

5 FOOT 3

No. 1



Photo : The Editor

NEWS AND VIEWS

**OF THE
RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY
OF IRELAND**

2/-

FIVE FOOT THREE

No.1

Winter 1965

Editor: Andrew Donaldson

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

Front Cover: J5 No.630 on up Kingscourt goods at Kilmainham Wood - Whit 1957. (A. Donaldson)

FORWARD

Lord O'Neill

The Railway Preservation Society of Ireland was formed in September 1964. It has been my pleasure to act as Patron of the Society since its inception, and I will look forward to many happy years in this capacity.

At the time of formation, steam traction was declining rapidly, and indeed the future of Railways in Northern Ireland seemed very uncertain. The Committee wisely decided to make this an all-Ireland affair, so that every aspect of Irish Railways was brought within the Society’s scope. Since then progress has been very encouraging, although there have been the inevitable frustrations and delays. Both CIÉ and the UTA have been very helpful, and we must count ourselves fortunate to have secured examples of the ex GNR S Class 4-4-0, and the ex GSWR J15 Class 0-6-0. I cannot leave the locomotives without recording our thanks for the generous gift from Guinness of one of their Hudswell Clarke 0-4-0 tanks. The Society is very pleased to be associated with the greatest of Irish exports!

What of our plans for the future? The Society is negotiating for a site adjoining one of the remaining lines in Northern Ireland, where it will be possible to store and maintain rolling stock, and also get up steam from time to time. Apart from this it is hoped to run one or two steam-hauled trips each year over UTA and CIÉ metals - these to use the Society’s stock as soon as it is reconditioned. Two such trips are already confirmed for this year.

In the long term, plans will depend to a certain extent on the situation prevailing on Irish railways. In the North, more encouraging comments have been noted of late, while in the South, CIÉ appears to be a basically sound undertaking. However, an atmosphere of uncertainty prevails, and it is difficult to forecast what the situation will be in 10 years time. If the worst comes to the worst and all lines are closed, the Society plans to operate a section of line, so that there will be a permanent record of Irish

rail transport kept for posterity.

JANUS

A. Donaldson

Many of you who were good enough to pay your pound (or more) in faith have no doubt been wondering what the Society has been up to. In actual fact the publication of our activities has been frequently and hotly debated at Committee meetings but had to be postponed pending outcome of negotiations with the Ulster Transport Authority, which, passing as it was through its own difficult transition period, has not found it easy to give us definite answers.

Now, however, with the most delicate part of the negotiations behind us we are in a position to face the world and let all and sundry know what we have achieved, and hope to achieve in years to come.

Inevitably, this issue of what we intend to become our regular journal is somewhat of a stopgap and future issues will be rather different.

Except in title, that is. For we are fairly confident we have succeeded in finding a tag which should indicate Ireland-Cum-Railway in a manner not easily forgotten.

One obvious possibility was an Irish word signifying some aspect of Rail, but as the majority of our members are English speaking, the vote went to the description of a feature which must strike the visitor when he first looks at our Irish permanent way - be it at Dun Laoghaire, Larne, Cobh or Rosslare - the length of sleeper projecting outside the rails. The national gauge may have been imposed by the snap decision of an outsider, but at least it distinguished our railways from (nearly) all others.

This journal has no intention of cold-shouldering the three-foot gauge addict - we acknowledge that much enthusiasm has been evoked by the second gauge; but the Society has little chance of obtaining any narrow gauge rolling stock, let alone running it; and the narrow gauge has been more fully covered by railway litterateurs (certainly in proportion to its mileage) so there may be no harm in redressing the balance a little. At worst, the dyed-in-the-wool narrow gauger will find a magic "three" in our title.

The five foot three has its own nostalgic memories for many - my own include: the scintillating speed exploits on the Cork main line of half a dozen "generations" of engines in the early nineteen-fifties; 539 knocking a third of schedule times on the Sligo road; the nonchalant indifference of the GNR PP's to heavy loads; the excitement of simple and compound leaving Magherafelt simultaneously on parallel tracks; the last desperate efforts of the BCDR Baltics on accelerated schedules with unprecedented loads; Garland Sunday on the Sligo Leitrim ...

Happily we can still savour excellent steam performances on the GNR and NCC main lines but there can't be more than a couple of years of this left. In fact, if you want there to be any steam in Ireland in the future you simply must back us up. For it's going to cost hard work and money - a lot of money.

"Tús maith leath na h-oibre" [*A good start is half the work*] is an adage that has bedevilled many Irish enterprises in the past. We have made a good beginning - as you can judge from the reports which follow - but we couldn't really be said to have done half the work. We owe much of our success to the transport concerns with which we have had to deal. We have been "banked up the Gullet" but the banker has dropped off and we have many miles of rising grades to face.

The commitments to which Mr Jordan refers include, initially, £150 - £200 for insurance; £1,000 expenditure needed on the Whitehead site; £1,000 for a carriage shed (very soon) at the same place. Indeed the acquisition of further rolling stock hinges largely on the possession of storage facilities.

The response to the 'S' class appeal, generous as it has been, will now be needed for shopping this loco; but while the Guinness engine is almost ready to run, the J15 will require considerable expenditure. Spares for this engine are also going to be a problem.

As well as writing cheques and campaigning for more and more members you can help by forming syndicates to purchase coaches or take responsibility for one of the engines. Any support we may win from industry or public bodies depends largely on showing that we deserve it.

We have shown our mettle by the successful September railtour; that planned for May 1966 is even more ambitious. But even this pales beside a proud tour with our own engines and carriages.

So if you have ever wallowed in the luxury of an all-steam summer Sunday on the Warrenpoint branch, or admired a freshly shopped 'S', or photographed a J15 on Barnagh bank or taped a Guinness saddle tank negotiating that improbable bank and curve - SUPPORT US!

PROGRESS OF THE SOCIETY IN 1965/6

Eamonn Jordan

Immediately after the April 1965 General Meeting, Messrs Arthur Guinness, Son & Co Ltd, Dublin, in answer to a letter from Mr G. Nevin, invited the Society to send representatives to their brewery to discuss the possibility of their presenting the Society with a steam locomotive.

Members of the Committee travelled to Dublin on 15th and 20th May, and after examining works records, boiler test reports, etc., it was decided that the engine should be No.3B(road)G(auge).

The locomotive was officially handed over at a luncheon held in the Guinness Board Room, Dublin on 16th June.

Owing to the tramway-type flanges fitted to this locomotive, it was necessary, before she could be accepted from the donors, for the Society's Locomotive Department to ensure that the wheels could, in fact, be turned to standard profile. The Engineering Dept. of the UTA kindly undertook to do the work for us and the locomotive was lifted from its wheels by CIÉ and transported to Belfast by low-loader on 31st August 1965. It was subsequently conveyed by the UTA to York Road, where the flanges were turned to size.

One of those present at the Guinness luncheon was Mr F. Lemass, General Manager of CIÉ, and members of the Committee enquired of him as to the possibility of getting a J15 from CIÉ. He advised us to write formally to him, and on 22nd July we were informed that our request had been granted. On 1st September, Mr R.F. Grainger, Asst. Mechanical Engineer, CIÉ, informed us that No.186 was to be the locomotive. On Saturday 11th December the engine was hauled to Belfast by CIÉ, the event being featured on *Telefís Éireann* and in the local newspapers.

On 2nd June, members of the Committee, together with Lord O'Neill, travelled to Whitehead, Co. Antrim, to inspect the disused excursion site. The UTA were represented on this occasion by Messrs J.G.T. Anderson, Secretary, John McCleary, Property Officer, and E.V. Hill, Civil Engineer. It was agreed that this site was the most suitable from the Authority's point of view, while the facilities available - water, engine shed and turntable - and the self-contained nature of the site made it attractive to the Society. The Society therefore formally approached the Authority on 10th June, requesting a lease. As the UTA, however, is under statutory obligation to offer redundant sites to the appropriate local authority, they asked on 24th September if the Society had any objection to their Property Dept. mentioning the needs of the Society to the Whitehead UDC when discussing the property as a whole. Permission was granted and during October the UTA began negotiations with Whitehead UDC.

At the General Meeting on 2nd June 1965, members of the Committee raised the question of acquiring loco No.171 with Mr Anderson, who kindly informed us that this engine would become surplus in September 1965. On 30th September we requested the Authority to explore the possibility of our acquiring her on some sort of permanent loan basis. This was not found possible, but informal discussions between Lord O'Neill and Mr Arthur Algeo, UTA Chairman, resulted in the Authority offering the engine on lease from 1st January 1966. The annual rental is £40, payable in advance by

four quarterly instalments. The Society has the option to purchase at some future date.

Mr L.H. Liddle gave details of two coaches - UTA Nos. 236 and 366 - stating that offers to donate these vehicles had very kindly been made by individual members.

At the same AGM - which was attended by Sir John Harcourt, Mr J.C. Bailey, Mr J. Coulthard, UTA Railways Manager and Mr W.A.G. Macafee, UTA Railway Vehicle Engineer - both the Secretary and Treasurer spoke of the heavy commitments facing the Society during the current year (1966) and urged prompt payment of subscriptions.

It was decided to form a limited Company.

In addition to the railtour of September 1965, the Society's activities included work on the Guinness loco by the locomotive committee and a film show given in Portadown on 25th February 1966. Films were shown by Messrs. F. Cooper, C.P. Friel, D. Henderson and I. Martin. The UTA provided a special late railcar from Portadown to Belfast. Nett receipts (which went towards the Society's funds) came to £3.16.0. Organisation was by C.P. Friel.

Mr C. Robb was largely responsible for the final steam-hauled public excursion from Portadown to Bangor on 28th July. A large number of members travelled on the return journey and though the running was undistinguished, opportunity was taken to do some propagandising.

OUR ENGINES

A. Donaldson

Guinness No.3 0-4-0ST, Built Hudswell Clarke 1919, maker's No.1152

Cylinders (outside) 15" x 22"; Wheels 3'4" dia,

Pressure 175 lb/sq.in. (now 170 lb/sq.in.)

Tractive effort (at 85% of 175 lb/sq.in.) 18,400 lb.

Weight empty 24 tons

Mechanically, this is the best of our engines, and maintenance will be rendered much easier and cheaper by the generous provision, by the donors, of a wagon-load of spares, including leading and driving springs. They also kindly repainted her for us. Her boiler was new in 1950 (also by Hudswell Clarke) and she passed her last boiler test in November 1964. Surprisingly, she also has the greatest tractive effort of the three - and needed it, for her chief duty was to haul 11 wagon rakes up a gradient of 1 in 40 on a very sharp curve.

An interesting feature of the Guinness tramway connecting the brewery with Kingsbridge was that the engine and wagons ran on their flanges instead of their tyres.

Córas Iompair Éireann No.186 0-6-0 Class J15 ex-GSWR

Built 1879 at Inchicore. Designer A. McDonnell.

Cylinders (inside) 18" x 24"; Wheels 5'1¾" dia.

Pressure 160 lb/sq.in. Tractive effort 17,170 lb.

Total heating surface 886 sq.ft. Grate 18¾ sq.ft.

Weight in working order 37 tons 13 cwt.

The tender carrying 2,730 gal. of water and 5½ tons of coal weighs 28½ tons.

This class, which, but for the Society, would not have survived to celebrate its centenary this year, was the most numerous in Ireland and the only one to have over 100 members (there were once 111 of them).

Our engine received her "Z" class superheated boiler in the thirties and was later rebuilt with new frames. Her last years of service included the Birr, Castlecomer and Cherryville-Kilkenny branches, and I have a record of a run behind her on the Macmine-Waterford line in 1954.

The J15s stood high in the estimation of enginemen as reliable plodders which, however battered, would not let you down. When circumstances demanded, however, they had a fine turn of speed. I well remember a morning in August 1952 when a tube went in 4-4-0 No.301 while working the 8:00am ex Limerick. The driver wired from Nenagh for assistance and struggled on to Cloughjordan. After a short wait No.164, the Birr branch engine, appeared from Roscrea and was hooked on front. The two engines then proceeded to run the 9.9 miles to Roscrea in 12½ minutes start-to-stop, covering 7 miles of this distance in 7 minutes 2 seconds with a maximum of 65 mph. Speed rose again into the sixties between Roscrea and Ballybroy where the Thurles engine took over. The load was about 240 tons. Considering the way 301 had been limping all the way from Shallee, much of the credit for this burst must go to the J15.

On another occasion 171 and 198 (both J15s this time) on a return Naas race special loaded to 265 tons covered the 10 miles from post 14 to post 4 in 10 minutes 14 seconds with a top speed of 63 mph - while No.198 has been timed at 69 mph on a GAA special. So No.186 inherits a noble tradition and deserves attention.

Ulster Transport Authority No.171 "Slieve Gullion" 4-4-0 Class S

Ex GNR. Originally built by Beyer Peacock 1913.

Designed by C. Clifford/G.T. Glover.

Cylinders (inside) 19" x 26"; Driving wheels 6'7" dia.

Pressure originally 165 lb/sq.in.; raised to 175 lb/sq.in. c. 1914 and to 200 lb/sq.in. in 1926.

Reduced to 175 lb/sq.in. in 1946.

Tractive effort (assuming 200 lb/sq.in. pressure) 20,198 lb.

Total heating surface 1239.5 sq.ft. Grate 22.9 sq.ft.

These engines were renewed at Dundalk in 1938 with new frames, increasing the weight from 52 tons 2 cwt to 53 tons 6 cwt.

The tender carries 3,500 gallons of water and 6 tons of coal, weighing 38½ tons full.

The best performances put up by these engines were witnessed between 1938 and the early war years. 173 is recorded as having run from Drogheda to Dublin (31.7 miles) in 30½ minutes start-to-stop with 10 bogies on the 5:40pm up in 1939. I myself timed No.190 with 10 bogies unassisted over Adavoye on a special on Easter Monday 1941. The summit was passed in 19¼ minutes from the Goraghwood start, at 28.7 mph and Dundalk reached in 27½ minutes.

No.171 herself was usually stationed at Belfast and was perhaps not the most brilliant of the class - many of my own logs with her are of "plugging" efforts over the Derry Road. One run, however, made on the 3:15pm down in 1939 shows what she could do. With 7 bogies, starting from Dundalk, she maintained 40/42 mph to Adavoye (passed in 12¾ minutes) and reached 78 mph down the other side, arriving in Goraghwood in 22 minutes 44 seconds. Subsequent times were 18:52 to Portadown, 7:23 on to Lurgan (including a very smart maximum of 61) and 22:10 thence to Belfast. The load was 8 bogies from Goraghwood to Portadown and 7 thereafter.

In 1952 she was stationed at Dublin and was chosen to work the 11:00am down Enterprise, returning at 4:45pm for a time during June. A photo in my album shows her on the latter with 5 bogies.

Then, just to show there was still life in her, she worked a return excursion train of 5 bogies from Dundalk to Belfast in 69 minutes 40 seconds (or 67¾ minutes net) in the summer of 1964 (diesel "Enterprise" time is 70 minutes).

No.174 of the class has worked to Cork as well as on the NCC to Derry and Portrush. Is it too much to hope No.171 will be equally ubiquitous?

The Editor wishes to acknowledge information kindly supplied by Messrs Arthur Guinness, Son & Co, Córas Iompair Éireann, the Ulster Transport Authority, and Mr R.N. Clements, used in this article.

“THE PROVINCE OF LEINSTER”

Denis Grimshaw

On Saturday 14th May 1966, the Society will be running a steam-hauled railtour over both UTA and CIÉ metals. The special will leave Belfast at 8:50am and the tight timings for which we have negotiated should ensure some fast running by the 2-6-4T with her six-coach train. We shall make a short stop at Portadown, and from Dundalk, where we shall pick up our Dublin passengers, we run to Dromin Junction and propel back into the branch platform, where a UG (0-6-0) will be waiting to take the train to Ardee.

This 4¾ mile branch, closed to passenger traffic in 1934, has no intermediate station or halt, and is fairly straight and almost level. It was opened on 1st August 1896.

Returning from Ardee, the UG will take us over Kellystown Summit and across the Boyne Viaduct into Drogheda. As the Navan branch leaves the main line south of this station and is facing towards Dublin, our engine will turn and run round the train in order to propel out to the junction.

The line from Drogheda to Navan was opened by the Dublin and Drogheda Railway on 15th February 1850, and was extended to Kells in 1853 and Oldcastle in 1863.

On 29th August 1862, the Dublin and Meath Railway opened a line from Clonsilla, 7 miles from Broadstone on the MGWR, to Navan. On 1st November 1872 the Navan and Kingscourt Railway extended this line to Kilmainham Wood and to Kingscourt exactly three years later. The Drogheda-Oldcastle and Clonsilla-Kingscourt lines converged at Navan Junction, some 400 yards beyond the D&DR station at Navan, and then ran parallel for some distance before diverging just west of Poorhouse Crossing. The former became the property of the GNR(I) on 1st April 1876 and the latter of the MGWR from 1st June 1869.

The typical daily train service on the Kingscourt branch consisted of two passenger trains from Dublin (Broadstone) to Kingscourt and a third to Navan only, plus a daily goods from Kingscourt to North Wall, together with the return workings. Passenger services were withdrawn on 25th January 1947 but a thrice weekly goods ran from North Wall to Kingscourt via Clonsilla until 1958 when the GNR passed to CIÉ who re-routed this via Drogheda. [*The passenger trains were worked by the G2 2-4-0s and the goods (latterly) by the J15 0-6-0s, though J4 (ex GSWR) No.257 did a spell on it in 1958. - Ed.*] The Clonsilla-Navan Junction section became redundant, with no train service at all except for the occasional special, but was not actually closed until 31st March 1963. With the increase in cement production in Ireland the gypsum from Kingscourt grew in importance and is now the sole raison d'être of the line from Navan to Kingscourt, which now has a daily goods on weekdays.

Oldcastle generally had two or three passenger trains from Drogheda, with one or two more to Navan only. A daily goods to Oldcastle was often supplemented by cattle specials. Passenger traffic ceased on 12th April 1958. A daily goods train (in addition to the Drogheda-Kingscourt goods) continued until 31st March 1963, when the line west of Navan Junction was closed. Thus at present the train service consists of a daily goods from Drogheda to Kingscourt and back, although virtually all the traffic on the MGWR portion of the route is gypsum. The last steam passenger train to Navan and Kingscourt - the RBAI Railway Society's special hauled by SG No.177 - ran on 29th April 1962. [*This was the class most commonly seen on the branch, both on passenger and goods, though UGs, PGs, QLs and even Ps 5'6" No.105 worked it. - Ed.*] It is a matter of conjecture how much longer this gypsum traffic will justify the retention of nearly 40 miles of branch.

The line rises from Drogheda at around 1 in 200 to a summit before Duleek, which is at MP 4¾. The line is dead straight for 2 miles on each side of Duleek. 3½ miles further on, Louher Halt is passed

just after the beginning of another four miles of straight track. The Boyne valley is rejoined after another summit before Beauparc at MP 11½. The line continues along the Boyne valley to Navan, where the GNR station is 17 miles from Drogheda.

A right-hand curve takes us to Navan Junction (MP 17½), where the remains of the Midland station and yard are seen on the left.

From here on the GNR line is lifted; we turn northwards at Poorhouse Crossing, taking the former MGWR branch. Some 2 miles further on we pass Proudstown Park Racecourse platform on the right. Gibbstown Halt is reached four miles from Navan Junction, at MP 34½ (measured from Broadstone). Wilkinstown is at post 37; four miles past Wilkinstown is Castletown Crossing (the site of a former halt), where the gates are opened and closed by the train crew. Nobber is reached at post 43½. Near MP 46 we pass Whitewood Lough on the left, before arriving at Kilmainham Wood (MP 46½). Two miles short of Kingscourt the Irish Gypsum Industries Factory and siding are on the left, and our terminus is reached at MP 50½, or 20 miles from Navan. The gradients on the branch are erratically undulating, with a ruling grade of 1 in 50. The four main summits occur as follows: between Gibbstown and Wilkinstown, just past Castletown Crossing, a mile on the down side of Nobber, and 3 miles before Kingscourt.

Although a terminus, Kingscourt was built as a through station, as an extension of the line was at one time contemplated through Carrickmacross (only 5 miles away), Castleblayney and Keady to Armagh, Dungannon, Cookstown, and even Portrush.

At Kingscourt the UG will be turned and we will set off back for Drogheda. If time permits, stops will be made at all stations on the branches - in both directions at most of them - and there will be run-pasts at Beauparc on the outward and Kilmainham Wood, Nobber, Beauparc and Louher Halt on the return journey.

On arrival back at Drogheda, the 2-6-4T will take over to work us to Belfast, stopping at Dundalk and Portadown again with very fast timings.

A restaurant car will be provided on the train throughout the entire journey.

This will be a unique opportunity to travel over the Ardee and Meath branches behind steam and a chance to obtain some good running on the main line. We are very grateful to the Ulster Transport Authority and Córas Iompair Éireann for having assisted us to such an extent, and we hope that the support of our members will justify running this Railtour, so please come - we need your support.

TRANSPORT MUSEUM AND PRESERVATION

R.B. Beggs

Railway preservation enjoys a rapidly growing interest which is world-wide. Daily proof of this is seen in the correspondence arriving in the Transport Museum with enquiries and information on schemes which are active in such widely distributed centres as Australia, South Africa, and Japan.

Understandably preservation societies are especially active in Britain where railways had their birth, and the more noteworthy of those like the famous Bluebell Line, Talyllyn and Ffestiniog function in the devoted hands of amateurs and earn growing profits which would seem to suggest that such a venture is well worth while.

The preservation schemes operating in England, Scotland and Wales are numerous, and to recount the museums in which railway preservation is undertaken in these areas would be to tell the reader what he almost surely knows already.

Our interest is in Ireland and its railway history.

A relative few know the original thought that went into the development of Ireland's railway systems

and the fascinating profusion of types of railway units that resulted. Thus we in Ireland can speak with justifiable pride of the first hydro-electric railway in the world. If a murmur of "Magnum Folk's" arises, stress that the Giant's Causeway was hydro-electric and operated on a mileage of 11 against about $\frac{3}{4}$ of a mile in Brighton - not in the same league! Come to that, the County Donegal Railways with nearly 140 route miles far exceeded the total of all narrow gauge systems in the rest of Britain, and the monorail system recently re-invented and acclaimed by the planners was operating $7\frac{1}{2}$ route miles from Ballybunion to Listowel in the late 1880s. These are random examples of historical distinctions to which Ireland can lay claim and there are many more.

It is proper here to state the relative positions of the Belfast Transport Museum and the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland.

For 5 years it has been my concern to develop a comprehensive Museum of Irish Transport, and while a good deal of railway preservation has been achieved in the Museum much remains to be done that is outside the Museum's present capabilities.

Urgent action is needed and the timely formation of the RPSI is seen as such. By voluntary work at that, they have carried on where the Museum has been obliged to leave off and working on a basis of close co-operation and non-duplication they have already made valuable progress in the cause.

Elsewhere in this publication you will see a list of their achievements to date. These successes have been won in conditions that to the faint-hearted would have looked hopeless, and I appeal to all to whom the cause is dear to give all possible support to this the only voluntary railway preservation scheme in Ireland. In years to come the value of their work will be fully proved, but the time of emergency is now.

CHAIRMAN'S MESSAGE

J.S.R. Harcourt

As Chairman of the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland, I am pleased to have the opportunity in this, our first News Bulletin, of expressing thanks and appreciation to many of those who have materially assisted its work and achievements to date:

To Lord O'Neill who kindly agreed to become a Patron and whose help, enthusiasm and support has been invaluable in not only securing the foundation aim of the Society but also enlisting the support of many other distinguished persons.

It would be remiss of me not to mention the splendid co-operation the Society has received from the Ulster Transport Authority, Córas Iompair Éireann, and the Belfast Transport Museum. Without this support it would indeed have been difficult to carry on.

To our many benefactors, including Messrs Arthur Guinness, Son & Co Ltd, Córas Iompair Éireann, Shell-Mex & BP Ltd, Messrs W. & C. Scott, Omagh and Inglis & Co Ltd, who have generously provided the Society with locomotives and items of rolling stock.

To the Committee who have met at regular intervals and have been most active in advocating and implementing the proposals put forward at the Annual General Meetings; our Secretaries, Messrs Eamonn Jordan and Derek Young who have been tireless in their efforts in sorting our customs licences, export orders, insurance, publicity and a host of other problems; not to mention our worthy Treasurer, Mr L.H. Liddle who also keeps a fatherly eye on the purse strings.

Particular tribute should also be given to Messrs Craig Robb and Denis Grimshaw, Tour Organisers, for the excellent arrangements on the two successful outings held last year.

To Messrs Derek Henderson, Irwin Pryce, David White and others in maintaining and caring for our locomotives and equipment. To Messrs Graham Nevin, Sullivan Boomer and fellow members for producing the membership cards and requisites for the Society.

The willing and ready assistance of the Irish Railway Record Society in Belfast, Dublin and London has been a source of great strength to the Society in extending its membership and influence in Ireland, the UK and abroad. Thanks are also due to the Model Engineers Society (NI), the Transport Development Association and the Association of Railway Preservation Societies of Great Britain, to whom we are now affiliated, for their guidance and counsel in our initial stages.

The Society has good reason to feel grateful for a generous and sympathetic press, television channels and the various railway journals who have provided our meetings with a true and comprehensive coverage.

Last but by no means least, our members and patrons whose support provided the very foundation on which we stand.

The year ahead promises to be an exciting one - already two special tours are being organised for 14th May and 10th September, together with hopes of obtaining a much needed base for operations.

The centenary of the J15 class locomotives of the old GS&WR, numerically the largest class in Ireland, is being commemorated by the IRRS who are issuing a special booklet for the occasion. It is hoped that the highlight of the celebrations will be the official handing over of the sole survivor No.186 by CIÉ to the Society.

In conclusion I would appeal to our members and readers alike to enlist the support of their friends by inviting them to become members of the Society.

It is only by a large and enthusiastic membership that we will be able to preserve STEAM, a glorious heritage of the past, for future generations.

RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

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