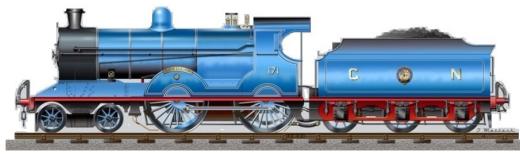


Railway Preservation Society of Ireland



March 2021

NEWS LETTER

MEMBERSHIP

Subscriptions: Now due for 2021. 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 membership or sales, please send individual payments for each category to the address given on the relevant form.

LOCKDOWN TIMETABLE

29th January: *General Manager:* For the last month I have, again, been completing complex grant applications with three submitted and one ongoing and one successful!

I am also undertaking the final vouching for the Museum project which is, to say the least, onerous.

On top of this work, I am beginning to pull together a costed Business Plan for operations towards the end of the year. Planning of any sort is speculative but we must be ready when the time comes to operate once more. One fairly safe assumption is that static events at Whitehead will lead the way in the first instance, followed by a programme for mainline events. It is also likely that we will be coping with reduced capacity for some time to comply with social distancing. This will mean reconfiguration of carriage seating options and assessment of pricing to ensure that we are making adequate money to fulfil income expectations.

As all but essential works have ceased on site in

Whitehead, we are also having a forensic look at workshop space and how best to maximise use based on maintenance and restoration requirements. Hopefully this will enable better and more efficient use of facilities and targeted effort to complete priority jobs.

The Events Committee has been busy exploring ways in which we can use online means to generate some income and provide a little non-railway entertainment, the inaugural quiz on 19th February being one such event.

Platform 3: Members in the Whitehead area are reminded that the tea room continues to be open for take-away only.

The latest menus and opening hours are on the café's Facebook page.

SALES NEWS

B134 Model: At the time of writing there are only a few remaining.

Museum Guide: This guidebook is intended to complement a visit to the museum, £5/€5.

"It must surely be the best guide to any preserved railway centre of any sort, anywhere. You have included such a fabulous selection of pictures past and present, encompassing so many people as well as every aspect of the trains, etc. Hope it sells a million, it certainly deserves to." - Michael H.C. Baker

Back In Stock: Some copies of the following books have become available again:

"Rails Through The West- Limerick to Sligo" by Jonathan Beaumont and Barry Carse, £16/€18.50.

"Horseshoes and Trolley Poles - Fintona and Howth trams in the 1950s", Anthony Burges, £6/€7.

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"Smoke Amidst the Drumlins - The Cavan and Leitrim Railway in the 1950s", Anthony Burges, £6/€7.

The Burges books may be bought together for £10/€12.

BELFAST MEETINGS

10th February: This was Joe Cassells' talk "Steam's Last Great Challenge" about the stone trains which operated between Magheramorne and Belfast between 1966 and 1970.

Drawing on material recently discovered by member Phillip Newell in the papers of his grandfather Henry Beaumont, Joe found that the scheme had been first mooted as far back as 1962 when various Northern Ireland Government ministries wanted to bring spoil from the quarry at Magheramorne to the foreshore of Belfast Lough to make the foundations of what is now the M2 motorway. Joe told us that right from the start, and somewhat surprisingly, the UTA was very enthusiastic about the job being done by rail.

Fortunately, the UTA had spent considerable sums on loco overhaul in the preceding years, and 70 specially-built four-wheel wagons were obtained from Cravens of Sheffield.

Fortunately, the loco fleet held on - just - to get the job done and Joe brought us through to the last day of spoil trains on 2nd May 1970.

A busy meeting (156 participants) was closed just after 10:10pm.

10th March: Locomotives Of The GS&WR, a talk by Michael McMahon based on his co-authored book of the same title.

TRAINS & EVENTS

Questions and Answers: The Society broke new ground on Friday 19th February by running a Zoom team quiz - and very successful it was too!

More than 100 people from 20 teams took part and each put in a strong performance. Team captains were RPSI members but most of their guests were non-members.

As billed, the topics for the 11 rounds ranged from sport and music to cookery and travel and from Ireland to the natural world - and there were no train questions!

Thanks to member Ryan Downey for such a polished and professional performance as quiz-

master.

The winners, with 58 points out of a possible 70, were called Liverpool University Public Transport Society, captained by RPSI member Tom Kane from Preston.

The second prize was for the team with the most original name and the prize went to the Maam Cross Mob team, led by RPSI member John Beattie from Belfast.

Many thanks to the Events Committee for organising the quiz and devising the questions. Altogether we raised £1,330 for the RPSI, so thanks to everyone for their support. But most importantly, it was a fun night and an entertaining way to spend a lockdown evening.

GENERAL

Website: Updates have been made to:

- Members Area - Several new galleries and updates to existing galleries.
- Our Collection - New items added.

Long Story Short: Two short stories from Whitehead Railway Museum are featured on the Northword NI website.

The stories, penned by Robin Morton, feature train rides coach 68 and the Schoolmaster's Cave on Blackhead Path. The cave name appeared in a station signboard at Whitehead in the early 1900s and a photograph of the signboard is featured in the display in the museum.

<https://northwordni.org/your-stories>

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Zoom: The meeting on Monday 22nd February was a quiet affair.

It was a first in that it was held online, and successfully so.

Change: The only change to the Board was the retirement of Eileen Armstrong, who we thank and wish well for the future.

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