Five Foot Three

FIVE FOOT THREE
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Front Cover: J15 No.105 and J9 No.251 on No.2 ballast at St. John's siding, Enniscorthy about 1961. (A. Donaldson)

FROM STEAM TO DIESEL — J. O'Neill

There is an old Irish proverb which advises "Never put all of your eggs in the one basket for fear of breakages".

Well! CIÉ ignored this proverb in 1955 and got away with it, and they still are and are likely to continue "getting away with it". In 1955 the first single manned main line loco-hauled trains ran in Europe and, by 1963, all CIÉ trains were single manned, diesel hauled. This was a miracle of staff co-operation and of staff training and a very great tribute to the senior loco drivers in their late 50s and early 60s who met the challenge of the 1950s and 1960s. To these men we owe the survival of our present highly efficient railway and this article is a tribute to them though, in many cases, unfortunately, a posthumous tribute.

As a driver, one expects many questions to be asked, all beginning with a word having as its first letter "W".

It was easy to answer all the questions on steam for the fireman helped out if, God forbid, the driver was stuck for an answer. Diesels are a different proposition - you are on your own and not knowing the answer to some sticky question can, to say the least, be embarrassing.

With the diesels a new question has been added to the list of stock questions - "What is the difference between driving a diesel loco and a steam loco?"

The difference is vast and it's only fitting that I should begin with the world's loveliest machine, the

steam loco.

Recruits to the steam engine began their career at a tender impressionable age. One could begin as an engine cleaner at 16 years, but not at 20 which was considered too old for a driving apprenticeship. Most lads started at 16 and the railway then began its own form of character formation.

The young cleaner generally started in a depot many miles away from his own home town. This transfer was brutally swift as were the conditions of service for a cleaner. He was allowed 14 days to apply for a cleaning vacancy in his own home depot and failure to do this meant he had chosen his present depot as his future home and, like the damned in hell, there was no redemption. Here he was stuck. It might be wise at this point to explain a loco man's transfer arrangements, for to the ordinary public these have always been a mystery.

For the purpose of transfer and promotion, the railway, loco section, divided up into five areas. Inchicore (Dublin) was No.1 area, Broadstone (Dublin) was No.2, Waterford No.3, Cork No.4 and Limerick No.5. Inchicore had Kildare, Portlaoise, Portarlington and Banagher as its outstations. Broadstone's area was scattered, embracing Sligo, Galway, Ballina, Ballaghaderreen, Athlone, Mullingar, Cavan, Ballinamore, Longford and Tuam. In the south, Waterford, because of its complex of railways prior to the amalgamation, took in the entire DSER and its depots were Canal Street (Dublin), Bray, Wexford, Rosslare, Enniscorthy, Kilkenny and Clonmel. A multiplicity of depots existed in the Cork area because of its numerous branches covering Kerry and West Cork - too many depots to name here. Limerick, compared to the aforementioned was reasonably sane; it had the depots of West Clare, Limerick Junction and Thurles, all within easy travelling distance of Limerick.

These areas marked the boundaries within which drivers and firemen could be transferred. However, the poor cleaner, God help him, had no such boundaries, he was on what was termed "whole line promotion" which means simply that the entire railway system was open to him for transfer and this probably will explain to the curious why you often find Cork accents cropping up in the West and North East and soft Western accents in the South. However, I defy anyone to find any accent among the Cork footplate men that isn't of the purest unadulterated Cork. There is a big Cork population in Cork!

Now let us take a cleaner and follow his career.

Our hero joins Waterford loco at 17 years and is promptly moved to Athlone where he quickly settles in, finding digs in the home of a fitter's helper. Athlone is a pretty wonderful depot to begin in for here, locos from both Southern and the Midland are found and it's not too long before he can speak with authority on their various differences.

The Midland men are a friendly lot and he soon has as many friends in Athlone as he had in Waterford - which he will only see now on his annual leave and at Christmas. He has resigned himself to the nomadic life of a locoman. He is happy in his job because, though he is working hard and the rewards are greater in other industries, the work is not as interesting. His muscles fill out, his body hardens, his brain becomes sharp and all of his senses become very acute. Fresh air, plain food and hard work all contribute to transform the boy cleaner into a man and he is well able to handle the fire-shovel when he is finally promoted to fireman at Waterford - to which depot he has been returned after an absence of two years.

Here he continues his nomadic life, making friends all over CIÉ. He spends many nights away from home sleeping in the company's dorms in the large depots of Cork, Inchicore and Rosslare. One thing strikes him very forcibly about these dorms - each of them is equipped with a handball alley. He wonders at the sense of humour of the Victorians who constructed these alleys.

You shovel coal for the day on a roasting hot loco and on arrival you try to find which bone in your

body is not aching and for relaxation of your taut muscles and nerves, a handball alley is provided! Most of the dorms were built in the middle of the last century and were, for the most part, of dark forbidding limestone on the outside with green and cream painted walls inside. Each man was allocated a cubicle containing a bed, chair and a portable Victorian piece of interior plumbing.

Cooking was done over a huge open fire or a range and if the coal was bad on the locos it was bad in the dorms. Gas or electric cooking in the dorms was unknown to our fireman. The frying pan was always made from a loco cylinder with a handle riveted to it that resembled the spoke of a J class wheel and even if you were weak with hunger and dropped the pan, it would not break. Those pans never burned meat and would be a chef's delight, provided he had the necessary strength to lift one of them.

Firing on a steam loco was a most rewarding, healthy and interesting job. No two locos were alike and the first ten miles or so were spent in the study of the performance of the engine. Teamwork was vitally necessary on the footplate and both men had to work together or the performance suffered. The steam loco was a ship on land, for it's only at sea can a comparison to be found with the exacting nature of train working.

Because both driver and fireman work so closely together a companionship develops both on and off the footplate and in many cases they become as close as brothers. Management have always sought for harmony at the front end of the train for the sake of safety and timekeeping. Here, the Loco inspector was very important for he observed crews who were not on good terms and arranged re-rostering. In a small depot of some two or three sets of men, his job was very difficult indeed and diplomacy was vitally necessary.

Usually, in a small depot, where two men were at loggerheads on the footplate, the Inspector tried bringing the cause of the argument into the open by asking both to state their grievances. He then tried to resolve it and usually succeeded. Loco men are, however, stubborn and independent men and there was the odd failure. In this case the Inspector studied the grievance carefully and warned the guilty that any further trouble would be dealt with at management level.

This sort of difficulty, fortunately, arose rarely as footplatemen are generally a good humoured lot despite the hardship of their calling.

The footplate life had, and has, a few compensations. The principal one is travel, and Ireland is a lovely country viewed from a speeding engine. Nothing can compare with an early run to a fair in a southern town. A good J class loco heading a rake of empty cattle trucks. Let us join our fireman on such a run to Enniscorthy fair in August 1950.

He signs on duty at 5am (there was no 24-hour clock then) and a very tired night foreman tells him, "158 is your engine and the oil is already on her." He collects his mate's seat box, a large oaken box filled with spanners of various sizes, spare gauge glasses, detonators, flags and rule books. The box weighs about 60 lbs. He oils his loco and an obliging cleaner makes on a fire with about 30 cwt of lumps. His mate arrives and descends the pit to examine the loco for faults and then tests the brake. Everything being in order they back out to the train of 30 wagons.

The sun is rising at their back, the sky is clear and it looks like being a sizzler of a day and already our fireman is taking a long drink of spring water from "the black can". A few last minute checks by the train examiner on the wagons and the guard starts the train. We are off to Enniscorthy - time 6am.

Dodging to Abbey Junction at a funeral pace in case of signal blocks, we see the starting signal off and the regulator is opened almost full for the 1 in 60 1½ mile climb out of Abbey Junction. We have the New Ross staff which resembles a shillelagh.

Now begins the study of the loco. Is she heavy on water?

The first grade will tell that. How is she burning the coal - is she chopping the fire at any particular

point in the firebox? Can she carry water or is she inclined to prime? Both men study the loco and at the top of the bank are satisfied that 158 can stand up to a flogging for she has held her pressure and her injector is singing as the glass registers ¾ full.

Top of the bank and the driver shortens the cut off and eases the regulator. Our fireman relaxes by sticking his head out the side and breathing in the hay scented air. It's good to be alive.

We run at 30 mph on an easily graded up and down two mile stretch and so into our next heavy 1 in 75 bank. Nothing easy about DSE banks. 158 is no longer a problem, we now know what she can do. We flash through Glenmore, shut off and ahead lies an eight mile fall to New Ross with a half mile of 1 in 60 up. New Ross lies basking in the sun, its broad river, the Barrow, winding parallel to the railway, a silver gash in a lush green countryside.

Slow through New Ross for the staff exchange - speed with DSE staffs is not recommended. A broken wrist can result from a wallop from one of those miniature crowbars. Now we accelerate, for ahead lies eight miles of a climb but there is a flat one and a half miles approaching the grade, so it's speed to gain momentum. On to the lovely Barrow Viaduct, the longest bridge on the DSE and then we plunge into the rough cut, half mile long, curving tunnel with our fireman swinging the sand lever.

Contrary to popular belief, a tunnel is not a cool place when traversing it on a footplate. The exhaust has no exit so it condenses, soaking the loco cab and adding to the heat of the footplate. Most loco crews lifted the fall board between loco and tender in a tunnel and this caused a current of air to circulate the footplate and help dispel the exhaust. Our crew has done this. For obvious reasons, firing in a tunnel is not possible, so a good fire, plenty of water and full pressure is necessary before entering a tunnel. Leaving the tunnel, the train enters a deep cutting, delightfully cool and the crew gulp in lungfuls of refreshing air. The loco climbs steadily, the firemen shovels coal and watches his water and steam. The driver listens to the steady beat of the loco and also watches the steam and water. Here is the world's best example of team work of two men thinking as one. A steam loco is an exacting machine and it demands this from its crews. We arrive at Palace East, having climbed for 8¼ miles at grades of from 1 in 60 to 1 in 80 and here we stop to fill the tank which is now very low indeed. The stop is availed of by our fireman to fill his bunker and the driver feels the bearings for heat and replenishes the "black can" from a nearby well.

Off now to Macmine Junction, falling all the way save for a brief one and a half miles, this is a fall of 10½ miles and must be climbed on return but who thinks of the return journey now? With damper closed and footplate swept, both men sit and allow gravity to take over the train. Now the scenery can be enjoyed - shut off running down a bank is one of the few compensations of footplate life.

At Macmine the loco is turned, oiled and watered, the van shunted to the rear and we are ready for the scenic, easily graded, six-mile run to Enniscorthy. The railway follows the lordly tree-lined Slaney river on whose banks Enniscorthy is built. Portion of the town is built over the railway, so the station is approached by a tunnel with the home signal at the Dublin entrance of the tunnel. We plunge into the tunnel, which twists and turns for its ¼ mile, eventually seeing a pin point of light which gradually gets larger and reveals the signal "off" for our train.

Enniscorthy is a lovely town, dominated by historic Vinegar Hill and inhabited by a hospitable soft spoken people who are rightly proud of their country and its tradition of fierce independence. It's a very railway conscious town, as all County Wexford towns are, and passenger and freight traffic are heavy.

Fairs are a great event in Enniscorthy and are a social gathering as well as a business affair for the farming community from a distance of twenty miles radius. The locos of the fair specials have their complement of admirers and many a railway enthusiast was born on a "fair day".

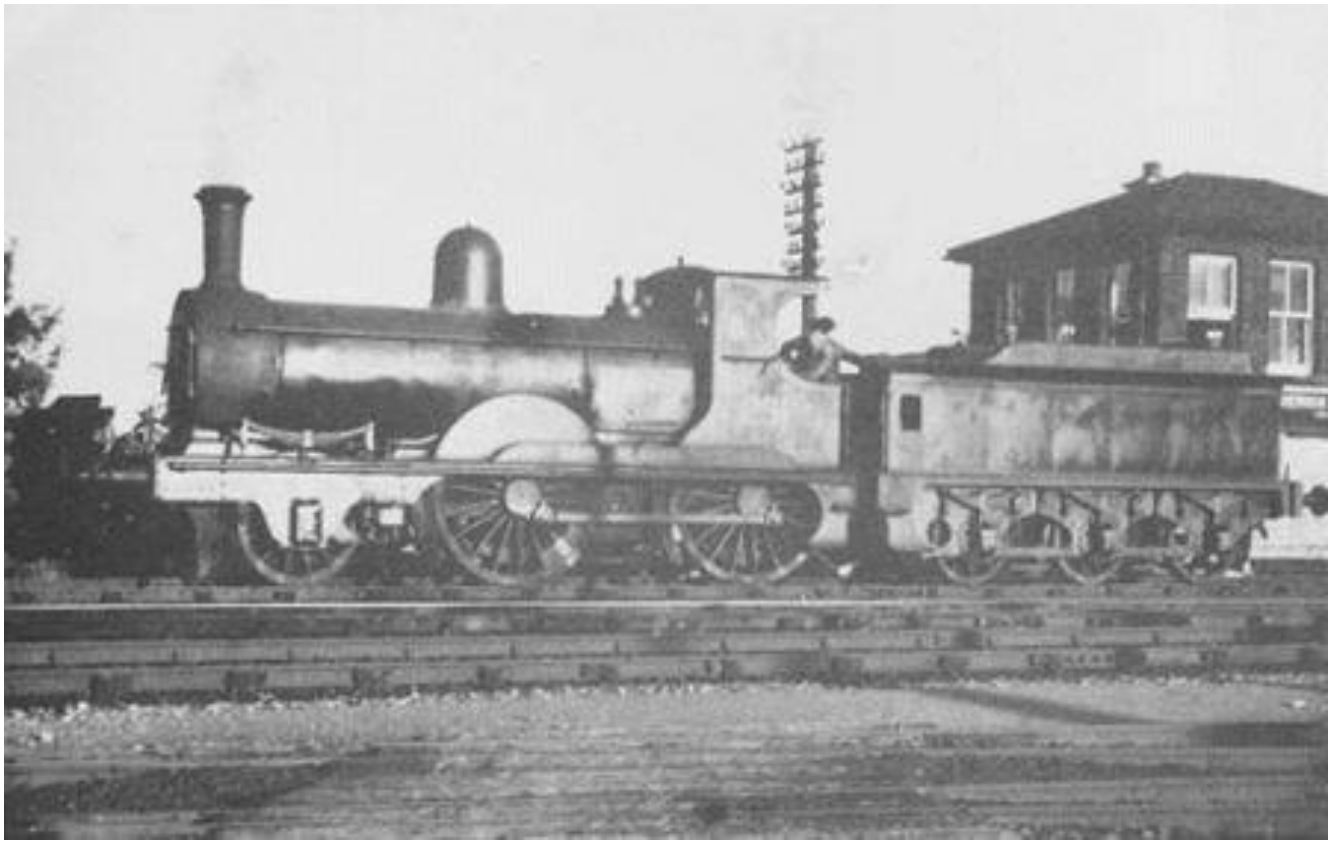
A fussy little 2-4-0 Waterford and Limerick loco, No.290, takes charge of our train and begins to place the wagons for loading. The Inspector in charge of the fair tells us "All right now lads, get your breakfast, fix up your engine and be ready to leave at 2pm, or earlier if the fair is over."

We place the loco at the water column, pick out a shady grassy patch, and with a can of tea made from spring water and a shovel of sausages and onions refresh ourselves watched by a group of young farming boys who ask many questions.

During the meal, one of the farmers, an Englishman settled near Enniscorthy, joins the curious and begins to ask questions on footplate life. He is fascinated by the cooking methods and our driver and fireman offer him a cup of tea, a sausage and piece of bread which he accepts with gratitude. He declares it to be the best cup of tea he has ever tasted and comments on the flavour (delicate he calls it) of the sausage.

The fireman explains to him that the shovel is cleaned by steam prior to frying and, as it's steel, the meat never burns.

In the course of conversation, the Englishman innocently asks about toilet arrangements on the footplate and is solemnly assured by the fireman that again the shovel is a most useful and versatile piece of loco equipment.



G3 No.291 at Limerick Junction after working 3:45 ex Limerick on 4th August 1953. (A. Donaldson)

The loco is oiled, ashpan raked, smokebox cleaned and we are ready for the return journey to Waterford with twenty-three laden wagons of livestock arriving there at 4:30pm, tired, dirty and thirsty and gratefully step down from 158, happy to be off duty early on such a lovely evening. Our fireman is eager to wash, eat and change and go to the seaside for an evening dip. Railway and engines are forgotten until tomorrow, another doubtful blessing of footplate work - irregular hours, for our fireman is off duty until 1:30pm tomorrow and his hours of duty for the remainder of the week are like the

doctrine of "The Trinity" - a mystery.

Our fireman eventually is passed to act as a driver with all the responsibility that goes with it coupled with the headache of badly run down locos. He is passed in 1955, the year the first A class diesels arrive and his driving of steam is in the twilight of this form of motive power. Steam is gradually ousted, first on the passenger trains, then on the specials and finally the goods. In 1960, all passenger trains and practically all goods trains were diesel hauled. Very little time was available for proper maintenance of the remaining steam locos and CIÉ were faced with a large redundant staff which had to be intelligently absorbed without causing labour troubles.

The finale of steam, the evolution of diesel - an industrial revolution - had to be dealt with and a tribute must be paid here to the good sense of both management and workers in their mature solution of these problems. Some of the solutions were by no means perfect and lack of planning and foresight has caused a shortage of trained loco drivers in many places.

In 1963, CIÉ could announce that all of their trains were now diesel hauled and so CIÉ became the first railway in the world to abolish the grade of loco fireman and loco cleaner. Our fireman begins what is virtually a new career.

"Now lads, forget about steam, it's gone. This is an A class, Metropolitan Vickers, 1,200 horsepower diesel locomotive, having six traction motors." This was the opening sentence delivered to our fireman, now a driver, by the loco inspector in February 1963.

Diesels are now well established and our driver must put from his head everything he had learned for diesels require an entirely different technique in train working. The driver is entirely alone and he has been transferred from the rear of the engine to the front. On the steam loco he had the long boiler ahead of him, the motion of the loco was to his front also. He saw everything that happened to his loco and so was quickly able to pinpoint a fault.

Because CIÉ required single manning, a departure from the conventional type of loco was necessary so the cab of our diesels was placed in front with diesel engine, generator and auxiliary generator placed in rear and the driver, because of this, had to change also. His points of brake application, shutting off power and approach to stations had to be given drastic revision, and emergency reversing in motion during brake failure or poor judgement was no longer possible. Even the railwayman's bible, the rule book, had to be changed.

Let us follow our driver's career and see all the changes through his eyes. We begin with his training.

A diesel driver was given three days in his home depot under the instruction of the loco inspector, learning the basic details of A class locos. This was termed ground training. He was taken through the cab and engine room and the different parts shown to him. He was encouraged to draw diagrams and make notes and to familiarise himself and to apply in so far as possible steam terms to the various parts.

On completion of ground training, the driver is sent to the "big smoke", Dublin, for three days in a mock-up A class. Here is determined his suitability to operate the new motive power and his quickness in detecting and correcting faults. A number of the older men failed this part of the training but remarkably a very small percentage. Remarkable, because it's difficult to teach a man of 60 or over new tricks. As the proverb says "You can't knock an old dog off his trot".

Men who failed to master the new machines were retired under the compensation clause of the 1958 Transport Act and in honourable retirement watched their firemen of yesteryear pump new life into the railway.

The next part of the driver's training was three days working supervised by the loco inspector on whose shoulders rested the responsibility for passing or failing the diesel pupil, not a job to be envied.

The railways have been transformed in a brief ten years, 98% of all passenger trains run to time and rarely is a goods train late. The payload of goods and beet trains have been increased and single manning has become accepted. The contribution to the economy of CIÉ by its footplate staff is enormous and management has in return improved conditions, the best improvement being in the dorms and mess rooms on which CIÉ has spent a great deal of money.

The diesels are here to stay. This we have to accept. We may not love them as we loved steam but they have saved our railway and we are grateful.

It would be nice, however, to see one or all of the preserved steam locos working an occasional train just to remind us - the loco men - of the past, for all of us still love "the ould puff of steam".

THE 60 CLASS — A. Donaldson

The 4-4-0 was introduced to this country by the GSWR, though the first examples were small-wheeled engines for branch line work. Aspinall built the first express 4-4-0s (the 52 class) in 1883. These were an improvement on the McDonnell 2-4-0s which preceded them - the leading bogie was an attempt to remove the stiffness and/or oscillation to which the 2-4-0s were prone (similarly on the BNCR, "Jubilee" and "Parkmount" were altered from the 2-4-0 to 4-4-0 arrangement). In 1883 it was recorded that the 2-4-0s (presumably on test trains) ran to Cork in about four hours with a load of "10½" (i.e. about 130 tons) on 26 lbs per mile. The following year the 52 class were putting up the same performance on 22 lbs. This was attributed to their higher working pressure and larger blastpipe and No.53 was said to be coming in regularly from Portarlington in 47 minutes (53.2 mph). Yet the cylinders of the 52s were the same as their predecessors and their boilers and fireboxes only marginally bigger.

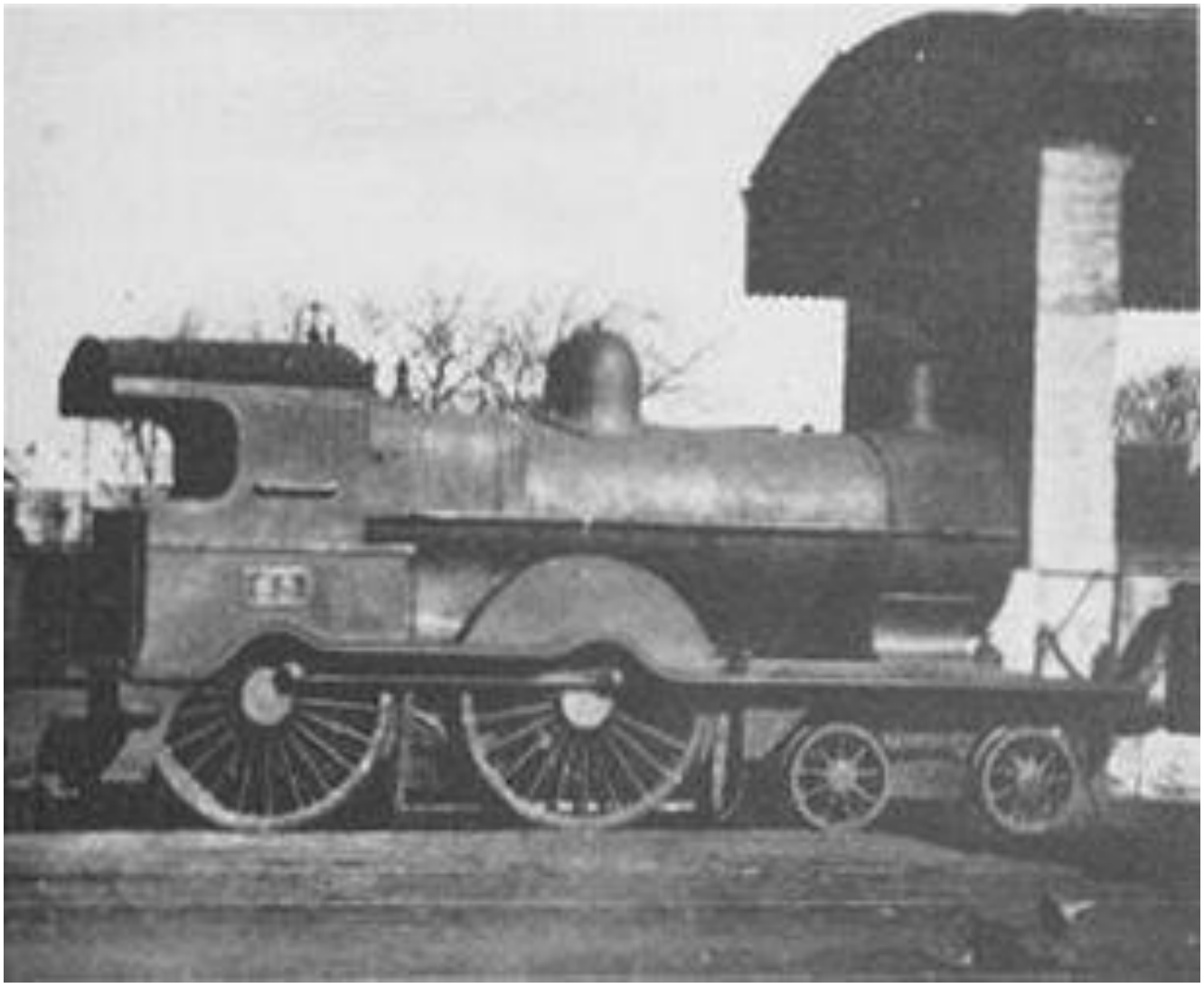
In 1885, therefore, Aspinall produced the much larger 60 class, which remained the principal express engines of the railway for fifteen years. Building continued till 1895, by which time there were fifteen of them, and the 52 class continued to be turned out interspersed with them, no doubt for secondary duties. An increase of 6" in the coupled wheelbase of the new engines enabled a larger grate to be fitted, which made possible a bigger boiler and cylinders. A comparison between the two classes is instructive, and can be seen from the table.

	52 Class	***60 Class***
Wheels	6'7" & 3'0"	6'7" & 3'0"
Cylinders	17" x 22"	18" x 24"
Pressure	150 lbs	150 lbs (later 160 lbs)
Tractive effort at 85% working pressure	10,260 lbs (150 lbs)	13,390 lbs (160 lbs)
Wheelbase, coupled	7'9"	8'3"
Wheelbase total engine	19'5¼"	20'4$^{7}/_{8}$"
Boiler barrel - length	9'7"	9'9¼"
Boiler - inside diameter	4'0"	4'3" (smallest ring)
Grate	17.5 sq ft	18.8 sq ft
Tubes (1¾" dia) number	185	204
Heating surface - firebox	96 sq ft	112.5 sq ft
Heating surface - tubes	835 sq ft	938 sq ft
Heating surface - Total	931 sq ft	1050.5 sq ft

Weights in working order:

Bogie	11t 18cwt	13t 10cwt
Driving	12t 8cwt	12t 18cwt
Trailing	12t 2cwt	12t 17cwt
Total	36t 8cwt	39t 5cwt

The 60 class boilers were the first built in Inchicore to have telescopic rings and the firebox flush with the barrel. Similar boilers were fitted to the corresponding 101 class 0-6-0s from 1901 onwards.



D14 No.65 with '700' boiler at Limerick on 17th March 1940. (A. Donaldson)

The tenders were of a new type. For the first time the springs were located below the running plate, enabling a wider tank and therefore more water and coal to be carried on the same wheelbase of 12'4". They held 2,730 gallons and 5½ tons - the latter increased later by extension coal plates. This was the type of tender most commonly coupled to them, and was identical with that which came with No.186 in 1966. Many were given 3,345 gallon tenders (i.e. similar to No.186's present tender) in later years for

piloting on long non-stop runs. When they gravitated to the Dublin suburban services they received 1,864 gallon vehicles (like that of No.184).

D14 No.62 on 3:15pm Waterford train leaving Kingsbridge on 20th February 1940. This shows her with new frames, large cab and 60 class boiler with extended smokebox. (A. Donaldson)

The bogie was similar to that of the earlier classes. Though its wheels were the same diameter as in the case of the 333 class of 1907, and though the 60 class were, of course, used on fast trains, they seem to have suffered none of the heating troubles which caused the later batches of 333s to be fitted with

outside bogie frames. Some of the 60 class, however, had bogie axles of increased diameter. It must be remembered that their bogie only carried 13½ tons (compared with the bigger engines' 18 tons) and even this was reduced in later engines to 12t 19cwt. In these engines, adhesion was increased to 26t 11cwt and total weight to 39t 10cwt.

In view of the discussion about No.186, it is of interest to note that the axleboxes of the 60 class were at first of cast iron to be later replaced by bronze. Another interesting change, made no doubt in the interests of balancing, especially as the plain coupling rods were replaced by fluted ones, was a reduction in the coupling rod throw from 12" to 10" whenever new wheels were fitted.

New boilers, when required had, as is often the case, the number of tubes reduced - to 191 (no doubt to improve circulation) making the total heating surface 991.1 sq ft. The dome was now placed on the second ring instead of the first. Pressure was raised to 160 lbs. In the 1930s the pressure (of the saturated boilers) had again been reduced to 150 lbs.

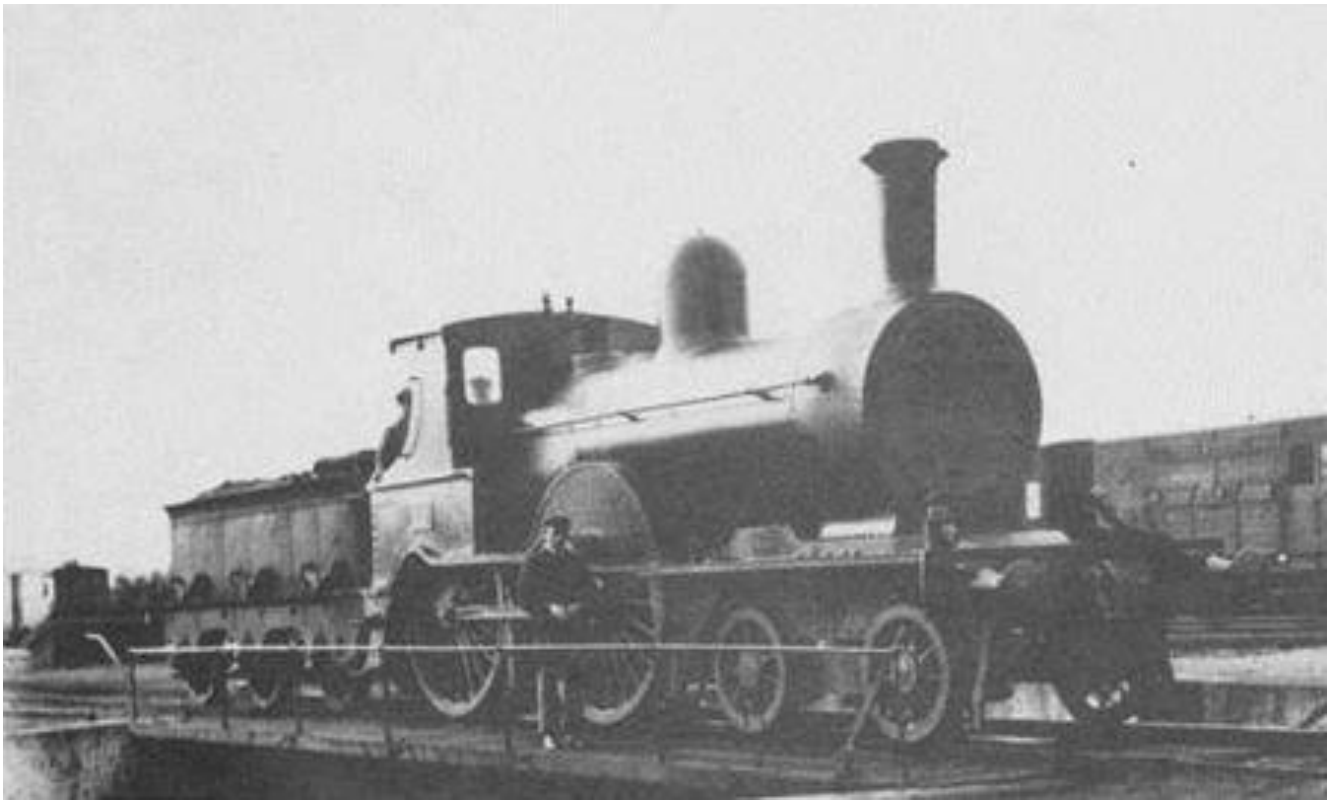
No.61 in green with Z boiler at Bray in 1949. (S. Carse)

Apparently the new engines gave every satisfaction, for the journey times improved steadily between 1880 and 1900. For example the Down Mail took 5 hours from Dublin to Cork in 1880 and the Up 5 hours 10 minutes. By 1888 this had come down to 4 hours 5 each way and ten years later to 3 hours 55 which was still the allowance in 1938. Of course the nineteenth century loads were lighter - about 100 tons - though this was increased in 1898 with the introduction of bogie stock and a restaurant car.

Not much timing was done in those days, but E.L. Ahrons in his book gave details of a run with 94, one of the first batch. She ran from Limerick Junction to Portarlington, 65.3 miles, in 76 minutes 10 start-to-stop (51.8 mph) though his time of 4 minutes 2 from the start (MP 107) to MP 103 is obviously wrong. Speed averaged 64 for three miles down Ballybrophy bank and exceeded 60 at several other points - he did not record maxima or minima. The running was less meritorious thereafter though the scheduled speed was the fast one (for this country in 1899) of 49 mph start-to-stop. The load was about 130 tons tare.

In 1897 had come the Killarney Expresses, composed of bogie stock, which had several 50 mph averages, the fastest being Ballybrophy to Kingsbridge in 76 minutes (52.7 mph). Coey introduced bigger engines (301 class) in 1900, but as there were only four of these, the 60 class must have continued to do much mainline work till Coey's next class (305) appeared in 1902. I am indebted to R.N. Clements for another early run with No.62. This was in 1907 when there were plenty of Coey engines around and obviously No.62 was on some sort of secondary train, for the load was only about 40 tons. It could well have been the Waterford portion of the Up Mail, flying in ahead on a day of heavy loading. I often saw this done in the late 1930s. No.62 sped from MP 45 to MP 33 in 10 minutes 48 (66.7 mph) averaging 75 mph for one mile and 72 mph for another.

By 1915 there were 35 4-4-0s larger than the 60 class in existence, yet J.M. Robbins was fortunate to find No.87 at the head of the 3:50pm Cork express on 30th July of that year. With the substantial load, for such a small engine, of 32 axles, 190 tons, No.87 took 10 minutes 13 to pass Clondalkin and was 2 minutes 43 down on her 38 minute schedule on passing Kildare, but averaged 59.3 thence to Portarlington (pass) including an average of 64 for 1½ miles down Cherryville bank (no maxima given) so reaching Port Laoighise in 63 minutes 10, allowed 65 minutes. As there was a 35 mph signal check at Ballast Pit, Robbins estimated net time at 61 minutes 55 seconds.



No.93 (with later saturated boiler and frame deepened for compounding) at Kildare in 1929. (H.C. Casserley)

A number of modifications and experiments were made in addition to those already described: a change from wrought-iron to cast-steel wheel centres; another in the method of constructing the bogie cross frame stay; a third in the journals for the trailing boxes; strengthening of frame plates at the driving horn corners; an early type of side-window cab for No.89 (an early 19th century photo shows her in this form on a train of short clerestory bogies at Cobh).

In 1896 No.62 was given a steam dryer, fitted in the smokebox and using the hot gases to dry the steam en route from boiler to cylinders. Apparently it was too effective for the lubrication of the time, for the

excessive wear of the valves and port faces was considered to outweigh any advantage from drying the steam. So it was removed after about six months.

Compounding

In 1894, three years after a similar experiment with 0-6-0 No.165, Ivatt converted No.93 to two-cylinder compound propulsion. Some years previously, around 1883 when Aspinall proposed construction of four new express passenger engines at a total cost of £8,000, the idea was mooted that they should be Webb type compounds, which would have raised the cost to £9,000. The board, fortunately for the GSWR, wavered and the 60 class appeared as simples. However, the success of the BNCR engines must have something to do with the compounding project just mentioned.

Despite the savings claimed by other companies, No.93 did not prove successful, even allowing for Ivatt's statement in 1900 that she was neither better nor worse than before. Joynt, his chief draughtsman, appears to have changed his opinion; he at first stated that the engine used no more fuel or oil than a simple, but later, speaking of 165, he said she was weaker than the other 101s but nevertheless better than No.93.

In converting No.93 Ivatt retained the standard size of boiler, but reduced the number of tubes to 179, presumably to improve still further the water circulation. In the compound's boiler, pressure was retained at 150 lbs (93 had one of the earlier boilers).

The reason advanced by Ivatt for this unenterprising element of design was that he wanted to see if compounding alone made any difference. The frames were deepened to accommodate the low pressure cylinder (26" x 24") and the distance between them increased to 5'0½" at the leading end. The bogie wheelbase had to be lengthened from 5'3" to 5'8". Though Walschaerts gear was fitted to the BNCR and BCDR examples and was more suitable for two-cylinder compounds, Stephenson gear was retained in No.93. She differed from the BNCR engines in one other important respect; she had a non-automatic starting valve of Ivatt's own design, enabling her to be simpled at the driver's behest. This valve, added to the extra steam pipes required, so crowded the smokebox that the position of the lubricator had to be altered. In all other respects No.93 was standard with the rest of the class.

In assessing her failure compared with the A class of the BNCR, three important features must be considered.

(a) Boiler Pressure: the BNCR engines were built new with 175 lbs (some authorities give 170 lbs). Despite his stated reason, Ivatt was almost certainly unwilling to construct two non-standard boilers to withstand 170 lbs - an unheard-of pressure for Inchicore - or most railway works - in 1894. Thicker boiler plates (the standard ½" would certainly have been inadequate), additional firebox stays, and heavier frames needed would have increased the weight to around 45 tons - a high figure for the GSWR permanent way, though considerably improved over the previous decade. High pressure was therefore ruled out, even though Joy in 1890 remarked that compounding economies were largely due to higher pressure which could not be efficiently utilised otherwise. James Holden had also stated that on the GER these economies fell from 14% to 2% when the pressure was dropped to 140 lbs. And in a paper read to the Mechanical Engineers in 1889 Lapage, an expert on the Von Borries system, claimed that high pressure, while not essential to compounding, was desirable if real economies were to be achieved.

(b) The Starting Valve: Lapage insisted on an automatic starting valve and so did Lange, both realising that the temptation to get more power by simpling would be too much for drivers. The effect of working No.93 simple was to choke the receiver and exhaust and drain the boiler of steam. The NCC, in an attempt to improve starting on banks, fitted a manual starting valve of their own pattern to B class 4-4-0 No.59 (the A class didn't need one). This was intended to admit high pressure steam direct to the low pressure cylinder while guarding against running the boiler short

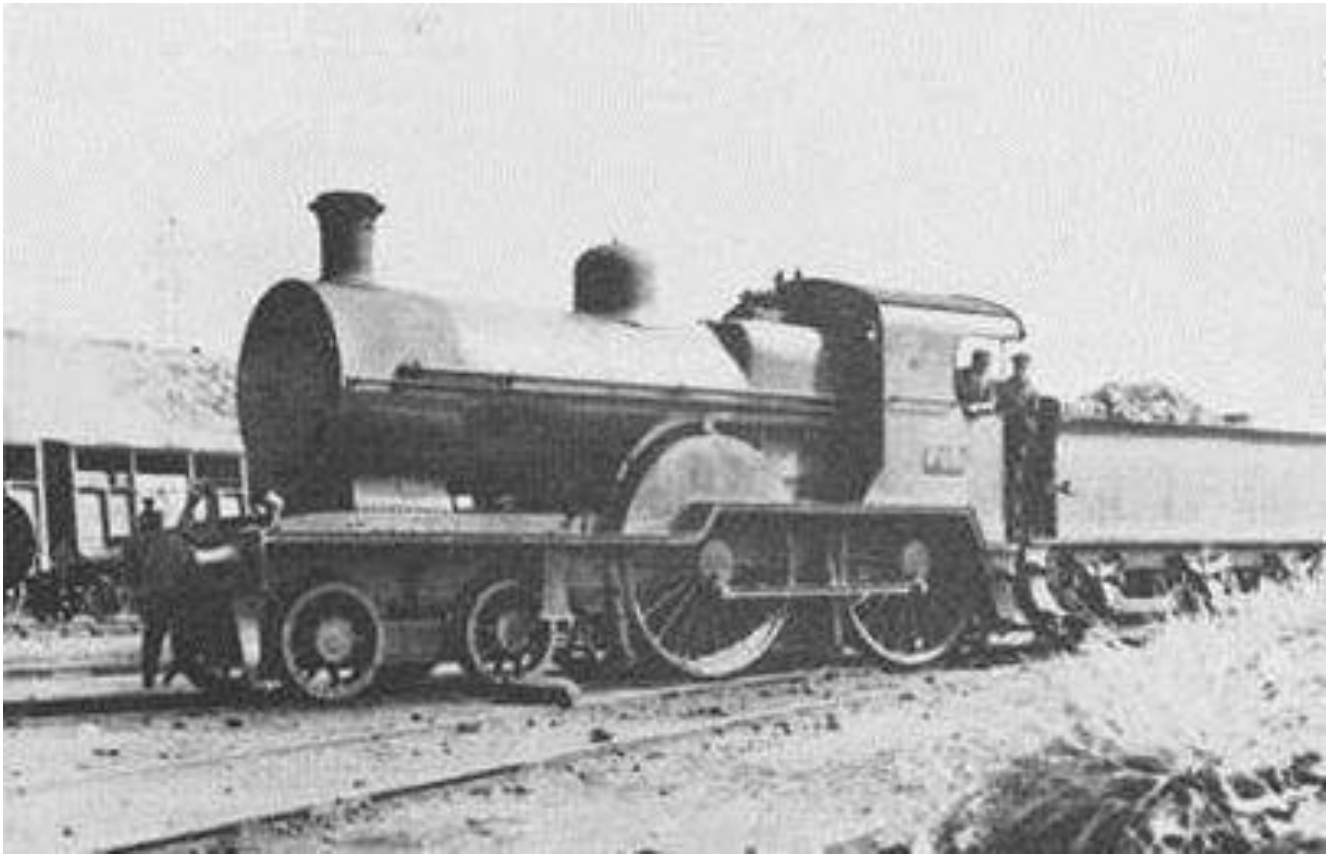
of steam, but it also was unsuccessful. Much trouble was also experienced with No.93 on maintenance of the valve.

(c) The Engine's Work: To obtain real economy from a compound she must be worked to her maximum all the time. This was unlikely to happen on the GSWR where even in 1894 trains were still light. The Dutch railways obtained little economy from their compound 2-4-0 on the Flushing line apparently because trains were so light that drivers ran at half regulator. Alexander McDonnell also held this view and in 1889 maintained that nowhere in Ireland were loads heavy enough to justify the extra expense of compounding.

Looking back, now, it seems that No.93, damned by her low pressure and starting arrangements, had little chance of success. In 1901 Coey rebuilt her as a simple, on the pretext that she needed new cylinders. This may well have been the case, as excess wear in the low pressure cylinders was also a feature of the BNCR A class. No tail rods were fitted to the pistons in either these or No.93.

Modernisation

From 1924 onwards Bazin was turning out 321 class 4-4-0s with new, stronger frames and giving them a more "contemporary" look by raising the running plate over the coupled wheels and fitting a larger cab with beading, corner pillars, extended roof and generally more symmetrical appearance; and there was naturally a tendency to make the 60 class a "pocket version" of these.



D14 No.89 with '700' class boiler about 1932. (H. Fayle)

Though most of the 321s were superheated (with W boiler), Bazin was averse to this practice, so a saturated boiler was designed for the 60 (and 101) class. Length of barrel and of firebox were naturally practically the same as in the 60 class, but it was 4'8¼" diameter outside and contained 188 x 1¾" tubes, giving a heating surface of 887 sq ft to which the firebox added 126 sq ft. A sloping grate

increased the grate area to 19.1 sq ft. Boiler pressure was 160 lbs, but could have been raised as plates were $^{5}/_{8}$" as against the standard ½". It was pitched 7'9½" from rail compared with the original 7'2½".

In 1925 No.89 was given new frames, a running plate and cab similar to the 321 class and one of the new boilers, increasing her weight to 45t 9cwt. She was reclassified D13 instead of D14.

Nos. 62 and 88 were similarly rebuilt, but retained their original boilers. These, however, were now pitched 7'9½" from rail and had extended smokeboxes. The overall weight of these two engines was thus only 42t 9cwt.

62, 88 and 89 received a new curved reversing rod, which, in 89 at least, passed through a guide bracket atop the leading splasher. All the other engines retained the straight rod, passing behind the splasher. When Z class boilers were fitted, the firebox and cleading was recessed for the rod. The last mentioned feature was also applied to No.62.

No.64 ran for a time in the mid-1930s with an extended smokebox, but not otherwise altered. By 1938, however, a standard short smokebox had been restored, though it was a modernised version with a single dished door, not the traditional double flat-door type.

No.89 as rebuilt (and to lesser extent 62 and 88) was undoubtedly a very stylish engine, and similar treatment accorded to D12 (4-4-0) No.305, the first three "400" rebuilds and D4s (4-4-0) Nos. 333/6/7/8 would indicate that the new administration was giving some thought to the comfort and appearance as well as the performance of its engines.

The tightening of purse strings, however, which was responsible for the cheaper rebuilding applied to Nos. 403/5/7/9 no doubt affected the smaller engines also, for when the time came, they superheated with the minimum of modification otherwise. There were no more new frames and while the cabs received deeper top side sheets, they were still minus beading and corner pillars.

Mr Dave Murray, who supplied many of the dates and shed allocations used in this article, suggests the large cabs were intended to make the engines suitable for use on the 3:30 News Train. This may be, especially as only a few were so altered, but the only accounts I have of this train involve engines with "ordinary' cabs.

The "News" Train was allowed 3 hours 40 minutes to Cork including seven stops totalling 17 minutes. On present-day calculations of allowances for stops, this would be equivalent to a non-stop run in 3 hours 9 minutes. Some of her schedules tied with these of the famous 1939 Mail and one was actually faster - 48 minutes to Portarlington start-to-stop 52.1 mph. At Limerick Junction apparently, the train merely stopped on the Down main line and the bundles of newspapers were pitched across on to the platform. This train was not always worked by a 60 class but it suited them perfectly, being very similar to what they were designed for. A run on it with No.63 (unrebuilt) was published in the "Meccano Magazine" in the early 1940s. I can only remember now that No.63, with about 100 tons, kept or bettered time on each section, speed rising to over 70 mph at several points.

From 1932 to 1952 all the class except 63 and 65 were given Z class superheated boilers (like the J15s). Barrel and grate dimensions were as before but the heating surface was made up of: tubes 662, superheater 112, firebox 112, total 886 sq ft. Plates were ½", pressure 150 lbs, boiler pitched 7'2½" from rail (officially; 94 and other engines after certain shoppings viz. 95, 86 and 96 had them pitched higher than the others). 62, 88 and 89 had their Z class boilers, when fitted, at 7'9½" from rail as before. 62/4/5, 85 and 96 had circular extended smokeboxes, the rest flat-bottomed (the original extended smokeboxes of 62/4 and 88/9 were also circular).

63 was never superheated. Ever since I first saw her about 1937 she had a flat-sided smokebox instead of the gracefully curving type which was standard on all small GSW passenger engines. The double doors were replaced by conventional dished doors because of wartime emergency fuels.

In 1933, No.65 was given a "700" class saturated Belpaire boiler (like that carried by 89) but kept her original frames and her cab was renewed only above the rectangular lower side sheets. She remained in this form to the end of her days.

Dates of building, superheating and withdrawal are set out below.

Loco No.	*Built*	*Z Boiler*	*Withdrawn*
60	1891	1934	1957
61	1891	1935	1955
62	1891	1939	1959
63	1891	-	1955
64	1895	1941	1959
65	1895	-	1959
85	1886	1952	1959
86	1886	1949	1957
87	1886	1939	1957
88	1886	1935	1957
89	1886	1935	1960
93	1885	1932	1959
94	1885	1932	1959
95	1885	1941	1955
96	1885	1935	1959

Before World War II, 60-63 and 95 at least were at Inchicore and worked to Waterford, Tullow and Kildare as well as piloting on the heavier main line trains. 64 spent a time in Limerick working the Burma Road, and I remember 65 also shedded at Limerick, working the 3:45 connection into the Mail.

After the War, generally speaking, 60-64, 85 and 94/5 were shedded in Dublin. Their duties included Kilkenny and Waterford trains and piloting (often the whole way to Cork or Limerick). It was also a favourite scheme to put a 60 class in front of a J15 to work a race special, presumably on the principle that the J15 could pull and the 60 class could run. Once when on a visit to Inchicore about 1941 I saw this combination fly past on a return special with no less than twenty-four six-wheelers.

Most of them ended up on the DSE section. Apart from locals, 62 worked the Wexford trains in the mid-1950s. 63 also occasionally worked to Wexford and 89, when she joined them, was put on the Arklow "Sea Breeze" train.

86/7 were often to be found at Waterford or Wexford and worked on the Wexford-Rosslare trains. 65 & 88 were Cork engines and apart from piloting (88 sometimes going through to Dublin) they handled Mallow and Youghal trains - the latter could be very heavy in summer. 89, 93 and 96 were based on Limerick, working to Galway and Sligo, and, after the dieselisation of the latter service, to Limerick Junction on local turns. 93 was sent to the Birr branch in 1954 and 60 class engines assisted on the Nenagh Road.

When the Dublin-Waterford service (via Port Laoighise) was officially dieselised in 1952 the railcars could not be put into service that summer owing to an electricians' strike. So the trains were steam-hauled and 60 class engines were often chosen to work them (I recall 62 and 95 on these turns). But the loads of 6-7 bogies were too much for them on these schedules and time was lost out to Port Laoighise.

After the dieselisation of the Dublin-Limerick (via Nenagh) trains, 60 went to Thurles and worked the

connections between Ballybrophy, Thurles and Clonmel.

64 was the last of the class to be shopped and worked an IRRS special to Tullow in 1957.

Though they were built to fly on the main line with light trains, most of us remember them in their superheated form on branch work. Fortunately, however, some mainline exploits with the superheated engines have been recorded. It was my good fortune to join the 3:40pm Cork express on a summer Saturday in 1951, hauled by 61. As the run was detailed in Five Foot Three No.4 it will be sufficient to remind readers that, after arriving at Limerick Junction on the dot with 160 tons, Peter McGibney cut 2 minutes (net) off booked time to Mallow. Leaving the Kerry portion behind there, and going forward with only 85 tons, he tore his schedule to shreds, racing up to 45 at the top of Mourne Abbey bank, and averaging 65.5 mph over the 7.1 miles from Rathduff to Rathpeacon, where he had to reduce speed for the precipitous descent. Max was 71 mph and time from Mallow to Cork was 26 minutes 32 - all in spite of a hot box.

D14 No.88 with new frames, etc., and Z boiler piloting No.407 on Up Mail at Kilbarry in April 1954. (W.H.C. Kelland)

I am indebted to R.N. Clements again for the sprightly run set out at the end of the article, on the Newspaper train. 86 had recently been rebuilt with Z boiler at the time (December 1938).

The fastest snippet among my own records on other lines (this is not really a "branch" but the old Waterford and Limerick main line) is also given at the end. Scully was the senior driver at Limerick, and the train was the local connection out of the 6:30pm ex Kingsbridge.

In 1939 J.M. Robbins timed No.64 (then saturated) to run from Crusheen to Ennis, 7.8 miles, in 11 minutes 50 start to stop, with a max of 58 mph. The load was the inevitable bogie and two six-wheelers; the schedule time was 14 minutes.

Piloting may be illustrated by run No.24 on Page 50 of Five Foot Three No.4, timed by E.H. Gilmore. 94, an Inchicore engine, had arrived in Cork as pilot the previous day. It is of interest that she was attached to the "Enterprise", the fastest timed train of the day, as showing the faith Cork shed had in her speed capabilities.

Herself and 407 with 275 tons managed 51½ mph above Blarney and 74½ down into Mallow, passed in exactly 30 minutes, allowed 34, topped Two Pot House at 50 and reeled off the 26.8 undulating miles thence to Emly in 26 minutes 40, touching 70½ down Ráth Luirc bank. Overall time to Limerick Junction (first stop) was 71 minutes 40 or 70½ net, allowed 74½.

Originally the 60 class were finished in olive green, with a yellow line and a thin and a thicker red line, and black edging to panels. The frames were a reddish brown. Coey changed to black, lined red and white, shortly after 1900. World War I brought a change to grey, which persisted to the end. When fresh it had a bluish tinge, but in time it became quite nondescript.

In 1949, No.61, being at the time a "suburban" engine, was turned out in dark green, with a fine white line, and black edging to panels. Boiler bands had a double white line between black edges on the green base, The emblem and numerals were in Eau de Nil, edged with gold. The buffer beam had a black edge only. This proved that even the less elegant superheated version could be made quite presentable, and 61 was kept spotless while she bore this livery, but she lost it after a couple of years.

One aspect of 60 class working was succinctly expressed by the late Charlie Maguire (solus na bhflaitheas dá anam *[may the light of heaven shine on him]*) then one of the loco foremen at Inchicore when he paid me a visit in the 1950s. I had just finished a model of 61, and set her "valves" to run like the prototype. I put this engine through her paces for Charlie and as she rolled to a stop alongside "Kingsbridge" platform he gazed at her affectionately and exclaimed, "You could put one of them in front of any engine ..."

The professional railwayman's opinion is always valuable, so I further asked Jack O'Neill for his experiences with these engines and it's best to give his actual words:

"Like the men that worked them, steam locos were individuals: no two were alike in performance though made from the same blueprint. Many colourful adjectives were used by the crews to describe the temperament of the locos, adjectives which are unprintable here.

"On the whole, the 60 class escaped much of this form of comment but there were a few that merited castigation for some peculiarity in their make-up. On a branch, they were an unrivalled loco for speed and they rarely slipped when starting. I personally worked on the following: 60 to 64, 86, 87, 94 and 95 on the Heuston-Kilkenny passengers and 87 on the Macmine Junction-Waterford passengers.

"94 and 95 were two outstanding engines and I never knew them to be 'shy for steam' to use a southern expression. 62 was fitted with a short reversing screw which had 4½ turns in all from forward to reverse, unlike her sister engines which had a screw of 9 turns contained in a barrel. The large cab of 62 made her a very comfortable loco in cold and rainy weather and her water consumption was extremely light as was her coal consumption.

"60 was a foul loco to work on, the contrariest engine I ever knew. She had to be kept at 125 lbs pressure for if she blew off steam, for some strange reason that I have never solved, her injectors overheated and refused to work. The tank had then to be overflowed or, if no column was available, the plunger handle of the injector removed and the feed pipe filled with cold water. She steamed only with a small fire and refused to steam with wet slack so the coal on the tender had to remain dry and the crew dirty.

"61 and 64 were lovely smooth running engines and spent a lot of time on the Wexford-Dublin passenger trains as well as the Kilkenny branch trains.

"For many years, 87 was regarded as the best steaming passenger loco at Waterford and many times worked the heavy 3:40pm Mail to Heuston. She was, however, mainly on the tough DSE Macmine branch where she did outstanding work. Rebuilding ruined her and she was never the same in running, heavy on water and her ability to steam was seriously impaired. She was plagued with a constantly hot driving box and after rebuilding, spent most of her time in Waterford fitting shop. She was one of the few failures of superheating.

"There is one frightening incident which occurred on 86 in 1949 when working the 5:30 passenger from Kilkenny to Dublin. We had left Kilkenny 9 minutes late due to the late arrival of the 7pm goods from Kildare which had occupied the Gowran section at our scheduled departure time. 86 was steaming well so my driver decided to "pull up" the 9 minutes and we were on time passing Cherryville Junction. We stopped at the column on the Up platform at Kildare with the loco over the inspection pit and as I got down to oil the big ends and rods we felt the footplate sag under our feet.

"Water, steam, oiling and time were forgotten as we both descended the pit to see what was amiss. We found the back axle broken clean through and the wheels resting against the frames. Had this happened after leaving Kildare, say at the Curragh where 86 would be doing 60 or 70 mph, I'd not be here now to tell the story. I never saw her again after that day but then, there were many locos I saw and worked on for but a short period."

A drawing of the original form of the class is appended and in case anyone feels inspired to model one of these handsome engines, it is to 3.5 mm scale (and can also, therefore, be used for 7 mm). No end elevation is available, but they were the same width over running plate, splashers and cab as No.186. The roof radius was 15 ft.

Practical preservation started so absurdly late in Ireland that many fine types had gone to the scrap merchants before they could be saved. This article is a small attempt to atone for such neglect. It is very incomplete, and if it stimulates any reader to set his own experiences of them on record, it has not been written in vain.

In addition to Messrs Murray, O'Neill and Clements, I am grateful to W.T. Scott for details of the experiment in compounds and to G.M. Kitchenside of Ian Allan Ltd for permission to use material from "The Locomotive".

No.93 and Driver Scully on 6th August 1952. The load was one bogie, three six-wheelers weighing 65/70 tons.

Miles	***Station***	***Schedule***	***Actual***	***Speeds***
0.0	Limerick Junction	0	0.00	
1.0	Post 21		2.45	38
3.6	Oola	6	5.45	54½ 59
7.0	Post	15	9.22	59
8.1	Pallas	13	11.05	
2.3	Dromkeen	6	4.07	52¼
3.7	Boher	6	5.16	59
5.3	Post 5¼		7.51	62
7.4	Killonan	11 *	10.35 (9¾ net)	48½
3.7	Limerick Check		5.48	
4.2	Limerick	8	7.28	

* Killonan was a conditional stop.

No.86 and Driver Dan Murphy. Load to Portlaoighise 82 tons, thence 58 tons.

Miles	***Station***	***Schedule***	***Actual***	***Speeds***
0.0	Kingsbridge	0	0.00	
0.3	Islandbridge		2.07	
1.7	Inchicore		4.55	23
6.8	Lucan		12.12	60
10.0	Hazelhatch		15.37	58 62/53
13.1	Straffan		18.43	63
			PWR	50
17.9	Sallins	24	23.50	54
25.5	Droichead Nua		31.18	64 65/62
27.7	The Curragh		33.28	53½
30.0	Kildare	36	36.03	59 63
32.7	Cherryville Junction		38.14	69
36.7	Monasterevin		42.02	66
41.7	Portarlington	48	47.18	60
9.2	Port Laoighise	12	12.44	
2.6	Clonkeen		4.11	53
8.6	Mountrath		10.03	64 70/54
10.7	The Curragh		12.09	64
14.1	Post 65		15.48	50
15.9	Ballybrophy	20	18.11	
2.4	Coolowley		3.52	58
5.6	Lisduff		7.17	58 53½/60
11.9	Templemore		12.52	68 73
17.7	Post 84½		17.39	70
19.6	Thurles	23	20.32	

OUTING ORGANISATION — W.T. Scott

When the RPSI was founded some five years ago it soon became evident that if the locomotives donated and rented were to be shown off to a wide audience it could only be by means of tours organised over the existing railway network. Ideas of buying a branch line a la Keighley & Worth Valley were mooted but the cost, running not into thousands but tens of thousands, fortunately put paid to such restricting notions. Even if by some financial miracle some stretch of a closed line had been acquired, the operating costs would have been far beyond us. It is worth remembering that the Keighley

lies in the centre of an area containing around eight million people whereas the whole population of Ireland is under four million and probably declining and the largest centres are well under one million.

Once it became obvious that the RPSI could not buy nor even hope to own its own line, a process which should only have taken a few minutes thought, those members who valued the steam locomotive for its past glories on the open road set to and built up a tour organisation to demonstrate our engines in conditions as near as possible to those under which they worked in railway service. The Society's first tour organiser was Craig Robb and the lines which he followed have guided us for all subsequent tours. Despite however the frequency and the success of the majority of our tours, it is evident from correspondence that the members are in the main ignorant of the building up and running of a tour - a fact which has caused some concern to the railtour committee.

Tour organisation really begins the previous year, usually around November, with the first thing to be decided - the number of tours to be run. Here the committee has a very real problem as it is a matter of trying to sense what the market will buy and is analogous to on entrepreneur who is launching a new product and is uncertain of how much to produce.

D4 No.339 on Wexford train at Macmine about 1950. This shot could have been obtained had the "Decies" run. (A. Burgess)

Once the number of tours is settled, the duration of each must be considered. In the past the ideal seemed to be four tours - two of one day and two of two days duration but this is now being reconsidered in the light of the last year's experience and it seems probable that in 1971 only one single day tour and one of two days can be run. This is very much to be regretted and could be avoided if every member made a firm decision to support at least two tours per year. It should be emphasised that had even half the membership elected to travel on the Decies tour it could have run and made a reasonable profit. While on the subject of support, members may wonder where we get the numbers for the tours and this can be quickly answered by reference to a list of bookings for the tour. Apart from

the local support from Belfast the vast majority of non-member participation is from England including many faithfuls who support most tours, undertake publicity and carry out many other tasks such as attending meetings and trying to sell raffle tickets on our behalf. To those people, in many cases unknown, who work only for the chance of a run behind No.171 and No.186, I would like to express my gratitude. On the other hand, our Dublin support is negligible with the exception of the Royal Meath tour when, thanks to Sam Carse's untiring efforts, some 40 people travelled.

The sobering fact appears to be that, with a few notable exceptions who loyally support us on most tours including the recent Colmcille, Dublin railway enthusiasts no longer want steam nor are they prepared to pay for it preferring instead to note numbers of ubiquitous diesels at Amiens Street or Limerick Junction.

D3 No.338 on Limerick-Waterford train crossing the main line at Limerick Jct about 1952. Again a shot at this spot was planned for the Decies Tour, but in the opposite direction with the Galtee Mountains in the background (C. Clendinning Collection)

We do not accept, however, that all is lost in the South, as we have enthusiasts travelling from as far afield as Cork, Rosslare, Limerick, Clara and Waterford and we are planning a drive to reawaken an interest in steam among Dublin railway enthusiasts.

It is sad that a city which gave Ireland its first railway and then its first railway society and is now the headquarters of one of the most advanced railway companies in Europe should so easily forget its past.

When the tours sub-committee has chosen the number of tours to be run and assessed the possible support for each, then comes the actual construction of the tour. This can best be described by considering an actual tour such as the Decies for which such high hopes were held. The choice of

venue was simplified on this occasion because previous tours had covered the old MGWR and GSWR sections of CIÉ, so it seemed to be the turn of the DSER - in any case one of the most attractive lines still open in Ireland. Having settled the venue, the question of engine power now arose and once again was fairly quickly settled by the fact that no 2-6-4T was available, thus reducing our motive power to No.186 and No.171 (when "Decies" was first mooted No.27 had not been bought by Roy Grayson and a vast amount of work is still needed on her). Following on the choice of engine power comes the parts of the tour to be worked by each. Those who were with No.171 on the early stages of Brian Boru must surely have been thrilled by her fine sprint to Castlebellingham and it would have been unfair not to have provided this treat again, also she was the only engine that would get us to Dublin in time to make the most of the photographer's paradise from Rathdrum to Rosslare. Dublin to Rosslare was to be No.186's part. She is ideally suited to such a job, providing the load is not over five bogies and the schedule not too tight. In any case No.171 could only have worked over the DSER at very reduced speed, if at all. However those who used it could never forgot the Rosslare Express, and in an endeavour to provide a replica of this fascinating service it was arranged that No.171 should proceed to Rosslare via Kilkenny and relieve No.186 there and work the train into Waterford to Rosslare Express timings. By this use of the two engines it was hoped to provide something for everyone - fast running, ample photographic chances, tape recording facilities on the notorious Rathdrum bank and cine shots along the Slaney at Edermine.

On the Sunday the two engines were to be used indiscriminately from Waterford to Limerick Junction and then No.171 was once again scheduled for a fast run home.

It should not be imagined that the above outline emerged from the tour organisers' imagination. Many hours of thought went into the pros and cons of each move and before any final decision was taken a thorough survey of the route was undertaken by Mr Donaldson, Mr Carse and myself. This involved visiting every station, noteworthy bridge or tunnel or other feature of railway or scenic interest, noting the position of the sun in relation to the train at each, working out the best viewpoints and listing all necessary safety precautions. Included in this survey were sites for the portable pump - a beautiful location was found near Woodenbridge - watering, fire cleaning and coaling arrangements at the stations, and the availability of turntables. It might be mentioned here in passing that one major problem is cleaning No.171's fire. This is a lengthy process compared to a 2-6-4T and time just has to be allowed for it. The survey also took in hotels and catering arrangements and the use of buses to carry participants to photographic vantage points.

Incidentally, when the attempt to run the Decies last spring failed, a second survey was carried out by Mr Donaldson and Mr Edwards by which several improvements were made to the tour, bringing it more into line with the constructive suggestions put forward in our questionnaire.

With the survey complete the organisers sit down to plan a schedule. In this job the organisers are caught between many fires. They must allow for as many photographic stops as possible over the scenic part of the route, and yet must provide longer non-stop running for the timing enthusiasts. The needs of the engines and their crews must be kept in mind and, perhaps most important of all, no interference must be caused to regular trains. A minor amendment to this last point is that goods trains may sometimes be shunted to allow the special through.

The easiest way to set out the path for the Society train seems to be to draw a graph marking the ordinary trains on a time against position-on-route basis and then superimpose the special. By this method crossings can be seen at a glance and mistakes avoided on single lines. It is also convenient on the day of the tour if, for any reason, the special gets out of path, for adjusting crossing points and deleting stops.

To the uninitiated, it might seem that having organised the venue, locomotives, schedule, hotels and other tour amenities, the railtour committee are finished but two important items have purposely been

left to the end. The first of these is advertising which is a full time job and in the last year has been ably dealt with by Charlie Friel. Nevertheless advertising tours should be the concern of every member. If you live in England and are a member of an English society, do you mention RPSI tours - the only engines to run on the main line in the British Isles? If not then write in once a tour is mentioned for circulars and do a bit of publicity - 30 shillings prints 1,000 circulars, one fare more would easily recoup the expense of printing more. An example of what can be done has been given by Arthur Wickham in Derry for the Colmcille. What has been done in Derry can be repeated elsewhere.

Remember, 50 more fares would have run the Decies. Finally on this point, to those members who are not tour supporters, I should say come out and travel; it is your Society; it can only demonstrate your engines with your support. Do not be misled by the feeling "My 'sub' is paid - I'm all right." Subscriptions only cover the Society's everyday cash needs. Your active support on tours is essential - and this does not mean coming out to Amiens Street, Bray or Knockmore Junction and watching the train go by.

The last topic in this note on tours is the cost. The cost of a railtour varies with the mileage and the number of engines. From a questionnaire results it would appear that most people want two engines; therefore the cost must include not only the train mileage worked by each engine, but also that of the inevitable light engine mileage. Even so the cost of an RPSI tour is not excessive when compared to the rail fares available on diesel service trains and the rising cost of steam coal together with the disappearance of coaling plants which means more labour in handling the coal.

My own view, and here I must stress that it is a personal one, is that once a 2-6-4T has been bought and repaired together with what work is needed on No.27, all Society fund raising activities must be channelled into running the tours as the only way of showing off our engines. In other words when a reasonable fare has been struck, the deficit should be made up, if at all possible, from other Society funds.

For too long the tours have been expected to be profit makers for the Society instead of the reason for its existence.

Our name is ill chosen - approximately 400 members cannot preserve "the railway", whatever this may mean, nor even "a railway". They can only preserve the best sight and sound of the age of railways, namely the steam engine on the open road.

Let us therefore channel all our energies into running the tour programme and forget such schemes as the reforestation of Whitehead or the making of birdcage coaches. Who ever heard of trees round a steam engine shed anyway?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

Having studied the last issue of Five Foot Three, one or two points may be worth commenting on. In Joe Magill's excellent tribute to Romley Robinson there is the point of the cut-off. On No.83 this surely could not have been 30% - 35% in a compound. What presumably is meant here is that the cut-off on No.83 was about 65% - 75%, equivalent to 30% - 35% on a simple engine. I would also suspect that the speeds of 70 or a little over would represent the absolute maximum with the compounds given Romley's methods of driving. With a more gentle if less spectacular approach these engines were capable of and indeed attained speeds in the eighties.

With the arrival of the Jeeps, I feel that apart from any natural feelings of indignation aroused in the GNR men by the supplanting of the indigenous GNR 4-4-0, the limitation to the performance of Romley and his mates was set, not so much by the inability of the Derby engines to take a hammering,

but by difficulties the firemen experienced with the injectors. Once this problem was overcome the Jeeps began to display the sort of form their running on the NCC suggested. From many runs on them and behind them I formed the opinion that the NCC Jeeps could be all things to all men, responding equally to 35-40% and half regulator or to the man who liked to pull up to 17-20% and open out on to the big valve. My own footplate runs suggest that the highest speeds were obtained by the latter method. I see in a moment of nostalgia Joe has wondered about a VS linked up and worked on the big valve and judging from the all-too-rare occasions when I knew this to be done, nearly always south of Dundalk, the engine took to this method, pulling the train effortlessly and with little noise. Only constant reference to the watch indicated that speed was being held at almost 70 mph on little better than level road and only a slight lengthening of the cut-off, almost undetectable from the train, marked the changes in gradient.

W No.97 "Earl Of Ulster" crosses WT No.1 at Dundalk in 1961. (A. Donaldson)

The trial of NCC No.18 on a passenger train as mentioned in the Editor's comment on "Steam Over Belfast Lough" was carried out in 1944 and not long after she came. Information is scanty but it seems that the engine was able for the job power wise but it was felt that trouble with hot boxes would result if much passenger work was done. So far as I know neither engine ever worked a passenger train subsequently nor have I been able to find any records of them working passenger in England.

While on the question of the book review, I must say that it seems to me rather strange to review a book describing two distinct sections of railway by devoting five lines to the NCC on an engine class unmentioned in the book and almost three pages to the BCDR. Indeed I would question if review is the correct term to use since much of the space is taken up by the Editor's personal and interesting reminiscences and while these make excellent reading, a book review is hardly the place for them.

The book review apart, however, I consider the last magazine to have been our best yet. Now that it has achieved recognition it is important that the standard of the articles be maintained and the interest of the general public sustained. This can not be done by pandering to those wanting "comics" nor describing boring Society trivialities as so many other preservation societies seem to be guilty of.

WT No.56 on Portadown-Dundalk goods at Scarva in 1964. (A. Donaldson)

In finishing, I must say how much I enjoyed the Athenry article. I note with interest that WLWR 0-4-4T worked around Tuam about 1900. I have heard that in the late 1920s the GSWR 0-4-4Ts Nos. 40 and 72 worked on the line from Limerick to Sligo and this is confirmed by two photos from R.N. Clements. These diminutive engines must have been hard put to it on some of the banks and their limited water capacity would not have assisted.

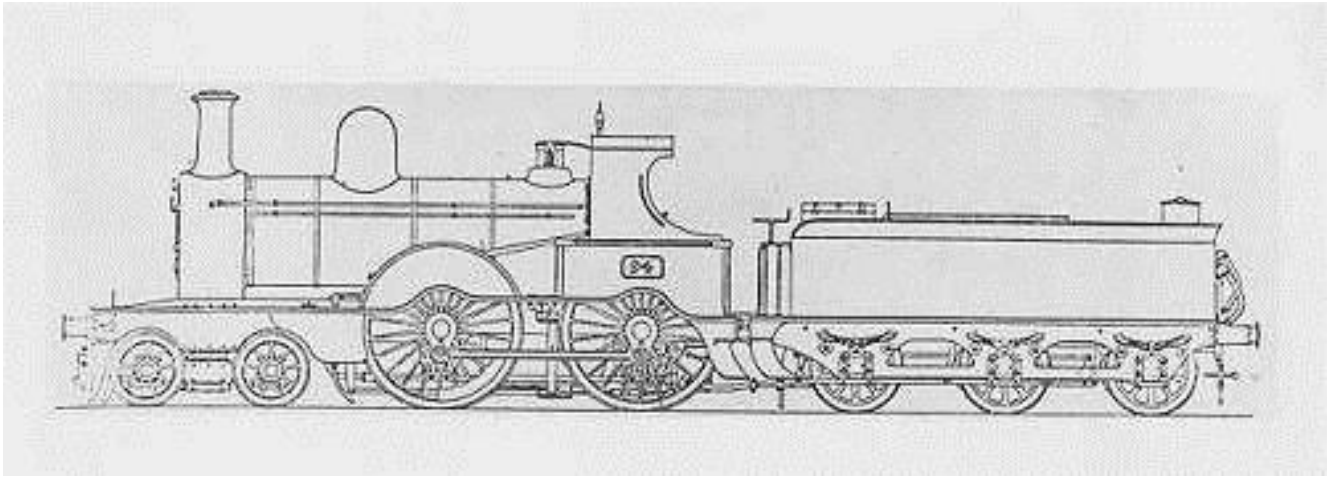
Yours, etc.,

W.T. Scott

[Mr Arnold's book was unconventional - successfully so, to my mind though other reviewers seemed to fail to get to grips with it. Therefore it was surely perfectly correct, from a literary and aesthetic point of view, to give it an unconventional review, The reasons for the concentration on the County Down were many - for example (1) I was in a position to add something, even to Mr Arnold's considerable mass of material on the BCDR, which was not the case with the NCC. (2) The NCC has often been treated in the pages of Five Foot Three, the BCDR never. (3) Simple personal preference -incidentally I note the book evoked a similar reaction, mutatis mutandis, from Capt. Gillespie.

May I also thank Mr Scott for his kind remarks and even more particularly for the railway lore

contained in his letter? It is gratifying to feel that if Five Foot Three ceases publication for any reason, or undergoes a change of editor and policy, at least it has done something to show what Irish locos did and how they did it. - Ed.]



Dear Sir,

I read with interest the item "Editorial policy" in the latest issue of Five Foot Three. I too was present at the 1970 AGM and found myself largely in agreement with my fellow member's "eloquent - indeed rhetorical - protest". The objects of the RPSI as laid down in its rules are "the acquisition, preservation in working order and operation of steam locomotives and other railway vehicles and equipment" and though, for good enough reasons, there has been a concentration on locomotives rather than vehicles and equipment, the Society does adhere closely to its constitutional aims.

Five Foot Three is not specifically mentioned in the rules, but as the RPSI's official magazine, it would presumably pursue similar objectives. Its first and most important function is therefore to provide comprehensive news of the Society and its activities - tours, locomotives, Whitehead, personalities, future plans and so on. Space remaining when this has been done can be devoted legitimately to articles of general Irish railway interest but, I suggest, with preference given to those having some direct connection with the Society, its locomotives or activities. Detailed recording of locomotive performance, which is after all a highly specialised aspect of railway enthusiasm and practised by a minority of present or potential RPSI members, should take its turn with other material. Present editorial policy appears to be the reverse of this, with priority given to non-RPSI material, and with Society news squeezed in at the back if space permits. Here I hasten to add that I have no objection to any particular articles which have appeared - indeed I have greatly enjoyed most of them - but I do not consider it appropriate that they should take precedence over Society news in the Society's official magazine.

Many activities of the Society no doubt appear commonplace and too trivial for publication to an editor living in their midst. However, it must be remembered that most members are not in such close contact with events, and would welcome information on them. Comparison with the magazines of the four other preservation bodies to which I belong is revealing. Their latest issues contain respectively 65%, 80%, 85% and 85% of material dealing primarily with Society matters, and it is obvious that this is what their readers expect. In contrast the current issue of Five Foot Three devotes less than 20% to RPSI matters, and it is difficult to believe that so little has happened on the Society front since the Spring News-letter that this proportion could not have been increased. Indeed, one notable omission is the lack of reference to the intended preservation of a Jeep. Admittedly there was an appeal circular some two months ago, but surely a matter of such vital importance to the future of the Society is worthy of mention in Five Foot Three.

I am sorry if this letter appears unduly critical, but I do feel that present editorial policy may be the reason, at any rate in part, for the loss of members which has occurred during the past couple of years, and for the lack of practical support complained of on pages 52/53 of the current issue. Communication, or rather the lack of it, is the curse of many bodies - professional and amateur - and particularly so in one such as ours, whose members are so widely scattered and meet infrequently. It is essential that the membership should be imbued with a unity of purpose and constantly reminded of the objectives of the Society, and of what is needed to achieve them. Five Foot Three is virtually the only means by which this can be achieved, and by concentration on extraneous matters rather than on the Society's activities and aims, it is, in my opinion, failing in its most important function.

Finally, I would mention two errors in the current issue. Firstly the last Magheramorne stone trains ran, of course, on 2nd May and not 25th March as stated on page 45. I trust that a suitable correction will be published in the next issue, as errors of this sort can easily be perpetuated and finally become accepted as fact. Secondly, on page 48 mention of the "Midland and Great Western" (sic). Even some ignorant Englishmen know better than that!

Yours, etc.,

Lance King

[The writer of the above letter has done a great deal for the RPSI across the Irish Sea. Criticisms such as his are useful and welcome, and the Society would be a healthier body if more followed his example.

Most of his criticisms can be easily enough answered - many were in fact answered in the issue to which he refers.

Let me take the others in order.

Constitutionalists took a hard knock one day in 1968 when a small party of committee members, led by Craig Robb, timidly approached the CIÉ Rail Control Officer and were readily given permission to operate railtours over that System. Locomotives were therefore even more important than previously, and all efforts were concentrated on them. It was felt that what the Society was trying to preserve was the state of affairs obtaining before say 1955 when you could travel over almost any line by steam passenger train; and that the preservation of railway miscellanea is best left to the Transport Museum or private collectors. If there were no steam trains, any interest which other features may have would rapidly wane, except perhaps among a small number or specialists. Admittedly, we could do with carriages, but the fate of the GNR brake van at Whitehead is a lesson on the treatment these would certainly receive unless we had vandal-proof sheds to protect them.

Five Foot Three concentrates on the Irish steam locomotive for a number of reasons - firstly, those all-important members who look after our engines are naturally interested in the steam loco and its performance; in the second place it is desirable to keep this interest alive in as many people as we can reach, to maintain enthusiasm for getting our engines out over the lines described in its pages; a third reason is that a high proportion of the articles received deal with this and kindred topics, and lastly, the Irish steam locomotive is largely neglected by other similar periodicals. It's obviously impossible to keep these articles revolving incestuously round the Society's three engines, one of which was confined to about half a mile of line during her working life. Some attempt was made in this direction in No.1 issue, and it produced a very dull magazine, which was criticised somewhat contemptuously (and justifiably so) at the time.

Of Mr King's list of possible topics, tours are announced by means of circulars; if they go according to plan, the circular has already told what happened - unless some engine does a particularly good run. If this is mentioned, we are back to loco performance which Mr King does not appear to like. If the tour does not go according to plan, it is normally referred to in the magazine. The Loco and Site Officers

are always asked for reports and very rarely fail to comply.

I can hardly imagine anything more calculated to tear the Society asunder than personalities, enthusiasts being so individualistic - and often touchy - as they are. Future plans is a reasonable enough topic but they have so often been foiled in the past that you can easily make a fool of yourself - and the Society - by expatiating on them. Everyone knows we are trying to acquire a Jeep - a second appeal went out shortly before the last issue - and run her over as many routes as her weight and dimensions allow. This also answers a point of Mr King's third paragraph. Other plans have been set forth in a very recent circular and it seems otiose to repeat them.

The RPSI is triumphantly different from cross-channel societies, and this is naturally reflected in its magazine and percentage distribution of material in it.

I must also point out that Society news is not squeezed in. All the Society news goes in, but it goes in last in an attempt to make it as up-to-date as possible. There is no specific limitation laid down on the magazine's actual size, apart from an attempt to keep its weight within postal limits.

The errors are quite serious. I can only plead that the magazine was rushed out to have it on sale at Whitehead Open Day and Charlie Friel, who types nearly all the Society's publications, had so many typing jobs on hand that he had to call in assistance from non-enthusiasts. This and the lack of opportunities for proper checking had disastrous results. Every effort will be made to prevent a recurrence. - Ed.]

Dear Sir,

Any editor has a position of great power. His difficulty normally is to balance strong views on this and that against the good and financial future of the concern for which he acts. It seems to me that the material of both Five Foot Three and the various tour brochures is chosen with one main object in view and it certainly is an original one; to publish as many of your photographs as possible.

A study of any RPSI publication yet will bear this out but the Colmcille tour brochure comes most readily to hand. Considering what an unappetising job it is trying to work permutations on the inevitable itinerary data, the first part of the brochure was very readable and well written, but that picture of No.56, even if it had been a good one, had no possible bearing on a run to Derry behind No.171. Had you selected No.171 (or No.121 or No.131) on the Great Northern 8:25am to Derry at Damhead it could aptly have tied on three different counts, but a Derry Central 2-4-0. Really!!!

The unknowing purchasers of this booklet had next to grapple with pages of details of previous running, even, again, on the Derry Central. The 10% who struggled through this, just to get their money's worth, must surely resent such dollops of cold data, inexcusable in a tour brochure, where there is no space to provide suitable background of atmosphere and human interest.

As far as I can see, your usual method of producing articles for Five Foot Three is to rewrite contributions which suit your interest and photographs. It is generous on your part to give the credit for the revised version to the original author, even though he may find it unrecognisable. One exception to this editing process was my own Athenry subject, written out roughly for my talk to the 2:45 club, whose contributions, incidentally, towards recording in every aspect the last ten years of steam, is quite beyond anything you could envisage. It was without my knowledge that this was published in the form it was, with log tables. Data acceptable to those interested in performance is unsuitable fodder for the main body of the Society whose cash contributions are keeping it in existence.

The magazine committee seem unable or unwilling to soften this continuing process. I wonder that my fellow members of the ordinary ranks think.

Yours, etc.,

R.M. Arnold

[To take Mr Arnold's more or less factual points in order:

In contrast with the sinister motive which he apparently thinks he has found behind the selection of photos for RPSI productions, the principles of selection are amusingly innocent. For printing by offset litho all the photos on a double-page spread should be of approximately the same tonal range - and that not too wide. We usually cannot find enough 'outside' illustrations of suitable size and tone to achieve this and therefore naturally fall back on negatives which are readily available and can be printed to any required density. A second problem is delay in replying by the owners of copyright. Thirdly, with the present cover arrangements, we can only use a shot for which we have the negative, and the number of persons from whom we can borrow those is extremely limited.

The photo of No.56 in the Colmcille brochure was NOT a good one, but it suffered to an unusual extent in reproduction. Mr Arnold's point about a "Derry Central 2-4-0" need not have arisen had he "struggled" as far as page 12 where he would have discovered that No.56 was at Macfin.

On the same page Mr Arnold would have found the names of the authors of the brochure, Messrs Scott and Cassells, who will, no doubt, be prepared to explain their choice of material.

The insertion of Mr Arnold's Athenry article in Five Foot Three without alteration was done precisely to avoid just such a letter as the above. Unfortunately, however, two unwanted alterations did creep into it. One was the omission of the word "them" after "time" in the last line of paragraph 4 on page 5; the other occurred on page 8 in the run with 251. The puzzling time of 5 minutes 50 over the 0.4 miles from MP 25 to Ennis was accountable to a signal check. Net time would be about 11½ minutes. By the way, the sectional running times given on pages eight and nine are on a non-stop basis. Stopping trains were allowed 2 minutes extra per section.

The popularity of Mr Arnold's book "Steam Over Belfast Lough" with RPSI members might be taken to indicate that hostility to performance data is not as widespread as he suggests - indeed in a previous (unpublished) letter in January 1970 he expressed himself as generally satisfied with the contents of this magazine. - Ed.]

LOCOMOTIVE REPORT — I.C. Pryce

The burden of preparation work on the Society's engines has been lessened because of the unfortunate cancellation of the Decies.

The time saved has enabled some extra small jobs to be undertaken - for instance visitors to Whitehead have commented favourably on the gold and black lining which has been applied to the Guinness Loco. This engine, though not having the glamour of No.171 or No.186 is very popular with visitors on Open Days, and over the last two years has carried many hundreds of passengers on the short trip up and down the site.

On 3rd October No.3 was the centre of attraction for twenty-four delighted deaf and dumb children from the Jordanstown School. Billy Steenson, York Road foreman, was, as usual, a most efficient and genial driver for the occasion.

Much midnight oil was burnt during the weeks preceding the Colmcille railtour, in replacing the steam heating apparatus on No.171. In the event only one of the coaches provided for the tour proved capable of being heated.

During the tour a familiar defect reappeared on No.171 when the right piston gland blew. Informed sources suggest that metallic packing might cure this recurring ailment. Such packing, if it could be

obtained, would have to be specially made. On the return journey the left large end ran hot and will require re-metalling.

The entire tender has been repainted - Craig Robb having taught himself the art of lining. Readers can appreciate the time and care spent on this job when they learn that the speed of lining has been calculated as two feet per hour.

A well-intentioned description in the "Railway World" of No.186's livery as semi-matt black has prompted an attempt to improve her appearance. The splashers and cab sides have been stripped down to the bare metal in preparation for several priming coats and new gloss paint.

Apart from a tendency to loosen slide bar bolts and having rather temperamental injectors No.186 is a most reliable and sweet running machine.

It is hoped to steam Roy Grayson's ex-SLNCR 0-6-4T "Lough Erne" some time during the coming month. Repairs executed since Spring include removal of the dome and re-facing of the regulator valve. The vacuum brakes which refused to function have also been attended to. The general mechanical condition of this engine is poor.

It may be of interest to members to hear that the NCC vacuum ejector which was part of a barter deal with the Keighley and Worth Valley Railway is now at work on an ex-National Coal Board "Austerity" class 0-6-0ST.

SITE REPORT — A.H.J. Glendinning

At long last the re-timbering, ballasting and levelling of the oft-mentioned shed point has been completed, though it has now lost its super-elevation for 40 mph running. The ballast was bought as quarry screenings from an outside source and native ingenuity devised a tipping ballast wagon.

It consists of the rebuilt frame of a permanent way bogie on which the tipping coal barrow from Adelaide shed coaling plant was mounted, (resplendent in a new coat of black paint) so that ballast could be loaded into it at the platform and then tipped between the rails as the wagon was moved along. It was promptly labelled "The Mahaffey".

Another PW bogie was converted to a weed sprayer when a donated, hand-worked crop sprayer was mounted on it, equipped so as to spray weed-killer an each side of, and between, the rails.

The electric pump (feeding the tower) formerly in the shed has been replaced by two identical pumps (again kind donations) installed in the base of the tower. Working in tandem they will be able to keep a decent head of water in the tower. The tower itself has been divided into two lofts for storage purposes while the steps from Annaghmore cabin have been erected near the tower and equipped with a hand rail. This obviates negotiation of a slippery grass bank between tower and shed and the restriction over this section has been lifted.

The back boiler mentioned in the last issue has been fitted with a safety valve, at the insistence of the Loco Dept. But a friendly "who does what" dispute with the Loco people has prevented the further addition of a steam pressure gauge.

The back room of the shed has been sheeted and a ceiling put in in an attempt to make it more comfortable on cold winter evenings after a day's work. The material for the bunk beds mentioned in the recent circular has arrived, while most of the shelving has been installed.

As a result of that circular a very large work party came down and a massive 'tidy-up' was put into action. The Guinness was in steam and hauled all engines out so that the pits could be given a much-needed cleaning. Various springs, firebars, tools and other items were sorted and stacked - the chances of spraining your ankle have been greatly reduced.

Earlier in the year Tony Ragg was appointed as deputy Site Officer and given special responsibility for trackwork. Following a visit and instruction by PW Inspector Davy McLaine several of the ups and downs were taken out and many sections were straightened. As a result of this much-needed attention, the track withstood the strain of Open Day which brought to light only a few minor flaws.

Shed Road No.1, next the water tower, has had its timbers renewed at the door - the Guinness now has to be less of a stair climber to get in and out.

But against this background of intensive work came the shattering and sickening burning of our brake-van, ex-Great Northern six-wheeler No.42.

The vandals struck on 23rd September; the burning van was seen about midnight by nearby residents who called the police and fire brigade. The van was well alight by the time they arrived and workers arriving on the following Saturday were met by the stark frame of the van. Everything except the king-pins of the body framing and a little of the roof were burnt out. It is thought that the fire was started on the balcony next the shed and then spread to engulf the rest of the vehicle; the heat of the blaze was sufficient to fracture the brake handle wheel.

The loss of the van and its contents was felt very deeply, not only for its own sake but also as a possible pointer to the treatment equipment might expect in the future.

As far as is known, police investigations are in progress. Fortunately the van did not contain anything really valuable but quite a few members lost their working overalls and shoes while the Society lost several pieces of fund-raising equipment used at Open Days.

The van was to have been used for a visit by children from the Jordanstown School for the Deaf and Dumb - a point which "sold" the story to several papers. However, the children's visit took place as arranged on 3rd October, NIR's Permanent Way Dept kindly loaning us one of their vans for the occasion. About twenty pupils from the school came along and were treated to rides behind the Guinness while the local mineral water people provided minerals and crisps for the visit.

OPEN DAY — A.H.J. Glendinning

The Society's second Open Day was held on 27th June when over three thousand people visited Whitehead and the Society's funds benefited to the tune of £250.

As mentioned in the previous issue of Five Foot Three, Whitehead was the scene of a massive tidying operation before the Open Day and it really did look well on the day - the absence of weeds was remarked on by many. People began to take up residence on the Thursday evening - just after the arrival of No.171 and Jeep No.53, behind a diesel, from their store at Carrickfergus. Setting up started in earnest on the Friday afternoon with wiring up the public address system and the yard lighting which was much appreciated later on. A very satisfactory work party was at work and by late evening we were almost ready to roll, though one fastidious member was seen painting the water column at two on Saturday morning - by the light of a bicycle lamp!

Once again a coach was borrowed from NIR and again this was used as a dorm and duty roster drawn up to cover the night watch until resumption of work about 8am.

Small marquees on the platform housed various fund-raising stalls and a bar, all of which were efficiently staffed by some of Roy Grayson's employees. The remains of the horse box were pressed into service as a shooting gallery while the brake van provided a central office in the middle of things from which to sort out all the minor crises which inevitably arose.

There were three model railways on show as well as a passenger carrying 3½ inch gauge line worked by an LNER Atlantic. In the smaller gauges were the Ulster Model Railway Club's 4 mm scale

exhibition line and a model of the Giant's Causeway Tramway as well as Drew Donaldson's 7 mm line (much used for RPSI publicity purposes) worked by his own and Fred Graham's engines representing all the Irish companies.

The back of the shed was transformed into quite an acceptable cinema where Macha Film Studios screened "Olderfleet", "Slieve Cualann" and "Port to Port" almost non-stop-no wonder the projector was in danger of running a hot box. The arrival of our secretary on an Aveling Porter steam road locomotive was heralded by much whistling.

BBC Radio sent along one of their reporters who interviewed a few Society Officers as well as some members of the general public; we brought him for a ride on the Guinness and when he queried the "bumpy, hot and very uncomfortable cab" he was solemnly assured that it was "very therapeutic". Unfortunately, that weekend saw much violence in Belfast and all local radio/TV broadcasts were occupied with that. The local camera crew of Thames Television did quite a lot of filming, again interviewing quite a few, but we don't know whether anything was screened as a result.

All in all things went off fairly smoothly and the track stood up to the hammering of our three engines which were in steam taking turns at working the one-coach train, their movements being limited by a lock on the unmanned shed point and a special staff. Roy Grayson's Sligo tank and No.53 were at the platform. The latter, with a money box affixed and a suitable invitation to deposit money, raised over £15 for the Jeep Appeal. Each of the dead engines was manned by members who explained the controls - assisted by an article and drawing in the Open Day brochure.

Even though the 2:05 could not be steam-worked as hoped, it did deposit some 800 visitors who almost overwhelmed our gates.

Thanks here should be recorded to NIR for their help in moving the engines for us, even though Frank Dunlop hadn't bargained on having to shunt the whole place when he arrived with the Carrick locos. All those who worked so hard and enthusiastically also deserve thanks and while it is often odious to mention individuals, our especial thanks must go to Mike Gilliland who spent five days and nights on the site keeping a watchful eye on the engines and other stock stored in the open.

Unfortunately, we must also record that the response to our preliminary appeal for help with this function was extremely poor - all the operations detailed above were run by a handful of members, and some fund raising activities simply couldn't be used as there was no one to man them. An appeal broadcast over the public address system for relief, to enable the hard-working functionaries to have their lunch brought a total work-force of - ZERO.

MORE RAILTOURS — A. Donaldson

This, the most rewarding and important of the Society's activities is still causing concern. An attempt to correlate the lack of support for tours with the Spring Questionnaire is quite revealing. 154 were returned (out of 700 sent out!)

To take the pre-set part of the Survey first:

Numbers Of Tours: The most popular figures were three one-day (110) and one two-day (81). Fifty out of 117 didn't care how short the interval was between repeated tours.

Stops: The general opinion was that these were too frequent and too short and this has already been attended to.

Buses: A considerable majority wanted to see the use of these increased but some would like it decreased - a view hard to understand.

Value For Money: 73 put it at "good", 68 "fair" and 22 "poor" and, consistently with this, 120

preferred the use of two engines, only 25 opting for one.

Hotel Grades: Grades A plus B only accounted for 55 as against 87 who desired cheaper accommodation or preferred to make their own arrangements. (Bord Fáilte, please copy!)

Tape And Cine: Only 17 out of 125 were dissatisfied with the former, 6 out of 114 with the latter. The organisers themselves are actually dissatisfied with the tape facilities and are considering means of improving them, e.g. lineside tape.

Tour Dates: September (86 votes) was the most popular month for a two-day tour followed by May (69) and April (61). Curiously enough our most heavily booked two-day tour was the Brian Boru in April 1969; those attempted in September either ran at a loss or were cancelled altogether.

Runpasts: 72 favoured an increase while 65 were satisfied. We have already dealt with this.

Catering: Only 5 out of 136 were dissatisfied with our suggested light lunch and high tea. This is helpful and will make the problem easier to cope with.

Many took a lot of trouble with the questionnaire and we are most grateful for their useful ideas which they will see being put into practice in due course. Others were less praiseworthy - for example a considerable number wanted one-day tours and plenty of them, but were not willing to re-traverse the same route except after an interval of many years. Do people know just how few lines there are within one-day reach of Belfast?

The individual comments were of great interest and, in general, usefulness.

The following ideas were put forward by several persons or had particular merit.

Better Publicity: It can be safely said that this is in good hands, as bookings for the Colmcille show. We are now in touch with far more cross-channel groups than ever before and our two-day tours have a correspondingly greater chance of success.

Stops: Stops in one direction, non-stop running in the other is becoming a regular feature of our tours.

Sales: The sale of souvenir tickets and films has been in operation a few times and was planned for the Decies, had it run.

Catering: RPSI catering operates on NIR tours, but CIÉ apparently like to cater themselves and on shorter tours their snack car service has been well received. There are, however, times when catering is not available and this factor must not be allowed to cause abandonment of dates which are otherwise eminently suitable. No complete answer to the problem has yet been found.

Cross-Channel Travel: This is really unbelievably awkward in this supposedly travel-conscious age. The mindless destruction of the Menai Bridge and the total inadequacy of the alternative arrangements are now known to have played a large part in the failure of the Decies Tour, as we depend heavily on cross-channel support for such tours, Irish enthusiasm in general being weaker. Irish incomes are also lower, and high fares undoubtedly were a potent factor too. We can only hope next spring will see improved cross-channel ferries until the normal Dun Laoghaire-Holyhead service can be resumed. Connections between Ireland and Scotland are even more inconvenient: Scotsmen find it difficult even to partake in a one-day tour. An increased interest in Continental steam, and lack of it on NIR, has further militated against us.

There has been some suggestion of still longer tours to make them worthwhile for cross-channel enthusiasts but we do not yet possess enough engines to guarantee steam throughout such a tour and even if we had the engines and could keep them semi-permanently at strategic points, the fare would be prohibitive. To run even a two-day tour with one engine involves risk, as experience has often shown.

Incidentally, there is no point in offering our engines to the Railways to work service trains for

enthusiasts to photograph. The Railways aren't interested and one could not expect them to be.

There were many impracticable suggestions: fast times to Derry - the stretches from Ballymoney to Magilligan and from Carrichue to Derry are restricted to 50 mph! Tours over the Antrim branch - we have to traverse it to get on to the GNR anyway; quite a number wanted to go to places like Sligo, Limerick, Galway - AND BACK - in one day.

A couple were sharply critical; many had praise for our efforts.

An amusing side issue was the mini-furore locally over tour names. Craig Robb's first tour was unnamed; the "Province of Leinster" was badly named, but Craig now apparently accepted that names gave colour to the tours and the practice was continued. There is an element of tourism about railtours and it seems perfectly rational to give them names associated with the traditions/history of the areas through which they run. The names have been suggested by various people - L.H. Liddle came up with Dál Riada; Killultagh was Ciarán Clendinning's and Decies was of course the suggestion of Jack O'Neill. The trouble seems to have arisen with the Inbhear nOllarbha. The tour was originally to be called the Inver Colpa but Ciarán called one night, while Charlie Friel was actually typing the circular, and pointed out (correctly) that the name was wrong. A frantic search was made, as a name had to be telephoned to Charlie without delay. Inbhear nOllarbha was correct enough as the chief amenity was the lineside bus effort at Glynn; but it appeared awkward to some.

In general Irish script (as used in Golden Age book illustrations) is used only in the brochure, which also explains the name. Amid the dust of battle, the one constructive suggestion was that of John McGuigan, who advocated a phonetic approximation. This will in future be given in "difficult" cases, but it is hard to foresee the publication of further brochures for NIR lines as all the routes have been covered many times - unless, that is, someone else can be found to produce them.

Colmcille Railtour

The Colmcille seemed to stultify many of the conclusions drawn from the questionnaire. It has been the most heavily booked of all our tours, yet it only had one engine, and many of our clientele had indicated that they were willing to pay extra for the second locomotive for which, in this case, no crew was available. Arthur Wickham's valiant publicity effort in Derry brought a considerable contingent and so did posters displayed by two Belfast travel agents - at 30 shillings per train mile it is the lowest since the halcyon days when CIÉ quoted true excursion fares to Athlone, Wicklow and (for the IRRS) Kilkenny. We were able to offer NIR a percentage of the profits and hope it represents a breakthrough in fare calculation. A full train brings additional profit in sales and the Colmcille did offset losses incurred earlier this year.

It must be remembered however that: (1) Steam was enjoyed over the NCC long after it had disappeared on other lines and we must face the challenge of introducing it elsewhere. Indeed many of our clientele would not be satisfied with repeated tours over the same two routes for ever. (2) To operate tours other than on the NCC means light engine mileage of at least 120 (Whitehead to Great Victoria Street and back, say) which affects the fare. (3) On a really long tour a second engine is probably needed for variety, apart from the severely practical reason given above, so the fares per mile are bound to be considerably higher.

A couple of alterations to the Colmcille schedule require elucidation. The excision of the Culmore stop was caused by the arrival at Limavady Junction of an extra goods which delayed the 9:45 Down and consequently our train, which had to cross the 12:30 ex Derry at Lisahally with the minimum of delay.

The reduction of the University runpast to a photo stop was due to some person or persons taking it upon them to instruct the enginemen to make a full runpast at Dhu Varren. This had not been allowed for; it caused the enginemen great trouble restarting twice on a 1 in 76 with a faulty engine, and did no

one any good as passengers had already boarded the train. Had time not been cut at University, there was a danger of passengers missing the 17:55 Boat Train at York Road and the 18:35 to Dublin at Great Victoria Street. If tours are not to fall into chaos, the briefing of train crews must be left to those in charge of the Tour.

In general the engine was most competently handled by driver Paddy Russell, fireman Willie Graham and inspector Frank Dunlop, who organised the split second co-ordination between road and rail so successfully. Prompt departures and smart train movements were ensured by the guard and traffic inspector Sam Hanley.

The performance of the engine left nothing to be desired - for example nearly 6½ minutes were cut from Coleraine to Belfast to make the connection with the 17:55 Boat Train. Unfortunately, No.171 arrived home with a piston gland blowing badly and a big end in need of re-metalling: these will involve most of a winter's work.

The photographic highlight of the tour was undoubtedly the Ballykelly "Runpast". The RAF men, many of whose own cameras were busy, could hardly have been more helpful. Formalities were reduced to a minimum and the aircraft was placed in exactly the right spot for the purpose on their own initiative. We hope they found the project interesting and have plans to show our appreciation in a practical way before long.

A further questionnaire was circulated on the tour and a study of those who had previously been untouched by our activities shows a gratifying interest in tours going further afield.

Important

Frank Dunlop unfortunately lost his watch during the Colmcille. Frank has always been a good friend of the RPSI and a replacement has been bought out of Society funds. The Committee feel, however, that members will be anxious to show their appreciation by contributions. These should be sent to the Treasurer, John Richardson. Any surplus will be transferred to the Jeep Appeal.

VAPORARIA - A POSTSCRIPT — J.A. Cassells

The history, to date, of the RPSI roughly corresponds to the last phase in the distinguished career of the 2-6-4 tanks. "Mogul and Jeep type engines" were once as familiar a part of Operating idiom as the "vans for flags and drums" which were of course an indispensable part of the political excursions they worked - inevitably "formed by spare coaches". Now they are almost gone. In 1965, Nos. 4, 6 and 54 were the last of the class to receive major overhaul, while No.2 was the first to go. In 1970, with the shed yard being swallowed up by the motorway advancing on all sides, No.4 alone remains, just in case the (diesel) station pilot breaks down.

They will be remembered as an astoundingly successful engine. Mr Arnold has lately demonstrated how they revolutionised the BCDR; and some day we may have the full story of their years on their native main line, and the performances they gave in the hands even of the most Laodicean Great Northern men. Moreover the speculator has material for endless "might have beens" based on No.4's work on the Cork and Athlone tours, and should the Society ever own her, there could be less "mights" and more "beens". I long to see a critic of the Tuplin school elaborating on the fact that the ultimate design in our railway history was a mixed traffic engine which broke through the "suburban local" image to become that world rarity - the express tank engine. How much persuasion would it have taken, I wonder, before BR would have spruced up a standard 4MTT and allowed her to run 165 miles with an eight bogie train? I am not competent to deal with these matters, but I want to mark the passing of the class - and the end of Vaporaria - with an impressionistic tribute to the class whose last survivor the Society wants to own.

Though not ugly, they were by no means beautiful engines. Perhaps it was their blackness - though the sight of one ex-works was enough to dispose of the, to me, unjustified theory that a black engine can't look nice. Perhaps they lost their individuality through being so obviously part of a large English standard family. Perhaps they offended aesthetically in contrast to the classic line of the inside-cylinder, four-coupled tender engine. Perhaps being tank engines had something to do with it, for I always thought the Moguls had something of beauty about them. Most of all, I feel that what made them unattractive was their association with the declining years of railways in the north of Ireland. A bad run was not made better by expanses of trackbed and rusty rails at the smaller stations, and museums of decaying rolling stock in the sidings of the larger ones. Nothing functions independently, and the state of a railway system often rubs off on the engines. Connected with this was a gradual running down of the fleet since the last spate of patching up in 1967/8. It was most unpleasant for the enthusiast when a selection of steam jobs in the autumn of 1967 were almost all worked by the weakest engine in the shed. Week in and week out, No.6 struggled wearily out with the 5:30pm until even hardened timers went home in disgust when she appeared. The same engine, crippled by blown piston rings, fell to 2½ mph on the bank with a football excursion which the "passengers" subsequently wrecked to pass the journey time. A combination of wet morning and weak engine brought the normally strong No.51 down to 9 above Monkstown on a Sunday School train in 1969.

But even when the timer felt like throwing his watches away, there were other more generally redeeming features connected with their last days. Like timers themselves. Their presence on the tank-hauled Saturday 2:15pm Dublin used to fascinate one little man who, we suspected, had no other reason for travelling so regularly. Latterly too there was always a chance of finding them in picturesque - even unusual - places. When the authorities ceased to worry about what damage they did the track, the last summer of the Warrenpoint line gave them a final fling in County Down; and the Omagh relief had tanks quite often near the end. Not quite so frequent were their workings into Foyle Road, and photographers would have had a long stand by the Strule river to get one in that most beautiful of Tyrone sections - Omagh to Strabane. I need hardly refer to the Great Northern Main Line, the whole length of which was regularly traversed by tanks until November 1966, and the Northern half until early this year. But this is not to deprecate the NCC main line.

I have a great liking for the County Antrim and perhaps it is just that the dour Presbyterian-ness of the county should have been served by black engines and coaches of the darkest green.

The NCC was long notable for seaside excursions, and for the "Sunday School Season" - probably a unique feature in Europe, if not the world. There was the Derry Holiday fortnight, with its ridiculously cheap excursions daily enabling many families to commute to Portrush and have a seaside holiday without the cost of a boarding house.

After the closure of the GNR Derry Road the Relief of Derry celebrations centred on Waterside, and readers of Vaporaria will remember the flood of tanks which came to this duty each 12th August. Fewer would have been in a position to see the shed one year, when engine No.3 was forgotten about in the confusion and the loco inspector found her an hour before train time with the fire out. An interesting feature for the traveller was the non-stop "express" to Belfast, always made steam in the evening. Once incarcerated in it, however, the timer usually had plenty of time to ponder his choice of the wrong train home.

But if you had no interest in seeing up to eight tanks in Portrush or Derry - or four light engines coupled, or a triple-headed empty coaches - of a Saturday afternoon, you could always sit in an interesting coach (at least until a suspicious Sunday School organiser questioned your bona fides). After the demise of the GNR, some of their more interesting stock came to the NCC to join North Atlantics, both the BCDR bogies, the saloons 160 and 162, a host of standard vehicles of the 1920s and 1930s, and the last of the Larne steels and "short" bogies. In 1965 I travelled in beautiful collections of

carriages, featuring most of the types mentioned, on the Derry holiday trains. As late as last year, steam on the 5:30pm Larne train could still turn out a completely GNR train of modern steels, and this year a couple of battered GN wooden centre-corridors made their way to Portrush on August Monday, albeit with diesel loco 101.

For the signal enthusiast, a tank-hauled journey could be controlled by somersault signals, the upper quadrants of Larne Harbour, the handbells of Larne Town and Derry Waterside; diversified by the thrill of high-speed mechanical exchanging (and, once, of No.55 breaking the snatcher at the start of a terrific descent of Ballyboyland and not getting pulled up for a further mile and a half) or the mystery of no tablet at all from Macfin to Coleraine.

Coleraine, that isolated colour-light stronghold, was where on summer Saturdays in 1965 the diner which had come out of the 8:35 was backed into a siding, and collected by the 8:50, which took it forward to Derry. (To complete the circle, after two steam journeys it finally got back to Belfast in a diesel set on the Sunday night). The level crossing brings to mind a summer Saturday a year later, with engine No.6 bursting off the main line too quickly for the tardy signalman, and rolling through the gates in awful majesty just a second after they had snapped open, to be followed up the platform, in her attempts to stop by breathless and despairing porters. Less pleasant was a spate of level crossing gate checks a year or so ago, and worst of all the cord-pulling on football excursions which I once remember being stopped abruptly after No.4's wrathful driver stamped down the train brandishing the shovel.

These are some of my impressions of the tank engine "ethos". But what gave them cohesion was their place around the performance I timed.

I am sorry we never got a chance to see No.4 driven flat out on the Athlone railtour with that small load - but she still ran from posts 33 to 3 on the Cork road in 29¾ minutes under easy steam. I remember No.56 covering the difficult 30 miles from posts 85 to 55 on the GN main line in 33¾ minutes.

On the NCC there was the outstanding No.4 lifting 220 tons through Antrim with only a momentary drop to 60 at Kingsbog, or her all-time record run in 1965, when she never fell below 66 on the toughest part of the same climb with 165 tons. Mr Magill's article gave me a chance to compare the work on Great Northern stopping trains, and I found a log with No.55 and 250 tons, running from Lurgan to Lisburn in 14 minutes 3 seconds.

But this has only scratched the surface, and I could go on all night boring non-timers and telling what they already know.

For the future, the last tank is one of the Society's problems. My own view is that environment means as much as the engine, and that taking on a tank means coming to terms with this problem, and roping in the signalling and rolling stock enthusiasts, and then the industrial archaeology and natural history fellow travellers. If we can establish the engine as part of a scene and "preserve" that scene by a continuing tour programme, we might be able to solve all manner of other problems. Problems like the choice of livery.

I feel that painting in a gay (though historically impossible) colour tends to cover the fact that the owners don't really like what they've got, and are trying to pretend it's something else (a colourful - correct - livery for No.171 has contributed nothing to a store of goodwill for her, while the dour No.186, with no bright colour but a few bright performances, has suffered little diminution of affection).

But only time will tell whether the Society can get, keep and run one of these rugged machines. It would be sad if we didn't, and we had nothing to prove that steam power does not mean an antiquated railway and a pedestrian timetable. After a good run which was mentioned once in a Society

publication, I can still see the driver sitting happily up in No.55. “Ah, they’re a grand engine”, he said, “And, when I saw what sort of form she was in, I just knew I could give her a bit of a luderin’.”

PUBLICITY REPORT

The Society’s Publicity Department can be said to have moved forward on three fronts. The first of these was the production of an updated, informative and illustrated membership brochure which attempted to present a go-ahead and lively image while at the same time bringing in the marginally interested historians, economists, etc. This was supplemented by a separate publication giving details of the Tour programme, aimed specifically at the cross-channel market and at people who had not yet been on a tour.

The second major feat was the materialisation of a set of display boards setting out the activities and aims of the Society. This came into being after a remarkable two-year gestation period during which the original idea underwent much revision and was enlarged from three to nine panels. The centre-piece is large map of the country showing the railway systems and indicating the lines yet to be travelled by our tours. The other panels carry photographs of each tour with brief details of its route, flanked with engine and general Society data. The “boards”, as they became known in Society parlance, went on show at our Open Day, CIÉ’s Open Day at Inchicore, and the ISPS traction engine rallies at Randalstown and Stradbally. On the first two occasions the boards were supplemented by the back-projection of slides on a mock television screen which proved a real crowd-drawer; lack of “mains steam” at the rallies curtailed use of this attraction.

Publicity virtually acquired Fund Raising for the events mentioned above and effectively cleared all back issues of railtour brochures and Five Foot Three (so effectively that the Colmcille brochure was re-written from one of the few copies of the original left). Persuasive, almost forceful, salesmanship on the part of many members also sold large stocks of books and periodicals of general railway interest. Our No.171 badges are now “out of print” while other notable successes were the books “Steam Over Belfast Lough” and “Sligo Leitrim”. Total funds raised amounted to £130, while those involved had an enjoyable, though exhausting, time.

Another notable success was the appearance of a feature article on us in Nuacht, the CIÉ Staff magazine, with photographs supplied by two of our members.

Plugging the Society to newspapers, etc., (both railway and otherwise) was a continuous job which, at first, yielded few results, despite the issue of numerous “bulletins” on railtours, Open Day and the burning of our brake van. The latter brought a great deal of newspaper space, hitherto difficult to get. We were on the front page of the Belfast Telegraph for the first time since the inaugural railtour, while both Belfast morning papers carried the “official” story verbatim. By a curious, though welcome, quirk this brought several enquiries (and bookings) for the Colmcille Railtour, judiciously mentioned in the bulletin.

The Colmcille itself also received very good coverage and once again was front page news, this time complete with picture while strenuous efforts on the part of some Derry members excited a lot of interest in the Maiden City.

To help further the Society, we would like to hear from anyone with personal contacts in the newspaper world or with other media while a good supply of good quality half-plate prints of Society events would be appreciated - they can go a very long way with editors.

Jeep appeal

Our Jeep Appeal now stands at £725 - still a long way off the sum given in the Appeal. Keep sending in your 50p pieces and preserve an example of one of the finest classes ever to run in Ireland. The chance

of your being asked to support another steam loco appeal is very remote - give this your unstinted support.