

FIVE FOOT THREE

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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: No.4 approaches York Road station with the Portrush Flyer of 21st July 1984, having run in from Whitehead. (C.P. Friel)

[INSIDE FRONT COVER]

No.171 still looks very much at home against the backdrop of the GNR's Amiens Street Station. Here she waits to depart with the working north after the Galway Bay Tour, 13th May 1984. (C.P. Friel)

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

Sullivan Boomer

It is difficult to write for FFT as 'News' is frequently stale by the time the magazine is received, such is the speed with which things can happen in this Society. However, I feel that it is no bad thing to review the policy and progress of the Society at regular intervals, and as I am putting pen to paper in an attempt to inform members some of the thinking going on in Council. (Yes, we do think from time to time!)

Obviously most of you are aware that we have been approached by the Downpatrick and Ardglass Railway Society for support in their scheme to reinstate the old County Down branch line. They are seeking in particular locomotives and rolling stock, and the Preserved Railway Committee (a sub-committee of the Council) has recommended that we give this support. There has been considerable debate in Council (and amongst Council members in private) and, at the time of writing, an Extraordinary General Meeting is still to be called. Reservations have been expressed not so much about the scheme itself, but more

concerning the consequences of an over-hasty decision. We are therefore seeking meetings with various Government departments and related agencies, and with the railway company to ensure that our own interest in main line steam operation can be adequately secured.

Related to our future plans will be the final decision by the Board of Trustees of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum on the proposal of the Society to house the railway collection at Whitehead. Currently a UFTM Working Party is considering the various options available, and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and Carrickfergus Borough Council are waiting, like ourselves, for the outcome of these deliberations. It is not, and never has been, the custom in this Society to wait for others to reach a decision affecting ourselves, but in the circumstances we must wait as patiently as we can, and hope for a favourable outcome.

The Council have felt for some time that negotiation at the highest possible level is the most effective way to further the aims of the Society, and for this reason meetings are presently being planned with both NIR and CIÉ. at Board level. I do not propose to list specific topics of discussion - each department within the Society has its own priorities - but the over-riding theme will be to ensure the future development of our steam operations and the provision (or retention) of such railway installations as are essential to this end. We are currently witnessing a massive leap forward in railway modernisation, with DART, new trains, new signalling, new track and all the other paraphernalia of a modern railway system. It is imperative for us, as a Society, to ensure that we do not allow anything that we will require in the future to disappear - we will not get a second chance to influence decisions or acquire material if we do not speak now.

Finally, on a more domestic front, I am happy to say that Whitehead Railway Project (the NIACRO backed Youth Training Scheme - to be known in future by its proper title) have provided the Society with excellent support this year. They are now so much of the Whitehead scene that, regrettably, they sometimes get taken for granted. I suppose that in itself this level of acceptance is a compliment, but the work they are doing is greatly appreciated by all Council members, and it is our earnest hope that over the coming years they will be able to undertake more tasks, both in vehicle restoration and routine administration, as well as seat bookings, which will release our members for more specialised applications.

So there you are - I've rambled my way through a number of areas of policy and I hope you may now have a clearer idea of the kind of debates and discussions that go on in Council meetings. One thing must be clear in all of these writings; at the end of the day it is you, the member, who will ultimately decide the future and policy of the Society. The Council will make no irrevocable decision without the agreement of a General Meeting of the members, and you have the final say in every way. After all, you elect your Council at the AGM, don't you!

NEWS FROM COUNCIL

Robin Morton

Another branchline EGM is looming at the time of writing, with the issue at stake this time the proposal to re-open the Downpatrick - Ardglass railway line. The Downpatrick and Ardglass Railway Society, which is co-ordinating the proposal, had written to the RPSI requesting the loan of locomotive, carriage, and technical equipment. Down District

Council had decided it would back the Ardglass scheme rather than a rival proposal to aim for Ballynahinch, and now it really all hinges on the RPSI's attitude.

On the mainline the year got off to a good start with the formal presentation to the RPSI of the annual award of the Association of Railway Preservation Societies. The award trophy was triumphantly brought back to Belfast where a special train headed by our 2-6-4T No.4 was operated to celebrate the event. Since then the trophy has been on virtually continuous display in various windows of shops, tourist boards and banks in the greater Belfast area.

We also took the trophy with us to Galway for the highly successful Galway Bay railtour in May. Our only problem at the end of the year will be working out how to transport this bulky item back across the water - unless of course we manage to win it a second time!

Foundations are being laid, meanwhile, for two major projects upon which the Society has fixed its sights. The first is the installation of a turntable at Coleraine to facilitate the continued operation of the Portrush Flyer. It is hoped that the work will be carried out by Enterprise Ulster with materials being funded through a Northern Ireland Tourist Board grant. Detailed discussions with NIR are pending.

The second project is the Society's proposal that Whitehead would be the perfect spot for the relocation of Belfast Transport Museum, currently housed in rather cramped conditions at Witham Street. The Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, which controls Belfast Transport Museum, has set up a working party to examine various options and we trust our proposal will merit serious consideration.

The spadework is due to begin at the time of writing on another important development at Whitehead - the excavation of an embankment to make way for a badly needed new siding. With substantial expenditure involved the Council thought long and hard before giving the project the go-ahead. Finance will be provided through a bank loan of £12,000, repayable over the next five years.

The question of finance always dominates Council thinking, particularly as this year the Society finds itself minus a commercial officer. Fund-raising is flying on one wing, with various folk filling in to keep the show on the road. But we all know that despite their efforts it means we cannot rely on the usual healthy injection of funds from the sales front.

Our bank balance did, however, receive a welcome boost for two separate one-day film projects. Both involved our veteran 0-6-0 No.184, operating from Mullingar shed. The first was in December when RTÉ borrowed the loco, for the film "A Painful Case." Then in July No.184 was out again for a fleeting appearance in the American series "Remington Steele".

The Council feels that Mullingar has yet to realise its full potential. A new Council post of Mullingar Site Officer was ratified at the AGM in January and a circular was sent to members in the Republic in July in a bid to whip up a little more enthusiasm. The circular appealed for support on the fund-raising, operating, and maintenance fronts. The Society is hoping to line up a high-level meeting with CIÉ to discuss the possibility of a long-term lease for Mullingar among other matters.

At a special Council meeting in April our policy was re-affirmed that Whitehead should handle major overhauls of locomotives and coaches with the heavy engineering equipment being concentrated there. Mullingar, it was felt, should continue to handle running repairs.

Once again the Council has decided to stable a rake of carriages at Mullingar for the winter period, to enable No.184 to run a number of excursions. It will mean we are ready for the off should a special steam train be requested for the actual Traen 150 anniversary on 17th December.

To date the Council has been disappointed that more has not been made of Traen 150. The RPSI has largely been left to carry the torch on its own and has not received the response in official circles which the council felt the occasion merited.

Activities at Whitehead have included the Santa, Easter and Summer train rides, all of which have proved worthwhile.

Our two unemployment relief schemes have both continued apace, dove-tailing well into the work of the RPSI volunteers. The Action for Community Employment team currently comprises two joiners, a boilermaker, a painter and a handyman and all have been making significant inroads.

The Whitehead Railway Project, our youth training scheme run under the auspices of the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders, now has five supervisors and 24 teenagers. Work on coach 68, housed in the Project's own shed, has been impressive. The Whitehead Railway Project has also taken on much of the Society's administrative work, including answering phone inquiries, handling some railtour bookings, and preparing, printing, collating, addressing and despatching circulars to the membership.

Cover on our buildings at Whitehead has been increased in line with our insurance broker's recommendations. The locomotive shed is now covered for £133,000, and stables for £25,000. Certain carriages such as dining cars and brake coaches have been designated 'high-value' and the insurance cover on them upped from £1,000 to £10,000.

The Council's mind was concentrated by the fire at Whitehead bus shed in which some of our property was destroyed. The forensic report indicated that there was nothing to suggest the fire had been started maliciously. That means the Society cannot lodge any claim against the Government and so the items concerned will just have to be written off as loss.

The Society's Belfast area meetings have been going from strength to strength with audiences of up to 100 at St. Jude's Hall not unusual. In the same neck of the woods the Society ran its annual soiree at the Drumkeen Hotel in February.

The RPSI was represented at the official naming ceremony at Bangor in August of the new NIR locomotive 113. The nameplates "Belfast and Co. Down" were provided by the RPSI.

My thanks to all those who have helped, including the following posts of special responsibility (PSRs):

Membership Secretary	Mervyn Darragh
Belfast area meetings	Charles Friel
Ulster Tourist Development Association	John Glendinning
Insurance	Derek Young
Legal	Brian Ham

As in all departments of the RPSI, the Operations committee is under increasing pressure to maintain the presently successful level of operations. Success in this context is partially measured by an increase in the steam passenger mileage, an increase in the contribution railtours are making to the upkeep of the locomotives and rolling stock. Not so obvious, but at least as important, is an increase of interest in Irish railways at home and in Great Britain, not to mention the recognition of our efforts over previous years by the Association of Railway Preservation Societies. I am most fortunate in having the following members making major contributions to the annual operations programme: Sam Carse - Dublin Agent; Brian Hill - Locomotive Running; Charles Friel - Railtour planning and brochure; Alan Love - Portrush Flyer; John Friel - Publicity; Leslie McAllister - London Agent; Denis Grimshaw - Railtour planning and scheduling; Tony Ragg - Steam Enterprise; Neil Hamilton - Carriage Running; Jeremy Saulters - Carriage Programming.

My thanks are due to them for the many hours of toil necessary to keep the wheels turning. Thanks are also due to Arthur Wickham for Flyer publicity at Coleraine and Portrush, to Ian Slaughter for arranging air travel for the three day Railtour and to Brian McElhern for printing tickets. As usual, shops have played an important part in reaching the general public with tickets and information. These are Castle Travel, Lurgan and Portadown; Caters Estate Agents, Carrickfergus; Hobbies Ltd, Dublin; McCulloughs Toy Shop, Bangor; Mullans Bookshop, Belfast; Nelson Medical Hall, Lisburn. Many thanks to you and your staff for a most important role.

Instead of the usual account of the various Railtours which I trust most of you will have sampled, I would like to report on the general trend of operations, past and present and future. The present committee inherited a solid foundation of operations from the previous committee under Denis Grimshaw. The two day enthusiasts railtour was firmly established, the one day public excursions; "Portrush Flyer" and "Steam Enterprise" were already part of the annual calendar. Southern operations included Santa Trains and Easter Bunny trains at Mullingar and the "Claddagh" to Galway. Our job was to build on this foundation and see what areas could be improved or revised to ensure that each covered its own expenses and the overall operational expenses of the Society, i.e. those expenses which keep the locomotives and carriages running, including insurance. For 1982 this operational expense worked out at £6 per mile, but with increasing passenger mileage during 1983, dropped to just over £5. Hence we were able to keep most fares this year level with 1983 in spite of gradually rising costs.

Let us look at each operation in turn which perhaps may promote comment/criticism from members. Starting in calendar order the Santa Train Rides at Mullingar were the least successful of our operations. The extremely cold weather, while providing a rare photographic opportunity of No.184 and train in a snow covered landscape, was hardly conducive to carrying the families of Mullingar in an unheated train. Thus we have suspended this operation until steam heating is available on our trains. The alternative of hiring CIÉ rolling stock would be prohibitive at around IR£250 per coach per day. We did prove however that the market is waiting for us.

The Easter Bunny Train Rides (at Mullingar) are better placed in the calendar and have been relatively successful. Due to the lateness of Easter this year and the impending Claddagh Railtour on the following Saturday the train rides were not operated. We have

relied heavily on Mrs. Sheridan for local publicity and on Tony Mullins, stationmaster at Mullingar, for sales of tickets for these events - which hopefully will be revived.

The Claddagh Railtour from Mullingar to Galway was struggling for survival using high cost CIÉ rolling stock, but had a new lease of life when the Society's own carriages were substituted. We still have some way to go to promote the main trip and in spite of an improvement in numbers travelling from Mullingar this year, it was the afternoon local trip to Attymon Junction and back which made the whole operation viable. We have a most useful ally in the West of Ireland Steam Railway Association who promote the Galway - Attymon trip; indeed Martin Hewitt also undertook to promote ticket sales from Ballinasloe. We in turn are offering a small percentage on ticket sales, and an opportunity to sell souvenirs.

The Two-Day Railtour has now become the Three Day International Railtour. This year 35% of the participants chose to make it a long weekend and travelled to Belfast and Whitehead/Larne to take full advantage of the steam mileage. Next year it is proposed to visit Cork and Cobh and we believe the resulting steam mileage to be unique. Taken together with the atmosphere of the event it must represent a most attractive proposition to rail enthusiasts world wide. It is therefore most encouraging to have the support of Bord Failte Éireann, who have agreed to publish an advance booking form for the "Cork 800" Railtour on 11th - 13th May 1985, to be distributed through their offices in several countries. Incidentally "Cork 800" is so called because the city is celebrating 800 years since its charter was granted by King John in 1185.

The numbers travelling on the 2 (?) day Railtours increased from 180 in 1983 (Waterford) to 220 last May (Galway) with an increasing proportion coming from outside Ireland. Railway company charges and coal bills have been increasing annually, so an obvious way to keep fares down is to carry more passengers. The Operations committee have been considering other ways of increasing revenue, including running a short trip open to the public at the point of the tour's destination. This also satisfies local interest in our activities. This year we had an interesting innovation on the Galway Bay Railtour when member Sean Brown of Castlerea realised the potential for a short trip from his own town. On the day he raised £IR238 from tickets sold for a trip from Castlerea to Claremorris, returning by means of the 'empty' train working hauled by No.171 on her way back to Mullingar for servicing. We are already considering the potential for local trips next year in Cork.

The Portrush Flyer has just completed its eleventh season, is as popular as ever, and is attracting increasing numbers from outside Ireland. It is hard to envisage people paying more than £7 or £8 each for a trip to and from Portrush and as a family day out it is certainly not cheap. As the Flyer has been struggling to break even financially we reluctantly increased the adult fare to £7.50 this year. In an attempt to fill the first trip on 21st July we increased the advertising effort, though at one stage we had considered cancelling it altogether, because of the date clash with the Shane's Castle Traction Engine Rally. Our decision to run was vindicated by a near record turnout.

[PHOTOGRAPH]

No.171 on shed at Galway, during the two day tour, 13th May 1984. (C.P. Friel)

[PHOTOGRAPH]

No.171 and No.184 provide an interesting comparison of lines, while pausing at Attymon junction, 13th May 1984. (C.P. Friel)

The Portrush to Castlerock return afternoon excursion operated on the Flyer dates is now an essential part of the overall operation since the 250 - 300 additional fares collected ensures the continuance of the Flyer series. This was well illustrated during the past season by the excellent support at the Portrush end of all three trips, while support for the second and third Flyers was a little disappointing at the Belfast end - despite a press reception funded by the Northern Ireland Tourist board.

In contrast, the Steam Enterprise, running this year on 1st and 15th September, has been very well supported in the past and with a fare of £13 adult return broke even financially last year, as in previous years. As usual, the first trip ran with some empty seats, but this year we were grateful to have the assistance of Bord Failte Éireann who held a press reception in the Forum Hotel, Belfast to launch the Steam Enterprise series. We also have shopping vouchers on trial from BFE to tempt the ladies to an afternoon's shopping in the fair city.

I have left the so-called 'carriage workings', to the last. We are planning a permanent rake of carriages in Mullingar depot which will be available for traffic generated from a number of possible centres in the Republic, as well as film contract work. Unfortunately human resources are spread thinly and we have not been able as yet to effect restoration work on carriages at Mullingar. In order to leave room at Whitehead for renewal and extension of track work, it has been the RPSI Council policy to work a rake of carriages in the Autumn to store at Mullingar over the Winter, returning again to Whitehead with the 3 day railtour. The cost of this movement of carriages over long distances presented a major challenge to the Operations Committee so we tried advertising to members only. The fares were lower than usual for the distances travelled as there were no refreshment facilities or shop on board. Also, the schedules were inclined to be loosely adhered to, which meant that a train did not have to stick rigidly to departure times. We had a small success with our advertising to members - this type of trip seems to have its own appeal. Nonetheless there is still a large deficit on these 'operations'. The answer would seem to be in attracting public interest in a short haul return portion or extension to the main carriage working, and using the revenue from this to clear the deficit.

Thus the "Bray Shuttle" on 24th September was an extension of the carriage working from Whitehead to Mullingar. Similarly the "Enfield Shuttle" of 7th April last was an extension of a similar stock transfer.

The "Bangor Belle" of 27th August made viable the stock transfer from Whitehead to Central Services Depot at Belfast (for the Steam Enterprise), as did the Larne Lough Railtour in the opposite direction.

Looking into the future we have had several enquiries from individuals and firms to let them have sole use of a steam hauled train on a date of their choice. The main problem here is that of fitting in with existing operations and the need to plan ahead and roster staff several months in advance. Thus we hope that enquirers will appreciate the problems of organising complex operations staffed largely by a small band of unpaid volunteers. At the present time June is the preferred month for trains of this nature, with requests lodged by the end of January.

On a smaller scale the demand for the Directors' Saloon is increasing and it is usually possible to attach it to established workings. We have had double enquiries for each date this year and this is encouraging for the future.

On the 3-Day International Railtour front the committee feels that it is time to visit the railways of Northern Ireland. The success of the third day of the railtour is encouraging us to think of Londonderry and Portrush as a destination for 1986 with overnight in Portrush. It is also the 150th anniversary of the opening of the Ulster Railway. A nice coincidence!

[PHOTOGRAPH]

The GNR main line section of the two day tour made a stop at the recently reopened station at Newry, formerly known as Bessbrook or Newry (Main Line). (C.P. Friel)

LOCOMOTIVE MAINTENANCE REPORT

Peter Scott

No.3 "R.H. Smyth" (LP&HC 0-6-0 ST), Whitehead.

In Traffic. New smokebox door required.

No.3BG (Guinness Brewery 0-4-0 ST), Whitehead.

In store. Requires re-tubing.

No.4 (LMS NCC 2-6-4T) , Whitehead.

In Traffic. Driving crankpins machined by Harland and Wolff. Big end and coupling rod bushes re-metalled. Brick arch renewed. Requires renewal of smokebox.

No.23 (Irish Shell 0-4-0 DM)

In Traffic. Clutch re-lined, cylinder head ground, injectors overhauled.

Comlucht Siuicre Éireann 0-4-0 DM, Whitehead.

In store. General overhaul required. The "donkey engine" used for building up air to start the main engine has been overhauled.

No.85 "Merlin" (GNR(I) 4-4-0)

With the exception of running repairs on the operational locomotives, work has been concentrated on No.85 over the past year, the jobs completed being: re-position and fit main steam pipe, fit smokebox brickwork, repair and fit chimney, make set of superheater elements, overhaul vacuum cylinders, renew pins, re-metal brakeshaft bearings, provide missing items and pipework for boiler fittings, overhaul damper mechanism, overhaul and re-position drain cock linkage, repair cab windows and deflectors, fit ferrules for large tubes, overhaul firehole door, overhaul lubrication system including making missing anti-carbonising valves, install new cylinder lubricator and replace pipework, fittings and clips; face up centre crank pin; remetal, machine and fit big end brasses, examine bogie axlebox bearings, fit new footstep- bolts and brackets, assemble coupling rods, remove splashers and renew backsheets, make feed pipe unions and repair brackets, overhaul horn face lubricators, renew front buffer beam (oak) and bolts, refurbish and anneal drawbar, renew coupling, alter position of hand rail brackets and renew left handrail, make name plates and maker's plates. Work completed on the tender is as follows: Make new bushes and springs and overhaul intermediate buffing gear, overhaul vacuum cylinder and renew all vacuum

pipework, overhaul brake rigging, renew corroded platework on tank and bunker. The main work outstanding on the locomotive is to renew cylinder cladding, overhaul sanding gear, fit brick arch, renew bogie horn stay bolts, renew steam heating pipework, set valves, weigh locomotive, complete painting, lining out and fitting of crests and numerals. The tender requires renewal of intermediate drawbar and safety link pins, renewal of handbrake spindle and nut, overhaul of rear drawhook and coupling; profiling of wheels, restoring worn surfaces of horn guides, new bolts for horn stays, handles for shut-off cocks, refurbishing bearing springs and spring hangers, repair and replacement of bunker and locker doors, renewal of steam heating pipework, painting, lining out and fitting of crests and numerals. It is hoped to steam test the locomotive during the autumn.

[PHOTOGRAPH]

Peter Scott in the process of refitting one of No.85's splashers, following sheet metal repairs. (C.P. Friel)

No.171 "Slieve Gullion" (GNR(I) 4-4-0), Whitehead.

In traffic. Repairs recently completed include renewal of ferrules, welding repairs and replacement of rivets to firebox and renewal of ashpan floor.

No.184 (GS&WR 0-6-0), Mullingar.

Minor repairs. The short pattern front buffers have been replaced by the buffers from the small tender which formerly ran with this engine. The locomotive has been painted in CIÉ green livery.

No.186 (GS&WR 0-6-0), Whitehead.

In store. Requires re-tubing, new superheater elements, smokebox repairs, and firebars. The tender is now running with locomotive No.184.

No.461 (GSR ex DSER 2-6-0), Mullingar.

In store. Requires general overhaul and replacement of missing parts.

Plant and machinery

The wheel lathe motor has been re-insulated. A set of stands is being constructed to enable wheelsets to be removed from a tender, the tender itself remaining inside the loco shed for other work to proceed rather than outside at the wheeldrop. A shaping machine and forge have been acquired.

[PHOTOGRAPH]

This photograph illustrates the delightful scenery of the Larne line beyond Whitehead. Running in duties for No.4 in the early part of the year including several days on NIR ballast train duties. The days of the stone trains are vividly recalled as No.4 heads south from Magheramore with nine hopper wagons. (C.P. Friel)

[PHOTOGRAPH]

No.171 with the final working of the two day tour; Whitehead to Larne and return, seen here on the causeway at Glynn. (C.P. Friel)

This year (up to the end of July) has seen locomotives No.184 (Mullingar), No.4 and No.171 (both Whitehead) on mainline duty with No.3 and diesel 23 available at Whitehead.

The tank engine (No.4) started the year off early, fresh from big end and crank pin repairs, by participating in the ARPS award special in January, a week of NIR ballast trains in February and an empty stock working to Central Services Depot (i.e. Belfast Central) from Whitehead in April. This enabled 502 miles of ‘running-in’ (255 ‘train’ miles and 247 light engine miles) to be accrued before the engine headed off to Portrush on the Lord O’Neill special charter train and the first “Portrush Flyer” of the season; accomplished without mishap.

As an aside, this year’s “Portrush Flyer” locomotive displays a new headboard made by the fair hand of Peter Scott, the Locomotive Maintenance Officer; and a very fine job it looks too!

[PHOTOGRAPH]

A further running in turn for No.4 involved the transfer of a Mk2 generator van from York Road to Central Services Depot (Queen’s Quay). No.4 is here seen climbing the NCC’s loop line at Monkstown. The overgrown trackbed of the former ‘back line’ to Greenisland can be seen on the left. (C.P. Friel)

[PHOTOGRAPH]

Three generations of motive power at Central Services Depot: 73, one of the highly successful diesel electric rail-cars of 1967, which are now being withdrawn, Hunslet 102 “Falcon” of 1971, and our own No.4. of 1947. (C.P. Friel)

No.184 powered the “Enfield Shuttle” and the “Claddagh” as well as some film work, with both No.184 and No.171 on the “Galway Bay” tour.

Many of the members will be aware of the national coal strike in Britain; although of gradual construction, the strike initiated in Yorkshire to deprive the society of its usual source at Rossington colliery. Fortunately there was sufficient time to establish a stockpile (mainly imported) to fulfil Whitehead requirements for 1984; special thanks to Ernie Gilmore, Rory McNamee, Paul Newell and Jim Graham for their help. The coal has performed quite well but does have a tendency to clinker and run down between the firebars. Mullingar has been utilising foreign coal (mostly Polish) for some time, however this type of coal is more prevalent (and cheaper) than the British variety south of the border.

Reverting back in time to 1983, the final mileage figures for the locomotives were:

Loco	Train Miles	Light Engine Miles	Totals
4	730	189	919
171	1,454	285	1,739
184	648	403	1,051
Total	2,832	877	3,709

Under Society auspices, light engine miles covers actual light engine running plus hauling trivial loads (usually up to 2 coaches in the case of the '2-day' tour). No.171 was again the Society's main work horse, but No.184 made a useful contribution with her 1,051 miles being the highest since restoration by the RPSI (with the possible exception of the "Great Train Robbery" film year of 1978). No.184's train miles exceeded light engine miles by nearly 250 miles, a notable reverse on a few years ago and emphasising the engine's greater and more effective use.

Indeed a look at the locomotive mileages for the past few years reflects just how much our operations have expanded with the advent of the "Steam Enterprise", Mullingar-based trips and film and charter work; certainly this is borne out by the increased coal and oil consumption encountered.

Year	4	171	184	186	Total
1975	480	1,243	-	405	2,128
1976	1,108	738	-	819	2,665
1977	1,258	648	-	629	2,535
1980	-	2,674	336	59	3,073
1981	-	2,456	467	-	2,923
1982	340	2,124	889	-	3,353
1983	919	1,739	1,051	-	3,709

It can easily be seen from the chart how the annual mileage of each locomotive has altered in relation to particular locomotive availability, specifically in regard to No.4 and No.171, as No.171's mileage increased dramatically when No.4 was withdrawn for overhaul.

It is a credit to the hard work of those who are and have been involved in running all facets of the Society, and the Society's supporters, that it has been possible to increase activity to the extent that loco mileage has almost doubled in eight years.

Finally I wish to thank the following for their co-operation: Management and staff of NIR and CIÉ; RPSI personnel at Whitehead and Mullingar; Paul Newell, coordinator of coal and oil purchases, and road transport; James Corey and Co., road haulage; Esso, suppliers of all railway and road vehicle lubricants; Isabel Gilmore, preparation of tour schedules; Ernie Gilmore, Neill Hamilton and Jeremy Saulters of the RPSI Council for the long hours of detail planning of steam trips.

CARRIAGE AND WAGON

Jeremy Saulters

In this, my first report, may I pay tribute to Alan Edgar for his years as Carriage Officer. It was he who set the standards to which passengers are now accustomed (if they are fortunate to be travelling in refurbished coaches).

As the operating season is still with us (at the time of writing) readers will notice changes in the train formation by the time this is read. In this report I will therefore briefly outline the present state of coaches and the immediate plans for the winter.

9 - Rebuild still progressing, will run next year. When rebuilding this coach the former driving compartment was replaced by a second toilet. The two ACE joiners employed;

Jack Looney and James Baxter, are working wonders producing a coach from the rotten (in some places non-existent) skeleton that was there (see FFT No.29).

50 - In traffic, and in constant demand on railtours, but maintained by NIR at York Road - my thanks to those concerned.

68 (NCC 1/3 Compo) - Nearing completing by NIACRO. Whilst it was intended to run this coach in the 1984 season, minor problems dictated otherwise. In the end it was decided that it would be better to wait for the 1985 season to run this vehicle.

87 (Diner) - In traffic, the earlier problems with her seem to be behind us.

91 - In traffic but still has minor problems to be sorted out.

114 - Former-workshop coach, was hastily withdrawn after the Galway Bay railtour as a result of being 'carded' in Connolly station on the Saturday morning. It was only the hasty and rudimentary repairs carried out on the platform that allowed 114 and the rest of the train to leave. Everyone involved in the tour owes Robert Edwards a well-deserved thank you for his efforts for saving the tour from a disaster.

238 - In traffic, but to be repainted on return to Whitehead in the spring.

241 - In traffic, this was to have been reduced to a stand-by coach but this will not now occur until next year.

411 (Latterly 616) - In traffic though still being converted to a purpose made workshop vehicle. To be completed over the winter, repanelled and repainted in UTA green.

861 - Withdrawn in March as the result of a shunting accident at Mullingar (CIÉ discovered she was too wide for the doors of the shed) this coach will be stored until time, money and manpower permit a rebuild.

1142 - In traffic but similar to 91.

1327 - In traffic.

1333 - Withdrawn after Flyers for overhaul. This proved to be more difficult to do as there was no suitable replacement (open) coach, but she was generally unfit for traffic especially into/out of Connolly (see 114).

Two coaches 'carded' in Dublin is in my opinion two too many. 1333 was the next likely candidate, hence her withdrawal without replacement and the reduction in seating capacity (partially offset by saloon 50 being run on the train). If any coach is therefore in dubious state it will not run.

Earlier in the year a six wheeler appeal was circulated. As a result a BCDR coach body was transported to Jennymount Industrial estate for the Limestone YTP scheme to commence the task of rebuilding.

[PHOTOGRAPH]

Ex BCDR six wheel third No.182, latterly used as a hen house, in its intended last resting place: a back garden in Ballyclare, Co. Antrim. (C.P. Friel)

[PHOTOGRAPH]

***Local people watch as 182 is lifted on to a lorry for transfer to the Limestone Youth Project Training Ltd. There it will be restored, ultimately as a running vehicle.
(C.P. Friel)***

My thanks to those who donated to the appeal, to John Thompson of Ballyclare who donated 182's body, GWJ Beattie of Hillsborough for craneage, Paddy Williams of James Corey's for the transportation (ever seen a six-wheeler on the M2), Brian Hill for his organisation at the last moment and for the work he did on the day, and lastly Colin Holliday for organising the Limestone end.

Since the move work has started on the project, while Ciaran McAteer is negotiating with the Jubilee Trust for additional funding (it will cost a four figure sum but in the end a museum piece vehicle of a neglected type will be preserved, at the same time providing one YTP scheme with a project that will secure their own future. An article will appear in a future edition of Five Foot Three.

I round off with two things; firstly anyone looking for a worthwhile way of spending a few Saturdays or Sundays should consider Whitehead. The work can be easy or difficult depending on what you feel like tackling, if we are to continue improving the standards of coaches your help would be greatly appreciated, and your reward - a job you can say you had a hand in when the compliments come forth (with more frequency as the public see an improved image).

Lastly my thanks to the small group of workers who made it possible to Messrs Hamilton, Holliday, Charters, Martin, and Miss Wilson (you see we're not biased - females aren't banned from the work). To the staff of ACE and NIACRO for the hard work during the week, without them even fewer 'new' vehicles could be placed in traffic, and to the locomotive department who have to suffer us occasionally rearranging their way of life.

[PHOTOGRAPH]

A PW gang at work lifting old panels of track out of the RPSI 'main line' at Whitehead, prior to relaying. (C.P. Friel)

IRISH ROYAL TRAIN – 1903

Charles Friel

The photos accompanying this article are hardly new or never-seen before. Recently, however, the glass negatives from the Watson Collection passed through my darkroom and they sparked off a frantic printing session and a fascinating piece of investigation. The photographs were taken by L.J. Watson, the Chief Draughtsman in Dundalk between 1892 and 1933. Watson was something of an amateur photographer, working with both half-plate glass negatives and the earliest miniature roll films. The pictures with this essay are contact prints from some of the 6½ by 4¾ inch glass negatives.

The train is, of course, the Great Northern's Royal Train of Saturday 25th July 1903 conveying the new King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra from Dublin to Belfast. Or so the history books would have us believe; the facts are slightly different, as we shall see.

[PHOTOGRAPH]

Q Class 124 “Cerberus” posed for the camera in full royal train regalia. (L.J. Watson collection)

The 1903 royal visit was King Edward VII's eighth visit to Ireland but his first as King. He landed from the Royal Yacht at Buncrana in county Donegal in early July and it is an oft told tale of how the poor Swilly had to borrow a bogie coach from the Ballymena and Larne to convey the Royals to the site of the old Middle Quay station in Derry. Thereafter the party spent some time in Connemara and Dublin before journeying north on “a day of most unpleasant and almost continuous rain with the outlook anything but bright” (as Monday's paper described it).

[PHOTOGRAPH]

A front end view of 124, taken at the same location (Dundalk). Note the elaborate coat of arms, a similar device to that which the Society currently holds. (The ARPS award, formerly carried on the front of royal trains on the London, Brighton and South Coast Railway.) (L.J. Watson collection)

The schedule for the train was Dublin depart 11:45; Malahide pass 11:57; Drogheda pass 12:26; Dundalk 12:54 to 12:58; Portadown 13:42 to 13:46; Lurgan pass 13:51; Lisburn pass 14:06 and Newtownards arrive 14:40. So it didn't travel to Belfast after all! At both Dundalk and Portadown the royal couple “received the homage of local dignitaries while the locomotives took on water”.

The train actually left Dublin nine down at 11:54 “driven by Charles Jackson, under the supervision of Charles Clifford, locomotive engineer of the Northern”. The fireman didn't rate a mention.

At all of the stations along the way, large crowds were reported. The worthy citizens of Lisburn, however, were disappointed to find that the train wasn't stopping at their station. They were further frustrated to find that the railway company had closed the station to the public. The Belfast Morning Newsletter of the Monday reported, “upon finding the station closed, ladders were placed against the Company's premises by inhabitants of Antrim Street and before long people were lined alongside the outside of the Up line and also in coal waggons.”

The train continued to run ten minutes late throughout but five minutes were recovered at Maysfield and the train was just five minutes late into Newtownards. Does anyone know details of the BCDR portion of the journey?

Monday's paper described the Great Northern engine as “one of the new type and had been neatly dressed overall for the occasion by Mr. Wilde, works manager at Dundalk, the decoration embracing the Royal Coat of Arms in front, miniature Union Jacks and Standards around the funnel and streamers and festoons of flowers along the sides.”

The “new type” was, of course, the Great Northern's Q class, introduced in 1899. The train's engine, though, had been delivered just a year earlier, in August 1902. No.124 “Cerberus” was the last of nine members of the class to be built by Neilson, Reid and Co. By the time Hyde Park works turned out their last two Qs in 1903, the firm had been merged in the new North British Loco Co. The last two Qs were built by Beyer Peacock and delivered in 1904. All of the class were named after Greek and Roman mythological

characters; Cerberus, by the way, was the three-headed dog which guarded the gate to the Greek lower world, Hades. I often wonder what GNR drivers made of the more unusual engine names, many of which must have appeared unpronounceable in the shed tarries, let alone in the drawing office.

The Q class engines were introduced in order to cope with the increasing weight of trains, particularly on the main line. Until their arrival, the biggest passenger engines were the PPs, the much-loved class of smaller 4-4-0 that later epitomised the Irish North. The Royal Train weighed over 180 tons empty and had seats for 157 or just over a ton of carriage for each passenger. Of course this train is an exception but it does give some idea of the sort of weights being hauled around the country.

The Qs really came to make their mark on the Derry Road between Portadown and Londonderry (Foyle Road) but until 1911 many of the underline bridges, particularly in the Omagh - Strabane section, were too weak to take the Qs. After these bridges had been rebuilt, the Qs began a domination that was to outlast the Great Northern.

As early as 1912, however, Glover had pinpointed the big weakness of the class, their light frames. The pounding of the Derry Road with its continual curves, long stiff climbs and sometimes boggy ground took its toll on the frames and Dundalk shops spent years patching and repairing cracked frames and loose driving splashers.

Cerberus is seen here in the lined green livery which she lost, together with the nameplates, in 1914. At that time too the built-up chimney was replaced by a cast-iron one.

In 1919, Glover began rebuilding the Qs and producing the engine with which most of us were familiar much later on. The engines received a new superheated boiler, the centre line of which was pitched 10 inches higher than the original. Amongst other things, the cab roof was given an extension but unfortunately the light frames remained. 124 was one of the last rebuilds, emerging from the Works in April 1924.

The Royal Train coaches are no less interesting than the locomotive, and Monday's newspaper carried an extensive description of them, probably quoting from a Railway handout. The coach bodies were described as being built from the "best selected Honduras mahogany varnished to show the natural colour of the wood and lined out with gold and blue, and waist panels bearing the number and name of the cars in gold block letters, shaded with blue, the lower panels carrying the Company's monogram. The underframes are all of best oak and steel channels and fitted with spiral and laminated springs to ensure easy riding." The names referred to are the designations "Dining Saloon" and "Saloon Carriage", of which vehicles more anon.

The Saloons and the Dining Car were described as being "fitted with crimson velvet on the lower inside panels and the upper panels fitted with bevelled mirrors set in walnut frames. The coach panels and pillars are of walnut and some of the upper panels decorated by tasteful platino photographs of Irish scenes." Platino photographs were made up of an enamel-like finish of platinum black powder on a metal plate and were usually toned with sepia; the process preceded the use of silver as the reactive ingredient. The newspaper account of the train concluded by proclaiming that the train was "fitted throughout with electric light, steam heating, brake communication, and the five saloon cars are connected to each other by vestibule gangways." The brake communication was by means of a cord strung along the gutter, passing through a set of rings set at about 2 foot 6 inches apart.

When all the cords had been connected, on both sides of the train, the cords from the leading coach were fed through a bracket on top of the tender and linked to the engine's whistle. The system had the drawback of not being readily accessible to the less agile. In any event, a considerable amount of slack had to be taken up before the alarmed passenger was in a position to influence the whistle. But back to our Royal Train. By selectively enlarging the glass negative I have been able to identify each vehicle. Immediately behind the engine is a low-elliptically-roofed bogie van, 240 of class M2, built in 1901. This vehicle passed to the UTA in 1957 and was renumbered 607. After seeing final use on pigeon specials, it was scrapped in 1960.

The second and third vehicles are First and Second Class Composites. First comes 352 of class F3, built in 1902 and seating 18 first class passengers and 28 second. The other is 338 of class F6 - a most interesting vehicle. It was built in 1895 as the Northern's first Dining Car. It ran in the Belfast - Kingstown Mail Trains, serving breakfast on the Down morning journey and tea on the evening Up. Although equipped with an internal corridor, it did not have corridor connections, so the First and Second class customers and the attendants were cooped up together between stops - Drogheda, Dundalk and Portadown. In 1903, however, this pioneer catering vehicle became a lowly Compo, the only member of class F6. The accommodation was for 15 first class passengers in two and a half compartments and 24 second class passengers in three compartments. It seems likely that 338 was recently ex-Works at the time of the train. Both 352 and 338 were scrapped in 1960; 352 by CIÉ and 338 by the UTA.

The imposing-looking fourth vehicle is twelve-wheeled Dining Saloon 427, built in 1900 for the morning train from Belfast to Dublin and its evening return. 427 has provision for 18 first and 24 second class patrons at opposite ends of the centre kitchen. In the press reports, the roof of 427 came in for particular attention. The clerestory roof had "hinged windows fitted with muffed glass and between which were torpedo ventilators and from the centre of the roof were suspended four-light electroliers." I have not been able to establish what "muffed" glass was; in the photograph the lights seem very white but it would be rash to draw conclusions. "Electroliers" is another word not found in the dictionaries but I would guess that it was a way of describing an electrically-lit chandelier. Any suggestions? 427 was broken up in September 1951, seeing out her last days on the Derry Road.

Behind the Dining Saloon came two "Saloon Carriages". 326 of class A1 dated from 1900 and had seating for just 18 first-class passengers below her clerestory roof. The low-elliptically-roofed 400 comes next, built in 1893, it sat 38 third class folk. Somehow I had an idea that saloons were not meant for the hoi polloi, but ...

It appears that Queen Alexandra occupied the rearmost saloon, 400, which was said to have "a drawing room with boudoir and lavatory attached." The King travelled in 326 which "was fitted out with smoking room and dining room and a central drawing room between." I wonder would we be right to conclude that the Queen slept while the King ate and smoked alone? Anyway, the Saloons were described by Monday's paper as being "gorgeously adorned with the choicest flowers, crimson roses predominating."

Sometime before 1944, 400 was rebuilt as a full brake and reclassified M4. 326 was scrapped in 1951 and 400 in 1957. Bringing up the rear is another M2 van, this time 399 built in 1902. While 338 started life as a Dining Car, and 400 later became a van, 399 later became a Kitchen Car. To help out with the wartime pressure on the GN's catering

facilities, 399 was rebuilt as a B7 Kitchen Car in 1940. After being taken over by the UTA, 399 was renumbered 166 and as such became well-known in Tourist Train and All-in Rugby specials where her 8'9" wide body distinguished her from the 9'6" wide K15s. One of her last duties was in a CIÉ rake, diesel-hauled, for a Landsdowne Road fixture in February 1970 when her narrow body looked even narrower among the bulbous black and tan Cravens. She was broken up in 1971.

So much for the Royal Train. As I type this I find it strange (but not all that difficult) to imagine this cavalcade climbing the 1 in 197 to Neill's Hill, not fifty yards from where I sit, eighty-one years ago. Maybe if I silently peek over into the cutting one moonlit night next July ...

But the tale isn't quite told yet. There was another special from Dublin that July morning. This conveyed "the Royal luggage and the gentlemen (sic) of the Press" and ran in front of the Royal Train, leaving Dublin at 10:15.

The intention was that the train would be split at Maysfields with the Press contingent going forward to Newtownards to await their Majesties while the Royal luggage would go to Bangor, where the Royal Yacht lay at anchor.

I will conclude this article with another quote from Monday's Belfast Morning Newsletter. "At May's Fields the special came to a stand and in the exchange from one company to the other and in the transference of engines, the front portion of the train, labelled for Bangor with luggage for the Royal Yacht was taken to Newtownards while the other portion was shunted into the local terminus of the County Down Railway. This nuisance necessarily caused some inconvenience as it prevented many pressmen from witnessing the reception of their Majesties in the Capital of the Ards. But accidents will occur even in the best regulated families - or the best managed Companies."

[PHOTOGRAPH]

The complete train, again a posed photograph, makes an impressive sight. It is a pity colour photography was not invented in 1903. (L.J. Watson collection.)

[INSIDE REAR COVER]

Another shot of the 21st July Flyer, here seen departing Portrush. The GNR Directors' saloon (first vehicle) was attached at York Road. (C.P. Friel)

[REAR COVER]

Sneak preview. A recent look into No.85's cab with restoration nearing completion. (C.P. Friel)