

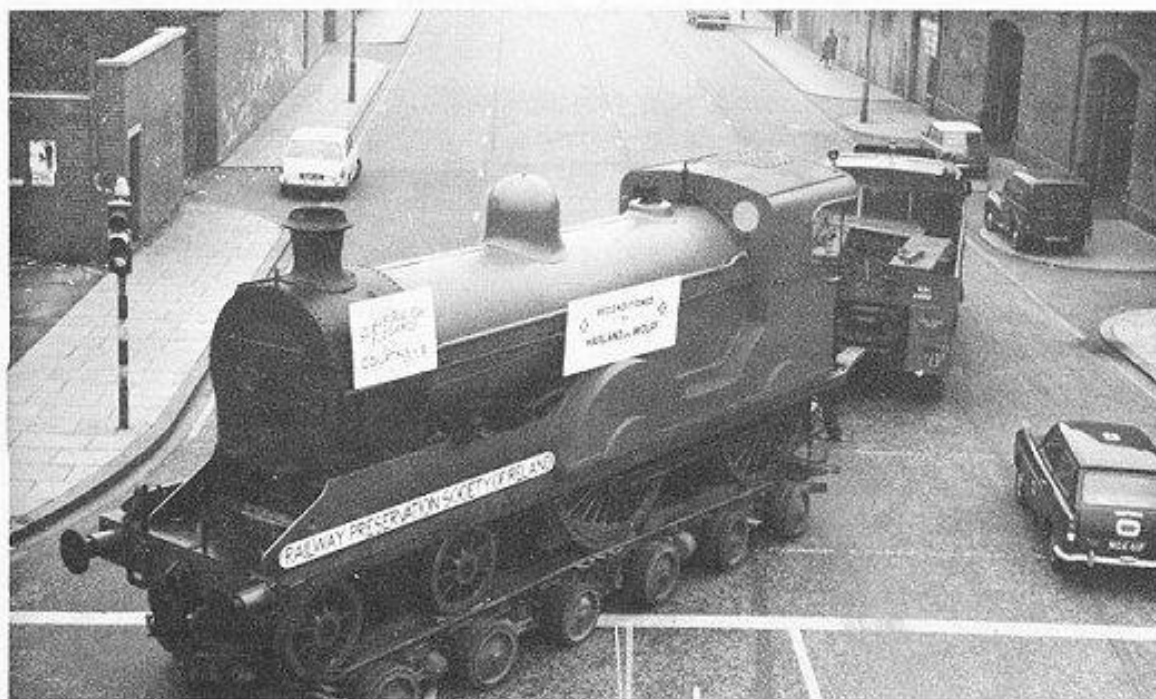
THE RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND

PATRON: THE RT. HON. THE LORD O'NEILL

FIVE FOOT THREE

NO. 5

AUGUST 1968.



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PRICE 2/6

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J. D. FITZGERALD
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FREE TO MEMBERS

FIVE FOOT THREE

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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: No.171 leaves Harland & Wolff on 26th July 1968 after her heavy overhaul.
(A. Donaldson)***

THE S CLASS

Fred Graham

In the month of May 1938 there emerged from Dundalk Works the first of the renewed S class locomotives - Nos. 173 and 192 - to be followed in August by 171; then in October No.172 was turned out. During January 1939 No.191 left the shops; 190 in July was followed by 170 in August and lastly, in October, came No.174.

The engines were not "rebuilt" but, as I have already stated, merely "renewed", the most striking change being the beautiful blue livery officially described as Azure Blue with Signal Red underframing.

They did, however, receive new and heavier frames, new 200 lb. pressure boilers, new cylinders with the valve travel increased from 3 inches to 5 inches, which gave much freer running and a harder exhaust beat. The brake rodding, which was formerly placed outside the driving wheels was moved inside, necessitating a change in the position of the injector which was now located just forward of the footstep on the fireman's side. This injector is the only pattern made in Ireland and is specially designed to enable any part to be serviced without dismantling. Its design is mostly the work of Paddy Mallon, now an RPSI member.

All of the class were paired with the standard 3,500 gallon tenders with the exception of 170 and 172 which retained the 2,500 gallon flared top tender - the idea being that they would be required to run special trains between Dublin and Warrenpoint, where the turntable was too short for turning an S with one of the larger tenders.

The original names 170 "Errigal", 171 "Slieve Gullion", 172 "Slieve Donard", 173 "Galteemore" and 174 "Carrantuohill" were restored to the 1913 engines and new names given to the 1915 engines. These were 190 "Lugnaquilla", 191 "Croagh Patrick" and 192 "Slievenamon".

The chief dimensions were cylinders 19" x 26", heating surface - firebox 141 sq. ft., tubes 905 sq. ft., superheater 214 sq. ft., and grate area 22.09 sq. ft. and the tractive effort at 85% boiler pressure 20,198 lbs. The weight in working order was increased from 52½ tons to 53 tons 6 cwt, made up as follows: 18 tons on the bogie, 18 tons on the drivers and 17 tons 6 cwt on the coupled wheels. The weight of the 3,500 gallon tender was 38½ tons as against 32 tons of the smaller.

Consideration was given, when renewing, to fitting SG3 type boilers and cylinders and it was a pity this was not done as I believe the extra power would have been a great advantage, especially during the War when bigger than ever loads were being hauled.

In the pre-war days 191 and 192 with 190 as spare were shedded at Adelaide. W. Davis had 191 and T. Lisk had 192 and they were rostered week about 7:45am to Dublin and back about 2:30pm and 5:30 Limited Mail to Dundalk only, and back again around 9:20pm. They were for some time running without lettering on the tender, this being, as I understand, the result of an Economy Commission's visit to Dundalk.

In those days I remember five Special trains arriving from Dublin with spectators for a big rugby international, one of them being made up of GSR coaches from Cork - the engine being 174 decorated with green ribbons for the occasion and fitted with a 3,500 gallon tender which enabled her to run non-stop to Goragewood. That evening the five Ss left Adelaide shed coupled together to run to Great Victoria Street to work the return trains, a sight I never saw before or after.

In anticipation of the arrival of the Compounds, 172 ran for a while with small sections of lead of different lengths secured to the buffer beam on the driver's side for platform clearance purposes; these being of soft metal would give way easily on coming into contact with any obstacle.

During 1936 NCC 2-6-0 No.96 came over to the Northern and worked the 8:15am to Dublin for a week and during that time No.170 ran on the NCC. She worked to Larne and back and to Portrush on the early turn (Driver Tinman and Fireman Bob Surgeon relieved by Driver W. Dean and Fireman Sam Mahaffey). About this time also No.172 was fitted out for oil-burning - I saw her with ten bogies and you could have seen her smoke for miles.

From 1942 the class could be seen on the Derry Road and on the "Mystery Trains" to the Twenty-six counties. On one occasion we had 190 on a Clones train and on the return journey she failed at Glaslough - a very unfortunate engine this, she was derailed at Dromiskin during the 1933 Strike and also on one occasion on the Twelve noon to Dublin with twelve bogies. After leaving Dundalk with 192 fresh from the shops as pilot to Drogheda, a connecting rod broke and pierced the firebox as she passed Donabate. The driver W. Bryans and Inspector Bob Green died from burns and the fireman Sam Snowden was badly injured. As a result of this two steel plates were welded to the frame stretcher just in front of the firebox to give protection should this ever unfortunately happen again. The plates can still be seen on 171. Incidentally the "patches" symmetrically placed between the driving wheel splashers on the Ss and other 6'7" engines were fitted to give clearance to the rods at top position. 190's tender also gave trouble, for in order to increase its water capacity the rear end was built up, but this gave uneven weight distribution and had to be abandoned. Holes were then made to allow the extra water to drain away.

When it was decided to inaugurate the "Enterprise" a test train of seven bogies was made up and No.191 was chosen to work the train; no difficulty was experienced in running in two hours and fifteen minutes. Incidentally this engine ran for some time with a VS tender and was the first S to be scrapped. As far as 171 is concerned, she seemed to be the spare engine, although she did take over the

“Enterprise” when the diesels were withdrawn temporarily with fractured axles and also gave us a grand run on a Sunday School excursion from Adelaide to Portrush in 1964. The star of the class to my mind was No.173, the first to be renewed and the first to be scrapped by the UTA. I had a number of footplate runs on her with the late Harry Waterhouse and on at least two occasions, timed by myself and others, she touched 90 below Mountpleasant.

They were a smooth and quiet riding engine, without doubt the finest of their type in Ireland, and preferred by the majority of the enginemen to the Compounds and VSs on the main line, although on the Derry Road the Qs were favourites.

To conclude - it is now thirty years exactly since No.171 was turned out of Dundalk Works. Now Harland & Wolff have brought her back to life again, and I am sure we of the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland are looking forward to hearing the music from her chimney-top again and trust she will give us many miles of pleasure in the future.

THE ONES THAT GOT AWAY

J.D. FitzGerald

Thinking it would be a pleasant exercise, I took down my early (1960 that is) notebooks for a browse, but angry red lines across thirteen pages merely reminded me of the Ones that Got Away - three films that were accidentally destroyed that summer.

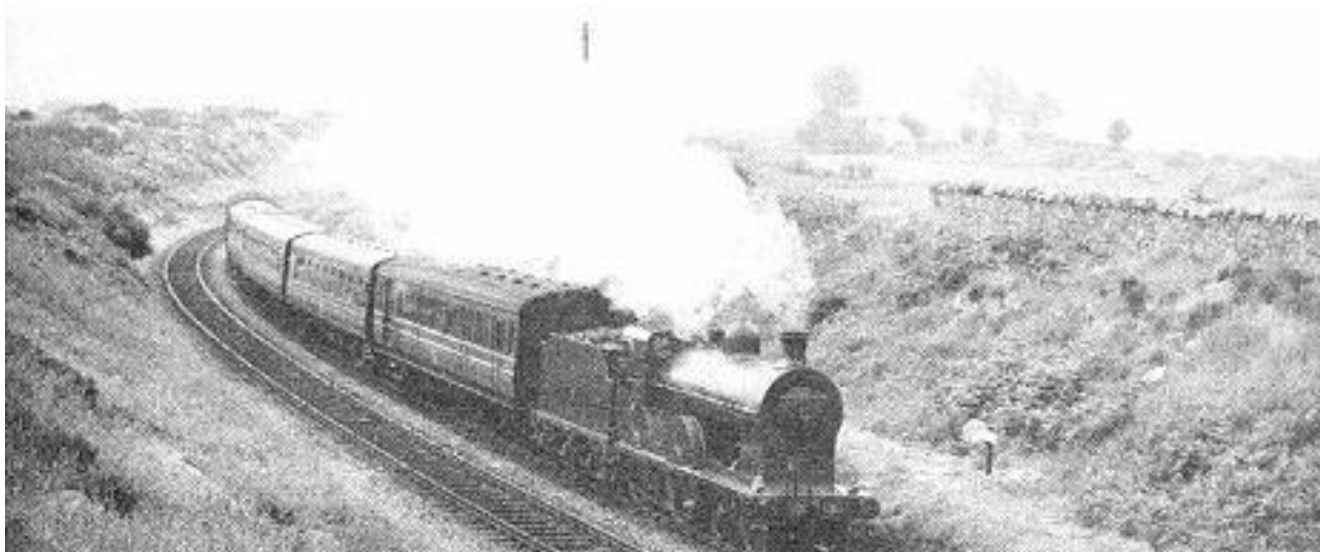
For instance “F11 1/300 “ reminds me that 26th May was a gloriously sunny Thursday evening, on which I got 85 returning to Dublin on the “Shopper’s Special” at Knock Bridge between Portadown and Tanderagee. At that time 85 was the usual engine on this run and I always welcomed 207 as a change. In a couple of years things were reversed and 85’s trips to Belfast became few and far between. After she had passed I walked up the line towards Portadown and was rewarded with 170, presumably on a relief to the Special. At that time 85, 170 and 207 were the engines turned out by Amiens Street for Belfast specials, 174 was just coming out of Dundalk Works and 171 was the Dundalk pilot.

The following night I saw 65 (ex 200) pass the Boilie on a Belfast-Derry additional, followed by 95 on a Portadown extra. The extra trains were probably due to the Balmoral Show.

The next of these “misses” was of 135 at Portadown on the 6:45pm (Sundays only) Warrenpoint-Belfast. 135 was, of course, the last of the Q class to run for the UTA and, as an admirer of these handsome engines, I was very glad to see 135 on that fine July evening. The weather was encouraging so I made my way south and got 59 (ex 210) on the 6pm Dublin-Belfast near Knock Bridge followed by 68 (ex 205) on a return Lurgan-Warrenpoint special. 48 (ex 146) not long out of York Road shops, was seen near Scarva on the 7:45pm (Saturdays and Sundays only) and 64 (ex 196) on the 8:30pm (Sundays only) Warrenpoint-Belfast near Goraghwood. Warrenpoint must have been a fairly busy place that Sunday because at Goraghwood I came on 170 returning to Dublin on a special. About this time CIÉ were changing over their haulage of Warrenpoint specials from Q to S class. They had two Qs, 131/2, but from early summer 1960 they were seen increasingly rarely north of Dundalk. I still remember the sweating face of the Dublin driver as he brought his engine round to the head of the train. He, at least would be glad of the cool of the evening as his train climbed the Wellington Bank, but all I was worried about was the fading light as 170 set off for Dublin. Now I shall never know how that shot turned out.

A few days later I was at Derry Waterside to photograph 5 leaving on the 11:43 to Portrush (Saturdays only) and 54 shunting. By now I had my family safely out of the way on holiday so I was free to spend as much time as possible on train photography. On Monday morning I was near Derriaghy to see another 5 - the T2 - on a Lisburn local, as was 55. Next came an interesting shot, the 8:15 to Dublin headed by two Jeeps, 57 and 51. This train was not usually piloted, nor was it especially heavy on this occasion, so it may have merely been a way of avoiding a light engine working. Incidentally the pilot

was producing so much smoke that I didn't realise it was double-headed until it was abreast of me. 47 (ex 82) passed in the opposite direction on the 7:25am from Antrim and was followed by an interesting engine - 86 - on the 8am from Portadown. 86 was the last of the Compounds to work for the UTA and, in fact, was not destined to run much longer. 67 (ex 202) passed on another local before I got 91 coming through the Ballinderry Road bridge on the 8:30am from Portadown. I had then reluctantly to adjourn for a day's work but came back to see 58 (ex 208) passing Moira on the 6pm to Dublin.



131 on Dublin-Warrenpoint Special at McEnuff's Bridge in May 1959. (A. Donaldson)

The next day saw 58 at work again on a Dublin train, this time the 3pm from Belfast, while 95 took out the 6pm and 59 (ex 210) returned from Dublin on the 6:20pm special with 58 following on the regular 6:30. These two engines were worked pretty hard, because by then the UTA had no Compounds left fit to run to Dublin and the NCC Moguls were not popular on non-stops. The other remaining VS, CIÉ's 207, lived a leisurely existence at Amiens Street, although when she became a UTA engine things were very different.

My next roll of film began with a shot of 85 near Cloghoge Chapel on a return Thursday special, but since the notebook entry concludes "raining" nothing much was lost. A51 (shape of things to come) followed on a relief to the special, then came 57 on the 6pm Belfast-Dublin. This train became a pretty regular turn for Jeeps, because its engine worked a goods from Dundalk to Portadown. I crossed to the southern side of the Wellington Bank in time to photograph 58 on the 6:20 ex Dublin and 94 on the 6:30. Then a trip down to Dundalk to photograph the semi-derelict 191, followed by a shot of 51 on the 8:20 Dundalk-Portadown goods.

On the Friday evening I travelled down towards York Road, photographing 59 near Moira on the 2:45 from Dublin, 64 (ex 196) on the 5:15 Belfast-Warrenpoint and 91 on the 5:35 to Portadown near Knockmore. Nothing very exceptional there, but I do regret the loss of the next shot - 30 leaving Adelaide on a Lisburn local - since I never did get a really good shot of 30 at work. At York Road I saw 80 shunting and 99 running in on an empty carriage train.

Saturday was 9th July and the Saturdays at the beginning and end of the Twelfth holidays produced quite a number of extra trains. So I was up early to see 85 pass Adelaide on the 8am relief Belfast-Dublin. She had presumably worked down from Dublin during the night on an empty carriage special. 55 followed on the 8:15.

I then decided to take a quick trip over to the NCC main line. The pattern of traffic was rather different

on the two lines because the NCC tended to be busy in the morning and evening, whereas the GN main line had extras and specials throughout the day. My principal reason for going to the NCC was to photograph a Mogul at work on its native heath. It used to be said that any Mogul venturing past Knockmore Junction on to Great Northern territory was immediately commandeered and certainly by this time Adelaide had acquired the vast majority. In fact had I known how remote the prospects of seeing a Mogul were I would probably have stopped on the GN. However I saw 10 and 2 on the 8:35 Belfast-Derry, followed by 6 on a Portrush EC train; next came 52 on the 7:55 Portrush-Belfast and 8 on the 9:25 to Portrush. The lack of variety sent me back to the Great Northern main line.



An unusual visitor to Warrenpoint; 95 had worked down the Twelve noon on Sunday 19th June 1960. (A. Donaldson)

First past Adelaide was 170 on another EC from Dublin. The Twelfth of July being quite a minor feast in Dublin, CIÉ were able to loan carriages to the UTA and, of course, the locos were utilised to work the trains back to Dublin. 58 passed next on the 10:40 relief to the 10:30 “Enterprise”. I had time to photograph 111 on a track-lifting train at Adelaide before moving on to Finaghy to see 62 (ex 190) pass on the 11:20 relief to the 11:15 Derry. Then came 170, pressed into service on the 11:40 to Dublin and in the opposite direction 57 very late on the 9:15 Down. 91 passed next on the 1:05pm to Portadown followed by 30 on the 1:10 to Antrim.

Incidentally, when I came back to the same haunts the following Saturday, I had the pleasure of photographing (properly this time) 10 (the PG) on this Antrim train. I think it was later that same summer that 10 was given the interesting task of hauling an Apprentice Boys’ special from Belfast to Derry on 12th August. She limped down the single track from Portadown, creating chaos in both directions and eventually expired at Newtownstewart. I believe the Portadown Shed Foreman’s remarks as he saw 10 lumber past his shed were very enlightening.

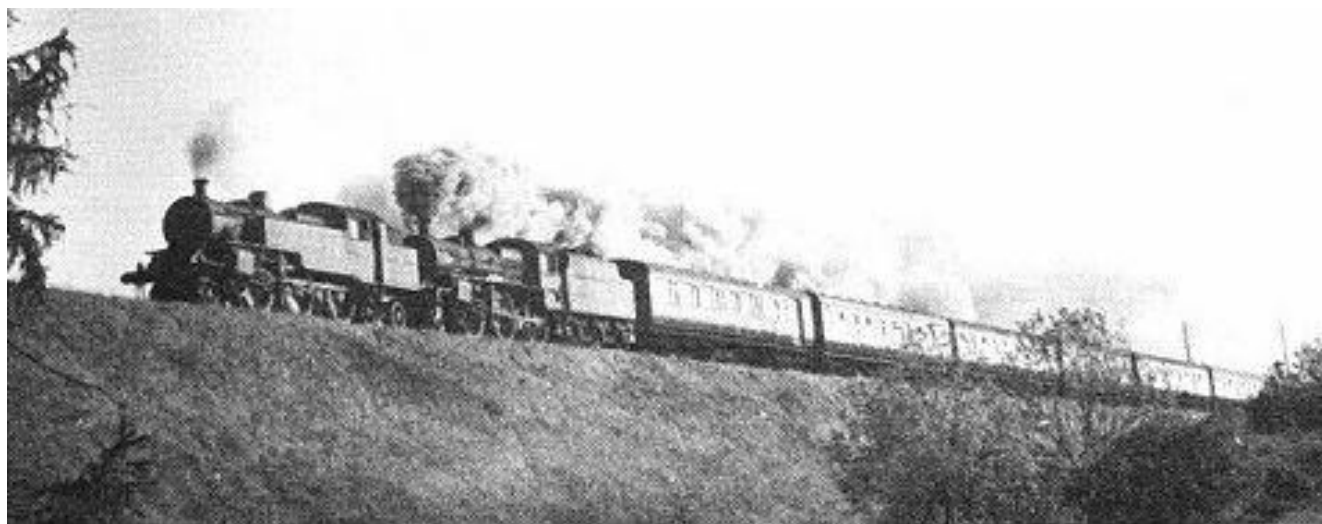
However on 9th July the next train to pass Derriaghy was the 1:45 to Warrenpoint, headed by 47; back to Adelaide then to see 135 pass on the 1:15 from Portadown and 94 on the 11:50 Mosney-Belfast. Then followed, three trains in quick succession; the 2:45 Dublin relief headed by 207 (which had come down from Dublin on the 11:05 relief but which I had photographed in colour), the 2:50 to Derry with 64, and the 3pm to Dublin with 57.

That fortunately was the end of that film but there were others that got away. For instance, when the ex-SLNCR tank No.26 “Lough Melvin” was taking water at Lisburn on an IRRS special in June 1960,

I identified a signalled down train from my WTT as a diesel. You can imagine my horror when 135 and a Jeep thundered through the station and I sitting in a carriage. By the way, if anyone was quicker off the mark than I was and did photograph that train I'd be very glad to buy a print. Then there was a showery Saturday afternoon one August when I was awaiting the 2:45 Dublin-Belfast between Meigh and the summit. Had the train been to time it would have passed me in brilliant sunshine; unfortunately a torrential shower came on and I could only watch from the car in impotent dismay as the train toiled past with a Big D (No.8, I think) piloting a Mogul.

Finally, one which half got away. In May 1963 a Belfast-Knock special arrived in Dublin rather late and this induced CIÉ to offer a pair of DEs to haul the next special from Belfast on the following Sunday. This offer put UTA on their mettle and the Special was scheduled to be piloted from Belfast. I thought it should be possible to have two bites of the cherry - to see the train pass near the foot of the Wellington Bank, jump into the car and photograph it again near the summit. So I took up position at Mullaghglass Bridge at 7am on a brilliant June morning and sure enough the Special passed well on time, headed by 54 and 91, both spotless and not long out of shops.

However I didn't waste any time admiring them once I had a quick pair of shots. A fine disregard of speed limits through Newry plus a fast climb up the Dublin Road should see me at Cloghoge long before the Special, I thought. But these crews must have felt the honour of the UTA was at stake because when I got to the summit the train was disappearing round the curve towards Meigh. A pity nobody logged that run, or did they?



***54 pilots 91 on a Belfast-Knock special past the foot of the Wellington Bank in June 1963.
(D. FitzGerald)***

Anyhow I sent a print to Mr Macafee remarking that I thought it odd that one of his beloved Moguls should require assistance in this way. In thanking me he replied that I certainly must be very keen on NCC locos myself when I got up at 6am and headed into the country on a Sunday morning.

Now, alas, steam on the Wellington Bank is virtually confined to our own Society's engines and if too many people refrain from travelling in order to photograph them, they won't run at all.

RAILWAY VOCABULARY

Jack O'Neill

Railways, like armies, have their own distinct way of expressing themselves and generally it's with great economy of words and is self-explanatory. Romance and even poetry can be found in some railway terms of operation as for example - Night Mail. This to me is the most romantic of all railway

names. One has visions of a powerful locomotive hauling a long train at 60 to 70 mph through a dark and sleeping countryside with the glare of the loco's firebox knifing the darkness.

Signals have names too. Poetic names given to them at the dawn of railways and still universally used. To the train crews, signals are their insurance, for a driver will always seek to have his train "under the protection of the home signal". Yes, there is a good deal of fun too as I will try to illustrate.

Have you ever listened to a group of railwaymen talking? Their language is not the one you speak. Perhaps you will understand the adjectives which are used to emphasise a particular point but there your knowledge will end. The vocabulary may vary from place to place, depending on the traditions of the former owning company. A Midland man will express himself differently from a DSE man as will a Southern man differ in expression from either.

On the Midland you are asked if you had "a hard watch" at the end of a run. This very nautical term is found only on the Midland. The Southern man will enquire if "you got it tough" while the DSE man will return to the sea with "What kind of a voyage had you?"

There are many nautical and army terms to be found on the railway and one can only surmise how they originated. Railways insist on strict and rigid discipline and so they have always attracted the ex-service man who, I assume, introduced a great deal of what is now railway vocabulary.

A Cork man leaving with a train will "set sail" for his destination while an Inchicore man will "ramble" down to Cork. A Waterford man will "cling up" to a signal - the Inchicore man will "daddle up" while the Cork man will "snake up".

Some conversations among railwaymen can sound unintelligible to the uninitiated, as the following will illustrate.

A group of drivers are relaxing over a few pints (not tea!) when they are joined by a colleague who says, "Mick the Rake has given up the smoking, lads." There is a stunned silence. One of the group asks, "When did it happen?" "Yesterday," replies the informant, "After he finished working in the garden." "Begob," another of the group remarks, "he was the first man I ever fired a shovel of coal for and as good a man as ever went through a pair of gates. When is he getting buried?"

There is no disrespect to a dead colleague in the foregoing conversation, just a footplateman's way of expressing himself.

I well remember being at the funeral of a well-loved driver some years ago and on the way to the cemetery the engine of the hearse stalled. One of the many railwaymen at the funeral remarked, "Sam will be rightly vexed if we're not on time, he never lost a minute in his life and now he's out of steam."

Sam would have understood, a tribute was being paid to him and one he would have been proud of.

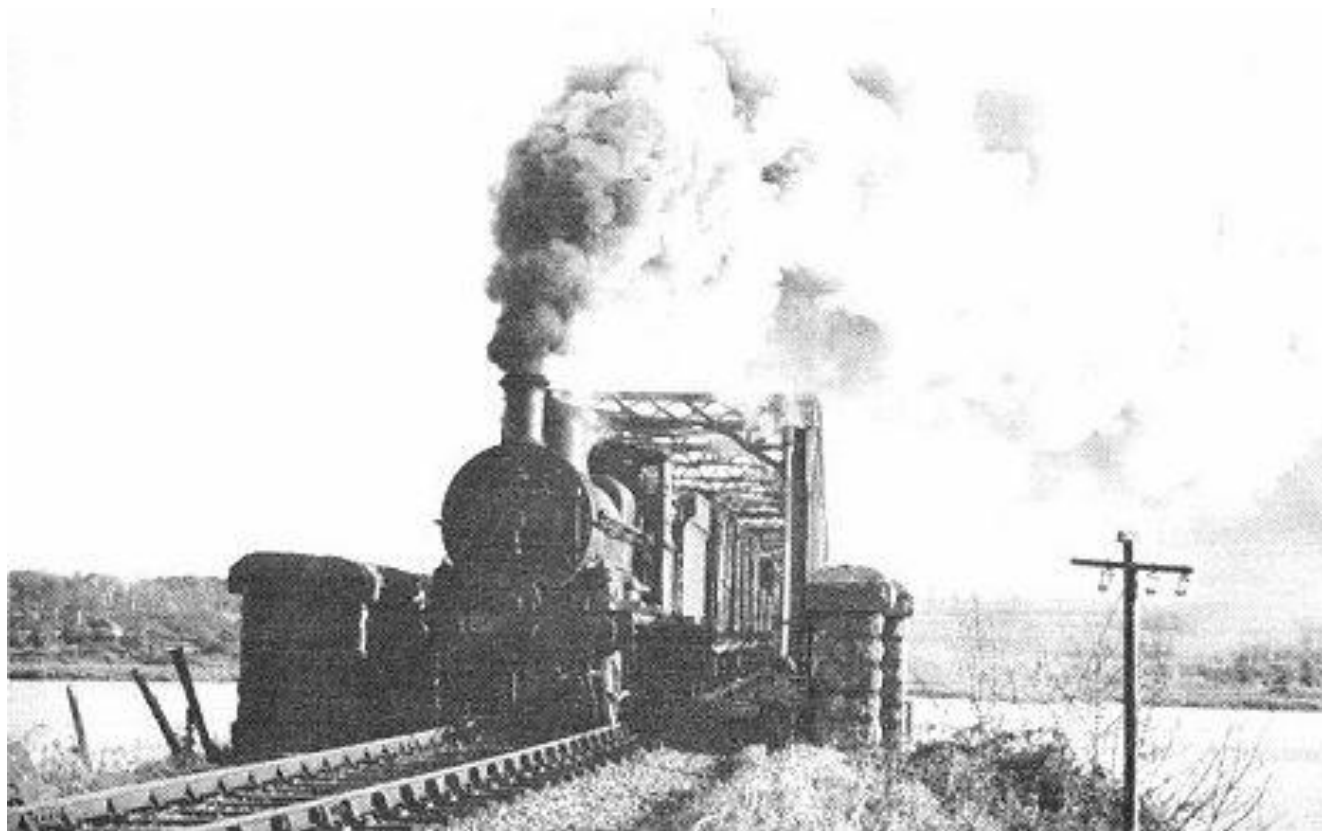
The diesels have managed to render a number of the old expressions redundant but they have given some new ones in return. When a man was seen to sweat profusely on the steam loco it was remarked, "You're priming, poor man." This is a universal expression as priming is understood by all footplate men. Priming occurs when the boiler of the loco is too full with water and the excess is carried out on the exhaust. Priming, alas, no longer occurs, now a sweating man is "getting an overload", the expression given to an overload of current to a traction motor of a diesel engine resulting in loss of power, but with the diesel engine still running.

When a loco is stopped for repairs it's said to be in hospital having surgery. When a footplateman enters hospital "he is put over the pits for the fitter to work on him" and the various parts of his anatomy are given mechanical terms. His chest is the steam chest; his legs, the outside; his arms, pistons and the stomach becomes the boiler. Propriety forbids my pursuing this very interesting subject any further - I leave the rest to your own imaginations.

Among the various professions outside the railway, there is only one selected for complete overhaul name-wise and believe it or not, that is the clergy and I hasten to add that no disrespect is intended. A bishop is the loco foreman, a parish priest the driver while his curate becomes the fireman and students for Holy Orders are the cleaners.

A conversation about clerical changes could be like this. "Father X is gone driving to Lisburn and he has a young fireman from Portadown. There's a vacancy now. I wonder what cleaner will get the job." "Who's the Loco Foreman? Father X was a gift as a fireman and I hope driving don't change him."

If any reverend gentleman is reading this I assure him that to be given footplate titles is the highest honour a footplate man can bestow and clergy of all denominations are the only people so honoured.



No.156 on 9:40am Waterford-Mallow goods (steam operated during the beet campaign) crossing Suir Viaduct, 1960. (A. Donaldson)

The names given to various parts of the engine can vary from place to place. A typical example of this is the DSER section where they have a vocabulary of their own. On the DSE the smokebox is the chimney end and this, you will admit, is an apt description. The bunker is the trap - which, again, describes the purpose of a bunker, but when you are told that the engine has a "sore big end" you wonder for this is something you never heard of before. You wonder still more when told to "apply black oil to its jaws" for you have never seen oil which is coloured black. The mystery is solved, however, for the engine has a hot big end and cylinder oil applied down its sides at the crank webs will have a soothing effect on the burn.

On most lines throughout Ireland, goats can be seen grazing at the side of the line inside the permanent way fencing. To the footplate men these are not goats but milesmen's cows and this brings me to a story of a practical joking driver who was taking a light engine from Thurles to Waterford. Seeing some milesmen working on the line ahead of him, he stopped the engine and called one of them over

and asked, "Am I far from Waterford?" (He was about two miles from Waterford) "Go to the third bridge ahead of you ..." began the milesman and then he thought of what he was being asked and by whom. The rest of what he said is unprintable. Well satisfied and with a big laugh our friend continued his journey.

The goods yards! - There you will hear railway vocabulary at its best, most of which, I'm sorry to say, cannot be recorded; our censorship laws forbid it.

The Yard Foreman usually starts the train by roaring, "Blow and go, driver." On one occasion I was hooked up to a train with No.186, the van of which was hidden around a corner some forty wagons back, when this command was given. The driver, very particular about loading refused to move until the Yard Foreman had given him full details of his load. The driver listened silently until the Foreman had finished, then very slowly he said, "You have some neck to expect this poor engine to haul that train. What do you think she is - a horse?"

Shunters in any goods yard work very hard and earn every penny they are paid. When they are paid they relax over well earned pints relating complicated shunting movements. Once a year the operative grades in Waterford get together for a social evening and during the serving of the tea this year the waitress passed the cup of one of the shunters present without filling it. He recalled her with, "Miss, you're after missing a hook here."

Railways all over the world are changing. The motive power, coaches and wagons are different to what they were ten years ago. However, despite the changes the essential character of railways and its operative personnel remain the same and much of the vocabulary is virtually the same. It's still said of a man about to enter matrimony that "he has the staff out for the section". A son born to an engineman on the Southern is still called a young fireman, even though the grade has long since passed away.

But who knows how long this individuality will last? May I express the pious hope that some member of the RPSI will collect the gems of Northern vocabulary and so preserve them for posterity.

THE BANBRIDGE LINE AS I REMEMBER IT

Fred Graham

The 37½ miles of single track which formerly diverged to the south of Belfast-Dublin main line of the GNR at Knockmore Junction was originally constructed in three sections.

The first was the Banbridge Lisburn and Belfast Railway which was ready for traffic on 13th July 1863, and from the beginning was worked by the Ulster Railway. The second line, from Banbridge to Ballyronney and known as "The Banbridge Extension", was opened on 14th December 1880 and the third section, from Ballyronney to Castlewellan was opened on 3rd April 1906, the BCDR constructing the Newcastle-Castlewellan section with running powers to Ballyronney, and to compensate matters the Northern had running powers into Newcastle.

About half a mile from the Junction the line passed Newforge Siding and immediately crossed the River Lagan and the Lagan Canal where the climb began to a point south of Magherabeg Halt steepening gradually from 1 in 121 to 1 in 77 at Newport Halt and then to 1 in 57 (the heaviest on the GN) just before Hillsborough - a passing loop and cabin was put in here during the last war but not a second platform.

After a further climb at 1 in 84 the grade eased to 1 in 100 at the summit, 500 feet above sea level. Once over the top the line fell mostly at 1 in 92 to Dromore, also a crossing station with two platforms and a small goods yard.

The line then crossed the River Lagan again, this time on a very high masonry viaduct which I am glad to say has been preserved by Dromore Town Council. Easy grades continue to Mullafernaghan with a downhill stretch over the River Bann into Banbridge - the most important station on the branch and the

terminus of the Scarva line.

Banbridge boasted quite a large goods yard which was full of wagons any time I was there. The passenger station had three platforms including the Scarva bay and the two road engine shed adjoined the up platform but engines requiring to be turned had to proceed to the turntable located in the goods yard. At the end of the down platform there was a fine swan-necked water column which always fascinated me when I was a boy, and also a large board on which was painted - SPEED 25 MILES PER HOUR, referring to the reverse curve south of the station although I used to think it meant right through to Newcastle. There were two signalboxes - the North and the South, but only the North was regularly manned and it also controlled the Scarva Branch.



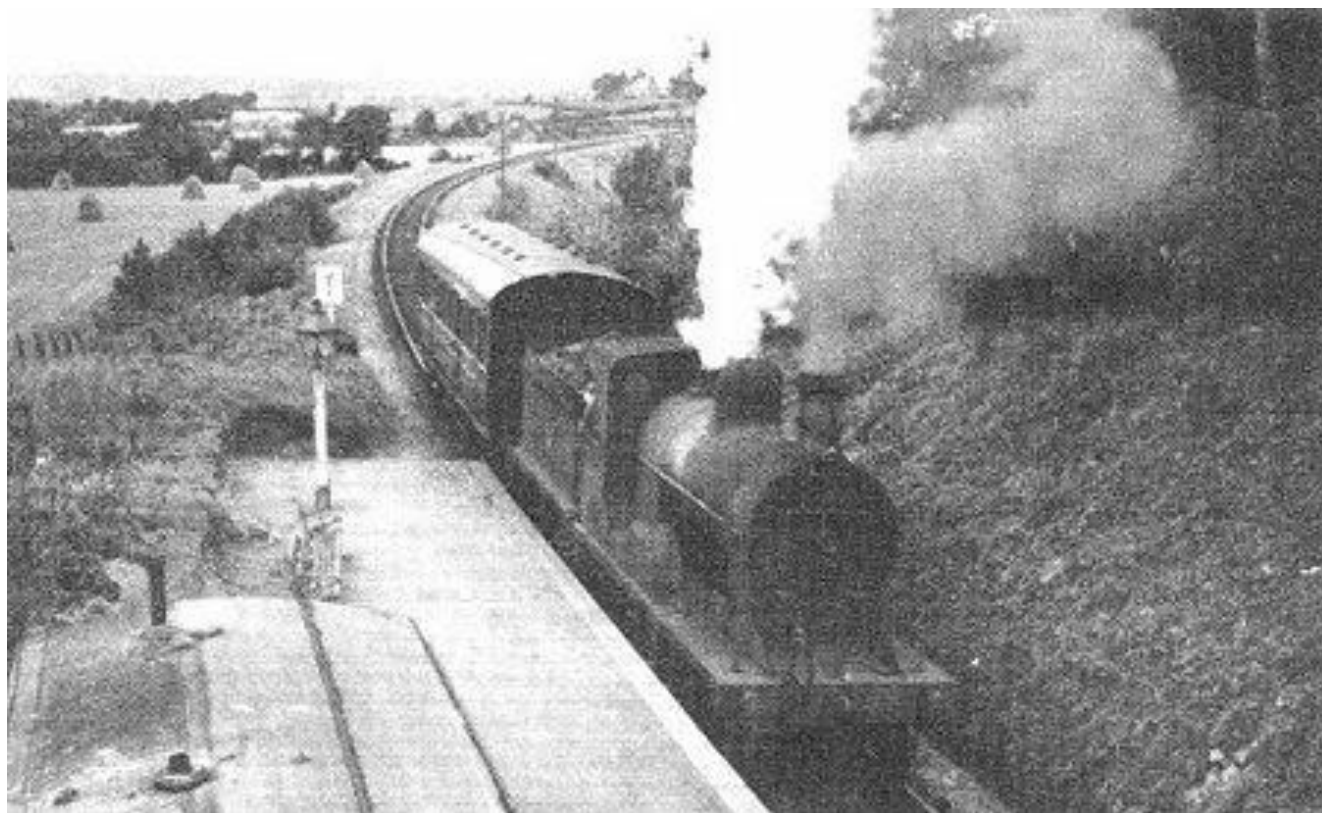
***153 on Stock Special entering Hillsborough Loop to cross the 4:55pm passenger in Spring 1955.
(A. Donaldson)***

South of Banbridge the line undulated, with easy grading through Corbet and Katesbridge, which was a crossing station, to Ballyroney, the railhead for Rathfriland. Ballyward was the next crossing station. The summit was reached after about a mile of climbing at 1 in 100 just short of Leitrim station and then the line fell gradually with two short sections at 1 in 80 to Castlewella where the “end-on” junction was made with the BCDR. Then a downhill section continued for almost two miles at 1 in 70 easing to 1 in 100 and then an almost level section brought the train into Newcastle - a fine station with two long platforms and a centre road which allowed engines to run round their trains. The two road engine shed housed both BCDR and at least one GNR locomotive in its heyday. As a boy travelling with my father I remember our train composed of six-wheelers stopped at Dromore to detach wagons which on the GNR were always marshalled at the rear of the train, the engine being a little 2-4-0 (84 - 87 class). These 2-4-0s had 6'1" wheels and were timed to run in from Portadown in 29 minutes on the “Limited Mail”.

That journey was the first of many I made between Belfast - or should I say Adelaide, which was the starting point of our Sunday School Excursions - and Newcastle. Our trains, made up of 12 to 14 six-

wheelers would depart around 9am, the locos being class ALs 55, 57 or 140 and we railway enthusiasts (there were about six of us) would rush for the front compartment of the first carriage in order to be as close as possible to the engine, especially on the descent to Dromore, which was always done with steam shut off.

Banbridge was usually our first stop where the engine would top up its tender and the wheeltapper would make his rounds. We were always held at Katesbridge to cross empty carriage specials and it was here that I first saw PPs 4-4-0 No.12 which was probably returning to Portadown over the Scarva line, having already brought its train of trippers to Newcastle for the day, returning to collect them about six o'clock that evening.



197 on 3:25pm Belfast-Banbridge train at Ballygowan in September 1952. This train was normally worked by the railcar which served the Scarva Branch. (A. Donaldson)

Only once did we run through Castlewellan and that was on the last excursion before the line closed, for it was usual to cross a BCDR train here.

About the middle of the 1930s the ALs gave place to the PGs, Nos. 10 and 100 were the usual engines, and then just before the war we got the UGs and our first bogies.

With the beginning of hostilities our excursions ceased and we had to wait until 1946, when for the first time we had a 4-4-0 (No.197) and six bogies.

Then the UGs took over (145, 146 and 147) and the year before the line closed we got a surprise - PPs No.45 was piloted to Dromore by QLs No.126 on eight bogies and for the return journey, Adelaide sent up AL, No.29 fresh from the shops to pilot us home. So, after thirty years, we were almost back to where we started.

The last excursion was worked by UG No.146 and I travelled on the footplate from Banbridge. It was rather a rough ride as the track was very poorly maintained, especially on the old County Down

section. Before 1932 the ordinary trains were generally made up to three bogies and were normally worked by PPs 70, 76 and 77; the last one being my favourite and the one I modelled. It was usually rostered on the 4:45pm to Newcastle and returned with the goods.

The 8:45am Belfast-Banbridge, made up of two bogies, was the turn of E class No.41, timed in 4.5 minutes and the fastest train of the day. This engine was similar to our 186 before superheating. The 6:15pm to Banbridge was always worked by Class A Nos. 33 and 146 and as they had short shallow smokeboxes were good at fire throwing and very often had red-hot smoke-box doors. I remember using the lid of a bin trying to catch the sparks as they fell. No.33 finished her days shunting at Belfast Docks, and Andy Little, her driver, always said she could run the "Limited Mail". The last Ulster Railway engine fit for passenger duty was No.137, and she finished her career on the branch, conspicuous to the last by her tall built-up chimney.

One Sunday night from Banbridge, we had two PPs in tandem with eight bogies and when we got to Dromore a horse-box had to be picked up from the goods yard. Now on the BCDR this would have been a simple matter, but not on the Northern - we had to draw forward in the dark and, after much lamp waving and whistling, set back - the whole operation taking about ten minutes, whereas on the BCDR the engines would have coupled the wagon on the front of the train with no time lost. However, it was good value for money.

In the summer of 1938 two trains ran through to Newcastle on Sundays and on the return journey the first one ran non-stop to Banbridge in 35 minutes which was very smart timing considering the slacks for staff exchanges (which were always done by hand) at Castlewellan, Ballyward and Katesbridge. Thence Belfast was reached in 45 minutes with stops at Dromore, Hillsborough and Lisburn. The war, of course, stopped this and these timings were never re-introduced.

The locomotives used were the new UGs 78 and 79 which I always recognised by their slightly more mellow whistles.

One special train I remember coming in from Newcastle was run for the Boys' Brigade Centenary, the loco being Ps 6'6" No.27 (old 83) suitably decorated with an anchor bearing their motto "Sure and Steadfast".

During the war years traffic increased considerably, especially goods. Timber was stacked high at the stations south of Banbridge as a result of the Blitz on Belfast, and all classes of engine were used, including the SG3s. Tank engines were not permitted beyond Banbridge, though strangely enough I did see No.66 working to Ballyroney. The night goods trains were piloted to Dromore and wagons for Hillsborough and Long Kesh aerodrome were brought in by the Lisburn goods which was extended to that station, serving Newforge Siding on the way.

Cattle specials were run weekly from Dromore, Banbridge, Ballyroney and Castlewellan and I travelled on the only mixed train which was put on after the 1933 strike, made up of three bogies, one wagon and a brake van and hauled by No.104. At Dromore we waited for twenty minutes, no traffic going forward.

The section from Banbridge to Newcastle was closed first and in the following year traffic, both passenger and goods, ceased completely despite strong protests from the local populace that the line at least paid its way to Banbridge.

It was the first GNR branch in Northern Ireland to close after the war to all traffic, and during almost 100 years of existence, the first section at least, was well patronised especially during the summer when as many as five specials would run from as far away as Armagh and Dungannon.

[Here are some additional notes which may be of interest. - Ed.]

In general the running on this branch was not too exciting - I remember making one run to Newcastle

by this route about 1936 and deciding to use the BCDR in future. Nevertheless, after the closure of the BCDR in 1950, the GNR introduced an "express". It left Belfast at 9:00am and Newcastle at 7:10pm stopping only at Lisburn, Hillsborough, Dromore and Banbridge. A log of this train shows No.11 (!) in the down direction running from Banbridge to Newcastle in 39.26 (the permanent way was not as good as pre-war). Best speeds were 46½ - 48 in about four places. 146 worked the return and took 43.28 to Banbridge, falling to 21¾ mph up the bank to Castlewellan but reaching 50 (unusual for this line) after Ballyrone. The load was four bogies each way.

Apparently anything short of a Compound could work to Banbridge and one of my logs shows none other than NCC U2 No.72, which was on loan to the GNR in 1954, and put up some exceptional performances. On this occasion on an up train, she showed a clean pair of heels to all her rivals over every section, in spite of having five bogies instead of the usual three. The best speed was 46½, attained in the two miles from Ashfield to Dromore, start to stop.

VAPORARIA

J.A. Cassells

Great Northern

One of the most encouraging features of 1968 has been the regular appearance of steam once again on the GN area of NIR. Since the end of January ballast trains have been run three days each week from York Road via the Antrim line to various places south of Portadown and also between Adelaide and Great Victoria Street. WT No.3 was for a long time the mainstay of operation, but lately 4, 10, 53 and 55 have also appeared.

The international rugby matches on 24th February and 8th March involved No.3 in overnight stays at Great Victoria Street on four different occasions in order to heat and brake-test the stock for the specials. No.3 also worked the pre-Easter transfer of extra coaches from the GN to the NCC on 11th April; but the return on the 17th (loaded up to 11 bogies) gave No.5 her first visit to the GN in recent times. Instead of returning light engine to the NCC, No.5 worked forward an overload CIÉ goods (whose brake van was a former NCC brake composite) from Lisburn to Antrim. On 10th July No.4 was sent to the GN to collect more coaches in preparation for the next NCC peak period. On 13th July a steam set hauled by No.55 was sent to Portadown to work some of the annual Scarva specials. With the exception of our tours this was the first time since November 1966 that steam had worked a passenger train on the Great Northern.

NCC Larne Line

A vigorous diesel repair programme during last year led to the virtual elimination of steam passenger working (except for occasional diesel failures) from Christmas until the start of the summer timetable. The Christmas period was blighted by the foot and mouth restrictions. So few were the cross-Channel passengers that only one extra steam boat train (on 23rd December) was needed. In addition one or two trains each evening on the line were steam during the pre-Christmas week. At the time of writing, the summer timetable has introduced no weekday steam, but the heavily loaded 7:55am and 2:05pm trains on Saturdays (both returning as non-stop boat trains from the Harbour) have been steam.

The most interesting feature of stone train working over the period under review was the allocation of drivers to their own engines in March. This provided for engines 50 & 55 and 51 & 56 (each allocated to two sets of men in the stone train link) to handle the whole service, but repairs, etc., have led to some departure from this and almost any combination of engines is at the moment possible. For a few weeks in June the practice of double-heading was revived for both empty and loaded trains, but the more orthodox engine-at-each-end practice has since reappeared. In connection with the spring ballasting programme, spoil wagons were being unloaded between Magheramorne and Ballycarry, and near Kilroot on some Saturdays early in the year. All stone trains now start from Greencastle, except for

those requiring to work into York Road to change crews. The connecting line from the new shore line to the rear of the shed yard (diverging at Port Arthur cabin) has now been lifted.

NCC Main Line

Apart from the football specials and ballast trains, the main line remained fairly dead until Easter. The holiday period produced a good crop of steam, culminating in five steam specials from Portrush to Belfast on Easter Tuesday evening. There was the usual Derry-Portrush special on Easter Monday night (No.53) and 56, after working out on a Portrush relief on Easter Saturday, went empty carriages to Derry for a special to Belfast on Easter Monday morning.

Between Easter and summer, the interregnum was as usual filled by the Portrush Sunday School specials (usually two or three each Saturday) and for a few weeks in May and June there was a twice weekly steam ballast working between Ballymena and Glarryford. Weekday steam ballasts on the main line have become rather infrequent of late.

The summer timetable this year has, so far, provided slightly less steam than last year. The 1:15pm Portrush was steam daily on the week commencing 15th July, but apart from a diesel failure on the 4:50pm Cullybackey (which was rescued at Antrim on 2nd August by the engine of the ballast train) there have been no other weekday steam turns yet.



No.6 on 2:05pm Portrush-Belfast train at University on 27th July 1968. (A. Donaldson)

On Saturdays the 10:50 Portrush was steam during July only, but at the time of writing the 3:05pm Portrush is still steam. At present the annual Derry Holiday week sees No.51 in Derry, working to Portrush each afternoon.

Though not strictly a locomotive matter, it should be recorded that steam now passes through a new station University Halt on the Portrush branch. On the days when the down 1:15pm was steam, the 5:35 Coleraine-University (propelled) and the 5:40pm return were also steam - surely the shortest scheduled steam Journey in Ireland?

NIR Locomotives

WT Nos. 1, 2, 7, 8, 9, 52 and 57 have recently been sold for scrap, together with UG No.146 and Sligo tank No.26. No.54 has been retained for either cannibalisation or repair, although her high bunker was transferred to 56 before Easter.

At the time the four engines previously mentioned were allocated, to stone traffic, 10 and 53 were

undergoing repairs, 4 was stopped and it was intended that 5 and 6 should be spare engines and 3 the ballast engine. Since then 10 and 53 have been returned to traffic, 4 has been put back in service and 3, 5, 6 and 51 received minor attention before the July peak period. All ten remaining engines are expected to be in service on 10th August for the Derry specials. The Sligo tank (No.27) remains on station pilot duty. Other jobs she does include coal specials from the quays as required and the occasional working of single spoil wagons out to the discharge sidings at Greencastle when stone trains arrive in York Road without being completely discharged. She also hauled No.171 from the re-railing point into York Road after her recent shopping.

This time we are delighted to welcome a complete newcomer to Vaporaria. On 6th June passengers waiting for homebound trains saw a ghostly object flit through Pearse Station, leaving a trail of STEAM. It was none other than No.184 (saturated J15) restored by CIÉ to take part in the film "Darling Lili".



No.184 on "Darling Lili" Film Train crossing Navan Viaduct, 15th July 1968. (A. Donaldson)

Following time-honoured Inchicore practice, No.184 had already been sent out on a couple of trial runs to Sallins in the course of which, we understand, some very creditable speeds were attained. We are reminded, of that lively 57 mph which she knocked up in 1960 on an IRRS special at a place no more promising than Post 91 on the Macmine-Waterford branch.

The filming, most of which was done near Beauparc, appears to be now over as the stock has returned to Ballsbridge and the disguised A16 to normal appearance. The restored No.184, however, was still lying at Drogheda in early August.

An important interruption in the filming occurred when she travelled to Inchicore for the Open Day. She carried crowds to and from Ballyfermot Bridge all afternoon and proved an immense attraction.

At the request of the IRRS, CIÉ have also preserved K2 (DSE 2-6-0) No.461 and Q (GNR 4-4-0) No.131. An engine saved from the scrap merchant's torch is glad news and we congratulate CIÉ on what we are confident will prove a farsighted action as well as a generous one.

The platform has been cleared free of charge by a local contractor; some 200 ft of the platform road has been laid, reflecting great credit on the eight members responsible. We hope to complete the trackwork in September, the local ganger having promised to put in the point shortly. I would appreciate a greater interest by the membership in general in a larger attendance on Saturdays.

THE SOCIETY**A. Donaldson**

No.171 travelled from Harland & Wolff to York Road on Friday 26th July through a gaping city. Mr Macafee has assured us that he can replace the fittings reported stolen in our last issue. She is turned out in blue, red and black undercoat; plans are complete for finishing her painting during the coming winter when she has been sufficiently run in. She is expected to run (unlined) on our Colmcille Railtour (to Derry) in October - DON'T MISS IT!

No.186 developed a hot box (the leading one on the driver's side) while on her way to Dublin for the Slieve Cualann Tour. She is to be lifted and have all six boxes inspected, re-metalled if necessary and run in before the St. Ciaran Tour. Her chimney has been repaired.

Dublin Area - The first meeting of the 1968-69 season will consist of a slide show "Steam in the Dublin Area, 1968". Both time and place are to be announced.

Belfast Area - At the Area AGM the following Officers were elected:

Chairman: J.A. Cassells

Secretary: R. Hunter

Treasurer: J. Lockett

Portadown Area - The pioneer Area is finalising plans for its third successive season, which will commence shortly after the St.Ciaran Railtour. Full details of the season's programme will be with the Area members by late August.

Inchicore - Those who took part intended our show to be a gesture of gratitude to CIÉ for the innumerable services they have rendered our Society. In the event, the hospitality we received was such a scale that we feel ourselves to be more deeply indebted to them than ever. To take only one example, their printing of our handout enabled the Society's aims to be put before a larger public than ever before and a barrage of eager and searching questions kept busy all the men who could be spared from operation. Looking back, we feel the effort was well worth while, both from the extra interest we undoubtedly provided for the Open Day (which is a unique event in any case), and from the way in which we apparently succeeded in reviving happy memories of steam days and setting forth the attractions, even in this day and age, of the steam locomotive. Out of the large number of CIÉ staff who helped us in a multitude of ways, it is only reasonable to single out Mr W. O'Shea who, though a very busy man, always managed to lend a ready and patient ear to our requests and see what was needed was done.

Go mbeiridh muid beo ar an ám seo arís! [*that we live in this time again*]

A TALE OF THREE CITIES - We cordially welcome the news that J15 No.184 is to work an IRRS outing to Kilkenny on 29th September. Indeed some of us who belong to both Societies had hardly enough room on our booking forms for all the RPSI members who wanted to go as guests! It is a truism that the greater the number of preserved engines, the better for all of us. EVERY steam outing deserves support, irrespective of its starting point or the wording of the prospectus. STEAM is the thing that matters. We express the hope that neither inter-society rivalry (to use the most euphemistic term) nor parochial thinking will deter ANY enthusiast from participating in ANY steam railtour.

We trust the organisers of both Societies will get together to work out a co-ordinated programme calculated to make the maximum appeal to both Irish and cross-Channel enthusiasts.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

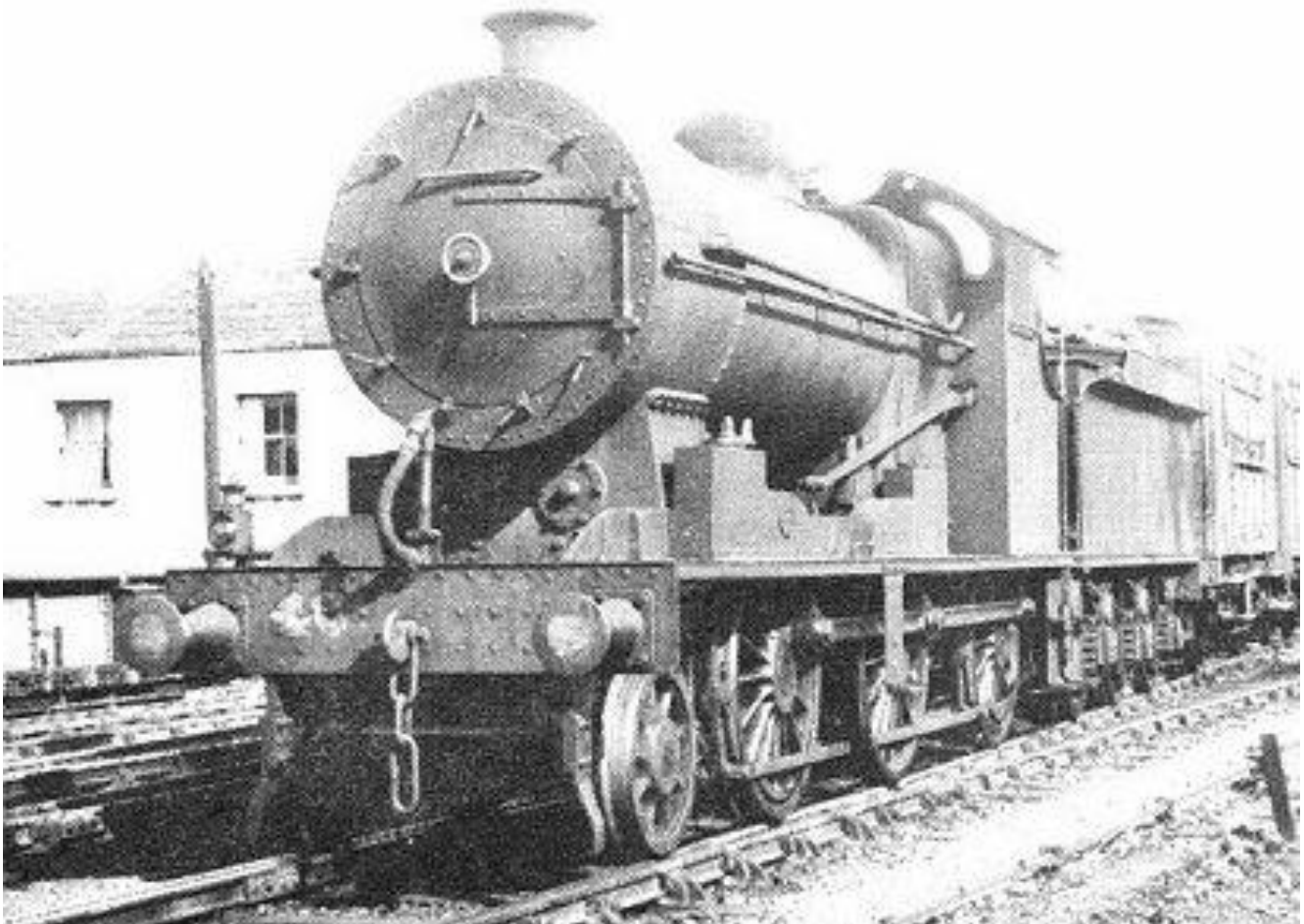
Dear Sir,

The sale of photographs on our Railtours indicates that many members are building up collections. With this in mind they may be interested to know that the collection of the late Ken Nunn is now available through the Locomotive Club of Great Britain whose advertisement appears elsewhere in this issue. So far I have sampled selections involving NCC, BCDR, DSER and the various railways as well as most of the Irish narrow-gauge lines and found the quality and variety very satisfactory. Members are welcome to see the collection at my address at any time, if they give prior notice.

Yours, etc.,

W.T. Scott

(Hon. Assistant Secretary)



No.461 on RDS Special at Dublin Connolly. (S.V. Kennedy)