or tank engine No.4):

- Inner firebox door plate, tube plate and foundation ring ready for assembly
- Inner firebox wrapper sections pressed to shape, to be welded.
- Front tubeplate ready.
- Flanging of throat plate in progress.

**B134:** The locomotive is currently in the

lifting shop in Inchicore works.

Scaffolding to allow work to continue in a safe manner has been erected. Work is concentrating on the refurbishment of the cab and bonnet structure. Material previously supplied is now going into the restoration.

When the current work on the cab and bonnet is completed the locomotive will temporarily move shops for the refurbished items, such as the radiator, to be refitted. The locomotive will then return to its current location for the electrical work and the work on the canopy over the engine to commence.

## WHITEHEAD SITE

**Drainage:** with no major train movements in early January, it allowed the Site team to get on with a major drainage job on the tracks. Water-logging of the track and sleepers has been an ongoing problem for some time and preliminary work last year established suitable outlets.

Using a hired mini digger, a deep channel was excavated in the six foot between the platform and middle roads. This was then lined with 150 metres of perforated plastic land drain piping and back filled up to level with 12 tonnes of clean, 2 inch stone.

The opportunity was also taken to connect the drainage from the signal box into the system where previously this had just emptied onto the tracks. The benefits of the system are already clearly seen and it coped easily with the exceptionally heavy rainfall from Storms Brendan and Dennis.

## BELFAST MEETINGS

**8<sup>th</sup> January:** It was a meeting in two

(3)

parts.

James Davidson's talk "Our Daily Bread - Another Slice" turned out to be not just the history of bread in Ulster and its distribution by rail but about many other foods as well. It included the Ormeau Bakery and Barney Hughes, among other topics.

"The BBC Archives Revisited" was a return visit from Ian Sinclair who brought us another selection of railway related clips from the BBC Northern Ireland archive. Featured were the 1953 royal train, the 1979 Portrush Flyer, member Harry Mulholland's O Gauge model railway layout, Liam Neeson, James Young, the Ballymacarrett accident of 1945 and a fairly gloomy 1956 debate on the future of railways in Northern Ireland.

**12<sup>th</sup> February:** There was a very large audience of 130 in attendance for "The Derry Road Remembered".

Jim Donaghy marked the 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the closure of the Derry Road - the former GNR(I) line from Portadown to Londonderry (Foyle Road) - which closed on Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> February 1965.

Jim used many pictures both taken by Des FitzGerald and from his collection, but began by recalling the influence of his late friend, Driver Jimmy Donnelly; many of Jimmy's stories appeared throughout the evening.

So good was the story-telling that by the time the Omagh Markets Branch was reached Jim was beaten by the clock!

But the good news is that he has agreed to complete the journey onwards to Foyle Road at the first meeting of the 2020-21 season - on 14<sup>th</sup> October.

Not to be missed!!

**11<sup>th</sup> March:** "Graham Hoare's Irish

Railway Photographs" by Roger Joanes.

Roger, himself a frequent visitor since 1959, will present pictures by his late friend who travelled extensively in Ireland between 1956 and 1964 and took a special interest in lines and stations then threatened with closure - Timoleague, Tomkin Road and Trillick or old favourites like Fintona and Killybogs among very many others.

## GENERAL

**Sales News:** Two new books have been added to the online shop:

- County Donegal by Rail in Colour, by John Langford and Neil Tee
- Irish Traction Iarnród Éireann, by Colm O'Callaghan

**HRA Annual Awards:** The RPSI's entry in the Heritage Railway Association annual awards was pipped at the post at the ceremony in Birmingham on Saturday 8<sup>th</sup> February.

The entry, for "50 Years of the Two-Day Tour" had been shortlisted in the newly introduced Special Events category.

The RPSI did receive a framed runner-up award certificate to mark the occasion and this will be put on display at the Whitehead Railway Museum.

**Galleries:** New photos are being added to galleries in the Members section continually, the latest being:

- Various (1964-1989)
- Various (1990-1999)

## EDITORIAL ADDRESS

148 Church Road, Newtownabbey,

Co. Antrim, BT36 6HJ.

Company Registration: NI010798

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

[www.steamtrainsireland.com](http://www.steamtrainsireland.com)

rpsitrains@hotmail.com

(4)