

FIVE FOOT THREE

No.

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Editor: Alan Edgar

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Opinions expressed by contributors do not necessarily represent those of the Editor or the Council of the Society.

Front Cover Photograph: 9th July 1955. Waterford J15 188 at Grange (first stop) on the 7:55pm Waterford - Limerick night mail. Despite a heavy train of 250 tons (8 bogies) 188 ran from Waterford in 16¾ minutes net. The allowed sectional time was 23 minutes. (R.M. Arnold)

EDITORIAL

"The RPSI has plans to re-open the branch line from Scarva to Banbridge" - that was the report which appeared in the Northern Ireland Press in September and which either surprised or puzzled members who read it. No mention of any such definite move had been made by the RPSI, and for the Council to embark on as major a scheme as a branch line without consulting the membership would have been serious.

In fact what the Press had come across was a mention in Banbridge Council minutes of an approach from the RPSI branch line sub-committee. There were, of course, no firm plans or commitments at that stage. However, the time is fast approaching when the Council, and the membership, must give serious thought to the adoption or rejection of such a scheme in principle.

In the early years of the Society branch line schemes involving Warrenpoint, Portrush and Carrickfergus Harbour were talked of, but were ruled out by the Committee. Remember

that those were the days when it was felt the Society could never hope to have more than one engine, with all maintenance to be performed professionally. With the success of railtours, branch line schemes seemed unnecessary in any case.

The issue was brought to the fore again when the Belfast & Co. Down Railway Museum Trust recently launched an extremely ambitious scheme to re-open part of the BCDR. To the surprise of some RPSI members, the proposal immediately gained widespread acceptance among the public and apparently warranted serious consideration by bodies such as the Northern Ireland Tourist Board.

As a result of this the branch line concept was discussed at a meeting of the recently established Association of Railway Preservation Societies (Irish branch). The RPSI representatives contended that the Society could only consider supplying rolling stock to a scheme which was connected to the railway system. The APRS(I) then asked the BCDRMT to conduct a feasibility study into its scheme and the RPSI to carry out a feasibility study into any possible rail-connected branch line.

Thus the RPSI branch line sub-committee came into being. Three options were initially considered: Cookstown Junction - Randalstown, Kingsbog Junction - Ballyclare and Scarva - Banbridge. For various reasons Banbridge has been studied in much greater detail. The criteria being examined are whether or not there are any insuperable objections from the engineering and local government approval points of view - that is, whether opening the line involves demolition of a housing estate or rebuilding an 18 arch viaduct. Thereafter, consideration would have to be made of whether or not it was considered sufficient volunteer manpower would materialise to operate and maintain the line, and whether or not a sufficient market would exist to make it viable. So the question of whether or not the RPSI should become involved in such a scheme remains open.

Nevertheless, the debate has commenced and it may be worthwhile to consider some of the arguments which have emerged:

“We don’t need a branch line because we can run railtours.” It would seem there are two flaws to this. Firstly, while we receive and trust we will continue to receive the closest co-operation from both CIÉ and NIR, our future in operating excursions over railway company track is not automatically guaranteed. Schemes such as electrification, automatic signalling monitors in the cab, etc., could bring our freedom of the rail system to an end. Secondly, we are the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland, and perhaps the long-term aims of the Society should include aspects of the railway - such as signalling and architecture, not hitherto covered - by preservation of a railway line in toto.

“Running at 25 mph on a branch line could never compare with mainline running.” This is true, but the setting up of a preserved branch line would not necessarily mean the end of railtours. The branch line in fact would be useful for running in of locomotives.

“We have invested much capital in Whitehead, and have an enthusiastic workforce in the Republic.” But the adoption of a branch line scheme would mean abandoning neither Whitehead nor an RPSI Eire base. Two locomotives based at the branch line during the operating season would probably suffice and allocations could be rotated. The line would also provide our working members with a well earned opportunity to work RPSI locos over realistic distances.

Other questions can be posed. Where would the money come from? How many would volunteer to work the line? Would it be profitable? The feasibility study may be able to hint at the answers to some of these questions but there is no denying that an element of uncertainty would exist until the line was in operation for a period. The adage of “nothing ventured, nothing gained” is applicable, but any scheme adopted would have to safeguard the present position of the Society should it fail.

There is no doubt almost every member will hold his or her own strong views on the issue. If this editorial has argued in favour of the adoption of a branch line, it is perhaps because the most objective arguments likely to emerge from the membership are those opposed to branch line schemes. It would indeed be interesting to hear members’ opinions in letters to the next issue of Five Foot Three.

NEWS FROM COUNCIL

Robin Morton

The Society’s position at its headquarters of Whitehead was further consolidated in September when, much to the relief of the Council and the workforce, the roof for the new shed finally materialised. Negotiations for the 50% Northern Ireland tourism grant had started two years previously and despite the co-operation of Carrickfergus Borough Council there was still a mile of red tape to cut through. But now the roof is on, and an official opening ceremony for the new shed is being planned for Spring 1980.

Fears of delays in obtaining similar grants in connection with the proposed Carrick train rides have led to the postponing of the projected commencement date. The target had been June 1980 but it now seems 1981 or 1982 is more realistic. Applications for grant aid are likely to centre on a platform sales and information building, a lever frame to operate points, and a carriage shed, but discussions are still at a very early stage at the time of writing.

The Council has cast its net wider in looking to the future, with the setting up in June of a branchline feasibility sub-committee, at the request of the Association of Railway Preservation Societies (Irish Branch). The sub-committee, chaired by Peter Scott, has focussed most attention on the Scarva - Banbridge line.

The Society was represented by two Council members at each of the occasional ARPS(I) meetings held during the year.

Discussions are continuing with the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum over the 12-year loan agreement for No.85, which is expected to be moved from Harland and Wolff to Whitehead over the winter.

Developments at Whitehead were as usual co-ordinated by the workshop management sub-committee, chaired by Johnny Glendinning. The WMSC was able to advise the Council on various Whitehead-linked topics and this saved much Council time.

We were sorry in July to receive the resignation for personal reasons of Commercial Officer Sam Somerville, the man largely behind the successful Steam Gala at Whitehead in June which attracted an estimated 3,000 people. John Richardson agreed to take on both Treasurer and Commercial posts for the rest of the year, and fund-raising looked like hitting yet another record at the year-end. The Society was grateful for the £250 donation from the

Northern Bank towards the cost of painting and lining out the sales van, which has certainly proved its worth.

The RPSI was prominently featured in a free information sheet on railway preservation produced by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. It hoped that this excellent effort will become an annual publication.

[PHOTOGRAPH]

The Northern Bank kindly sponsored the painting of the RPSI mobile shop. Pictured handing over a cheque for £250 is Art O'Hanlon, assistant regional director of the Northern Bank. Left to right are Mr. O'Hanlon, RPSI Treasurer John Richardson and RPSI Secretary Robin Morton. The ceremony took place at the front of Belfast City Hall in May 1979. (Northern Bank)

Membership of the Society has been on the up and up and by October had hit the 650 mark, the highest ever. It is a great boost to morale and it also benefits the Society in discussions over grant-aid.

In November the decision was regretfully taken to increase the subscription rate from £4 to £5 to take account of inflation. The proposal for this, the first increase for three years, was to be ratified at the AGM in December.

Communications with members living in the Republic were disrupted by the Eire postal strike in the first half of 1979. This partly led the Council to decide to cancel the Claddagh rail tour from Mullingar.

Another problem in cross-border dealings was the split between the pound sterling and the punt. The move forced the RPSI to open a bank account in Dublin and made for headaches in tour administration and accounting.

The Society is again indebted to the select vestry of St. Jude's Parish Church in Belfast for the use of their Sunnyside Street hall for Belfast area meetings. The six winter meetings provide a useful way of keeping in touch over the non-operating season.

Helping publicise the meetings is the answerphone which was installed at Whitehead in September. The tape on the device provides a run-down of planned activities for mid-week callers to the Whitehead number.

The Society's insurance matters are now handled by a firm of brokers, Bowring Martin of Belfast. Derek Young, our insurance PSR, still provides liaison, but the appointment of Bowring Martin was decided upon at Derek's request in view of the increasing complexity of RPSI insurance.

BM prepared a comprehensive report on the RPSI insurances and recommended some changes which mean the Society gets better value from the premiums and which increase the range of cover.

The Society has moved with the times and modified concessionary fare regulations for railtours. Children under five are now carried free provided they don't take up a seat and people over 65 qualify for 'junior' fares.

No.186's centenary dominated the 1979 railtour season but one new feature was the Society's first ever all-diesel railtour on 20th October to mark the passing of the MPDs. But it will be back to steam in 1980!

Helping to spread the load were those members who took up posts of special responsibility. These included:

Connolly Portrush Flyer Officer
John Danson North of England Agent
Mervyn Darragh Membership Secretary
'Tommy Dorrian Bar Steward
Doug Ferguson Train Robbery Posters
Charles Friel Official Photographer, Loco Stores
John Friel Safety Officer
Mary Glendinning Catering Officer
David Humphries Belfast Area Assistant, Railtour Hotels
Andrew Malcolm Address Plates Controller
Tim Moriarty Eire Railtour Brochures
Laurence Morrison Address Plates Ordering
Jim Mounstephen Covenant Forms
Paul Newell Purchasing Officer
Paddy O'Brien Mullingar Superintendent
Tony Ragg Carriage & Wagon Stores
Gregg Ryan Eire Publicity
Lavens Steele Ulster Tourist Development Association Representative
Derek Young Insurance

LOCOMOTIVE REPORT

Peter Scott

No.3 (Whitehead)

Replacement of some boiler tubes, hydraulic test (in progress).

Proposed: Attention to leading bearings to reduce side play of wheelset, and fitting of vacuum brake.

No.3BG (Whitehead)

In store. Requires re-tubing.

No.4 (Whitehead)

Undergoing major overhaul on standby basis. Progress as follows:

- New set of driving springs - springs received.

- Axleboxes (fit new brasses, re-metal, machine and fit) - in progress.
- Make and fit new tyre - tyre received, no machining to date.
- Fit new left-hand cylinder bolts - in progress.
- Refit driving keep plates - in progress.
- Overhaul steam heat apparatus - in progress.
- New piston and valve rings - material received.
- New superheater elements - part set received.
- New superheater flue tubes - tubes received, old tubes removed.
- Piston rods - completed.
- Fit new driving wheels - not started.
- Overhaul steam brake - not started.
- Overhaul pony and bogie bearings - not started.
- New bushes for coupling and connecting rods - in progress.
- Overhaul cylinder drain cocks - complete.
- Rebuild ashpan - in progress.
- Sheet metal repairs to bunker - not started.

No.23 (Whitehead)

Engine repairs including fitting of new pistons and liners - in progress.

No.27 (Whitehead)

In store.

No.85 (Harland and Wolff)

Undergoing major overhaul. Repairs to the firebox have been found necessary and the boiler is to be lifted out to enable these to be done.

No.171 (Whitehead)

In traffic. Proposed:

- Replace tender brake blocks.
- Overhaul tender brake cylinder.
- Smokebox patching.

Also required are new piston and gland parts and new slipper blocks. Since the last report the new driving axleboxes have been fitted, and also the rear damper.

[PHOTOGRAPH]

A great improvement in the appearance of No.171 last year was the result of a complete repaint. Here the final touches, in the form of lining, are being added. Left to right are Thomas Charters, Peter Scott and Paul Newell. (C.P. Friel)

[PHOTOGRAPH]

A new appendage in No.171's cab is the operating handle for the rear damper on the ashpan. Provision for a rear damper was made when the ashpan was rebuilt, but it has only recently been installed. In practice the new damper makes both steam raising and ashpan cleaning considerably easier. (C.P. Friel)

No.184 (Mullingar)

In traffic. The fitting of an ex-GNR(I) 2,500 gallon tender to increase the water capacity is being investigated.

No.186 (Whitehead)

In traffic. Proposed: new firebars, set valves, repair tender tank. Completed since last report: replacement of firebox seam rivets and new chimney fitted.

No.461 (Mullingar)

Major overhaul. Work continuing on a standby basis. Dismantling of motion and removal of boiler tubes in progress.

[PHOTOGRAPH]

No.171 is pictured just North of Cullybackey on the first Flyer of 1979. It is intended that the 4-4-0 will also feature on the 1980 Flyers. (C.P. Friel)

CARRIAGE & WAGON REPORT

Alan Edgar

The Carriage and Wagon Department is at present poised between two phases in its existence. In the past we have maintained a rake of coaches in traffic, most of which were in running order when purchased. Inessential work, such as interior decoration, tends to be left unattended, and in some coaches this is now becoming particularly noticeable. With a few exceptions, coaches bought in a derelict condition have been put into store, and have deteriorated due to leakage in their roofs.

The possibility this situation may change is welcome news, and change is now likely due to the allocation of No.5 road in the new shed to the C & W Department. Staging to provide a working platform is being constructed so as to allow easy access to any part of a coach requiring attention, and a system of lighting is to be installed.

The first priority is the replacement of roof covering on most coaches, beginning with North Atlantic brake 91, which was shunted inside the shed in early October. Other candidates for immediate attention are 562 (GNR brake 1st), 561 (GNR side corridor 1st), 4012 (GSWR side corridor 1st), 586 (GNR open 3rd), 358 (NCC side corridor 3rd), the last mentioned also requiring extensive repair to the roof structure. After the roofing programme we will be in position to overhaul individual coaches, whose emergence into traffic would in turn release coaches at present in service. Depending on manpower we would like to put 91 and 586 into traffic at an early stage to release (for instance) Bredins 1327 and 1335 for refurbishing. The repair of fire damaged Bredin 1328 becomes much more feasible now that secure covered accommodation is available, as it will be possible to strip down the affected body panels.

[PHOTOGRAPH]

Carriageman's Nightmare. This shows the problem which we face with many of our carriages. The roof covering of this coach (342) has completely disintegrated, leaving the wooden planking of the roof (which is not watertight) exposed. (C.P. Friel)

The other big news is the progress on the GNR directors' saloon 50, which is being completely overhauled by NIR under the sponsorship of Lord O'Neill. Stripping down of the remains of the exterior panelling revealed just how much deterioration had taken place; although the roof timbers and most vertical members of the body framing were sound, many of the horizontal members were rotten and had to be replaced. A railway company would already have regarded the coach as being beyond economic repair, and although such considerations do not apply similarly to a preservation society, any further deterioration would likely have ruled out restoration of the coach altogether. We are therefore grateful for Lord O'Neill's timely intervention. When the structural members had been replaced, the exterior panelling was renewed using veneered plywood. The roof was also recovered using PVC proofed nylon. Work on the coach is on a standby basis, proceeding when NIR employees are not required for more urgent jobs, and it will therefore be some time before the overhaul is completed.

[PHOTOGRAPH]

Two vehicles recently purchased, ex GNR Ballast Wagon 8112N, and ex MGWR 6-wheeled carriage 466A are seen outside Mullingar loco shed. (C.P. Friel)

Most of the work on the coaches in traffic has been in the nature of running repairs, the most notable exception being the repainting of 861, 340 and 342 in maroon. This has resulted in a great improvement in the appearance of the train, which is now in a uniform livery.

The other major item, not as noticeable to the casual observer, was the reconstruction of one guard's ducket on 861, the original of which was in very poor condition. Less expected was the need to rebuild two gangway connections following damage in a shunting accident. Unfortunately, both had been renewed only a short time previously, that on 1327 due to fire damage and on 562 due to replacement of a BUT gangway. There has been the usual spate of droplight renewal, mainly of CIÉ droplights which are in poor condition due to their age.

At the end of the operating season all carriage work ceased as the C & W Department (chiefly Ken Pullin) constructed the doors for the new shed, while the Loco Department manufactured hinges.

Only one vehicle, an ex-MGWR six wheeler which was until recently CIÉ departmental service, has been purchased since the last report. Although it has been bought for historical rather than practical reasons, it could see future service on a film train or on train rides. We are grateful to member Martin Hewitt who spotted this vehicle in a 'cripple special' to Mullingar, and it is at present in store there with the WL&WR coach.

In the previous magazine we appealed for help with the carriage roofing programme. Whether this has had any effect is not yet clear, but as the work has now started help would be greatly appreciated.

Track work resumed at the beginning of the Spring when No.5 shed road was tackled. This road comes off No.4 shed road immediately after the platform ramp and the turnout used was one of the three that the Society obtained from Great Victoria Street yard. The road comes off No.4 road on a right-hand curve and it then requires to make a sharp left hand curve to enter the new shed pit road. The radius of this curve is quite sharp being approx. 355ft. However, as this shed road is to be used for carriage maintenance there is no difficulty in traversing it and all locos can negotiate it if necessary.

No unforeseen problems were encountered when laying this siding. The JCB was in use and proved very capable for all work that it had to carry out. It is most important that adequate preparation of the track bed is carried out before track materials are put in place. This fact has been realised from earlier track laying practice and the JCB made this very easy when laying No.5 road, it being used to dig out the level ballast to below packing height. The turnout, when delivered to Whitehead, was partially made with the crossing complete as also were the blade and stock rail assemblies. Again using the JCB, lifting and manoeuvring these very heavy units with the back bucket arm was very easily achieved.

[PHOTOGRAPH]

The moment we had all been waiting for - the steelwork erected. (C.P. Friel)

[PHOTOGRAPH]

The sheeting on and the doors up. Coach 91 has already been shunted into No.5 road for re-roofing. (C.P. Friel)

Packing and ballasting both No.4 and No.5 roads to the correct levels is now completed. A lot of new ballast was required for this as the ground at this spot was very low. The area in front of the new shed and in front of the tarry has been ballasted to rail level. As a result, vehicles can cross the yard and the coaling of the locomotives is made easier due to the coal loaders having a larger turning area. The new ballast has also given the new shed a very clean looking and well drained frontage.

When No.5 road was completed, a start was made on relaying part of No.2 carriage siding. The condition of this siding was poor, it having developed over many years rather haphazardly. Most of the siding that was in bad repair had never had the track bed levelled (never mind ballasted!) and was wet due to poor or non-existent drainage. It is intended that the section involved will be relayed on new ballast and the existing sleepers which are in poor condition replaced.

Work on the new shed roof started in September. Before the contractors could start the erection of the steel trusses, pad stones had to be cast on the tops of the concrete piers along the outer wall. On the inner wall (old shed) some brickwork had to be removed and pad stones also cast in situ. The row of asbestos sheeting above the gutter was removed when this was carried out. This work had to be completed fairly quickly and as manpower is low the Society negotiated with a local builder who carried at the work very efficiently. Following this, the contractors, Smyth Mills Ltd, moved in, and the shed roof was sheeted and almost complete within four weeks.

Doors for the shed have been fabricated by the Society at Whitehead. They are timber framed doors, covered with heavy duty plywood and are similar in construction to the rear doors on No.1 shed road leading to the wheel-drop. Concrete lintels have been cast for the new doors.

The coming winter months will see hopefully a continuation of track work in line with the overall site track plan.

THE MAGILLIGAN BRANCH Michael Gould

The branch line of the Londonderry and Coleraine Railway (L&CR) to Magilligan has always presented railway historians with something of a problem as there is little information concerning the branch extant. It is probably not generally known that one of the provisions of the standing orders of the House of Lords relating to the deposition of Private Bills during the 1840s and 1850s states:

“That on or before the 31st day of December ... a copy of so much of the said plans and sections as relate to each parish in or through which the work is intended to lie made, ..., together with a book of reference thereto, shall be deposited with ... the clerk of the Union within which such parish is included in Ireland.”

Such plans were to be available for inspection and copying by interested parties.

While doing some research into the workings of the Limavady Union, the author was fortunate to be given the deposited plans relating to the deviation of the main line, the Newtownlimavady (as Limavady was known previously) branch and the Magilligan branch.

The history of the construction of the L&CR is probably well known. An ambitious plan to reclaim large tracts of Lough Foyle during the construction of the line nearly ruined the Company. Some land was reclaimed. Being beyond the original shore line, i.e. extra parochial, such land did not come within the existing townland boundaries, and had to be given new townland names. It appears that neighbouring townland names were used followed by Level. The reclaimed land, and the associated banks, may therefore be picked off the 1 in 10,560 scale maps, e.g. Ballykelly Level (Intake), Myroe Level (Intake), etc.

When it became apparent that the scheme could not be completed, a bill authorising the revision of the line was promoted in November 1847. The bill was passed as the Londonderry and Coleraine Railway Act Amendment and Deviation Act in 1848. The line approved by this Act was to become the main line to Londonderry from Belfast.

Another bill was promoted in November 1849 to allow the construction of the branch to Limavady and to extend the time allowed for the purchase of the land necessary for the construction of the main line. This bill was passed on 31st May 1850. The only difference between the plans and the constructed line was that the junction at the main line was shown as being triangular, whereas it was constructed as a branch facing Londonderry.

It was against this background that the Company decided to build the branch to Magilligan, even though the line to Coleraine was not yet complete. It was also proposed that a pier be constructed, probably to run excursionists to Donegal. In his book, Northern Counties Railway Volume 1, J.R.L. Currie gives the date for the commencement of work on the branch as September 1853. Mr Currie goes on to state that the land was give free by Sir

Hervey Bruce (Bt) of Downhill, and that no act was therefore obtained. He also states that Bruce later started to raise objections.

A bill was in fact promoted in November 1853. The heading of the bill was “Deviation of the Extension Line from Coleraine to Castledawson - Construction of Branches to Magilligan and Ballymoney”.

The deviation relates to a proposed line from Agivey Parish via Kilrea to “thirty-five chains, or thereabouts, from the centre of the Portglenone Bridge, over the said River Bann”.

The Castledawson extension of the L&CR was never built, although much of the area was later served by the Derry Central Railway.

The branch to Ballymoney was a proposal for a line from the Castledawson extension from Macosquin Parish, via Ree, Drumaheglis, Artigoran, Macfin Upper, Culbrin Upper and Currysheskin townlands to join the line of the Ballymena, Ballymoney, Coleraine and Portrush railway Co. Like the extension this branch was never built.

The plans deposited for the Magilligan branch clearly show the route of the constructed line (see map). The associated book of reference shows that all the land was, indeed, owned by Sir Hervey Bruce and, interestingly, that the L&CR was then in occupation of the full route, the property being generally described as “Railway in course of formation”. Bruce presumably withdrew his objections and this bill never, apparently, became an act.

The branch, believed to have run from July to October 1855, was a failure, even though it has been stated that some trains ran in conjunction with the steamer “Nelson” to convey excursionists to Moville. The track was apparently lifted.

The rebuilding of the branch using the old track bed was promoted by the Belfast and Northern Counties Railway in the Act of July 1895 (which also allowed that company to purchase the Draperstown Railway). By this time the Unions of Limavady, Innishowen and Londonderry, together with Londonderry Corporation, had built a cholera isolation hospital on War Office land at Magilligan, and the book of reference for the new act shows that the new line would have passed through the hospital grounds. However, the Admiralty refused permission for the construction of the associated pier and the rebuilding was never carried out.

There is now little remaining of the railway formation, only one stretch of the 3½ mile line still being visible. This is the trackbed to the east and west of the former level crossing in Upper Drummans. The road at this point has been reconstructed and on the eastern verge there is still a metal surface formed from interlocking plates which must have been part of the original crossing.

[MAP]

Acknowledgements

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At the turn of the century, the GSWR gained its foothold in Waterford when it absorbed the Waterford, Kilkenny and Central Ireland Railway and the Waterford, Dungarvan and Lismore Railway. This gave the GSWR access to the rich agricultural south-east of the country. Waterford, because of its geographical position, is the export port of counties Tipperary, Kilkenny, Wexford and Limerick, and to this day there is a large trade in livestock and other agricultural products with Britain and the continent. Access to Waterford meant increased revenue for the GSWR, but it also meant increased expenditure. The locos of the two absorbed companies were in poor condition, and because of their age, uneconomical to repair. Those of the WK&CI were mainly 0-4-2s and 2-4-0s with a few ancient side tanks that worked to Kilkenny. Tenders were mostly four wheeled with tank capacities of less than 1,000 gallons. A few of these tenders survived until the late 1940s on the famous Limerick Junction water train. By 1909 the last of the absorbed locos had been withdrawn and replaced by 4-4-0s on passenger trains and J15s on the goods trains.

[PHOTOGRAPH]

Cattle Working. Saturated 195 heads a down cattle special on the South Kerry Road (which will be covered by the two day tour this year). The train is here seen at MP27, between Rathmore and Headford Junction on 21st March 1956. (R.M. Arnold)

The following is a list of the first batch of J15s (or B class as they were then known) which were sent to Waterford: 109, 111, 116, 132, 144, 150, 153, 167, 184, 186, 188, 189. All of these locos remained until the end of steam except 132 and 184 (transferred to Inchicore in the late 1930s) and 189 (wrecked at Ballyvoyle in 1922 and scrapped in 1923).

The Waterford engineman therefore has a personal interest in the two preserved J class, No.184 and No.186. Both are famous locos in local railway lore. In this article I hope to sketch the career of these two locos whose working lives span a century.

Many famous loco types have been scrapped by the vandalism of progress. Let us be grateful, however, for that part of our heritage that has been saved, particularly the examples of Inchicore's finest achievement, saturated No.184 and superheated No.186. Although of the same class, these locos are very different. Long may they continue to thrill the enthusiast and the ordinary citizens as they operate over all the lines of this island of ours.

No.184 was built at Inchicore in 1880 to the design of Alexander McDonnell. To the late 1940s she remained virtually unchanged since her construction and she had the distinction of being the last J15 to retain the unusual Inchicore smokebox, which tapered below the chimney and had two half doors secured by screw clips attached to lengths of chain. She retains to this day the brass piston and valve glands which are packed with soft 'salamander' packing, and can therefore be said to be a pure Inchicore product in all except her modern smokebox front. Her present boiler dates from 1921.

Little is known of her early working life until her arrival at Waterford at the turn of the century, and here I must rely on local folklore. The story of the race which she featured in is based on information supplied by retired drivers now in their 80s. The date is naturally vague as no written records exist.

No.184's early working life at Waterford was spent on the Maryboro' (now Portlaoise) goods and on this job she remained until about 1910 when she became a 'special' loco, in use for the many fairs in the area. Three times a week 30 wagon trains of livestock used to leave Waterford for the North Wall in Dublin. The livestock traffic was a large source of revenue to the GSWR and this company jealously guarded its source.

In 1904 the DSER reached Waterford and competition began for the carriage of both passengers and livestock to Dublin. In 1910 a race was arranged between the two companies. Two livestock trains were to leave Waterford at 3:00pm and the first to arrive at the North Wall would win the contract for its company.

The GSWR selected loco No.184 and she was to be manned by driver Nick Kavanagh. He was allowed to select his fireman, and chose a man named Ned Walsh, who was known locally as the "Cuckoo". The DSER chose one of their newest locos, built in 1910, a J8 numbered 18 on the books, (she later became GSR 444, and was scrapped in 1957). She was Grand Canal Street built, so the two locos were pure Irish in all things. This loco was driven by a Dublin man, James Wheeler, and another Dubliner, stationed at the DSER shed at Abbey Junction Waterford, was his fireman. His name was Bob Wilson. All the participants are now long dead.

Both trains were shunted into the station at Waterford 184 backed down from the northern shed, 18 from the eastern shed, and both coupled up to their respective trains. At a signal from the goods agent the signals were lowered and both locos took the strain of the couplings. 184 headed up the goods yard, while 18 assaulted the 1 in 60 climb to New Ross. Let us join Nick Kavanagh and "Cuckoo" Walsh on 184.

There is a steady rise out of Waterford towards Kilkenny of 1/100 - 1/80 for 13 miles without any chance of a 'shut off'. Kavanagh opened her out full and at 40% cut-off soon had her skipping along at a steady 25 mph. Four miles out the gradient eases to 1/130 and here he eased the regulator to $\frac{3}{4}$ open and set his cut off at 25%. A J15 loves a flogging at the start; this makes the fire very red, and if she is saturated she begins to steam immediately. 184 laid on her pressure and the fireman adjusted the damper to the half open position. They passed Mullinavat, 9 miles out in 31 minutes as against the usual running time of 40 minutes. Now began the real climb up Ballyhale bank, a curving 1/80 grade, which 184 took in her stride at $\frac{3}{4}$ regulator and 60% cut-off. Down into Ballyhale station where all goods trains normally took water, but not Kavanagh. He passed through with the handbrake screwed on to keep the couplings tight and the damper shut to stop the loco blowing off steam. He was chancing on reaching Kilkenny on a 1,864 gallon tank and he still had the bank, $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles of 1/80 out of Thomastown. Through Ballyhale and down the steep bank to Thomastown, which he passed through at an estimated speed of 45 mph, his fireman taking the staff from the nervous signalman on the platform. At full regulator he was up the bank like a jet. Reaching the top, drivers normally shut off, but not Kavanagh, he eased the regulator to the first valve and did not change the position of either the regulator or the wheel until he shut off for Kilkenny where he filled the now almost empty tank. Willing hands filled the bunker, the fireman oiled the motion, and Kavanagh crawled under the smokebox to tighten the gland nuts of both pistons and valves.

[PHOTOGRAPH]

Kavanagh's engine: Apart from the smokebox front, there are a number of other differences from No.184's present appearance noticeable in this 1895 photograph. The most obvious are the raised firebox, cast iron wheels, one piece chimney, smokebox mounted lubricator, and the absence of vacuum brakes. Does anyone recognise the location? (Loco & General Railway photographs, No.24002)

[PHOTOGRAPH]

Wheeler's engine: DSER No.18 had become GSR No.444 by 1938 when this photograph was taken at Amiens Street. (H.C. Casserley)

The brief stop over, they headed at a cracking pace on the lightly graded section towards Ballyragget and on to the short but heavy section to Attanagh. Kavanagh and Walsh were busy planning their run and they decided to take water at Abbeyleix, run through Portlaoise, and thus get a run at the bank through that station. As they topped up the tank at Abbeyleix they arranged for a clear road at Conniberry Junction and through Maryboro' station. Their stop at Abbeyleix gained them an estimated bonus of 20 minutes. Before departure they soaked the glands with cylinder oil, filled the lubricator and oiled the axleboxes, for Kavanagh now intended to make Kildare, 31 miles away, his next stop for water. Years later "The Cuckoo" told me that from Abbeyleix to Kildare No.184 seemed to lift off the rails as she raced along, and all he was scared of was a hot box on one of the wagons. When he mentioned this to Kavanagh he was advised not to look back and then he would not have anything to worry him.

The guard, he later learned, spent the trip from Abbeyleix to Dublin lying on the floor of the heaving van praying to all the saints of the calendar for help and protection. He felt like putting on the brake, to slow up what he felt sure was a madman in front but decided to risk possible death rather than the certain wrath of 6'3" Kavanagh.

No.184 steamed into Kildare, her smokebox white with heat, and stopped for water. Again Kavanagh inspected his glands and motion, for there was a pit at the up column in Kildare. The bunker was filled and a hasty inspection made of the wagon bearings. All was well.

She passed the Curragh on full regulator, ran through Newbridge shut off, and was halfway down to Sallins before she needed steam to the cylinders, so great was her speed down Newbridge bank. They arrived at the North Wall and had their train shunted before an irate Wheeler arrived. Words of an unparliamentary nature were exchanged between Wheeler and Kavanagh and they parted with the agreement that if they ever met again only one of them would remain alive.

Kavanagh's trip had been 120 miles long, Wheeler's had been 118½, against which Wheeler had to turn his loco at Macmine Junction. Although Wheeler had a heavier bank to climb, he had a newer and stronger engine with a higher boiler pressure.

The story had a strange sequel, for Wheeler and Kavanagh did meet again, but under very strange circumstances indeed. Shortly after the 1926 amalgamation under the GSR, promotion of footplate staff within a depot was changed to promotion within an area. The DSER depots of Wexford, Enniscorthy, Bray and Canal Street were placed within the Waterford promotional area, and a massive transfer of men occurred. Nine Waterford men were transferred to Canal Street shed, and among them was one by the name of Tom

Kavanagh. When in Dublin he met a girl named Wheeler and eventually married her. At the wedding their fathers, the two old rivals Nick Kavanagh and James Wheeler, met again and relived their epic race to Dublin. In the hallway of Tom Kavanagh's house hung two photographs, of No.184 and No.18, taken at Waterford on the day of the race. The rivals glared at each other across the hall, their determination captured forever on film. Such an ending to the story could only have happened on the railway.

The first time I saw No.184 was in the terrible winter of 1946/7 when the country was covered in snow from December to April, and trains were much reduced due to the coal shortage. Trains were abandoned on the Mallow line, the New Ross line and the Castlecomer line. They had run into drifts of snow and the crews had to be rescued. No.184, fitted with a snowplough and still with the old GSWR smoke box, arrived in Waterford on a cold January day to clear the blocked lines. Ironically one of the locos trapped between New Ross and Palace East was DSER No.18, now 444.

No.184 spent that terrible winter in the Waterford area freeing trains from the grip of the snows and then returned to Inchicore shops where she was fitted with her new smokebox. When stationed at Kilkenny as a fireman from 1948 to 1952 I often had the pleasure of working on No.184, for she spent a brief spell at Kildare shed and worked the goods to Kilkenny. My last trip on her was on a fair special from Enniscorthy to Dublin in 1955. Perhaps I can hope to work on her again, for it would be interesting to see her performance on the Kilkenny line where 60 years ago she made railway history. She can never repeat her historic run, for the line from Portlaoise to Kilkenny is now gone, but she could show her paces from Waterford to Kilkenny and so relive part of that epic run. The ghosts of Nick Kavanagh and Eddie Walsh would surely enjoy watching her climb Ballyhale bank, and hear the bark of her exhaust echo from the hills of south Kilkenny, the scene of her greatest triumph.

The most photographed, the most written about, the most famous J15 of all time must surely be No.186, thanks to the foresight and courage of the RPSI. She must be the most travelled loco in Ireland, being photographed from Derry to Wexford. There can be few lines in the country that her wheels haven't sung over.

She was built in November 1879 by Sharp, Stewart and bore the makers number 2838. She was identical in every detail with the Inchicore built J15s and carried the standard 1,864 gallon tender. She spent 59 years of her working life as a special loco at Waterford shed, working both passenger trains and freight specials.

In the civil war of 1922/3 Taylorstown viaduct on the Rosslare line was damaged by an explosion and the boat trains from Rosslare were diverted via Macmine Junction to Waterford, over the DSER. J class locos were found more suitable than the 4-4-0s to assault the heavy grades on this line. Four Waterford J15s - 147, 151, 186 and 188 - were selected for the job, and did this job for 1½ years without losing time on a run. Between 1908 and 1910 No.186 received the standard 4'4" boiler (identical to that now carried by No.184). In 1932 she received the Z class superheated boiler she now runs with. Three years later she was rebuilt with new stronger frames. As a superheated loco she differs in steaming qualities from the saturated No.184. In No.184, where the steam is taken directly from the dome to the cylinders via the main steam pipe, a large amount of moisture is carried with it, hence saturated steam is often called 'wet steam'. Many enginemen maintain that the

saturated engine is a livelier loco as the moisture acts as a lubricant. I have an open mind on this issue.

In the superheated boiler of No.186 steam passes through the superheater tubes in the barrel of the boiler after leaving the dome. The moisture is dried by the gases from the fire before the steam enters the cylinders. Many loco men describe this as 'burnt steam'.

Superheated locos take longer to heat up and to begin steaming, because of the extra heating surface. It is estimated that whereas a superheated loco takes 14 miles to warm up the saturated type begins to steam from the opening of the regulator. However, the superheated loco burns less coal and uses less water than her saturated sister, but I must admit that the saturated loco runs better and further when shut off. Maybe here is something in the lubricating properties of saturated steam; I will leave the argument to the engineers.

Since 1965, when No.186 was handed over to the RPSI, I have had the pleasure of being on her 6 times. The first occasion was briefly on the official handing over at Connolly Station. The next was with drivers Alfie Crawley and Billy Croft on the Antrim line when the northern brothers allowed me to drive and fire on a very enjoyable trip. Another footplate run from Dundalk to Belfast was made with that fine engineman Billy Croft, and then I had her to myself on the Three Rivers railtour in 1973.

I was booked to work No.171 to Rosslare and return to Waterford. No.186, which had brought the train down the DSE was to follow light. Well, No.171 failed to steam on that Saturday, and we made a poor run with her. She burned coal to excess without making enough steam to justify the excess consumption. She performed sluggishly and, to my amazement, I had to put on steam down Campile bank.

The following morning I booked on at 06:00 for an 08:00 special to Ballinacourty. This was to be the first steam train ever to run over the new 1¾ mile section to the factory at Ballinacourty itself. No.171 was the loco. She was standing in Goulding's siding with many RPSI helpers cleaning and preparing her. Having checked her over, oiled her and filled the tank, we backed down to the station, one mile away. She blew out a cylinder cover and to this day I have never been given a reason for this. I can only assume that the drain cocks were blocked at that side for they were open before moving. It has always been a practice at Waterford to heat the cylinders of a superheated loco by opening the cocks for a few moments before departure. A loco stood at her train, the regulator slightly open and the steam escaping through the cocks.

No.171 was failed, and a debate started as to whether the tour could continue. After some discussion it was agreed that No.186 would be able to work the train back to Dublin unaided, and that there was enough time for her to work the Ballinacourty trip beforehand. Join me on the footplate for that run.

[PHOTOGRAPH]

The history of No.186 can be likened to that of the farmer's spade which had belonged to the family for 100 years, but had had three new blades and six new shafts. This early photo shows No.186 more or less as built, indeed the sharp Stewart maker's plate can be seen on the driving wheel splasher, behind the reverser linkage. Of interest is the short roofed cab, the edges of which are beaded, a practice which Inchicore seldom indulged in. (Locomotive & General Railway Photographs No.24144)

[PHOTOGRAPH]

This photo, taken at the former W&CI shed at Waterford, shows No.186 as rebuilt in 1908-10 with a 4'4" diameter boiler. This boiler was also saturated, but had a flush firebox. The one piece chimney had been replaced by a built up one, and the plain coupling rods by fluted ones. The cab roof has been extended backwards, and new side sheets provided (without beading). The number plate now appears to include the legend 'Inchicore Works' and a date, while the maker's plate has been removed. (Real Photographs X541)

We took the 20 mph curve up on to the Suir bridge at full regulator and 40% cut off. Leaving the 890 foot bridge there's a grade of 1/60, also sharply curved, easing to 1/80 after a mile. The entire grade out of Waterford is 2½ miles long and at the top of the grade we had 120 lbs of steam and an inch of water. There's a long 3 mile fall then, along the curving River Suir, and here, shut off, she recovered her pressure and the boiler was filled. From Kilmeaden station, 6 miles from Waterford to the top of Kilmacthomas bank, 12 miles from Waterford, only full regulator is any good for the line is a constant climb of 1/80 - 1/60. Jimmy Browne, the fireman on No.186, soon had her glued to her pressure and I didn't have to worry about steam or water. He fired her, as he had been taught, at the sides and back, only leaving the area under the brick arch thin and red. As we passed Carroll's Cross, the cut-off lengthened to 60%, a black-faced, happy Jimmy Browne grinned over at me and said, "she's as good as ever she was." No higher praise could be given to the dedicated people of the RPSI who maintain this old machine.

Down the bank into Kilmacthomas, that station with the magnificent mountain backdrop. The sun shone brilliantly and the safety valves popped. There was a happy crew on the loco, and an array of happy photographers photographed her facing the majestic Comeragh Mountains. We had a 15 minute stop at this station to allow the lineside photographers to 'bus it' to Ballyvoyle Viaduct. In the best loco tradition, Jimmy Browne grabbed the 'black can', and went to a nearby spring well for a refreshing drink of mountain spring water. Meanwhile I oiled the glands and link motion.

From Kilmacthomas to milepost 66 the line rises and falls on gradients of 1/60 to 1/66. Passing Durrow station shut off, and having passed through the tunnel, I found to my horror that the bus wasn't at the bridge, so speed was reduced to 10 mph to allow the bus to catch up on us. They arrived as we rounded the curve parallel with the road, and they had their photos, but it was a near thing. No.186 is faster than she is given credit for.

Down the long bank to the new curving line to the factory of Ballinacourty and the first ever passenger train, headed by No.186, steamed into diesel territory. We returned to Waterford tender first, as fast as she ran engine first, and the rest of the trip is now history, for she took the train into Dublin and the same evening steamed on to Belfast. This must be the longest day trip ever run by a J15, or by any loco of her vintage.

In 1978, loco No.186 again returned to Waterford, and again she was involved in a rescue operation. This is how it came about.

[PHOTOGRAPH]

199 is seen here at Inchicore in 1932, shortly after receiving the superheated 'Z' boiler. The smokebox, with flush rivets, and devoid of dogs and a central hand wheel, is in total contrast to later practice. (Kelland Collection 23070)

[PHOTOGRAPH]

Bringing the story up to date (almost) is this view of No.186 climbing out of Portrush on the Dalriada Railtour, the first tour she worked. Note the smaller tender which she was then paired with. (S.C. Nash)

I took over that magnificent engine, jeep No.4, at Limerick Junction to work to Rosslare Harbour. It is 58 miles to Waterford from the Junction and there are several fairly hefty banks on the run, notably Cahir bank. No.4 steamed freely and ran like a modern first class coach. At Clonmel, however, the tanks were dangerously low and there were another 28 miles to the next water. We were faced with the possible disgrace of being hauled into Waterford by diesel, and this was a steam tour. After much discussion, Mr Pemberton of CIÉ suggested that we phone Waterford and have No.186 sent on to Carrick on Suir, 15 miles ahead. There was enough water to do that 15 miles. At Carrick, No.186, in her film livery with brass dome and green boiler, and her 3,345 gallon tender, hooked up. Jimmy Browne and I could relax on the footplate in the sure knowledge that if our tanks were sucked dry the train would still be steam to Waterford.

That train made a brave sight as it entered Waterford the massive majestic black No.4, and the brilliant green No.186, followed by the red painted coaches. Many of the drivers at Waterford were seeing steam locos for the first time in their lives, and one of them said to me, "I'd work on those for nothing. They're beautiful!" A fitting tribute indeed to the courage of the RPSI in preserving this part of our National Heritage.

Recently the film "The First Great Train Robbery" was shown locally and all the retired enginemmen made a point of going to see their old friends, No.184 and No.186 in action. I met one of them at the cinema and asked him what he thought of the film. He said, "Seeing those two engines made me feel young again, but I couldn't help think, the two of them together couldn't pull the coffins of all the men who worked them."

This is true, for generations of loco men rode the footplate of these two great locos in the past hundred years. Both locos have outlived their makers and operators. Long may they continue to live and perhaps thrill generations yet unborn.

[PHOTOGRAPH]

158 on the duties for which she was built, seen here passing Inchicore in 1914. (Ken Nunn Collection H278)

[PHOTOGRAPH]

187 Piloting 4-4-0 No.8 on a passenger train, seen here at Banteer. (Real Photographs 528)

Leaving readers to ponder as to who might have said that and in what circumstances, I shall momentarily digress to a date about ten years later - the inaugural meeting of the RPSI, in fact. At this and a number of subsequent ones there was much speechifying by the inevitable orators, 90% of whom rarely, if ever, used a train for travel, especially on former GS&WR metals, although over 1,000 miles of Ireland’s largest railway was still in regular use. Our late member, Andrew Donaldson, sat beside me and proved the old adage about empty vessels by saying very little. I don’t recall saying anything at all, except to refuse office as Treasurer. For one reason or another very few of them appear on our tours these days, but even at that initial stage Drew may have wondered if his dream would ever come true, of everlasting steam over CIÉ track with our own locomotives and without the pomposity which had tended to mar society tours up until that date. The idea of steam, used only to haul enthusiasts about, seemed entirely artificial to me at that time, but I may have been selfish in this lack of enthusiasm, and thanks to the hard work of some who came on the committee later Drew was with us long enough to enjoy a whiff of the old days. On the other hand several others who had followed railway events of the thirties, just as keenly as we had, never saw the RPSI as serving any of their needs, but if “Five Foot Three” continues to return to the outward looking organ Drew intended then they may even yet add their subscriptions to ours.

It was, of course, the Society’s first editor who made that disappointed comment when a small goods engine appeared to work our train, instead of the small 4-4-0 of McDonnell, Aspinall or Ivatt vintage we expected. Such became the increasingly common situation 1953-5, but fortunately we both had photographs and timed most branches while small tank engines, 2-4-0s and 4-4-0s did regularly appear. But this article is intended to demonstrate the near miracle whereby the largest (numerically) class of locomotive in Ireland came repeatedly to produce as acceptable passenger running on branches as 2, 52 and 62 had done during the halcyon days. If readers did not realise it before, there is evidence here (though I do not intend to inflict too many statistics upon you) that in regular daily service and simply by keeping time the 101 class (a much better title for them) achieved better running than either No.184 or No.186 has so far given us. To give non-timers a breathing space first a brief mention of the situation for those interested in Irish railways 1930-60 might be in order.

Having still a dozen or so Railway Magazines bought at bookstalls 1928-35 it seemed advisable to persuade my wife to climb the four flights of stairs now impossible for me. Amazingly, in the chaos of my storeroom, she did turn up a few. In none of them despite regular references to Irish railways is there a single mention of the 101 class. Even the famous Drumm battery got preference. This periodical was then much more our bible than it had become by 1955 and it seems worth noting, in passing, that it never considered railway films to be worth more than one paragraph. It did tend to waste valuable space on ‘appointments’ on the railways, not of much moment to those of us much more intrigued at that time with each year’s new output of Pacifics and 4-6-0s coming from the workshops of Britain’s four big groups.

It seems worth noting now that the half-dozen or so who made Irish contributions to the ‘RM’ were those who over twenty years later became the backbone of the IRRS, so unlike the long-winded speakers of 1964 they really had a long history of deep interest in railways.

The senior of them, the late J. Macartney Robbins (ex LMS), arranged with Drew and me to meet in the Grand Central Hotel (where he was staying) to organise the formation of a Belfast branch of the IRRS. My attention may have been wandering for suddenly 'big' Robbins (as he always was to Drew) handed me one of the logs we were accustomed to send to H.A. Fayle for distribution in his 'Bulletin'. It gave full details of a really deplorable run on a passenger train by a J15. It may be of interest that he thought it of note not because of so much time lost but because it was so unusual for a passenger train to be hauled by this class. How things would change!!

Early in 1950 I travelled for the last time from three termini Stormont had adjudged unnecessary - Downpatrick, Donaghadee and Ballycastle, in that order and all with tank engines. It was probably as a reaction to such a disastrous turn of events that I set off in June for a ten day tour of North Wales, experiencing several branch lines soon to be closed and many engines of the Fowler era on their last legs, like some NCC ones at that time. Drew glanced at the resulting logs and photographs with a glum face but he may have been as surprised as he was delighted a few months later at CIÉ's Commercial Dept. reaction to correspondence with me. They did not normally issue weekly season tickets for the long distances I had in mind but were now agreeable to do so.

[PHOTOGRAPH]

101 at Limerick Junction on 7th August 1952, with the 10:50am Waterford - Limerick. The late Drew Donaldson is on the left.(R.M. Arnold)

[PHOTOGRAPH]

108 leaves Cobh on 22nd August 1954, with the 1:45pm (Sundays) to Cork. (R.M. Arnold)

So March 1951 saw us aboard the "Enterprise", on several occasions, out of Amiens Street, now dispatching it for both Belfast and Cork. We timed many other trains on the Cork main line - nine classes of engine in all, but not a single 0-6-0. Two did turn up on our next ticket but both of MGWR ancestry so it was not until the summer of 1952 that we timed 101 herself no less than three times on the same train. Drew studied most human profiles as keenly as he did the mountains of Donegal, but more ruthlessly and with more humour. In my photo it is difficult to know if he is already inventing this man's subsequent nickname - 'Lips', wondering what his response would be to a comment in the Irish language, or talking about the run into Limerick we were about to make, in which 101 with 150 tons managed 49 - 50 mph between most of the five intermediate steps. 114 turned up on this train later during the week, but this was our only other J15 on a passenger train, apart from 154 as described in "A Decade of Steam".

Despite observing 132, 654 and 602 freshly painted outside Inchicore works in 1953 it was clear the days of the 4-6-0s were numbered. However during 12th/13th July I timed no less than six of the 101 class but it was 4th August before one of the unrebuilt ones turned up on a passenger train I was using, and then 167 was merely a pilot to 304 on her regular turn, the 12:15pm Limerick - Waterford. During the next few days 102, 140/1 and 170 provided runs on Cobh and Youghal trains, then 124 on the Foynes mixed and 163 on the Clonmel branch, attaining 50 mph as had 141, a speed which CIÉ passenger engines seldom exceeded on minor lines any more than did British Rail at that period. On 19th August 109,

using a saturated boiler, did work my train, the mixed from Valentia Harbour, which managed 40 mph on this difficult but beautiful route, whereas 146 in the other direction was content with 38 mph.

The foregoing exemplifies how the 101 class was replacing passenger engines during the period until the new diesels had been proved. As some would find tedious the progressive story during the next three years on CIÉ I shall simply condense steam mileage/number of engines timed/number of classes as follows: 1954 - 5,287/72/23, 1955 - 5,132/81/23 and 1956 - 2,408 /58/20. Each year more diesel travel had to be endured to fit in steam runs. More and more routes experienced the modest 'maids of all work' on passenger work. 166 turned up on both the Macmine branch and Rosslare - Cork trains. This was the engine (on a goods train, of course) which crashed the buffers at Tralee in April 1901, wrecking the buildings and scalding driver, fireman and guard to death. Tralee crews worked three routes plus two small branches of which only one was suited for fast running, but one driver in particular - Denis Connor - seemed as happy with the 101 class as he did 336. On 12th April, 1955, he left Newcastle West 12½ minutes late with 156 and the 4pm ex Limerick. 53 - 54 mph was reeled off on section after section, including such smart times, with 140 tons, as 7'17" for the 4.6 miles from Barnagh to Devon Road and 5'43" for the 3.4 miles to Abbeyfeale, finally racing away to 58 mph before Tralee, reached only 1 minute late. Another Kerry branch on which, formerly, 7 and 13 of the D19 class (4-4-0) had reached, Kenmare, was now also in charge of such engines as 133 and 195 (saturated) and 139 (superheated), driven by Patrick Dalton. For me the dominant figure on any Kerry train was one massive Tralee guard, invariably shouting, and immensely curious about Drew. He'd be repeatedly crashing up and down through the train for another peep and would later inquire of me, "Where is the weights and measures man today?" In a more dignified atmosphere the other (GSR) 171 was active on Kilkenny - Kildare passenger work while 122 arrived at Portlaoise on 6th July 1955 actually hauling a diesel set. Speed never exceeded 54 mph on the non-stop runs to Dublin, arriving 27 late and losing 11¼ minutes on the 50 minute diesel timing from Portarlinton, but her crew stated she had a hot box. Drew accompanied me on almost none of those 1954/5 runs. Disillusioned with the fate of his beloved 400s and unable to envisage a CIÉ so very much in charge of small goods engines he resorted instead to his bicycle and photography. I had tended to share his view as expressed in the title of this article, but by now a real feeling of affection prevailed for the life the 101 class was still giving those immaculately kept stations, though there were many worrying moments. For example, during the winter of 1955/6 the Waterford - Limerick night mail was a warm train to pass a couple of hours in, even if 188, 303 or 304 could scarcely struggle into the forties with a heavy train. Down the road from the station at Clonmel was a small hotel always prepared to provide a welcome even at 10pm, and I would go to bed wondering if the dead silence of the shed area would resolve into steam next morning for the train to Thurles. But I'd be awakened by that melodious GS&WR whistle and the noise of a J15 shunting. In fact this branch was not as suspect as I had feared, for the former express engines 312/3 and even 335 gave me a morning run to Thurles even later, though not any faster than 108 on 18th March 1957 doing 55 mph.

After many runs with well over fifty of the 101 class I tended to consider that the rebuilt versions of engines built as late as 1898/9 and numbered 192-8 were about the most free running, though Sharp 164 of 26 years before could also be lively. Or maybe it was because she was now in charge of Tuam drivers who had kept the delicious '52' class 4 -4-0s so

long after most others. Three miles from post 117 towards Tuam were run by 164 in 3'17", with a sustained max of 59 mph, hauling 140 tons. The fastest I had on the Youghal branch was 56 mph by 181 but thankfully I never timed 186 in pre-RPSI days and my photograph at Kilkenny in 1955 is clearly before that era. I never timed 184 in ordinary service either but she was having some special attention in 1960, being given a well lined out livery of dark green. The IRRS tour though Borris and part of the Macmine branch, now closed, proved she was rather weak but quite free running, 57 mph down to Chapel being my highest speed with the saturated version.

188 was the first of the 101 class I ever timed and there was scarcely a year from 1948 when I didn't have at least one good run with her. The most entertaining was undoubtedly with Waterford driver, Ned Kennedy (not the senator) with a football excursion to Dungarvan on 18th March 1956. No one joined or left at Durrow but I took this opportunity for a photo and a few words with the crew, possibly the reason for a lively run over the 7 miles to destination. 188 took 11'7" (max 62 mph), this being the allowance for diesel locomotives when they took over shortly afterwards.

[PHOTOGRAPH]

Another Waterford J15, this time saturated 116, near Rosslare Strand on 10th May 1958. The train is the 2:50pm to Wexford. (R.M. Arnold)

It would be strange if a GSWR class over one hundred strong did not stray during GSR days to neighbouring metals but right to the end of steam one never saw them on the CBSCR of course, and seldom on the MGWR, though I twice encountered them there - 196 at Longford on a p.w. train and 200 at Batterstown with cattle wagons. 197 provided a photographic scoop on 17th September 1960 when she was at Kildare when the GNR blue engine with the same number arrived on a IRRS special from Dublin after a magnificent run. Which brings us to 198, the heroine of the class. In "A Decade of Steam", Drew has described my run on 26th June 1955, in a typically competent way, probably realising, though he did not state this, that it was the slowing for track repairs which induced driver Maguire to open up again so hard when usually the regulator at this stage of most runs would be all but closed. Possibly the crew may also have thought they might not have many more opportunities for a record run with a steam engine, unaware that the 101 class would, in duplicate, attain its centenary. As well as Irish mixed-traffic 0-6-0s of the BCDR, GNR, NCC, MGWR and other GSWR classes I have timed the same wheel arrangement as designed by each of the four groups in Britain but none at any time has ever had my stop watch under 15 seconds in a ¼ mile as often in a space of 20 miles as 198.

[PHOTOGRAPH]

3rd August 1956. 164 at Oranmore on the 3:10pm ex Tuam. (R.M. Arnold)

The last sentence of St. John's Gospel Chapter 4 verse 9 has always best expressed, to my mind, that attitude of Society Committee men towards those who travel our railways regularly, so I was both surprised and gratified when a message came through for an article on this subject for "Five Foot Three". I had no idea anyone in the throne room realized my J15 experience was worth using. All my footplate travel on this class goes back to the

fifties so I should add that several members must now be most knowledgeable on this aspect, because of experience with 184 and 186.

“Five Foot Three” did well to publish a well written obituary for Drew by J.A. Cassells which must also have moved many of his other friends. I trust my frequent reference to him here will also remind them of one of the-most entertaining companions one could ask for on any railway journey.

BOOK REVIEWS

Irish Railways In The Heyday Of Steam, H.C. Casserley, D. Bradford Barton Ltd

On several occasions in recent years I have heard the view expressed that railway preservation ventures should be supported by some of the better-known names of the photographic industry. Certainly, the value of equipment which is deployed during the course of any of our tours is formidable, not to mention the expense of films and processing which must necessarily follow. Despite this, the results which eventually see light of day represent only an iceberg tip, and the number of photographers involved is correspondingly small. It is therefore a matter of pride for our Society that we number amongst our members a photographer who is not only one of the elite of railway photographers, but one who has been consistently active for the past fifty years. He is Mr. H.C. Casserley, whose work is featured in “Irish Railways In the Heyday of Steam”, the latest in a long series of books which he has prepared for D. Bradford Barton Ltd. I first admired his work over twenty years ago when I was given my first railway book, a small volume featuring the Romney, Hythe and Dymchurch Railway, and it has been a pleasure to renew my acquaintance with his style.

Mr. Casserley’s photographs are often of ordinary subjects, rather than the off-beat subjects which seem to attract so many railway photographers and cause the amazing scarcity of ‘ordinary’ photographs. We do not have to turn many pages, therefore, before seeing Limerick Junction, that Mecca of Irish railways, and the Cork expresses which once graced its lengthy platform. From there, the subject shifts to that other ‘typical’ aspect of Irish railways, the country branch line. The book includes the remote termini at Fenit and Valentia and shots taken at several stations in west Cork. There is no strict sequence to the contents of the book either with regard to dates nor to location, but the subjects have been carefully chosen and occasionally run as a sequence such as that depicting the Midland Great Western Railway which starts at Broadstone and includes Claremorris, Westport, Manulla Junction and Loughrea. To balance the sequences, there are single unrelated subjects such as the 1886 Aspinall 0-4-4T seen at Wexford in 1938.

It was an unfortunate decision to print some of the best pictures as two-page spreads. Between two pages there must inevitably be a joint, and as the resulting discontinuity quite spoils any advantage which the greater enlargement may have given. One such example is Waterford and Tramore Railway 2-2-2WT No.1, photographed in 1932, three years before its tragic derailment and demise. Several other gems have fortunately been limited to single pages which still display their qualities excellently. Two pictures of locomotives of the Cork, Bandon and South Coast Railway and of the Timoleague and Courtmacsherry Railway respectively each occupy a single page. These tiny engines are the start of a transition in the book, which passes through the Great Southern and Western Railway pay

trains and inspector's loco/saloons to a substantial selection of narrow gauge photographs. Included here is Cork and Muskerry Light Railway No.2K, seen on the outskirts of Cork passing below the overhead gantries of the Cork City Tramways which occupied a parallel track. The Tramway ceased operation in 1931 and the Railway in 1934. If you think that you have seen all the narrow gauge pictures worth seeing ... think again! Despite the extensive coverage which Irish narrow gauge railways have received in the dozen or so specialised publications which have appeared to date, Mr. Casserley again succeeds in coming up with something new. Cork, Blackrock and Passage, Cavan and Leitrim, Schull and Skibbereen and West Clare ... they are all there, and a further section on northern narrow gauge lines follows later in the book.

From the economy-stricken narrow gauge we are shown the opposite extreme of the Heyday of Steam ... the Great Northern Railway during its three final decades of prosperity. The photographs of expresses in the thirteen-page Great Northern sequence are nothing short of magnificent, capably interspersed with lesser trains in more remote regions. The remainder of the book is distinctly northern in character, covering the LMS (NCC), the Belfast and County Down Railway, the Sligo, Leitrim and Northern Counties Railway and, of course, the narrow gauge lines. The final photograph, by Mr. R.M. Casserley, is of Bulleid's experimental turf-burning locomotive CC1. How fitting to finish the Heyday of Steam with Ireland's final steam locomotive.

As the work of only two photographers, Messrs. H.C. & R.M. Casserley, the photographic style employed is visibly limited when compared with other similar albums. It might also be said that Locomotives in the Heyday of Steam would have been a more accurate title, since the book shows little of the buildings, people or sundry other activities which gave the railways their atmosphere, but Mr. Casserley has kept to the subject which he knows well and has succeeded admirably. True, the captions contain several minor errors which the self-styled 'serious railway enthusiasts' will delight in pointing out to their friends or anyone else who will listen to them and although they should be corrected in future editions, are of only minor significance. In general, the captions are brief and informative; Mr. Casserley has included occasional comments and personal anecdotes, but their use is both apt and careful. This book has captured skilfully the aspects of Ireland's railways which many others would have considered commonplace. It forms a masterful overview of our multiplicity of railway companies during their final decades ... the final years of steam supremacy.

HWC

IRISH RAILWAYS IN THE HEYDAY OF STEAM

R.H. Barr

Some thoughts prompted by the book of the name

This contribution is in no way intended as a book review but rather some random thoughts resulting from having between one set of covers this collection of marvellous pictures. I confess to having viewed the appearance of "Irish Railways in the Heyday of Steam" with some trepidation. Over the years Mr. Casserley has kindly furnished me with a goodly selection of his Irish pictures, either directly, or by providing illustrations for a wide variety of books and magazine articles. Would I have seen all the pictures before? I need not have worried. I have found much that is fresh and new to me and indeed, such is the perversity of human nature, found I regretted the omission of one or two Casserley classics, e.g. 4-8-0 No.12 at Burtonport. The shot of No.84 at Amiens Street on 4/6/1932 alone justifies the

purchase price, and makes me think, firebox and tender notwithstanding, the RPSI should paint No.85 black!

Even if the photographic quality had been poor the subject matter is such that the book would be an essential part of any serious enthusiast's library; as it is the technical excellence (of the pre-war shots, at least) is such as to stand comparison with the Lawrence Collection. Reproduction is excellent, although a number of shots suffer from over enlargement of locomotive and train with consequential cropping of surrounding detail, though I admit this may just be the modeller in me. I think particularly of NCC 41 at Derry, VS 208 at Dundalk, or even my favourite shot, 84 at Amiens Street.

The claim that the Enterprise name was used before 1947 needs correction. Furthermore I have always understood that the name "Bundoran Express" only became official during WW II. The caption for compound 84 at Amiens Street states that this is in readiness for the inaugural run of the new timetable on 4/6/1932. In IRRS Journal 56 Mr. D. Murray gives the starting date of fifth June. According to Whittaker this was a Sunday, could it be that Mr. Casserley's shot is of 84 on a publicity special?

As well as implying that the name Bundoran Express was in use in September 1929 the picture of 104 at Bundoran Junction clearly shows the train signalled for Omagh, and with a string of cattle wagons on the tail. I wish it had been a Bundoran train; as the junction is still the original double layout. Did down stopping branch trains enter the up main loop and cross straight into the single branch platform, or did they keep to the down loop and set back into the station from the West Box? The later layout is shown clearly in a couple of shots (by Drew Donaldson and D.T.R. Henderson) accompanying "High Summer on the Bundoran Line" by C.P. Friel in FFT No.7. And how the trees grew in a quarter century - how are they now?

The description of the big Northern 4-4-0 classes as Birds and Rivers is odd, though I confess to have given a talk on the Mountains of the Great Northern, but that was in England. Alongside a fine trio of tanks at Amiens Street is a note that the GN had 27 such tanks; two too many since there were 5 T Class and 20 T2, to my eyes indistinguishable and indeed by the time of Mr. Casserley's first visit, were so. Since the U Class (10 engines) and the UG Class (10 engines) evolved from Glover's 4-4-2 tank the whole 45 seem fair to challenge the claim that the J15 was the only standard design in Ireland (page 16 - a dream evoking shot of 200 at Bray on 5/6/1932, just redolent of atmosphere).

In a similar way I doubt if there was such outward difference between the S and S2 classes. In IRRS Journal No.34 Mr. Clements examines the evidence and leads me to conclude that the 5 Clifford engines were superior to the 3 Glover variants. It is a pity then that alongside a fine shot of 192 at Dundalk on 14/4/1948 is the suggestion that the 1915 engines were the largest before the coming of the Compounds. Puzzling, too, since on the opposite page is a record of 171 at Wellington Bridge on 16/9/1973. I just cannot see any difference between the S and the S2. I will remember the poor light that day, but this, the newest in the book, bears out my contention that the older the photograph, the better the quality - compare this with those beautiful thirties examples selected for the cover.

In the caption for the picture of 85 and 86 at Dundalk (the Square Crossing gets good cover) Mr. Casserley quotes the old shibboleth that the Great Northern never had a 4-6-0 because of the restricted length of the traverser at Dundalk Works. This is uncommon odd

since in this context the difference between a 4-6-0 and a 4-4-2 tank eludes me. In the introduction to an article on the 3-cylinder 4-4-0s Mr. D. Murray (IRRS Journal No.56) sets out the two main factors placing a severe limit on the size of GN locomotives: (1) the restrictions on weight permissible on the Boyne Viaduct (17 tons per axle) and the Malahide Bridge, and (2) the fact that the erecting shop at Dundalk Works could not accommodate engines more than about 35 feet in length.

[PHOTOGRAPH]

The Heyday of Steam. Compound No.84 at Amiens Street, 4th June 1932.
(H.C. Casserley)

[PHOTOGRAPH]

Redolent of Atmosphere. Coey J15 No.200 at Bray on 6th June 1932. Interestingly, she is working a passenger train. (H.C. Casserley)

If anything (1) would lead to a 4-6-0 rather than a 4-4-0, but Mr. Howden won his spurs by his economical reconstruction of the Boyne Viaduct 1930-2, thereby eliminating the weight limit. So far as (2) is concerned I think it was Cyril Freezer who pointed out that the impecunious Great Eastern (another company which got more than most out of its 4-4-0s) produced in the S69 (LNER B12) a 4-6-0 and tender more compact than many equivalent 4-4-0s, and thus avoided expensive turntable renewal.

My own reasons for the Great Northern reliance on the 4-4-0 are three-fold. Tradition, and why change a winning formula? At the time the Compounds were conceived three of the British Big Four were actively building 4-4-0s; remember, too, the influence of Senator Bagwell. Secondly, a close look at Inchicore (before 1939) would hardly have inspired confidence, or show anything which Dundalk couldn't equal (allowing for the different traffic patterns and the totally different topography of the two main lines, e.g. Dublin/Cork like the silhouette of an inverted bath, Dublin/Belfast more like that of a Mexican sombrero, which with through working does not require so much collar work from a cold start. Possibly this is personal bias - my 'own' railway had 6 miles at mostly 1 in 70 from the platform end at Greenock Prince Pier, and the water level Caledonian to beat. Thirdly, the long coupled wheel-base gave a fine deep fire-box with the new boilers going on the Compounds from early 1947 it was convenient to have the same boiler on the 1948 VS Class. These are purely my own ideas, and since I was never in Dundalk works, there may be something I have overlooked. No doubt I will be told! [Any suggestions? Ed]

Incidentally the caption which sparked off the above continues on to suggest that the newly out-shopped 85 (15/5/1950) had received the 'new blue livery' for the first time. I understand that 85 first became blue about 1937. My suggestion that the RPSI should paint 85 black once more is serious, but doesn't mean I don't like the blue livery. To this day I can recollect my first visit to Great Victoria Street; doubting Thomas that I was, I had to see all these blue 4-4-0s before I really believed they existed. With one or two shining exceptions the McIntosh 4-4-0s on BR were grubby, black and neglected. From that first visit, too, I still recollect that marvellous, and as yet hardly pruned, map of the Great Northern which met the eye on entering the station. From those days, too, I recollect an almost dream-like picture of 205 shimmering in the sunshine, shunting the centre road at Enniskillen. What a

sight that would be to-day (but oh, for 74, all gleaming black and polished pipework, on the 1:55 EC to the Junction, and thence the 2:40 Passenger to Bundoran).

In his introduction Mr. Casserley roughly defines the heyday of steam as the period between the wars and a few years after WW II. Whilst accepting this for Ireland, I question the omission of the Edwardian years when considering the heyday of steam on my side of the Irish Sea. But do I detect that the publishers have reserved this title for we colonials? One could hang the heyday of steam onto a series of dates: 5/6/1932, the new Great Northern timetable; 1/6/1934, the inauguration of the North Atlantic Express; 17/7/1939, the acceleration of the Cork Day Mail; 11/8/1947, the introduction of the Enterprise, and end it with the Great Northern on 31st August 1953. This excludes me, since I only made my first Irish journey (on the County Down) in 1954 - but I remember with great affection the GNRB as the last truly great Edwardian railway, and the one which really pioneered diesel propulsion. To my own ends, I extend the period until the end of the Irish North on 30th September 1957.

This book, to an extent, fits my complaint that the quality of photographs in books on Irish railways is directly proportional to their age. The older the better. Admittedly when prints from the Lawrence collection are included, the only progress is bound to be downwards, but have there been no technical improvements in photography these past 40 years? Only the first two Editors of FFT seem able to maintain and improve their picture quality. Maybe I am seeing those pictures from Mr. Casserley's pre-war journeys through rose-tinted spectacles, but I have seen nothing post-war to rival them. Perhaps it is just that the sun shines on youth; for my part I cannot recollect rain on my Irish wanderings in the fifties.

There seems an almost mystic quality about the initial C where the surnames of Irish enthusiasts are concerned. The Casserleys (and my eternal thanks to Mrs Casserley for her indulgence), A.W. Croughton, W.A. Camwell. What a magic ring I sensed in these names when as a schoolboy I poured over May Railway Magazines in Glasgow's Mitchell Library and alternated these with January copies and the racy writing of David L. Smith, no mean Irish enthusiast himself. Yet all these giants of railway photography are overshadowed by the Clements family - I treasure a footplate trip (official) on the down Galway day Mail; once the snatcherman departed at Mullingar Driver Tennant regaled me with tales of the Clements family. Mr. Tennant, a Broadstone man, and himself the son of an army family, spoke with affections of father, a General in the English army, and brother, a General in the Irish Army, and Bob, who knows everybody and everything Midland.

Mention of the Midland reminds me of C.H. Ellis and the Trains we Loved. If my interest in Irish railways started with a Meccano Magazine article on the Beyer Peacock U class of 1948, Ellis and May Railway Magazines nurtured this until I was old enough to visit. Regular holidays in Galloway had implanted in me a special regard for single lines, and travel to school behind ex-Caledonian 4-4-0s made me receptive to news of a new 4-4-0, painted sky-blue and scarlet, designed by a CME called McIntosh for long single track branches between Dundalk and Derry. Branches indeed! - these termini were so far apart that I couldn't find the second without using the gazetteer!

The Great Northern had hardly reached its zenith in the period of which Ellis wrote, and his chapter on the Irish Companies opens with the Midland; I suspect Clements influence via the Railway Magazine. In this Ellis also introduced me to the works of Synge, for this I am eternally grateful and forgive him for being the cause of my missing my first County Donegal train (later in the same chapter he states that the Donegal connected (sic) with the GN at Strabane and Ballyshannon. For the true story see C.P. Friel on the Bundoran Branch in FFT No.7). Mr. Ellis referred me to 'The Aran Islands' as containing one of Synge's finest pieces of

descriptive writing involving a wild journey on a Midland Great Western night train from Galway to Dublin. It is a far cry from Supertrains of the Seventies, but maybe it had a 2-4-0 at the head.

Ellis did me another disservice, though I realised it gradually, and with none of the trauma of a missed 'connection' at Ballyshannon. He wrote so lyrically of the delectable lines to Burtonport, to Achill, and to Clifden - all of which passed away about the time of my birth - that I neglected to go to Valentia. Every time we talk of Irish railways David Smith will quite soon say "if only you had gone by Mountain Stage to Cahirciveen". Coming from that much travelled man that is praise indeed, but Mr. Casserley's pictures (and those from the Lawrence Collection) explain why.

A marvellous book. The mistakes are a minor blemish which I hope can be corrected in subsequent editions. I hope, too, that sales justify a volume II, with a fellow-member of the RPSI to cast an eye over the draft, if only to correct any reference to the Irish Railway Preservation Society.

[Before large numbers of persons make their way to Whitehead to paint No.85 black, it should be pointed out that the Transport Museum have requested that she remains in blue livery. Perhaps the black paint could be applied to No.186 instead (!). Ed]

[OUTSIDE REAR UPPER]

No.184 passes Glenageary during the Bray Railtour last September. (C.P. Friel)

[OUTSIDE REAR LOWER]

No.186 departs from Whitehead Excursion Station on the return working of the Open Day Special from York Road. (C.P. Friel)