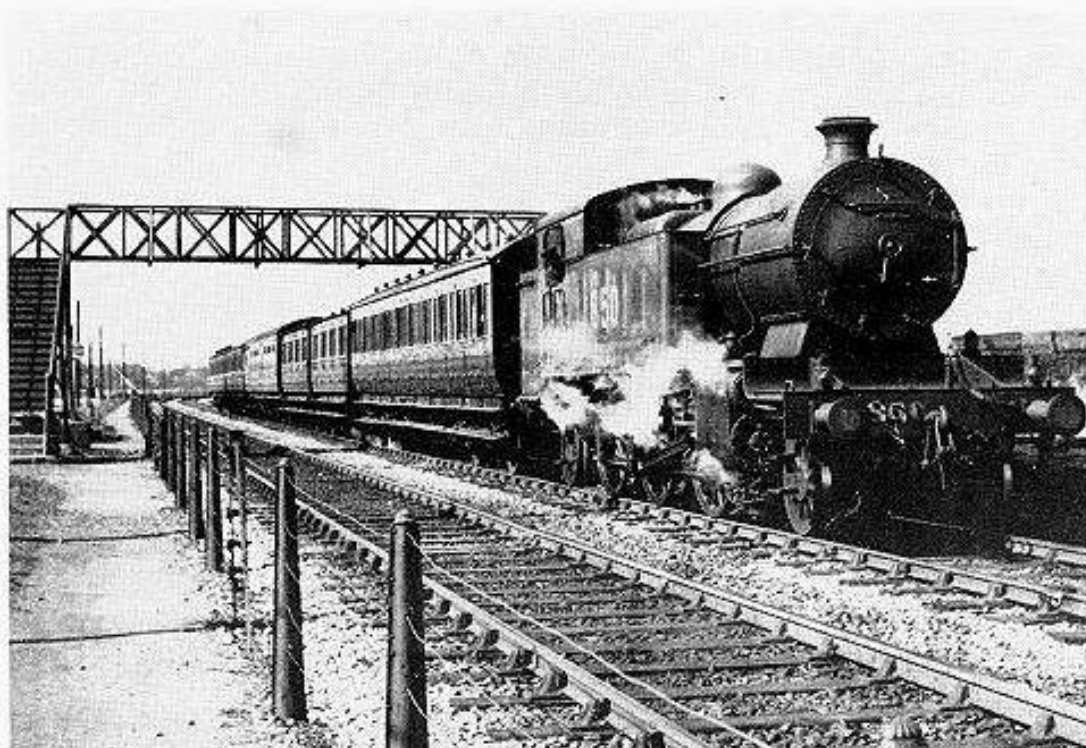


**THE RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND**

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

# FIVE FOOT THREE



No. 6

January, 1969

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Beet Fever  
Railway Reminiscences  
Vaporaria  
Society News  
1969 Railtour Programme

S. V. Kennedy  
J. O'Neill  
W. T. Scott  
J. Cassells

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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: 850 on down suburban train at the site of the D&K Williamstown station.  
(S.V. Kennedy)*

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#### **DSE SECTION SUBURBAN CIÉ - 1947-50**

**Sean V. Kennedy**

What follows is an account of the DSE section of CIÉ in its day to day working by one who travelled on its trains and locos continually during these years. Since my interest centres around steam locos and general working of trains and all connected with them, the account is biased towards this end. It is now certain that the period 1947-50 was the peak of interest, though we did not realise it then. Repairs to engines, coal supplies, engine painting and track had all improved after the war, while scrapping of locos and coaches had not really made itself felt as it was to do later, and we did not take the first couple of unreliable diesels seriously.

The result of all this was that one could find no less than twenty-six (!) different classes of engine, and these far from standard, on its rails at this time, unbelievable by today's standards. Coaching stock was literally a moving museum, from fine steel brake thirds 60ft (ex GSR) to gaslit six-wheelers of Midland and GS&WR parentage with WLW & DSE oddities and a couple of rebuilt steam and electric railcars for luck. So one will easily realise that it was a never-ending interest to the steam enthusiast. Add to this drivers and staff with special DSE character, plus the ready unofficial invite to well-known patrons to travel footplate ("Stand well in towards the fireman's side while we pass Bray shed!") and there you have it.

I will briefly describe the geography of the line for those unfamiliar with it, concentrating on the Amiens Street-Greystones section, and ignoring the Harcourt Street line as trains were scarce on it even at this date.

Miles	Chains		Miles	Chains	
0	0	Amiens Street	6	21	Salthill
0	59	Tara Street	7	1	Dun Laoghaire
1	1	Westland Row	7	54	Sandycove
2	5	Landsdowne Road	8	16	Glenageary
2	47	Sandymount Halt	9	8	Dalkey
3	21	Sidney Parade	10	71	Killiney
4	21	Boosterstown	14	34	Bray
5	1	Blackrock	19	19	Greystones
5	61	Seapoint			

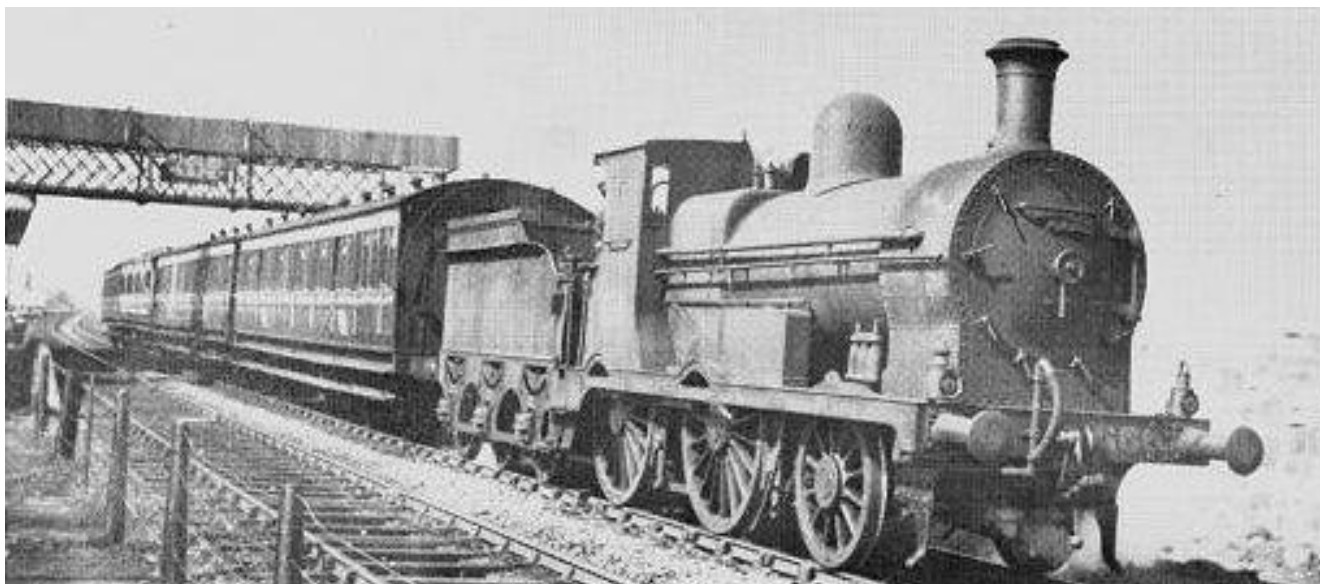
When one looks at this list one is immediately struck by the number and frequency of stations. Added to these were an array of busy level crossings between Westland Row and Dun Laoghaire, making it a real rough line on engines. The ability to start and accelerate quickly, and to stop quickly, were an absolute necessity - while big wheels and poor brakes made a very difficult line for the crews. Good steaming was not as important here as on longer lines, as it was the practice to get a good fire and head of steam up before the run and this carried even a poor loco a good distance on this short trip. Trains were not over-heavy - the fast sets comprising six large coaches - but often the slower trains, mostly six-wheeled stock, required real effort as the rolling of the old six-wheelers was really bad. Many drivers referred to them as "square wheelers", while one great character, a driver known as the 'Cobbler', aptly described them with the comment "you knew whether the brakes on them were on or off by listening!"

But to return to the road. The line starts from three platforms at Amiens St (which had a turntable and ashpit, etc., but no loco shed), climbs gently (1 in 287) to Tara Street, practically all of it on what the Dubliner calls "the Loop Line Bridge" and continues overhead on level road to Westland Row. From here it falls very gently until at Merrion Gates it emerges on to the sea wall and is dead level from here to Salthill, from where it rises (1/370) to Dun Laoghaire. This station at this period followed typical DSE character; there was only one through road, so that timekeeping in one direction affected the other. Also in the yard were fine lattice posts carrying semaphore signals mixed with tubular posts carrying modern colour searchlight type, all working together! There now follows a real climb (1 in 108 & 138) for 4 miles to Dalkey tunnel after which the line emerges out over the beautiful Killiney Bay and drops a similar height and distance. Then comes a rise of 2 miles at 1 in 150 to Shanganagh Junction (trailing from Dublin) after which we drop steeply (1 mile at 1 in 117). The last ½ mile to Bray rises sharply, which is a great help in getting one's train going in the up direction.

From Bray the line does a nasty climb of 4 miles around the face of Bray Head. The present line here is the third one, and most signs of the earlier ones have been swallowed by the sea. To look from a bucking footplate straight down into huge crashing seas directly below in winter is a nerve rattling sensation but DSE engine crews took it in their stride. The line then passes through one of our longest tunnels, dropping steeply (1 in 82/112) for a mile and rising gently for the last ½ mile into Greystones.

I can still clearly see Driver White, or perhaps Willis, fussing around usually 850, 466 or a 670 with the six coach set on the fast morning "Businessman's" train at Greystones. Engine at this period always clean and well kept, load 185 tons or so, departure 7:42am. Twelve minutes were allowed to Bray - 4¾ miles, average about 23 mph. At first sight this might look, as the line was known - DSE - dead slow and easy, but it wasn't. Speed was dangerous and impossible around the face of the Head so a

thunderous start towards the tunnel was the drill, having first made sure that all the regulars were aboard. From Bray the stop-start slogging started until one reached Dun Laoghaire. Here the passengers really had to shove in and the further additions at Blackrock truly made a paying load. The actual running of the 4 miles to Westland Row was made in a little over 5½ minutes, and every now and then 5½ minutes dead, an average of just over 40 - quite difficult over this short distance. Proof of the effort to keep time here was the number of times Merrion Gates were hit - also the throwing of engines into reverse at the platform end at Westland Row - but this still did not stop overruns out over the street bridge - and of course was highly irregular.



*650 on down train at Williamstown. (S.V. Kennedy)*

To me the real interest, of course, was the loco stock, and for quality, quantity and variety it would be hard to equal this small line. It could be said that the staff themselves without realising it used the locos in four groups. One, tender engines (0-6-0 and 2-6-0) were the backbone for the heavy work - goods trains, heavy Sunday seaside excursions, etc. Two, heavy 4-4-0s - classes 333, 342 and 301, used almost exclusively for Wexford passenger services. Three, the heavier tank locos - 850, 466, 455, etc., used on the bigger sets and non-stop runs. Four, small tanks 423, 434 and 650 class tender; these almost always worked the “all stops” and shunting. Here I should mention that towards the end the 650 class took on the Wexford Passenger on many occasions and kept time easily - but then the 650s were unique.

Another form of power on the line - the Drumm Battery sets, had ceased operation at this time and were lying in one of the stations on the Harcourt Street line while the older sets were on the Scrap sidings at Inchicore. It is said that though reasonably successful, it was not a sound proposition to renew the costly batteries as they expired.

The locos on the DSE at this period comprised the original DSER locos plus the various classes sent from Inchicore to augment the stock, and a couple they specially built for the line. The DSE locos were classes 423, 433, 458, 455, 444 and 461, and it must be said that these were all very tough and good engines. Inchicore’s approach to the DSE power position was peculiar, to say the least. The first real effort was the appearance of 850, a fine big loco, but no more of them were built. They then took a step back in time and produced the 670 class 0-6-2T. These were based on the famous J15s, but while they did a great amount of hard work they were an “unusual” design for the 1930s. The simple operation of gland packing and replacing required the engines to be lifted to clear the leading axle. Likewise they all

needed extensive welding around the axlebox hornways at each overhaul. It could be said however that their cabs were more than welcome around Bray Head on winter nights - anyone who has tasted a winter's storm at night on a 60 class or J15 between Greystones and Bray is not likely to forget it.



*455 & 631 at Amiens Street/Connolly. (S.V. Kennedy)*

About this time the 700 and 710 classes of 0-6-0 were also built but such was the reaction to the 700s by Canal Street and Bray that they were very seldom seen on the DSE. More use was made of the 710s, especially towards the end, as the smaller DSE tanks were scrapped.

850 had a most peculiar history. Originally she was to be the first of a series and she incorporated many standard parts. The boiler was excellent and of good size, but unfortunately the motion was liable to run hot bearings and even though the original lightweight motion was replaced by the standard type the hot points still persisted. The engine also had an unfortunate streak for silly accidents, rolling into turntable wells when the table was set at 90° to the engine; also if put around the little short curved road at the back of Canal Street the rear pony truck was liable to jam its wheel between the railhead and engine frame - with disastrous results when it tried to come out again. However, when all was well the engine was the pride of the line - especially after she appeared in green livery in 1948. She would also have been the strongest and fastest on this line. It was said that the original intention was to use this power and speed to run the Pier portion of the Cork-Dublin train to Dun Laoghaire but she did not work this very often.

Possibly the best "present" from Inchicore was the Bandon tank 466. Absolutely trouble free and very nearly as powerful as 850, her only bad point was that she was rough to ride on when going hard. Little behind these two in power but with good speed come the three 455 class. These in turn were much superior to the 458 class, though these again were most reliable. About 1948 or so, many of these were fitted with a patent smokebox cleaner - in the form of a pipe about 6" diameter which came out of the smokebox side and went straight down to the ground. These were immediately christened "Sleeper burners" for a very obvious reason and soon sealed off after some good conflagrations. I do not know how good they were at cleaning smokeboxes, but I know they were accused of ruining the smokebox vacuum.

The 433 tanks were solid and reliable but the 423s (2-4-0T) were glorious machines. At this time their duty was to shunt and take three or four coaches full of mail to the pier - one used to wonder how they stayed on the rails as they "flew" out by Merrion gates with the crew hanging on grimly. I don't think it is any Company secret either that on more than one occasion only the buffer stops at the Pier end prevented them from going the whole way to Holyhead with the mail, though here they would have to

give first place to a 650 on the same job which really did hit the Pier end and did a lot of damage. CIÉ Pier staff always claimed afterwards that the pier was a foot longer!

Of the rest of the Inchicore engines - the various 0-6-0s (excepting 700s) were very popular, (710's bad points being overlooked because of the better cover from the cab) as also were the DSE 0-6-0s while 461 and 462 were regarded in a special light. They were most successful machines in every way and generally worked the main goods to Wexford. They were equally good at heavy Sunday specials, excursions to Wicklow, Arklow, etc. It was usual those days to find a few GS 6'7" 4-4-0s doing suburban runs but why this was persisted with I do not know as the start, stop and start routine was just the opposite to their designed job. The Midland 4-4-0s weren't much better either, but I suppose that by 1950 there were no more suitable engines available. An interesting point is that the much smaller 650s were much more successful on the DSE than their big brothers! Another pertinent point is that twelve of these classes were built well before 1900, while another six classes were built before 1910, and at this stage though rebuilt to varying degrees were 60-70 years old, yet still absolutely reliable.



***458 on all stations train at Booterstown. (S.V. Kennedy)***

At the end of this account is a set of comparative proportions to show more clearly the great differences of the locos, and from my experience the most important figure on this line is the adhesive weight.

A service which was of great interest at this period was the incoming Wexford passenger traffic. The standard passengers were invariably worked by the 333 class, being relieved on odd occasions by 301 and 304. The D4 at this time was usually 337, 339 or 340. The running was rather uninteresting as the trains were on average six coaches or so, which was an easy job on the timings allowed. Of much greater interest were the Wexford Hurling Specials - Wexford were among the top Hurling teams in these years - which provided us with 6 and 7 heavy specials on various Sundays as they approached the All-Ireland. These trains were often 12 coach and provided great variety in combinations of power, J15 and D4, D11 and D6, 2 J15s, 2 D11s and, surprisingly, a 6' 7" D4 heading a J19. The sight of these climbing up the face of Killiney Head was unforgettable. From the lineside they appeared to achieve great speed and power output but unfortunately no one seems to have detailed the performance. Certainly I could never understand the timings on the "Wexford", as on the occasions I was on the footplate the D4s were working with so much in hand as to be ridiculous. They simply rolled from station to station and staff could be liberal with the station stop times. A very sharp effort on running

and stop times could have reduced the overall times by a third, without any increase in loco power.

There were, as on all other lines, some funny happenings on the DSE. On one famous occasion a loco took off to time and went quite a distance before the crew realised that they had no train behind; but possibly the best of all concerned the fine steam crane in Canal Street. A small ship used to dock at the back of the shed with coal supplies which were unloaded by bucket and crane on to the coal bank by a Mr Cribben, who had been on it for many years. However, during one of his holidays a relief man had to unload the ship, and he chose to use the grab rather than the bucket. On one dip into the hold he closed the grab firmly on part of the ship's bottom and, though he did not know it, made a valiant attempt to lift the ship out of the water! Eventually the crane lost the battle and tumbled head first down into the hold. The relief man fortunately was not hurt, though it was many weeks before the crane was fit for work. On another occasion a large packet of soap flakes was put in 459 at Amiens St. The results were unbelievable; the station was covered in white foam and powerful language from the crew.

Today when I look at the line, most of the stations are closed, including Booterstown, which was at the time of its closure the oldest station in Ireland. It is now almost entirely worked by the admittedly reliable GM diesels, helped by the railcars; but a few years ago as I watched the pathetic attempts of costly C class diesels, I could not but think of the tiny 423 and 650 classes battering away year after year without trouble.

One could not finish without reference to 455 and Canal Street. No.455, and later 456 and 457 were a bigger and more modern version of the 458 class. Designed by Mr Cronin, they were the last engines to be built in Canal Street. At this stage, Canal Street had built more steam engines than the other Irish works, excepting Inchicore and Broadstone! It is only fitting that this last loco was powerful and efficient, the last product of a great works, and as 455 "went", followed by a lot of the stations of its line, I think the line finished one complete chapter.

Should any of my many Driver friends, Fortune, Willis, White and others of this period read this, I would like to thank them for their interest and kindness during these most enjoyable days now gone.

<b>Company</b>	CBSCR	GSR	DSER	DSER
<b>Type</b>	4-6-0T	2-6-2T	4-4-2T	4-4-2T
<b>Class &amp; No</b>	B4 (463)	P1 (850)	C2 (455)	C3 (458)
<b>Load Class</b>	HT	HT	KT	MT
<b>Cylinders</b>	18" x 24"	17½" x 28"	18" x 26"	18" x 26"
<b>Pressure</b>	160 lbs	160 lbs	160 lbs	150 lbs
<b>Weight</b>	55.2 tons	71.5 tons	64.8 tons	57.85 tons
<b>Adhesive Weight</b>	41.9 tons	47.5 tons	33.5 tons	27.7 tons
<b>Max Axle Load</b>	14.5 tons	16.0 tons	16.25 tons	14.85 tons
<b>Driving Wheel</b>	5' 2½"	5' 6"	6' 0"	5' 3"
<b>Tractive Effort</b>	16,920 lbs	17,700 lbs	15,912 lbs	17,050 lbs
<b>Boiler</b>	R	850	351	458
<b>Year Built</b>	1906	1928	1911	1893
	Beyer Peacock	Bazin	Cronin	Sharp Stewart

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<b>Company</b>	DSER	DSER	DSER	MGWR
<b>Type</b>	2-4-2T	2-4-2T	2-4-0T	2-4-0
<b>Class &amp; No</b>	F1 (434)	F2 (428)	G1 (423)	G2 (650)
<b>Load Class</b>	MT	NT	NT	O
<b>Cylinders</b>	17" x 24"	17" x 24"	17" x 24"	17" x 24"
<b>Pressure</b>	150 lbs	150 lbs	150 lbs	150 lbs (160)
<b>Weight</b>	52.5 tons	50.5 tons	41.65 tons	37.8 tons
<b>Adhesive Weight</b>	28.35 tons	26.1 tons	28.85 tons	24.8 tons
<b>Max Axle Load</b>	14.35 tons	13.3 tons	14.8 tons	14.3 tons
<b>Driving Wheel</b>	5' 6"	5' 6"	5' 6"	5' 8"
<b>Tractive Effort</b>	13,400 lbs	13,400 lbs	13,400 lbs	13,005 / 13,870 lbs
<b>Boiler</b>	101	T and 267	T	650 / Y
<b>Year Built</b>	1901	1886	1885	1893
	Cronin	Cronin	Wakefield	Atock

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<b>Company</b>	GSWR	GSR	GSR	GSR
<b>Type</b>	0-6-2T	0-6-0	0-6-0	0-6-0
<b>Class &amp; No</b>	I3 (670)	J15A (700)	J15B (710)	J15 (101)
<b>Load Class</b>	KT	J	J	J
<b>Cylinders</b>	18" x 24"	18" x 24"	18" x 24"	18" x 24"
<b>Pressure</b>	160 lbs	160 lbs	160 lbs	160 lbs
<b>Weight</b>	57.5 tons	41.0 tons	43.0 tons	37.65 tons
<b>Adhesive Weight</b>	45.1 tons	41.0 tons	43.0 tons	37.65 tons
<b>Max Axle Load</b>	15.74 tons	14.35 tons	14.85 tons	13.0 tons
<b>Driving Wheel</b>	5' 6"	5' 1¾"	5' 1¾"	5' 1¾"
<b>Tractive Effort</b>	16,025 lbs	17,170 lbs	17,170 lbs	17,170 lbs
<b>Boiler</b>	Z	60 & 101	Z	Z
<b>Year Built</b>	1933	1929	1934	1866
	Harty	Bazin	Harty	McDonnell

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<b>Company</b>	GSWR	MGWR	GSWR	DSER
<b>Type</b>	4-4-0	4-4-0	4-4-0	2-6-0
<b>Class &amp; No</b>	D4 333/342	D6/7 540/536	D11 (301)	K2 (461)
<b>Load Class</b>	L	L	M	C
<b>Cylinders</b>	18" x 26"	18" x 26"	18" x 26"	19" x 26"

<b>Pressure</b>	180 lbs	175 lbs	160 lbs	175 lbs (150)
<b>Weight</b>	51.5 tons	50 / 49 tons	47 tons	50.05 tons
<b>Adhesive Weight</b>	32.5 tons	32 / 30.15 tons	30.55 tons	43.45 tons
<b>Max Axle Load</b>	16.9 / 16 tons	16 tons	15.95 tons	15.05 tons
<b>Driving Wheel</b>	5' 8 ½"	6' 3"	6' 7"	5' 1"
<b>Tractive Effort</b>	18,800 lbs	16,700 lbs	14,500 lbs	22,800 lbs
<b>Boiler</b>	O	C	N	461 & N
<b>Year Built</b>	1907-36	1909	1900	1922
	Coey/Harty	Cusack	Coey	Wild

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<b>Company</b>	DSER	DSER	GSWR	MGWR
<b>Type</b>	0-6-0	0-6-0	0-6-0	0-6-0
<b>Class &amp; No</b>	J1 (448)	J8 (442)	J9 (351)	J18/19 574/594
<b>Load Class</b>	E	E	E	J
<b>Cylinders</b>	18" x 26"	18" x 26"	18" x 26"	18" x 24"
<b>Pressure</b>	160 lbs	160 lbs	160 lbs	150 lbs
<b>Weight</b>	46.75 tons	42.35 tons	46.6 tons	37.7 / 39.8 tons
<b>Adhesive Weight</b>	46.75 tons	42.35 tons	46.6 tons	37.7 / 39.8 tons
<b>Max Axle Load</b>	16.2 tons	15.2 tons	16.35 tons	13.15 / 15.75 tons
<b>Driving Wheel</b>	4' 9"	5' 1"	5' 1¾"	5' 3"
<b>Tractive Effort</b>	20,090 lbs	18,780 lbs	18,560 lbs	15,740 lbs
<b>Boiler</b>	448	351/442/451	257 / N	X
<b>Year Built</b>	1897	1904	1903	1876/85
	Kitson	Cronin	Coey	Atock

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<b>Company</b>	GSWR	GSWR	GSWR
<b>Type</b>	4-4-0	4-4-0	4-4-0
<b>Class &amp; No</b>	D10 (310)	D17 (52)	D14 (60)
<b>Load Class</b>	M	R	O
<b>Cylinders</b>	18" x 26"	17" x 22"	18" x 24"
<b>Pressure</b>	160 lbs	160 lbs	160 / 150 lbs
<b>Weight</b>	48.2 tons	39.05 tons	41 / 39.45 tons
<b>Adhesive Weight</b>	30.9 tons	24.35 tons	25.9 tons
<b>Max Axle Load</b>	16.2 tons	12.35 tons	13.15 tons
<b>Driving Wheel</b>	6' 7"	6' 7"	6' 7"

<b>Tractive Effort</b>	14,500 lbs	10,920 lbs	13,390/12,550 lbs
<b>Boiler</b>	N	X	Z / 60
<b>Year Built</b>	1903	1883/90	1885/95
	Coe	Aspinall	Aspinall

*[NB: Boilers designated by letter are superheated, while those designated by number are saturated, except 257 and 461. - Ed.]*

## BEET FEVER

J. O'Neill

The busiest time on all railways in these islands is from May to late September. This is the season of the tourist, of the returning emigrant and of the ordinary holidaymaker, and the railways work at full capacity to cater for the needs of these people with extra trains and coaches.

At the end of the summer a return to normality takes place and the railways resume the normal timetables. This happens everywhere except in Waterford, Thurles and a few other places. Here, in these depots, for the last thirty-four years, September has marked the beginning rather than the end of a busy period. This is the beginning of the Beet Season, and this crop receives priority over all other trains excepting passenger trains. It is a mad season.

From Waterford to Rosslare Harbour is forty miles and there are eight stations serving the line. The activity in these stations from the first week of October to the first week of January must be seen to be believed. In all twelve extra trains run daily on this line, supplying empty trucks for the farmers and hauling them laden to Waterford for dispatch to Thurles. 170 laden wagons of beet per day are loaded at six of the eight stations and all this is grown in an area five miles wide and forty miles long. Talk of the Nile delta! it's not a patch on south County Wexford. The beet lasts thirteen weeks at the end of which the crews of the trains are ready for a long rest, but there is no rest until Annual Leave. The show must go on.

What does the beet mean to the train crews? It means long hours, bad weather - fog, snow, frost and rain - take your pick, you'll meet them all. It means overworked locos, hot boxes on the wagons and ALL NIGHT WORK for the entire thirteen weeks, with perhaps a dose of a cold or flu thrown in. This then is the beet season at Waterford every year since 1954 and even if the operative grades grumble about it, we love it for it's a challenge to us as railwaymen. No other form of transport can compete with us in this type of haulage.

Come with me on a beet special eight years ago; worked by loco 251, 0-6-0 E class. I'm the driver and we're going from Waterford to Thurles via Limerick Junction with thirty two laden wagons of beet. We leave at 12:30am, booking on duty at 11:30pm to prepare the loco.

251 is in the Limerick shed with 75 lbs on the gauge and a tender of good coal. The cleaners have filled the footplate with lumps and cleaned the ashpan. Underneath the loco a fitter is tightening a gudgeon nut and at the same time singing, in a lovely tenor voice, "The Three Flowers". The fireman returns from the oil store with the cans of loco oil, motion, axle and cylinder and says "That \*\*\*\* in the store gives out the oil like drops of blood. He's that mean that if he was a ghost he wouldn't give you a fright". We 'acquire' more oil from another loco leaving an hour later than 251 - we might need the extra for a hot bearing.

The fireman oils the loco while I 'make on' the fire and fill the luber. Together we fill the sandboxes and, having tested them, leave the shed for our train with an overflowing tank and popping safety valves. It's raining. The guard hooks up and mounts the footplate. "Is she any good?" he asks. "A lot you know about engines," my mate replies. "What do you want?" "A bit of good coal for me fire in the

van,” says the guard. “That lump will do nicely. You have a good load on,” he then tells me, “and your first stop is the Junction. I’ll not get out of the van until then unless anything happens.” “Right,” I answer. “Keep a grip on the way down into Clonmel and Cahir and we’ll see you in Thurles. Ramble back to the van now, I’ll give you ten minutes to go back and then I’ll pull out.”



***251 on Waterford-Kilkenny empty stock special at Kilmacow on 7<sup>th</sup> August 1957. (A. Donaldson)***

The guard having gone back, the yard inspector starts the train with his usual, “Blow and go, driver. You’re blocking up the whole place.”

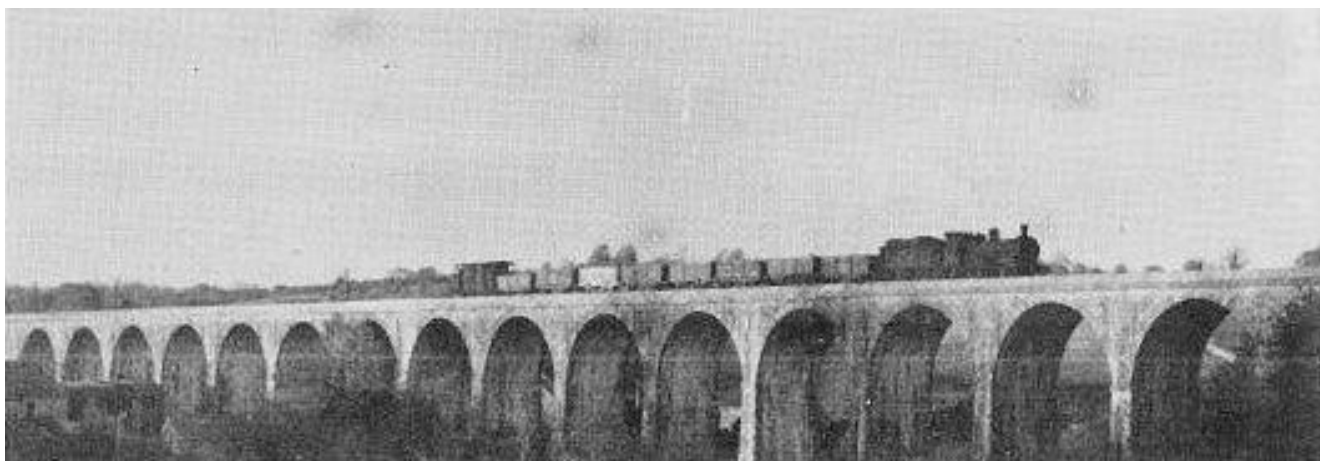
Under the critical eyes of the old pilot drivers and to the shouts of “You stole me oil, I’ll get you sacked, you \*\*\*\*\*!” from the driver from whose loco we had ‘acquired’ the extra oil we move our heavy train out of the yard and receive our first staff, for Grange, 8¾ miles away, mostly uphill. The line is level for ¾ mile from Waterford and then it begins to rise sharply and turn left. The ¾ mile gives me a chance to get 251 into a swing and passing Newrath level crossing we are doing a good 23 mph. She is steaming well and the fireman closes the fire with the pricker and says, “She looks well, mate. She’s holding her pressure, Maybe we’ll have a nice trip.”

251 has a lovely beat and she takes the curving bank at ¾ regulator and 2½ turns on her wheel and so we ramble along at 10 to 15 mph, climbing. We have 25 minutes to make Grange and it looks as if she can easily do it.

She mounts the top of the 3½ mile bank with the injector singing a song of triumph and I inch my lever to ½ turn from middle on the level. She skips along with a quick musical tempo from her exhaust to “Murphy’s Gates” where we shut off for the two mile fall to Grange. All stations from Waterford to

Clonmel have a level crossing at the station so it's brake to the first view of the signal. Beet trains are heavy; every wagon is fully loaded and a train approaching a station must be under perfect control, so a good brake is essential.

My mate is first to spot the signal. "OK!" he shouts, "Let her go! You have 'em all." Getting a run through Grange gives me a further fall of three miles to Fiddown and even further if Fiddown signals favour me so he releases the handbrake and I the vacuum and 251 gathers speed, propelled by the weight of her train. We flash through Grange, passing an empty beet special from Thurles with 65 wagons and hauled by E class 551. My fireman exchanges staffs and on we go down the lightly graded section to Fiddown where again the signals are all green and we pass a Waterford bound train of beet pulp, the sickly smell of which assails our nostrils. This by-product of the beet is sold to the farmers for cattle and pig feeding and again is rail-hauled.



*197 on BC 38 (Empty ex Carlow) on Borris Viaduct ca. 1962. (A. Donaldson)*

On half regulator with a well pulled up screw we run the 4½ miles to Carrick on Suir in eight minutes - two under the booked time. We now have seven minutes in hand and we are going to need them for ahead lies the toughest part of the road. We pass Carrick and begin a four mile pull. With seven minutes in hand I don't have to press 251 and though there is a column in Carrick we'd hate to stop and spoil a lovely run. Our tank holds 2,800 gallons and she is reasonable on water, no point in flogging her - it's a long way to Clonmel.

The fireman must now 'stretch' one of the rules. You never break a rule on the railway but you do 'stretch' them.

His bunker is empty so he has to climb on to the tender and shovel his coal forward and at the same time be on the alert for bridges - all in the day's work. The rain has stopped and an anaemic moon lights the line ahead. We are blocked at Kilsheelan. A glance at my watch tells me that the Night Mail is due and as we slowly fall into Kilsheelan station, my mate boils the can and makes the tea. As we stop he has the shovel cleaned, the damper closed and the sausages ready to fry. Later in the tiny signal cabin we share our meal with our host - the signalman, and wait for the Mail which duly passes by hauled by diesel B105 and we wonder for how long the beet will be steam hauled.

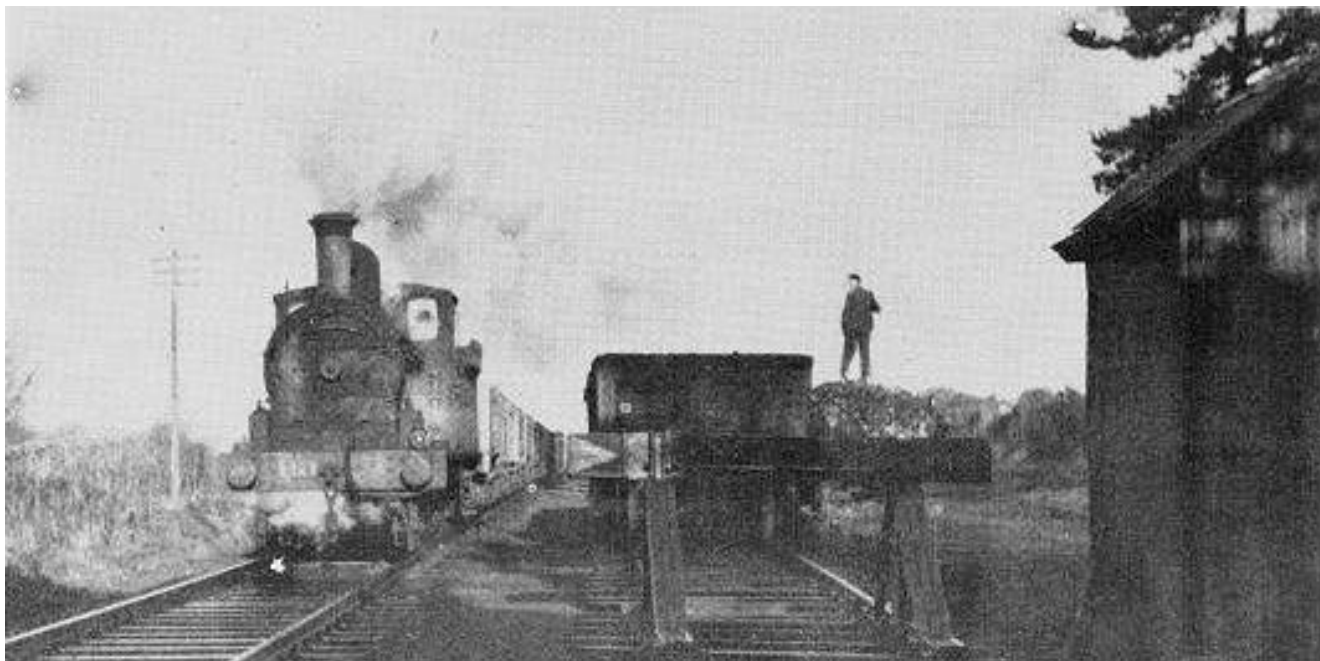
Kilsheelan to Clonmel is an 'up and down' section where the engine is worked hard to do the six miles in the eighteen minutes allowed. There is a 1½ mile fall at 1 in 130 down into Clonmel and it was, at that time, the junction for the Thurles branch which also falls into Clonmel on a grade of 1 in 100. Definitely not a station for heroics.

We get a clear road and now for the assault on the Cahir bank - graveyard of many a heavy train. There is a five mile bank, curving for two of them, mostly on a grade of 1 in 132. There is one flat on the five

miles and here a train can be stopped if necessary and the loco 'given a drink'. We have a full tank, having filled it at Clonmel, so water is not a problem - all we have to do is boil it. We nurse 251 up the bank.

This is the worst time of the night for footplate men. Between the hours of two and five nature is at its lowest ebb and a cheerful crew become morose. A sick feeling develops in the pit of the stomach and the muscles become weak and flabby. This feeling lasts for about two hours and one never becomes immune from it, no matter how long one is on night work.

My cheerful, singing fireman now shovels coal mechanically and neither of us is inclined to talk - 251 is tireless but the top of the bank is a welcome sight and the run down to Cahir with brakes on relaxes us both - we have time for a smoke.



*No.161 on BT 63 (Ardrahan-Tuam, laden) at Belville Beet Siding ca. 1961. (A. Donaldson)*

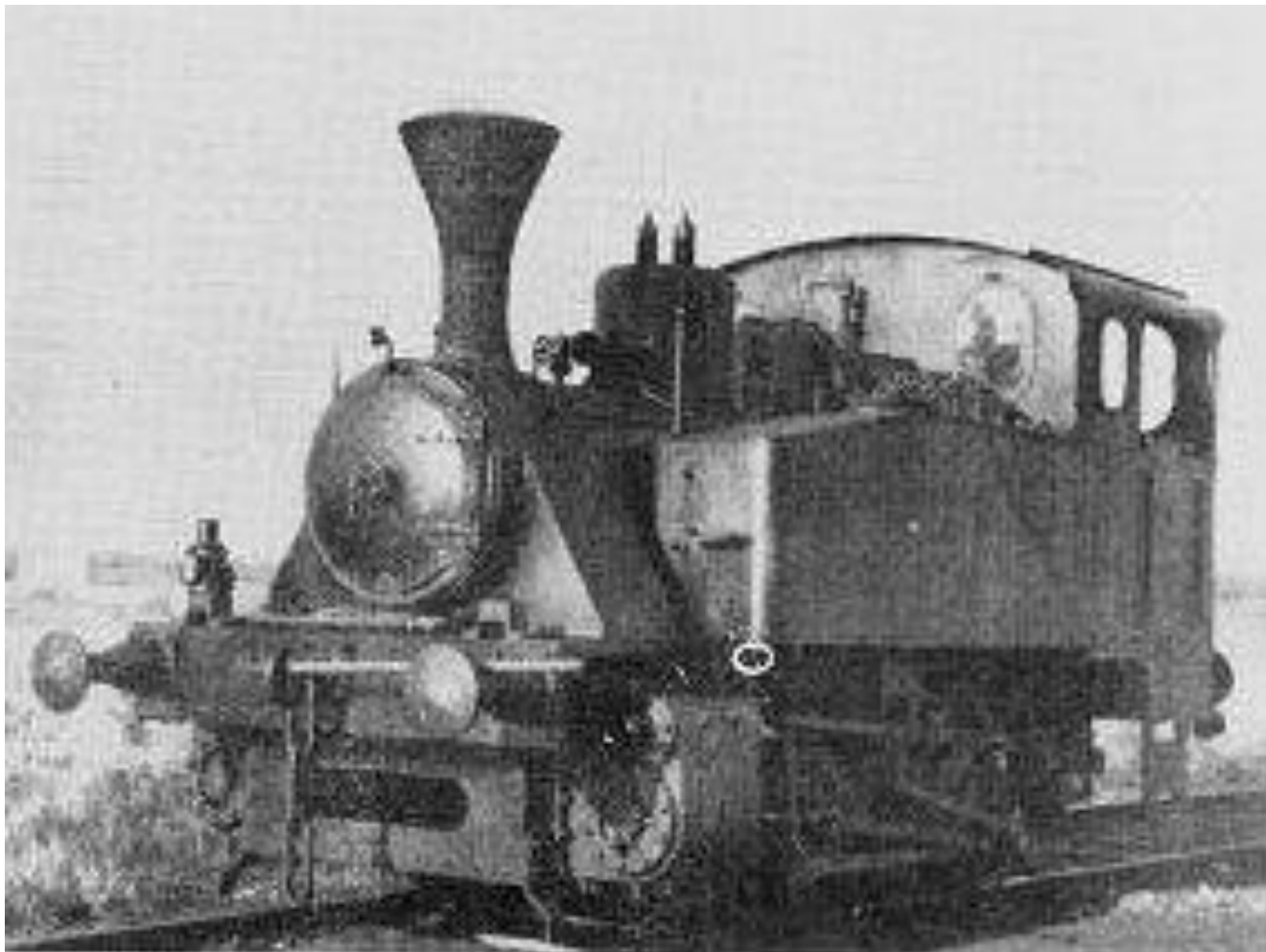
Next water is at Limerick Junction, so we top up the tank at Cahir and cross another sixty five wagon empty beet train - this one diesel hauled by A25. The diesels are on the beet; we wonder what kind of performance they give - only time will tell. Off now to Bansha, climbing through the narrow Khyber Pass which is a tough, curving ½ mile at 1 in 152. It's nine miles to Bansha and dead level once the Khyber Pass has been safely traversed. This section is noted for speed and was always a racing ground where the ability of locos to run was tried. Twenty two minutes were allowed for goods and it was generally done in eighteen and less.

251 is running at speed and the cut on the fire is light. We both have our heads out drinking in the moonlit Galtee Mountains, listening to the lovely symphony 251 is playing and conducting it with an occasional shovel of coal.

Bansha is passed in seventeen minutes and the goods from Limerick is shunted there to allow us to pass. We climb the corkscrew section to Tipperary and pass through, getting the staff for the Junction, that joke of Irish railways. Limerick Junction is in County Tipperary - three miles from Tipperary and twenty two from Limerick. So we call it Limerick Junction - why? No one knows. It's said to be the coldest place in the world and no railwayman who has shunted his train there will dispute that.

We back into the Junction and now for the last lap. No more staffs or fixed distant signals - we are on

the main road. There is a rise for two miles from the Junction and then the line is lightly graded - downhill to Dundrum which we pass with regulator shut off; nearly level then to Goold's Cross and a mile further we meet Jack Loughlin's bank - a straight 1 in 180. Finally, Thurles Beet factory, our destination, where we dispose of the train and off to the shed and rest in the dormitory before booking on again that night at 8pm for the return journey with the empties and so beginning the cycle over again.



*CSÉ Orenstein & Koppell 0-4-0T at Thurles in 1951. (A. Donaldson)*

That's the beet - bed to work - summed up many years ago when two drivers met in Thurles. One said to the other, "You on the Beet, Pat?" "Deed I am," said Pat. "I'm meeting meself going and coming on duty. I don't know if I'm coming or going".

The beet still rolls, diesel hauled now and maybe that spoon of sugar you're putting over your cornflakes came from south County Wexford via Thurles. Think of it, it's possible.

## **RAILWAY REMINISCENCES**

**W. T. Scott**

This does not set out to be a detailed railway history nor an account of any particular line but is rather an account of my own personal experiences of Irish railways as they were in the late 1940s and early 1950s. I hope that it will encourage those starting their railway interest rather late to travel by Society steam over those lines still left to us. While the locomotives are gone, much of the railway fascination of places such as Waterford, Mallow and Limerick remains and if members, by their support, enable

the Society to run steam tours to these places then most of the former atmosphere can be recreated. We must make the most of the lines left to us before they suffer the same fate as those about which I am going to talk.

My own railway interest started in Coleraine around 1948 when the NCC was just shaking off the affects of war and had re-introduced a fast train from Derry in 2¼ hours with five stops. This train indicated a change in emphasis as Derry was now the centre of attention and not Portrush. The train divided in Coleraine amid much shouting by the station staff to ensure that everyone was in the correct portion. The train engine usually took the first portion to Portrush and the Derry engine was waiting over the level crossing to back down to the Derry coaches. Two things remain in my memory about Coleraine in those days. One was the smartness with which the express was got on her way and the other was the grumbling of discontented passengers who arrived in Coleraine by a train with no through coaches for Portrush and had to change.

Coleraine shed pre-1950 housed a variety of engines including Moguls, Scotch engines and eventually one of the then new 2-6-4Ts. The great scoops from an enthusiast's point of view were two of the surviving Mountains, No.66 "Ben Madigan" and 64 "Trostan" which appeared frequently, the former in fact worked Portrush branch trains and I believe 66 occasionally got a turn to Derry though this road was mainly held by Scotch engines and Moguls, shortly to be superseded by the 2-6-4Ts. The majority of Derry Central trains then arriving in Coleraine were handled by Scotch engines.

My first journeys from Coleraine were usually made to Derry and this section of the NCC was a paradise in those days for anyone interested in transport and engineering. One started out over an opening bridge, plunged through two tunnels in quick succession and then skirted the cliffs where the remains of limestone mines could still be seen. First station of interest was Limavady Junction - in those days a junction proper and not in name only as the branch train still served Limavady. This was frequently worked by No.4A "Glenariff" though I was never lucky enough to see her on it. After the junction came Ballykelly with the RAF station, the main runway of which passed over the railway by a gigantic level crossing. I was never actually stopped by signals at Ballykelly, to allow an aircraft to land but there was always ample time to observe the variety of wartime aeroplanes stationed there. If an aircraft "spotter" did not gain satisfaction at Ballykelly then he had another chance at Eglinton where aircraft of Fighter Command and the Naval Air Service were stationed. Finally at Lisahally could be seen destroyers, frigates and corvettes of many nations, mostly veterans of the Atlantic convoys, together with about fifty captured German U-boats.

Derry of the early 1950s might have been specially created for the enthusiast containing as it did two narrow and two broad gauge termini together with the LPHC. The NCC I have already mentioned and taking the other railways in turn there was first the NCC narrow gauge from Victoria Road to Strabane. This line was always steam worked, no means of turning being provided at Derry. The engines I most frequently saw on the line were No.11 "Erne" and No.9 "Eske" and 2-6-4T No.1 "Alice". I never saw a class 5 engine on this line. The load was usually two bogies and vans were sometimes taken. Most of the traffic seemed to come from Donemana. The locomotives sometimes took on coal at Derry, using wicker baskets, from broad gauge wagons shunted up from the NCC Waterside. Two personal memories remain to me of this line. The first being of travelling on one of the last passenger trains to use it and conversing with an elderly gentleman who had travelled to Derry "to see the ships", as he put it, some fifty years before on the first passenger train. The second one is of No.11's driver, who sported a most magnificent moustache and also unfortunately a habit of moving the engine just as I was about to take her picture - no joke in the days of box camera usage. One relic of the line still surviving is the NCC somersault signal at the end of the platform.

Crossing the bridge from Victoria Road brought one to the GNR terminus at Foyle Road. From here one could sample most types of GNR inside cylinder motive power from the small A class 0-6-0s and P

6'6" 4-4-0s to the S and SG3 classes. Of all the engines which worked into Foyle Road my own favourite was 122, probably because she gave me many fine runs to Omagh. Another pet engine was No.71 of PPs class which regularly worked locals between Strabane and Derry and also did a turn on goods. Also U class No.196 occasionally appeared in Derry on trains from the Irish North. She was nameless at this time. Goods work from Derry was handled by SG3 and SG. class engines and I cannot recollect either UG or LQG and NQG. locomotives here at all in GNR days. These were also the days of staff exchanging by net on the GNR and Nos. 125 and 135 sometimes appeared complete with GNR bag on the tender and NCC fitting on the cab (but not the head). Digressing a little from Derry, it was the practice in these years to bank trains, particularly the Mail, out of Strabane as point to point times on this train were sharp and hard to keep with a full load of eight bogies. My favourite recollection of this practice was of standing on the Donegal platform at Strabane one day when the Mail appeared but with only a six bogie load. 140 being the Strabane pilot was deputed to give the shove and her driver apparently did not realise the lightness of the load, because on getting the signal he was caught napping. The train engine (No.190 I think) opened up with tremendous vigour and 140 came panting along behind barely touching the buffers of the last coach. The banker of course dropped off at the level crossing.



*CDR 2-6-4T (Class 5A) No.1 "Alice" on 1:35pm ex Derry at Cullion on 6<sup>th</sup> November, ca. 1946.  
(A. Donaldson)*

Strabane in 1950-51 was a busy place with interchange traffic between the GNR and the County Donegal. All three surviving classes of Donegal steam engines were to be seen as well as Phoenix and the railcars. The Strabane and Letterkenny line had a heavy goods traffic and the train was usually worked by No.11 "Erne" or No.2 "Blanche". One of my treasured memories is of No.11 blasting her way up Raphoe bank with a huge train made up of wagons of every sort including a few Lough Swilly. Mention of the Swilly brings us back to the fourth Derry terminus namely that of the L&LSR at the Graving Dock. This most unpretentious building was the terminus of one of Ireland's most interesting

railways. My memories of it are unfortunately confined to its last three years but into them I packed as much travel as I could, mostly on the footplate as by this time most L&LSR trains were goods only though a passenger brake was taken on the rear. It is hard to know where to begin any story of the Swilly but as good a point as any would be to pay tribute to the kindly help always given to me by the staff, from the Manager Jim Whyte down. It was one of the most friendly railways in Ireland. Then there were the engines from the giant 4-8-4Ts to the 1 class 4-6-0s. The Swilly never in my memory had a really dirty engine and the majority were kept in spotless condition. My own special favourites were Nos. 10 and 15. The former usually worked to Buncrana and the latter to Letterkenny. Both were free steaming engines which handled the frequently heavy goods without difficulty. The footplates were roomy and the engines comfortable to ride on even though the Swilly permanent way had declined. On one occasion while travelling on No.15 from Letterkenny the fireman swore that he knew two successive mileposts still in existence somewhere near Manorcunningham. With the two of us peering over the side of the engine one of these was located and after 29 seconds another object which might have been a post appeared. This gave a speed of just over 30 mph and was the highest and I think the only speed I ever recorded on the Swilly.



***L&LSR 4-6-OT No.3 at Tooban Junction ca. 1946. (A. Donaldson)***

Another engine on which I travelled was 4-6-OT No.3 but on this occasion only as far as Tooban Junction. Road access to Tooban Junction was by a low lying, often flooded, road and then by a two-plank bridge over a smelly, deep and wide ditch. Other memories of Tooban include John Doherty the cheerful signalman whose day became really busy when the Buncrana and Letterkenny goods trains converged on him. His cabin was immaculately kept with a row of gleaming levers and an ever ready can of tea from which he could always supply an extra person who happened to be travelling with the crew. A favourite practice on the Swilly which I remember well was that of tow roping. By this means the engine was enabled to draw a wagon into a siding without actually going in herself or requiring a loop to run round her train. Pluck I think was one of the places where I saw this done.

It was also the practice to pull the 4-8-0 out of her shed in Letterkenny for enthusiasts to photograph and for this the tow rope was used to avoid undue stress on the turntable just outside it. Towards the close of the line the engine was left outside but in earlier years one of the drivers told me how he always pushed her back in with wagons placed between her and his own engine.

Returning to Derry, a short walk from the Graving Dock took one to the shed housing the two LPHC engines. Of these "R.H. Smyth" worked occasionally but the smaller engine, though in perfect external condition, did not. I was told that only enough money was available to paint one engine and repair the other, so "R.H. Smyth" was repaired and No.1 painted. These engines were frequently pulled out for enthusiasts by tractor. The track was of course gauntleted and, though the engines were broad gauge, they had buffing gear and couplings for both. I never saw a mixed train being worked however.

In conclusion I may say that I hope that the information in these recollections is accurate but memory and scattered notes in school diaries are never completely reliable. More important I hope that these notes will stimulate members to support the Society's tours, thus enabling us to recreate the atmosphere of steam on the many lines still open.

## **SOCIETY NEWS**

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### **Locomotives**

As mentioned in the previous issue, No.186 developed a hot box during the Slieve Cualann railtour. Mr McAfee, Chief Mechanical Engineer of NIR, offered to undertake the remetalling of the box at York Road. This was subsequently done and no further trouble was experienced on the long run to Athlone in September. The coupling rod pin, however, gave trouble on this tour but there has been no further sign of this since Mr C Pemberton, Maintenance Planning Superintendent, CIÉ, had the bearing remetalled.

Members should remember that such work is done only through the generosity of the railways and that the cost of repairs has to be met out of subscriptions and tour profits.

During the winter we will have to replace the brick arch of No.186 and submit the engine for a rigorous boiler inspection. Mr Raymond Hall of Harland & Wolff has kindly offered to undertake the job of correcting the ovality, etc., in the left hand driving crankpins and the subsequent renewal of the bush.

Further progress with No.171 has been disappointingly slow, but it is hoped that running will take place soon. A 4,000 gallon roller bearing tender (formerly coupled to 207) has been obtained for use pending a decision on the future of No.171's original tender. Messrs W., J. and S. Crozier welded a patch on the tender tank top and Messrs C. Clendenning and F. Cooper applied a temporary protective coat of paint to the engine. The boiler fittings have all been overhauled and after a long search we finally managed to trace a complete set of engine and tender crests.

Guinness No.3 was in steam on Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> November at Whitehead and shunted during the afternoon. The operation was supervised by Foreman W. Steenson of York Road - a familiar and welcome figure on the footplate for many years until his promotion last year. Mr Steenson has also advised on and assisted in taking up the slack between No.186 and her latest tender.

Watch for news of BG3's next steaming, in the new year.

It is not generally known just how much the Society depends on the interest and efforts of professional railwaymen, although the tremendous work put in by Inspector F. Dunlop on our tours has been noticed by all. (Inspector Dunlop spent long hours on the footplate on the Colmcille after working till the early hours of the morning on the floods at Glarryford.)

Our thanks go to them all.

News has just come in that we have been given the loan of the lubricator off No.74 in the Transport Museum. This meets a very pressing need and the Society's best thanks are due to Messrs G. Thompson, Director Ulster Folk Museum and R. Beggs, Curator of the Transport Museum.

### **New Election Rules**

It has been felt for some time that the specialised nature of the duties of the Society's executive made it necessary to end the system whereby, after the election of the officers, members elected a number of miscellaneous committee members more or less at random, without considering whether the Committee so constituted could in fact perform the functions required of it. To take an example, no Committee member was found to take sole responsibility for Publicity during the past year.

A set of rules was therefore drawn up by a group of five members, and, with minor modifications, accepted by a Special General Meeting held on 5<sup>th</sup> December 1968.

Most of the rules, which replace Nos. 5-8, will be obvious from the nomination papers and voting instructions for the Annual General Meeting which are enclosed with this issue. You will notice, too, that an effort has been made to eliminate the uncertainty of past AGMs, as to who was prepared to stand for what office and whether a person who had resigned from one office intended to go forward for another, or as a 'private' Committee member.

It should be noted that: (1) A maximum of one Committee member may hold a maximum of two posts. This, of course, means that the Committee may consist of either eleven or twelve members. In the former case, the Committee may, if required, co-opt one extra member, the quorum in all cases being the nearest integer above half the total. (2) Any contingencies not provided for in the Rules - for example, if there are no candidates for a given Committee post - will be dealt with publicly at the AGM.

### **Policy**

As some members seem to be under a misapprehension about this, it may be as well to clear up a couple of points.

Firstly, on the preservation of passenger coaches. The Society can unfortunately make no plans at present. For one thing no coaches are readily available for sale; for another, our locomotive commitments do not leave enough money for them, our small active membership would find it extremely difficult to restore and protect them. Should NIR, however, discontinue locomotive-hauled excursions and begin wholesale scrapping of coaches, it may become necessary to acquire and restore sufficient stock for our short distance tours. In this case both money and labour will be required of members.

Then there is the question of operating a stretch of line should all the routes in the North close. NIR and CIÉ have been exceptionally co-operative in allowing our engines to run over their systems; therefore the Society's policy is simply this - so long as any main line in Ireland remains open to traffic, we shall endeavour to be in a position to operate rail 'tours' over it.

To any members who are dreaming of the day when they will be railway officials, we recommend that they get down to the job of preparing our engines for tours, or dip into their pockets to pay for the professional execution of repairs beyond the competence of the amateur.

Admittedly, the working conditions at Whitehead are still far from ideal; there is a shortage of all kinds of equipment and the supply of inspection lamps is far from adequate. This latter deficiency is being made good through the kindness of one member and others are urged to donate tools or money to buy them, or else to bring their own when they come to work.

No.171 is expected to be ready for painting in mid-January and teams will be needed thereafter, to rub

her down preparatory to painting by Ciaran Clendenning. If help is not forthcoming the engine cannot be restored to the condition we are sure all our members desire. Please contact Irwin Pryce and indicate when you are prepared to muck in. Irwin will also answer questions as to what equipment is required.

Members will be glad to learn that it has been decided not to allow such an efficient, free-running and easily maintained loco class as the WTs to disappear. We are keeping in close touch with NIR about the future of these engines and steps have already been taken towards the acquisition of one of them if and when the need arises. In such a case, should the engine have to be kept at Whitehead, accommodation would be needed, involving both trackwork and cover (presumably a lean-to against the existing shed). This again will call for an effort by members.

### **1969 RAILTOUR PROGRAMME (Subject to No.171 being ready in time)**

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***Saturday 22<sup>nd</sup> March*** - No.171's inaugural run

Great Victoria Street - Knockmore - Antrim - Coleraine - York Road.

***Sat & Sun, 26<sup>th</sup> & 27<sup>th</sup> April*** - Enterprise/Brian Born Railtour

This tour will comprise:

- a) "Enterprise" (2½ hr) non-stop run to Dublin with No.171.
- b) WT thence to Cork piloted, probably by No.171, to Kildare.
- c) Chance to photograph No.171 en route between Blarney and Cork.
- d) Evening run to Cobh with No.171.
- e) Sunday morning 'False Start' (WT and No.171) Cork to Rathpeacon.
- f) Main tour Cork-Limerick by No.171 (WT pilot to Rathpeacon).
- g) WT follows No.171 to Limerick.
- h) Visit to Silvermines branch.
- i) Train splits (as in Colmcille tour). Portions worked to Ballybrophy by No.171 and WT separately.
- j) WT Ballybrophy - Dublin.
- k) No.171 Dublin - Belfast.

This will be our most ambitious venture to date and likely to be heavily booked - so book early when forms reach you. Sections (d) and (h) are subject to the engine being passed for these sections by the Civil Engineer.

***Saturday 6<sup>th</sup> September*** - Slieve Gullion Railtour

Double- and single-headed trains between Poyntzpass, Meigh and Dundalk with ample photographic facilities using (optional) buses. Should Customs difficulties prove insuperable, we hope to run an alternative outing over CIÉ.

***Saturday 18<sup>th</sup> October*** - Colmcille Railtour

As planned for 1968, but using No.171.

Almost all our tours in future will use buses at some stage to provide maximum lineside facilities.

In addition to the tours set out, there is the possibility that No.171 may work the following Charter Trips:

***Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> July*** - To Bray (and possibly Howth) in connection with Bray Festival

***Date to be fixed*** - To Port Laoghise/Ballybrophy for Irish Steam Preservation Society's rally at Stradbally. **CANCELLED**

***November*** - To Athlone or Galway for the John McCormack celebrations.

### **Open Day at Whitehead**

Everyone appreciates John Richardson's untiring efforts to augment our funds. You are therefore urged to help with, support and publicise his latest venture - an Open Day at Whitehead in May. At least one engine will be in steam and probably two.

The side-shows will include tour and propaganda film display by Macha Film Studios and a Model Railway Display where visitors will be able to see forty or more Irish loco classes in action with appropriate trains. It also hoped to have traction engines and vintage cars.

### **Belfast Area**

Firstly, the Organisers would like to apologise to any members who turned up on Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December for a Macha Film Studios film show, which was cancelled so that it would not clash with Mr Patterson's talk. Failure to announce the cancellation was due to a multiple misunderstanding.

This session's meetings have comprised: (1) A model night at which (lamentably few!) members displayed their models and reminisced about the prototypes. (2) A British night. (3) A new venture was a detailed account by Mr B. Wall of No.171's progress through Harland & Wolff's and how each difficulty met with was overcome. Mr Hall had some illuminating things to say about the development in engineering methods over the last few decades. The talk was illustrated by ciné and slides and there was also coverage of the engine in traffic. Mr B. d'A Patterson (Rail Control Officer [Personnel] CIÉ) told a joint RPSI/IRRS assembly about the reorganising of CIÉ and its present methods of attracting and handling traffic. It was most encouraging to hear how a railway system, modernised with State assistance, can fight back against its rivals - and win. Traffic statistics shown by Mr Patterson give solid grounds for expecting that we shall have railways in Ireland for an immense time to come - a most important consideration for preservationists.

### **THE "WRONG ROAD" RAILTOUR**

**A. Donaldson**

We do not normally take up space in 5 Foot 3 with an account of railtours. Members receive full details in advance, and the tours have always gone according to plan, so that an account of each would merely be a colourless repeat of the prospectus with the tenses changed.

The Colmcille Tour, however, was a classic instance of the adage "Chan mar shíltear bitear" - "the best laid plans ..."

Arrangements for this particular tour seemed to be completed much earlier than usual, in spite of the fact that the Society was, for the first time, doing all its own catering - a suggestion made by the mother of a member and carried out by the kindness of a number of mothers, wives and female relatives.

On the Friday news came in of flooding on the NCC and in fact, a rescue party had to be sent out that night to rescue a group from Dublin whose journey north for the tour had been cut short by flood water.

Matters came to a head with an early morning phone call on Saturday to Craig Robb stating that the line was blocked at Glarryford. The most amazing part of the story is that NIR did not insist on cancellation but agreed to discuss an alternative thereby earning great credit for resourcefulness and the Society's eternal gratitude.

The revised tour - which could only be worked out beforehand in outline, leaving the details to be filled in en route, involved many interesting features. A double-headed train over the Antrim branch was unique and there was a chance to photograph it at Crumlin.

At Lisburn, skill had to be used to keep trains moving when we arrived at a busy time. In the event, a local was cancelled and its passengers were carried by our Special.

Runpasts are not normally permitted on double road, but something closely approximating to one was enjoyed by splitting the train at Portadown; No.50 then went ahead, setting down at Scarva. No.186 then followed., running through the station, providing splendid photographic possibilities, and set back to pick up. The reuniting of the two portions at Poyntzpass, with only one crossover available, was skilfully and photogenically accomplished.

At Dundalk, the staff managed to turn, water and attend to the fires of two unexpected steam engines, facilities for which have been little used for years - this after an interesting double-head shunt to clear the up main platform.

Thereafter, 50 worked the train solo to Portadown, where No.186 caught up and piloted to Great Victoria Street.

In all - a very enjoyable outing and one which revealed the resourcefulness of our railways and their exceptional willingness to please the enthusiast - qualities which cannot be too widely publicised.

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## **TENDER 375**

**A. Donaldson**

It is a familiar fact that this tender (now coupled to No.186) was built in 1922, i.e. about the time when the 400 class were new. It is known that 401, 402 and 406 (which were turned out in the second half of 1921) ran for a time with standard 3,345 gallon tenders and two early photos of 401 (one dated 1924) show her with such a tender. Since even 401, 402 and 406 cannot have done much running before the outbreak of the Civil War in June 1922 and tenders 374-6 were ready when the fighting was over, it is surely possible that they did run with them for a time (pace R.N. Clements) before 4,500 gallon tenders similar to those built for the Armstrong Whitworth engines (Nos. 403, 404, 405, 407, 408 and 409) were ready. It would be interesting if it could be proved that No.375 did in fact run behind a 400 and if it could be established which one had it. If any reader has an early photograph, or information, we should like to hear of it.

Just before this 'went to press' a letter arrived from Mr Clements drawing attention to the fact that the tender shown with 401 in the IRRS Journal has coal rails with a plate behind them, a version which went out of use in 1911. The other tender, however, is more modern, though not exactly the same as 375 is now. Certainly more photographs are needed.

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## **VAPORARIA**

**J. A. Cassells**

### **Great Northern**

After almost seven months, the ballast from York Road has ceased to be reliably steam. Since the end of the summer timetable, the loading of the ballast wagons concerned has been transferred from Antrim to Great Victoria Street, and the train, though still booked for steam, is occasionally worked by the GN based MPD cars. However, recent diesel failures on the Great Northern Area have led to the re-appearance of steam, notably on 31<sup>st</sup> October when the return working (with engine No.10) was used to transfer stock from Great Victoria Street to York Road for the Society's special on the following Saturday.

### **NCC Main Line**

This year - for the first time - no ordinary trains were booked for steam haulage during August, though there was a good deal of special working. The demonstration on 10<sup>th</sup> August brought six engines and the remaining NIR steam coaches into Derry. One of the engines involved - No.56 - ran a hot big end on the outward run, and No.3 was sent out light during the afternoon to take her place. 56 finally

returned to Belfast, hauled by 51, early the following week. This was not the only failure of the day, however, and No.50 on the return Antrim special (booked light engine into Belfast) finished hauling in the 7:30pm diesel ex-Portrush.

On 17<sup>th</sup> August Nos. 4 and 53 were involved in specials to Ballymena and Portrush, and a fortnight later the demonstration at Larne produced a special from Ballymoney, the return of which was worked forward from Belfast by No.3, No.50 having brought it up from Larne. On 7<sup>th</sup> September a 9:25 Portrush relief was worked by No.53, which returned on the ordinary 12:40 ex Coleraine. The winter timetable has so far produced only two steam outings on the main line - a Derry special with No.50 on 9<sup>th</sup> November and a football special to Ballymena on 30<sup>th</sup> November with No.4.

### **NCC Larne Line**

The 2:05pm Boat Train became, on August Saturday afternoons, the only NIR timetable train to be reliably steam - not even the ever-faithful 5:30pm was steam on more than a few occasions. 31<sup>st</sup> August was the busiest day of the summer on the Larne line, with the 7:55, 10:55, 2:05 and 4:10 ordinary trains being steam worked, by engines 3, 50 and 53. The 7:55 returned as the morning boat train, the 10:55 on the perishables, the 2:05 on the Ballymoney special and the 4:10 on the evening boat train. The practice of pairing specific engines and crews on the stone trains referred to in the last issue has largely broken down, since engines 50, 55 and 56 have been out of traffic at various times and at present almost any engine is liable to appear. The stone contract is expected to finish next year.

The selection of engines for the Derry Saturday each year usually provides a reliable guide to the stronger engines of the fleet, and on 10<sup>th</sup> August Nos. 4, 10, 51, 53 and 56 were chosen, leaving 3, 5, 6 and 55. As mentioned before, 56 just out of shops after minor repairs, failed after the outward journey, and has only recently returned to traffic. Of the other stone train engines, 50 is now in the shops after running a hot box in November though 55, whose injectors still give cause for concern, is back in traffic. No.10 is awaiting repairs, No.3 has recently reappeared on the GN ballast, and 4, 5 and 6 are to be seen quite often on the stone trains together with the regular engines.

In the author's opinion, 51 is the strongest of the remaining tank engines at present. Finally a word about the Sligo engine. After passing a boiler test in October, it's fairly likely that she will celebrate her 21<sup>st</sup> birthday in regular use.