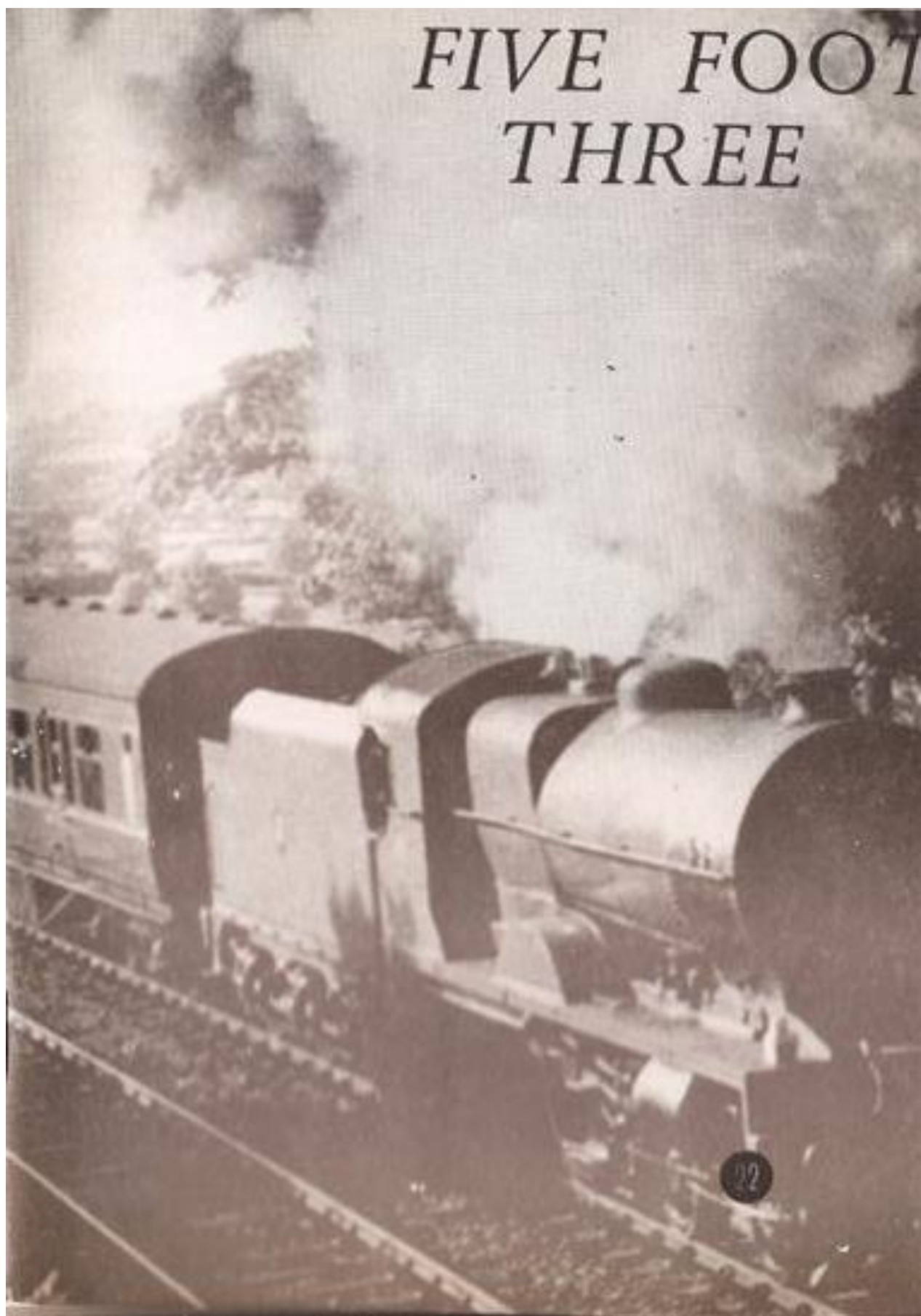


# *FIVE FOOT THREE*



# FIVE FOOT THREE

## No.22

### Summer 1978

Editor: Tim Moriarty

#### CONTENTS

---

Editorial	
News From Council	Robin Morton
Quiz	
Locomotive Maintenance	Peter Scott
Carriage & Wagon Report	Alan Edgar
Site News	Neil Hamilton
Merlin - The Story So Far	John Friel
A.R. Donaldson - Obituary	Joe Cassells
Some Thoughts On Goods Wagons	Martin Hewitt
The Derry Central Railway	James McIlpatrick
Miscellaneous Items	

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

*Front Cover Photograph: No.85 in action in steam days. (Des Fitzgerald)*

#### EDITORIAL

---

The fact that we are now within sight of the day when Great Northern compound No.85 "Merlin" will be back in full operation under RPSI care has undoubtedly not yet hit most of us.

But fact it is. Already much of the vital overhaul work on the famous locomotive has been completed at Harland & Wolff in Belfast. It now seems probable that the V class 4-4-0 may haul her first RPSI railtour in 1980.

It is a dream come true. How many of us, in years gone by, strolled through Belfast Transport Museum, gazed at "Merlin" and idly dreamed of the engine breathing life again?

Now the magic wand has been waved and the engine which steamed apparently for the last time back in 1963 will soon be powering down the main line again.

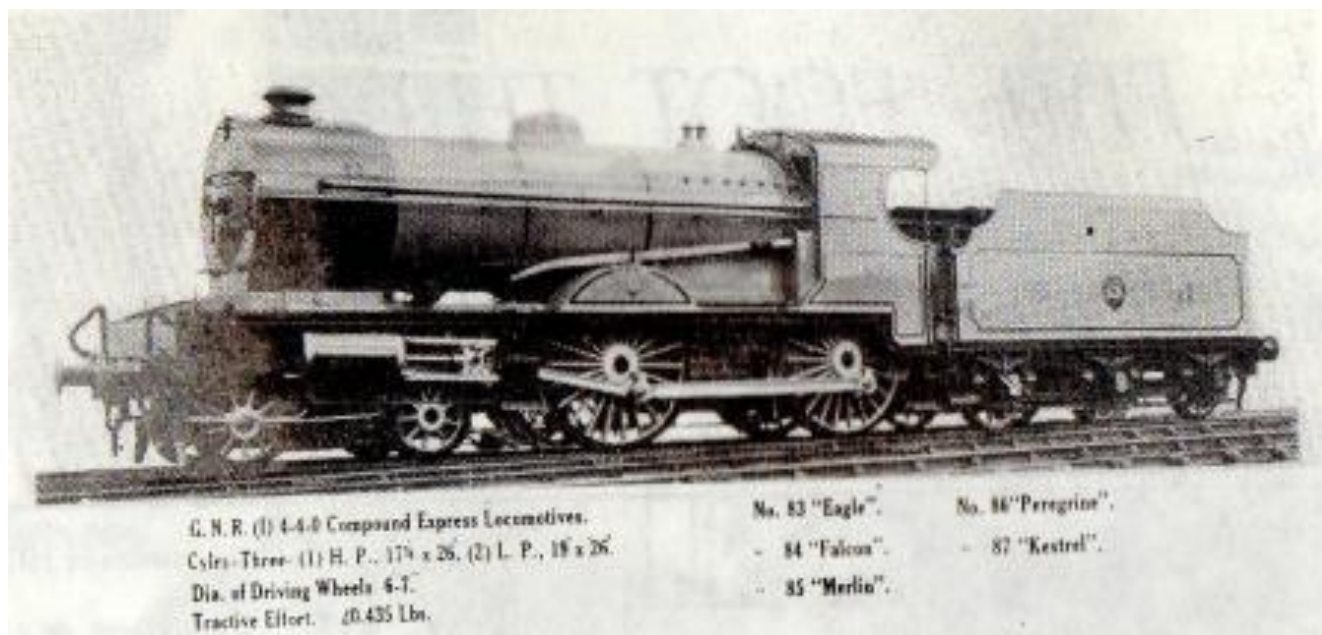
Tribute is due to the people who have made such a breakthrough possible. First, to the trustees of the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum who have given their consent to the proposal that No.85 should become the subject of a long-term loan to the RPSI.

And second, to RPSI member Lord Dunleath who has been the inspiration and driving force behind the whole venture. Without his help it would simply have been beyond the Society's reach.

The Society too can take pride in its involvement in the operation.

The advent of No.85 will give the RPSI no fewer than five full operational mainline passenger train steam locomotives.

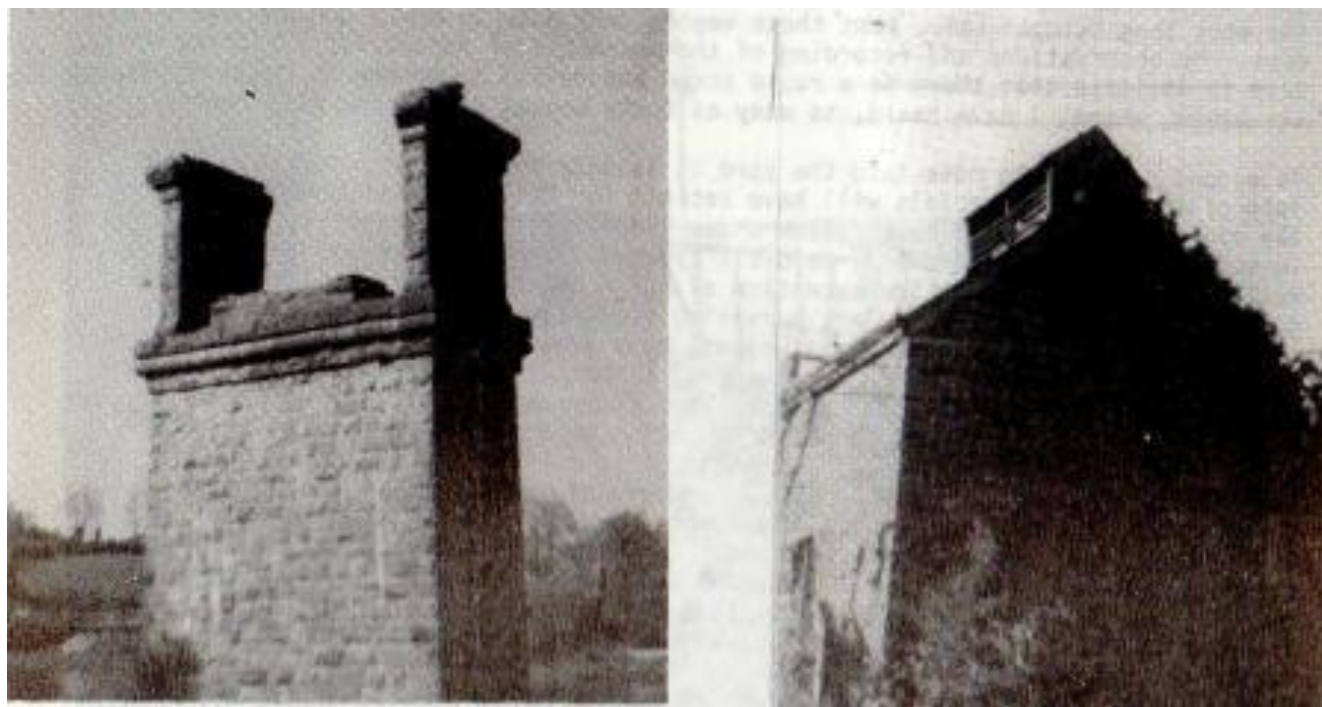
There could be no more ample proof that the Society continues to fulfil its objectives in a thoroughly professional, responsible and competent manner.



## QUIZ

---

Where is it? Answers at the end of the text.



## NEWS FROM COUNCIL

**Robin Morton**

Yes, Council. The Committee was renamed the 'Council' in April to bring its title into line with the

wording of our articles of association and upon the recommendation of our legal adviser. It is simply a change of title and has no further ramifications.

While on the subject, another name change saw the demise of the futuristic sounding 2001 sub-committee. The sub-committee, whose job is to plot and oversee developments at Whitehead, is now known as the workshop management sub-committee, WMSC for short.

The principal matter before the Council in recent months has been the negotiation of a contract with Starling Productions Ltd. of London for the use of two RPSI locomotives in connection with the shooting of the film "The Great Train Robbery".



***A rare scene at the Junction. Left to right, 134 and 136 (really No.184 and No.186) prepare for running to Cork to complete the filming of the Great Train Robbery, while on the right No.4 takes water before setting off for Pearse with the tour train. (C.P. Friel)***

Discussions spread over five months with the Council members ensuring the necessary safeguards and conditions were included. The Society's legal and insurance advisers were also vital in ensuring the terms were correct.

Fuller details of the work in connection with the contract will be given elsewhere.

The Society should derive much favourable publicity from the film which is expected to go on general release in the UK in 1979.

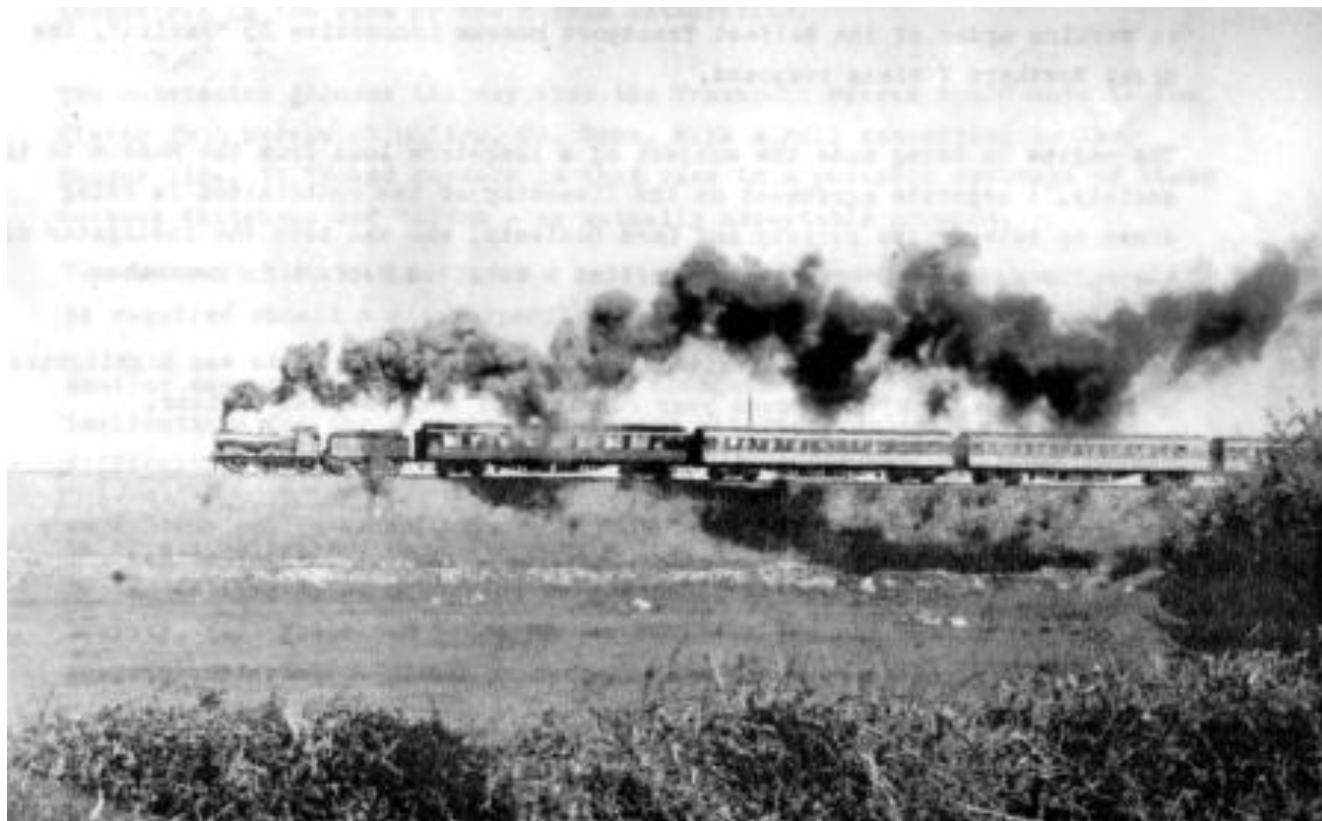
Hopes of a second contract for a film for German television had faded by March. This may have been for the best, as work on the "Great Train Robbery" kept the Society's workforce at full stretch during the first half of 1978.

Unfortunately, this forced the Council to prune the railtour programme somewhat. The proposed 12<sup>th</sup> August tour from Mullingar to Sligo was postponed until 1979. One consideration was the possibility that No.171 might at that time be based in Mullingar for a spell and it was felt she would be a more suitable engine for the tour than No.186. The other tour to go was the 2<sup>nd</sup> September outing from Larne

to Bangor. Again it is a tour which can be included at a later date.

The circumstances surrounding the cancellation of the 22<sup>nd</sup> April Poyntzpass railtour were of course different. This decision came in the wake of a break-in by vandals at Whitehead on 23<sup>rd</sup> March which led to the destruction by malicious fire of one of the Society's coaches, the K15 open second 583. Two other coaches, also vehicles regularly used on tours, were damaged in the attack.

The break-in was a sickening blow for the Society and an emergency Council meeting decided the best course would be to cancel the 22<sup>nd</sup> April in order to concentrate work at Whitehead on the securing of the site.



*No.186 in SER green, leaves a smoke-screen over the countryside near Castletown on the outward leg of the 1978 Claddagh excursion from Mullingar to Galway. (C.P. Friel)*

With hindsight it is possible to say that it is likely that the 22<sup>nd</sup> April tour would have been doomed even had it not have been for the break-in. Much work on the coaches remained to be done, and in fact it emerged just weeks before the proposed date that No.171 needed two axleboxes re-metalled.

The operation to secure the site by stringing coils of barbed wire along the top of the eight-foot high perimeter security fence was started at the Easter weekend and completed in several weeks.

It was particularly ironic that the attack should have taken place 24 hours after the Council had been discussing the possible consequences of such an incident.

Our insurance adviser was in fact in process of obtaining insurance cover for the coaches, but through bad luck, events overtook us. Such cover has now been implemented.

On the bright side, another major item before the Council has been the restoration to working order of the Belfast Transport Museum locomotive No.85 "Merlin", the Great Northern V class compound.

The engine is being made the subject of a long-term loan from the Museum to the Society. A separate



agreement on the financing of the restoration is being drawn up between the Society and Lord Dunleath, who has been the instigator of the whole scheme. No.85 moved into Harland & Wolff in Belfast in September for the bulk of the restoration work.

The shortage of members willing to volunteer for Council posts was highlighted by the absence, for the second year running, of a commercial officer. This led to the Treasurer carrying a double load.

The erection of the new 'Tarry' at Whitehead was planned by the Council as a means of making conditions there more tolerable for the workforce - and in the hope of attracting new faces down.



***Dismantling No.85 in Harland's Engine Works - engine off its wheels, ashpan about to be dropped, apprentices measure the outside cylinders for wear, carbonisation, etc., while men behind buffer beam inspect the middle cylinder and slide valve faces. Eccentric straps are at bottom left of picture. (C.P. Friel)***

The appeal for the tarry which was launched in March had a fair response. To those who contributed, many thanks.

The existing back room was demolished in January to make way for a track connection to the new wheel-drop. The commissioning of the wheel-drop in April meant that the Society was probably the first preservation group in the British Isles to have built its own wheel-drop ... unless, of course, you know different.

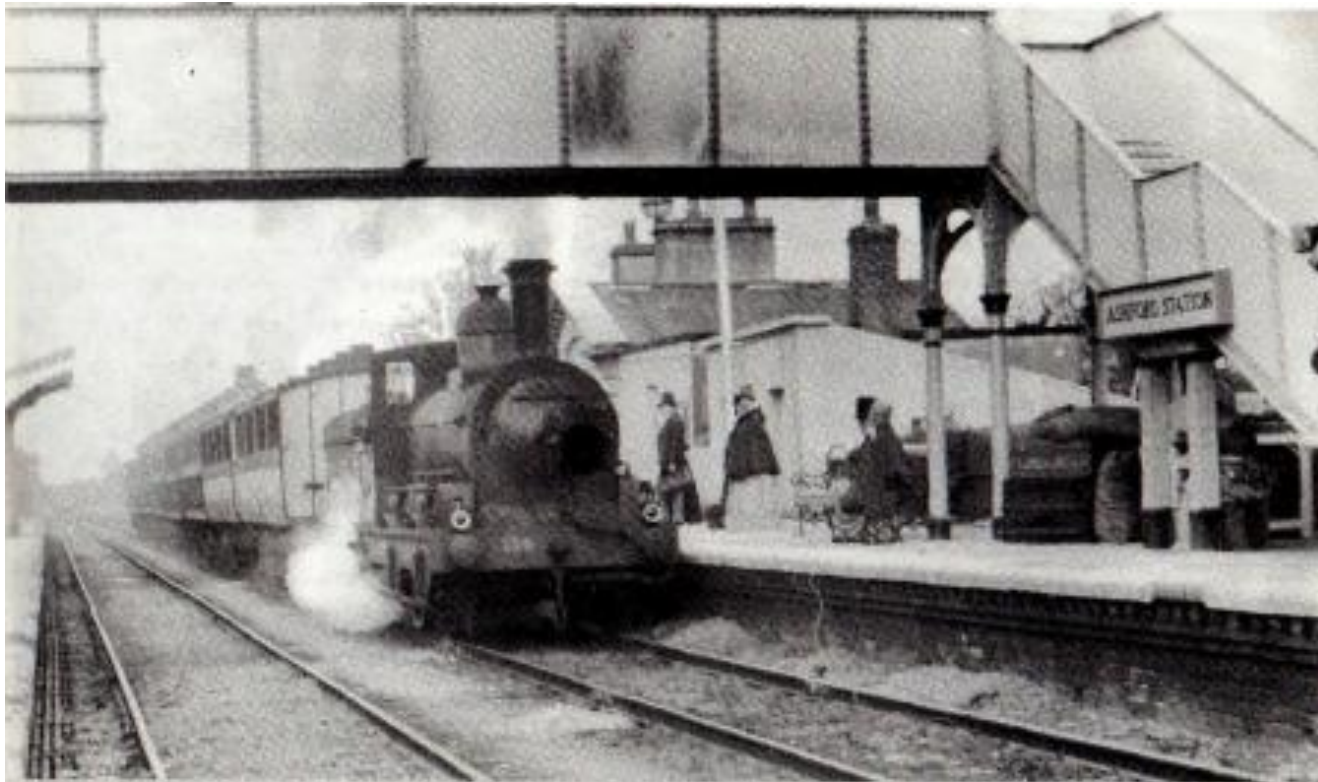
The 25-year lease with Carrickfergus Council for the site at Whitehead which was signed in April further cements our close relationship with the Council.

Another area of co-operation with the Council has been in the negotiation for a Government grant to

help with the roof for the new shed at Whitehead. If all goes well, it would be intended that work should start in autumn 1978.

The RPSI Council is also keen that negotiations should be opened with CIÉ with a view to obtaining a lease for Mullingar. Some progress here is expected shortly. The Society was invited by the Northern Ireland Department of Education to make a submission on the future of the museums service in Northern Ireland. A sub-committee made recommendations which were accepted by the Council and their document formed the submission.

One recommendation was that the Belfast Transport Museum should not disperse any of its locomotives or coaches to bodies other than those which have proved themselves in the view of the Museum authorities.



***South Eastern Railway 2-2-2 134 (No.184) built by Robert Stephenson in 1849, arrives at Ashford (Moate) with the Ocean Mail from London Bridge to Folkestone in May 1855 with just a glimpse of the cinemascope camera on the extreme right. (C.P. Friel)***

The submission foresaw the day when the Transport Museum would move to the Ulster Folk Museum at Cultra, Co. Down, with a rail connection to the Bangor line. It looked forward in that case to a possible exchange of items between Whitehead and Cultra - on mutually acceptable grounds.

The document also advised that a substantial government investment would be required should a steam-operated preserved branch line be opened.

Another suggestion, which the Council recognised could have wide implications for the Society, considered alternatives should difficulties be found in moving the railway part of the Museum to Cultra.

In this eventuality, says the submission, it might be worth giving thought to the setting up of a working relationship between the Museum and the Society, with Whitehead becoming the Northern Ireland centre for all standard gauge preserved rail stock.

The Council viewed the submission as largely being a matter of keeping options open for the Society. It was well aware of the possible complications inherent in any large-scale combination of activities by statutory and voluntary bodies.

The Council is keen that bonds between the RPSI and like-minded enthusiast bodies should be strengthened. Hence the Council was interested in an idea promoted by Lord O'Neill that an Irish branch of the Association of Railway Preservation Societies should be formed.

Many bodies ranging from bus to traction engine groups were represented at an inaugural meeting in Belfast in February. Significantly, also present were representatives of the Northern Ireland Tourist Board, the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, and Northern Ireland Railways.

Much remains to be decided within the branch, but it was agreed to restrict membership to railway societies. Consultations continue with ARPS in Britain.

On the same theme, the Society's Belfast area meetings were the forum for an inter-society railway quiz which initially involved teams from six societies. They were the RPSI, the Isle of Man Steam Railway Supporters Association, the Belfast & Co. Down Museum Trust, the Ulster Model Railway Club, runners-up the Irish Transport Trust and the winners, the Irish Railway Record Society.

The meetings were also used to put into practice a suggestion emerging from the annual general meeting that more information could be disseminated by short talks at the meetings. With attendances of up to 80, this has proved worthwhile.

In Dublin, the Society has held several film shows, with facilities provided by the IRRS.

Some 50 people attended the annual soiree held in Carrickfergus in January - and this was a turn-out higher than the AGM.

A sub-committee was formed to handle plans for the successful 20<sup>th</sup> May Steam and Vintage Gala at Whitehead. The event was a joint venture between the Society and Carrickfergus Lions Club. Whitehead was also the venue for the bring and buy antique auction in March.

The Council gave consideration to the theory of a further subscription increase. With insurance costs now up to £1,300 per annum, and many recurring items of expenditure to meet, an increased income from the subscriptions would be welcome. However, it was decided to try and defer such a move by having more members take out covenants in favour of the Society.

This year's posts of special responsibility include:

Laurence Morrison, Membership Secretary.

Paddy O'Brien, Mullingar Superintendent.

Paul Newell, Purchasing Officer.

Mary Friel, Catering Officer.

Nevin Hamilton, Counter Sales.

Charles Friel, Official Photographer and Locomotive Stores Superintendent.

Tony Ragg, Carriage & Wagon Stores Superintendent.

John Friel, Safety Officer.

William Coates, Plant Maintenance.

Gregg Ryan, Southern Publicity and Railtours Sales.

Evan Connolly, Portrush Flyer Officer.

David Humphries, Belfast Area Assistant and Railtour Hotels Officer.

Derek Young, Insurance Adviser.

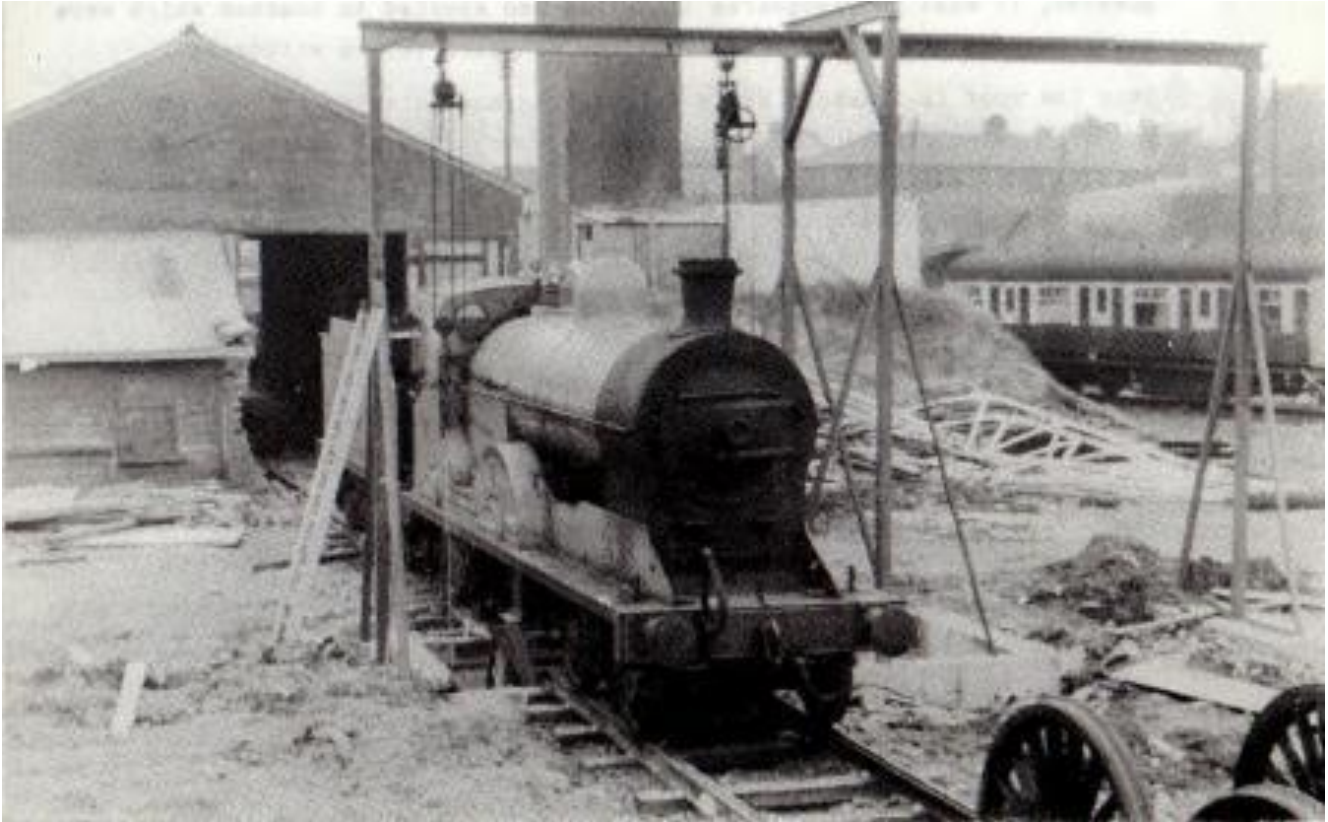
John Danson, North of England Representative.

Lavens Steele, Ulster Tourist Development Association Representative.

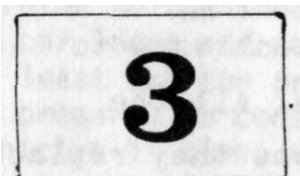
Tommy Dorrian, Bar Steward.



The following list gives the availability of each locomotive together with repairs recently completed and proposed for the near future. Major repairs are under review and proposed for the winter and will be decided upon at the end of the operating season. This list does not include running repairs or annual inspection of boilers.



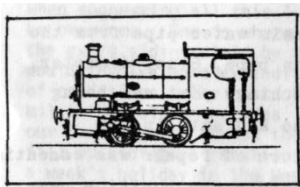
*No.171 over the wheel-drop at Whitehead with the replacement wheels for No.4 in the right foreground and the engine shed behind showing where the mess room was removed. (C.P. Friel)*



In traffic (Whitehead).

Work Completed: Repairs to damper and steam brake.

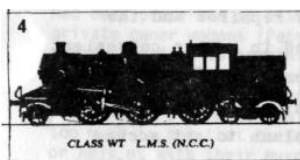
Proposed: None.



In store (Whitehead).

Work Completed: None

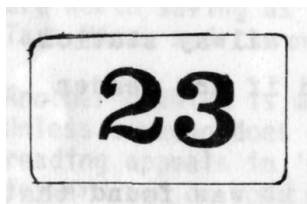
Proposed: None.



Minor repairs (Whitehead).

Completed: Bogie springs replaced, weights adjusted, rocking grate mechanism overhauled, washout plugs all repaired or threads re-cut as required. Fusible plugs replaced and box bolts also.

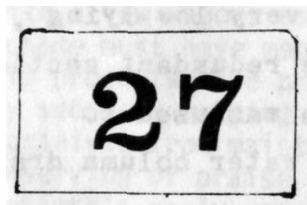
Work planned: Replacement of sand pipe, repairs to left cylinder gland, new brick arch, small tubes to be expanded at firebox end, ash pan to be repaired.



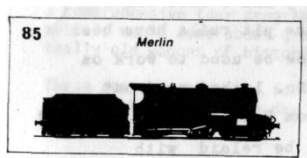
In traffic (Whitehead).

Work Completed: None.

Planned : None.



In store awaiting major overhaul (Whitehead).



General Overhaul in progress. (Locomotive at Harland & Wolff Engine works)

See also Editorial & Feature: Merlin - The Story So Far.



Running in (Whitehead).

Work Completed: Adjustment of vertical clearance of axleboxes.

Planned: Fit new tool box.

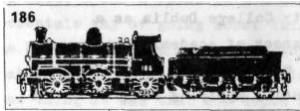


In traffic (Mullingar). In modified form for film contract.

Work Completed: Removal and examination of valves and pistons, gland bushes renewed, slide bars closed and slipper blocks machined, small ends closed and cotters re-fitted, big ends re-metalled and fitted, cross head travel checked and adjusted, drain cock linkage overhauled, brake cylinders, pipe work and valves overhauled, new vacuum reservoir fitted, vacuum ejector dismantled, checked and missing parts replaced, vacuum exhaust pipe replaced. Tender front plates replaced draw-gear overhauled and engine weights checked. Tender weights checked and adjusted, tender shut off valves overhauled, tender tank patched and stretcher plates repaired. Tool box repaired and shovel plate raised. Boiler retubed and hydraulic tested. Washout plugs replaced or rethreaded as required. Fire hole ring rivets caulked, steam pipe/cylinder block studs replaced, blower valve overhauled, new injector cones fitted and internal feed pipes cleared, steam joints remade as required.

Modifications For Film Work: False outside frames and axle boxes fitted, cab removed down to hand rail (except front plate), imitation brass dome, outside springs, dummy lever reverse gear fitted; also number plates bearing No.134. Locomotive painted in livery of South Eastern Railway - green with brick red frames, temporary framework and canvas cover made to protect crew while travelling to and from film location.

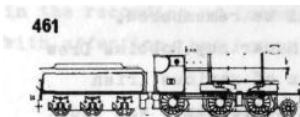
Work Planned: None.



In traffic (Mullingar). Painted in Film contract livery as No.184

Work Completed: Two washout plugs in smoke box replaced, fusible plug replaced, new lower half of main steam pipe fitted, new chimney built. Number plates - "136" fitted.

Planned: Fit new chimney.



In store (Mullingar). Awaiting heavy overhaul.

## Plant

Wheel-Drop: Area for drop pit excavated, reinforced concrete pit cast in place, bridge pieces and slide rails made and fitted, area back-filled, ballasted and tramway rail laid. Old tarry removed along with end wall of shed, new doors fitted, gantry built and erected, trolley for hoist made, crossbeams, ties and slings for lowering wheelset made.

Proposed: Back-fill material dug out under track, replaced by hard fill, track replaced with bullhead rail. Trolley made for sliding wheelset out from under engine, traversing mechanism for hoist fitted, pump installed.

Loading Shovel (No.1): Completed: Gear box removed and replaced. Planned: Reassemble machine.

## CARRIAGE & WAGON REPORT

Alan Edgar

A great deal has occurred since the last carriage report, not apparent to the casual visitor to Whitehead, where dilapidated carriages are all too much in evidence. But then carriage work does have a certain treadmill quality about it; it takes all the running you can do to stay in the same place.

At the end of the 1977 operating season nine coaches were in traffic. The eight coach rake used on the flyer consisted of three GNR vehicles (562, 583 and 552) while the GSR contributed the four Bredins and 861. The sole representative of the NCC was 342, which was normally the spare coach. Tour trains generally loaded to less than eight coaches, the exception being the Boyne Valley. 472, the North Atlantic brake, was withdrawn after a brief spell in traffic for some attention to her gangway ends. However, she was subsequently used for the Sunday train rides at Whitehead.

Of the above coaches, the diner, (552), received a new roof covering of PVC proofed nylon during the winter of 1976. This has given us considerable breathing space, as the interior is no longer regularly spoiled by water leaking through the roof. Material was also purchased for GNR open thirds 583 and 586. For comparison, a canvas roof cover was purchased for NCC side corridor third 358. Due to lack of time and manpower, these have not been applied.

The necessity of re-roofing arises with the majority of our coaches. The cause of the trouble seems to

be the grade of fabric used formerly on these coaches. It disintegrates after two or three years. However, it must be remembered that this was applied to coaches which were only intended to run for a small number of years before withdrawal.

Once the roof is leaking, it is frightening how quickly rot can destroy both the interior and the framing of the coach body. Besides restoration work, a continued strain on manpower and resources is the repairing of damage caused by vandalism, which has now reached unprecedented levels. Last year, during a shunt on a Saturday afternoon, 561 (GNR side corridor first) was left in the siding at Kings Road bridge. Collecting her some minutes later, shunters found that vandals had smashed three large windows with bricks. Shortly after the new carriage sidings were occupied vandals on the far side of the Larne line broke seven windows using catapults, two of the windows being the large ones on 472.

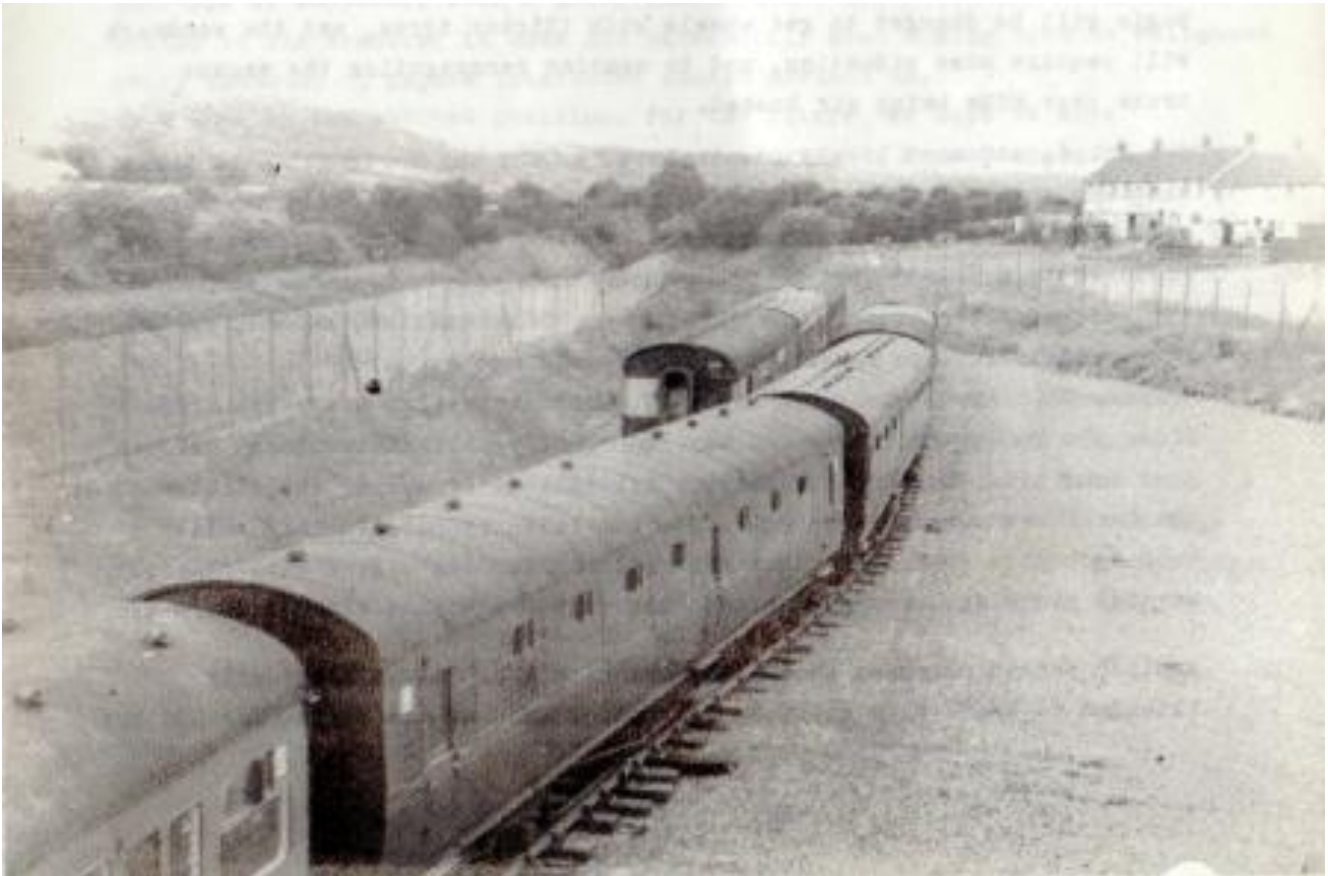


*Carriageman at work - Ken Pullin sealing part of 1327's roof with bituminous paint at Whitehead. (C.P. Friel)*

Vandals broke into the site on numerous occasions, smashing windows on 4012 (GSR first) and 1333 (GSR open second). The diner was broken into on at least two occasions. On one of these the contents of a full tin of varnish was poured over the interior of the kitchen. The culmination of all this occurred on the night of 22<sup>nd</sup>/23<sup>rd</sup> March when 583 was broken into by persons unknown and set on fire. 583 was destroyed, and Bredins 1327 and 1328 were also damaged. 1327 was coupled to 583 and was burnt at one end; the non-metal parts of the gangway end and the gangway door were destroyed, and the end plate scorched. This damage was relatively slight, and 1327 is now back in traffic. 1328 was more seriously damaged, having been partially alongside 583. The coach was severely scorched along half its length. The windows disintegrated and the exterior panels buckled and will require replacement, as might the timber framing behind them. 1328 has therefore been withdrawn from service. The possibility of having her repaired at York Road works is being investigated.



The fire damage was all the more serious as the coaches concerned were all in traffic. Looking on the bright side, 583 was not one of the more historical coaches and we do have another K15 in original condition - 581. The loss of 861, for example, would have been incalculable. Just two weeks before the fire, 358, a wooden bodied NCC third in original condition, was sitting on the track subsequently occupied by 583. Be this as it may, the effective loss of two carriages has severe consequences for the operating department, especially in connection with the Flyer, which requires eight coaches. The upgrading of 342 from spare coach to full traffic status still leaves a gap of one. To fill this it may be possible to patch up sister coach 340, although a large portion of her roof covering was carried away in the winter gales. Another possible contender is a vehicle recently purchased from NIR, which latterly worked with MED railcars. 526 is an NCC centre-corridor third, seating 80. Prior to entering traffic, one bogie will be changed to get wheels with thicker tyres, and the woodwork will require some attention, not to mention reconnecting the vacuum brake gear, MEDs being air braked.



*General view of one of the carriage roads behind the shed. (C.P. Friel)*

The third, and most likely, possibility is 472, the North Atlantic brake, which is currently undergoing restoration. The roof covering has been replaced, using the fabric purchased for 583, and she is currently being restored to full NCC livery. The gangway ends are to have new sheets welded in, and, time permitting, the interior is to be tackled, notably on the provision of luggage racks and sliding compartment doors. Besides 526, the Society has recently purchased several other vehicles. Diner 550 became available and was rapidly bought. Unfortunately she is in poor condition, holding the dubious distinction of having the worst roof of all the coaches we have so far bought. She has recently received SKF roller bearing bogies from a withdrawn MPD railcar. Her own bogies were removed several years ago, and she was sitting on works bogies without bearings.

Another recent purchase is ex-NCC composite 274. It was originally intended to break this coach up

for spares and use the bogies for 550 but she may now be spared the axe. 274 is unique in being the sole surviving coach retaining a rather curious 'unique feature - two half-sided compartments.

Ex-NCC brown van 697 has been purchased to serve as a store for the diner stock. We hope to purchase a GNR P van in the near future. This bogie vehicle will hopefully be used for transporting coal, etc. Visitors to Mullingar may have noticed an extremely dilapidated coach in one of the sidings beside the shed. Despite its deplorable body condition, this coach, latterly CIÉ 540A, is of outstanding historical interest, having been built for the Waterford, Limerick and Western Railway in 1897. It is typical of coach building of that period, with curved-in ends to the body and louvered ventilators above the windows. Her restoration will obviously be a long term affair. Also at Mullingar is a dormitory coach purchased by the Dublin members. This vehicle was originally a GSWR carriage.

A very welcome development has been undertaken by four members of the restoration of a coach. The four are David Humphries, Alan Love, Brian McElherron and John Shaw, and the coach is GNR brake third 114. This group made great inroads into 114's restoration before she was whisked away to serve as an RPSI personnel coach during the Great Train Robbery film contract. Work will resume when she returns north in the autumn. In the meantime, the group have tackled fire-damaged Bredin 1327. The formation of such a group to work on a specific vehicle is an excellent way in which members could help the Society; jeopardised by shortage of manpower. Such a group can work at times which are best suited to its members; it does not necessarily mean coming down to Whitehead every Saturday. Anyone interested should contact us.

This then is the current position. For the future, we hope to work towards producing two principal rakes of carriages. One of these is a GNR Enterprise set of seven vehicles; we eventually hope to replace 583 with 727, a GNR coach still in NIR service. In the near future it is hoped that GNR vehicles will begin to appear in GNR livery. 114 is likely to be the first. The second rake will be the 'Red rake' consisting of GSR and NCC coaches, and is well on the way to being formed already. There is also scope for a vintage train composed of coaches of various origins; vehicles such as 861, 50 (the GNR directors' saloon), 540A, 358, 4012 and 472. Any further coaches are likely to fall into this category. Finally, thanks are due to all those who assisted with carriage work in any way. We would appeal to anyone else able to spend even an occasional day at Whitehead to make their services available.

## **SITE NEWS**

**Neil Hamilton**

---

Enterprise Ulster complete their project at Whitehead in April. The final stages include the earth works for No.1 carriage road and planting silver birch and hawthorn whippets along the eastern boundary at the rear of the locomotive shed. Also completed was the boundary fence and gates. There are now three large track gates, one of which spans the entrance to Nos. 1 and 2 carriage sidings and the other two spanning the approaches to the present and new shed roads. There are also two smaller road gates. One is placed at the entrance to the site along Castleview Road and the other at the platform entrance. All the gates are of very substantial construction compared with those they replaced.

While one of the track gates was being erected, the main water pipe from the tower to the water column was fractured. This cast iron pipe, 6 inches diameter, was accidentally hit when the excavations for the large hinge post was being carried out. As the water supply from the tower to the hydrants in the locomotive shed was now rendered inoperative, some form of repair was essential. It was decided at this stage to move the water column to a new position near the fracture point. In this way, the pipe was not only repaired and the water system reinstated but the column was also located in a more convenient position beside No.1 shed road. It also solved the problem of how best to repair a large cast iron pipe. A considerable amount of effort was required to break up the concrete base of the water column to get access to the column connection with the water main. A compressor was hired for this task. Surprisingly the connection turned out to be a tee junction and not a right angle bend as expected. This

seems to suggest that there was a second water column at Whitehead somewhere nearer the main railway station or perhaps near the former turntable? I would be interested if any reader could verify if this was the case.

After the earth works for No.1 carriage siding was completed it was found that a considerable area of the land cleared became water logged, due to the absence of drainage. As most of the site at Whitehead is very low lying providing drainage for storm water is not easy. However the redundant section of water pipe to the original position of the water column was used to carry this water. The water now siphons into the original water column drain. Since the last report little new track was laid. No.3 and No.4 shed roads have been extended into the new shed floor area and the pit rails have been installed. As a result two of the new pits can now be used to work on rolling stock. Another new section is the extension to No.1 shed road out to the wheel-drop. For this section tramway track from Belfast docks was used but due to difficulties encountered the section will be relaid with conventional rail when time permits.

## **MERLIN - THE STORY SO FAR**

**John Friel**

---

For many years, RPSI member Lord Dunleath has considered the idea of restoring a mainline steam locomotive. Like many of us involved in the Society, he appreciates the world of difference between preserved English lines with an impressive line-up of restored mainline locos restricted to trundling along under a light railway order, and the RPSI with its unrestricted running over the Irish system.

Lord Dunleath discussed the idea informally on many occasions with various Society members and early in 1976 he got in touch with the Society officially. His first question was simply, "What locomotives are available for restoration?" On the assumption that the Transport Museum or CIÉ would release any loco which we expressed interest in, I outlined all the locos in existence.

It was obvious that Lord Dunleath's interest was in an express locomotive rather than a small engine such as No.184. (Ironically, No.184 in those days was not even under RPSI control, but now it is and has been restored to running order.) It was a simple exercise to start with the top and work down. Given unlimited resources, the Museum's ex-GSR 4-6-0 No.800 "Maedhbh" would seem an ideal choice, but her route availability would restrict her to the Dublin-Cork main line.

The next most powerful loco is the Museum's ex-GNR(I) three-cylinder compound 4-4-0 No.85 "Merlin". Despite being an unashamed Great Northern man, I had some misgivings about going for another GN 4-4-0. However, the next locos in line from other companies, ex-GSR 2-6-0 No.461 (originally DSER No.15) and ex-LMS (NCC) 4-4-0 No.74 "Dunluce Castle", could not match No.85 for speed and power. If turning facilities were available, No.85 could easily handle a Portrush Flyer train with bit of power in reserve.

The next logical step was to go and examine No.85 at the Transport Museum at Witham Street, Belfast. A visual inspection revealed that the loco had all of its fittings, apart from some copper pipes and a force feed mechanical lubricator, while the tyres on all the wheels looked quite thick. No.85 had arrived at the Museum in 1970 after spells of storage in Lisburn goods store, Adelaide shed and Dundalk paint shop following withdrawal from service in Dundalk in 1963.

Following our examination, Lord Dunleath wrote to George Thompson, Director of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, to arrange for No.85 to be loaned to the Society. The Trustees of the Museum were eagerly in favour of the project, expressing the hope that the loco could be displayed at the Museum's premises at times when not in use by the RPSI.

Northern Ireland Railways were consulted as to whether they would consider allowing No.85 to run as an addition to the RPSI fleet and, if in favour, as to what the loco's route availability would be. A reply from NIR's Engineering Executive, Stanley Myers, was that they would be happy, subject to normal

inspection procedures, to allow No.85 to run and that the loco would be allowed anywhere on the NIR system.

It was decided, with the approval of the Museum authorities, to examine No.85 generally, and the boiler in particular, as much as possible in the Museum. During October and November 1976, Society personnel spent many Wednesday afternoons in the Museum cleaning the smokebox and loosening washout plugs, fusible plugs and safety valves. No.85's original round-topped boiler was built by Beyer Peacock & Co Ltd in 1932 and was rebuilt in its present form with new front tube plate and Belpaire firebox in 1950 by Harland & Wolff. An examination of the boiler on 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> February 1977 by the boiler insurers revealed it to be in reasonable condition, although there is wasting around some of the washout plugs. However, all 24 large tubes and 134 small tubes were recommended to be renewed.

Meanwhile, Peter Scott was carrying out a detailed mechanical examination of the loco. For advice he called in Tommy Bullick and George Smyth of NIR and Paddy Mallon who was formerly foreman of the erecting shop in the GNR Works, Dundalk. Paddy has contributed much useful knowledge regarding work done on No.85 in latter years at Dundalk.

The extent of the examination possible at this stage was limited by the fact that no major dismantling of the loco was possible. Hence, Raymond Hall of Harland & Wolff was contacted to give a quotation for bringing the loco into Harland's, complete dismantling and examination and making a report of the restoration work considered desirable.

Armed with as much information as we could muster, Denis Grimshaw, Peter Scott and I had a meeting with Lord Dunleath on 1<sup>st</sup> June 1977. We established that Lord Dunleath envisaged No.85 being treated as a normal RPSI loco when planning a railtour season. The loco would eventually run with ex-GNR(I) tender No.31 which had been coupled to No.207 "Boyne" on her last run (the Society's inaugural railtour in September 1965). No 171 ran with this tender during 1969 and 1970 but it would now need some sheet metal work and attention to axleboxes.

The outcome of the meeting was to authorise No.85 to be moved to Harland's, since their report would finally indicate the feasibility of the project. No 85 was moved from the Transport Museum by low-loader on 21<sup>st</sup> September 1977 and the next morning she went into the engine works. Dismantling began barely a hundred yards from where Lord O'Neill's showman's engine "Banshee" was being overhauled.

By the 1977 Annual General Meeting, no defects had been found which would rule out restoration and the project was officially announced at the meeting. By that time, so many people knew about it that it was described as the Society's worst-kept secret.

By April 1978, H&W had produced a complete report listing the work necessary to restore No.85. During the compilation of the report, H&W were in consultation with us on many occasions and there were many visits to the Engine Works to examine parts of the loco.

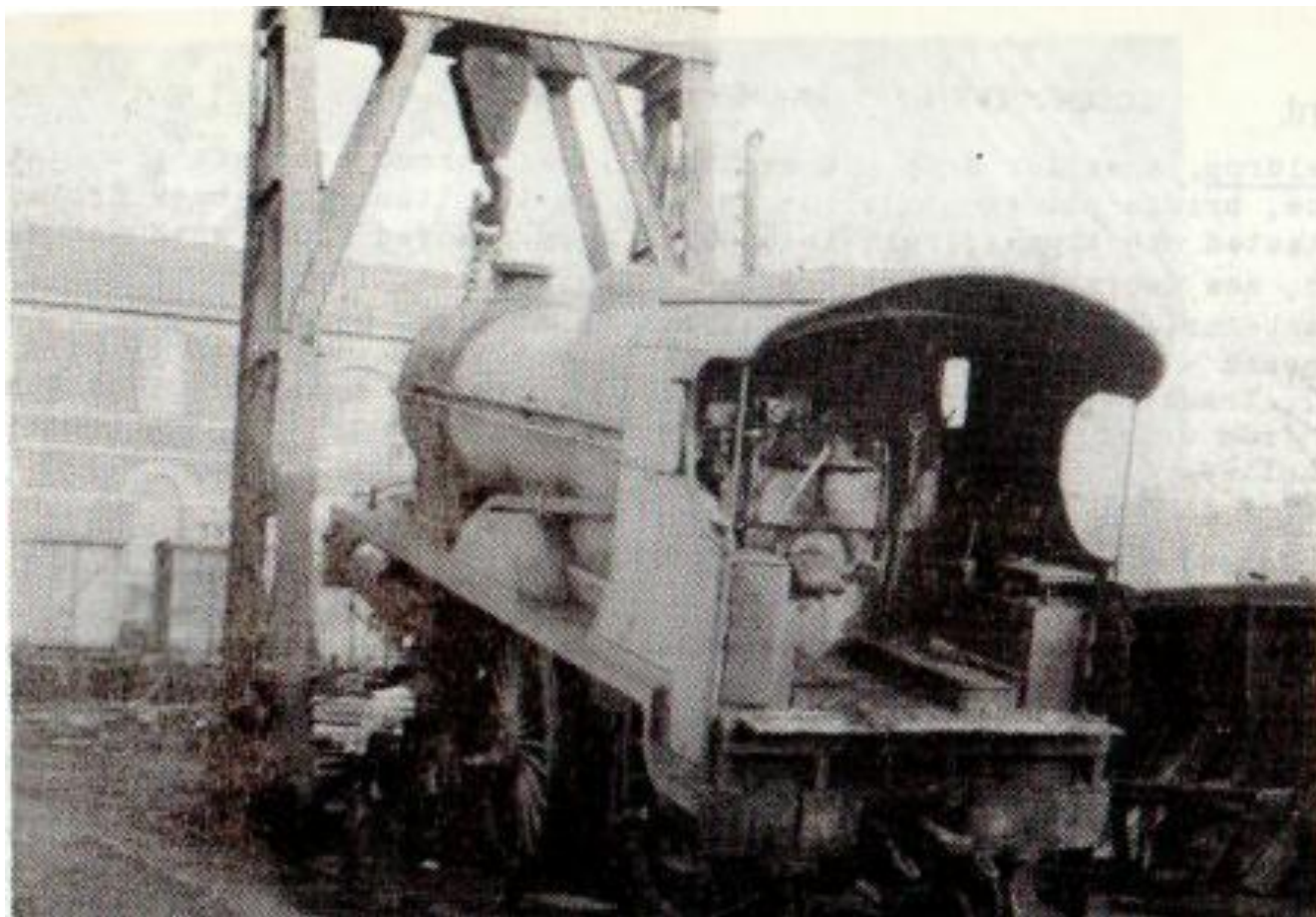
At a meeting with Lord Dunleath on 28<sup>th</sup> April, we decided on which H&W would be requested to undertake and on which the RPSI would undertake at Whitehead. Harland and Wolff were quickly authorised to proceed with the restoration work. The major item in H&W's work was the boiler retubing and fitting new boiler cladding and insulation. One bogie axlebox needed to be re-metalled as did the centre big end, and the crank pin needed to be machined. New bushes were required for the coupling and connecting rods. The piston rods were to be ground and new gland packing and piston rings were to be made. Other new items to be made by H&W included smokebox steam pipes, a drawbar for between engine and tender and a new small valve for the regulator. There were many smaller jobs such as overhaul of boiler fittings and replacement of pipework and boiler studs.



Once No.85 arrives at Whitehead, the cylinder lubrication system will have to be restored including replacement of much missing pipework and the missing lubricator. The brake gear will have to be restored and the other major job to be done will be the painting and lining out of the locomotive. Again, there will be plenty of minor jobs, such as straightening a footstep.

Predicting just when No.85 will finally take to the rails is difficult at present. Lord Dunleath's main concern has been to get H&W's work under way before spiralling costs would rule out the project altogether. Fortunately, this work is in progress at the moment (late June 1978) and should be completed by the end of August.

The RPSI Council envisage the locomotive shed extension roof being put on during October 1978, after which we would be set to receive No.85 from H&W (probably hauled by rail from York Road). Work could then proceed under cover on the loco and its tender, but the extent of work required on other locos will dictate the rate of progress on Merlin.



*No.85 "Merlin" being lifted at Dundalk in January 1961. (J.P. O'Dea)*

Once No.85 has arrived at Whitehead, the only way you can ensure her quick return to service is by coming to the site and asking for a job to do. There is plenty of interesting work in prospect.

The Society must express its gratitude to the Trustees and Director of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum for their enlightened attitude to the project; their readiness to make No.85 available is indicative of the reputation and degree of official recognition which the RPSI has built for itself.

The restoration of a museum engine to mainline standard is really the sort of thing that enthusiasts dream about. The Society is grateful to Lord Dunleath for taking the initiative in bringing the dream

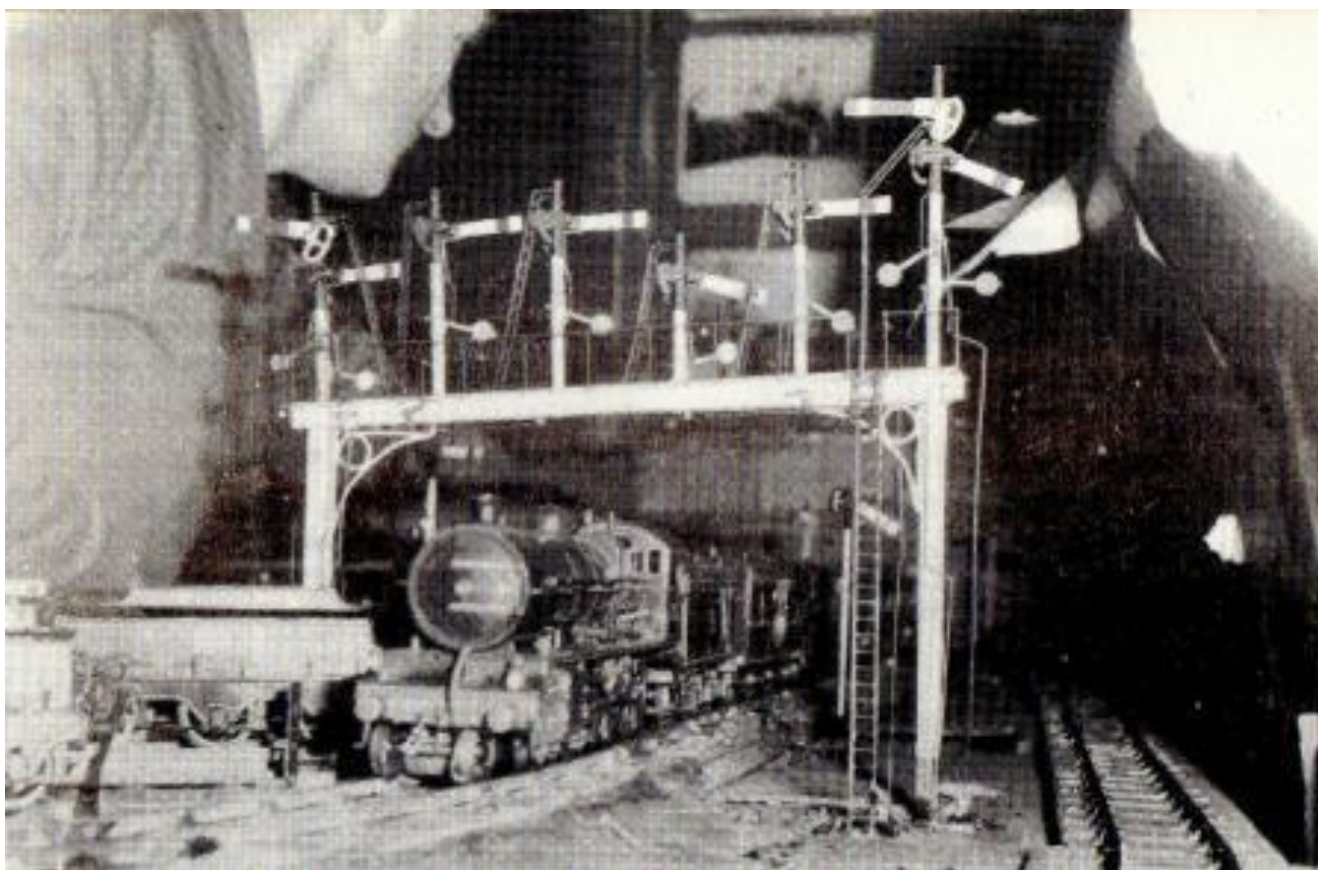
towards reality. It should be remembered that the reality can only be achieved by the application of sound engineering knowledge and practice and a lot of hard work lies ahead.

## **A.R. DONALDSON - OBITUARY**

**Joe Cassells**

Drew Donaldson's tragic death on 20<sup>th</sup> May 1978 has removed from the circle of Irish railway enthusiasts an individual who combined in unique degree historical knowledge, expertise in technical appraisal and dexterity on modelling which extended over a vast field of railway interest.

Drew's early career revealed a mind of exceptional clarity and sharpness. Making a straight choice between mathematics and classics he went from Methodist College Belfast to Trinity College Dublin as a classical exhibitioner, where he crowned a career of academic brilliance with first class honours in classics, a gold medal and one of the Trinity Scholarships of 1940. Between times he was busily applying himself to the study of the Irish Language, in which he became proficient, and through the medium of which he broadcast several times on Radio Éireann. A period of lecturing in the college was followed by a teaching career in Omagh and Belfast, from the mid forties until his retirement in 1971.



It is, however, as a railway enthusiast that he will be remembered. Along with Mac Arnold, Bob Clements and the late J. Macartney Robbins, Drew could claim to have been one of the first generation of serious Irish 'Timers'. His experience of locomotive practice and performance was wide, stretching back to the pre-war 'North Atlantic Express' on the NCC to the Great Northern 'Enterprise' during its brief booking from Belfast to Cork, and at the other end of the performance scale to the smaller railways, not least to the BCDR. Supremely his love for the Great Southern Railways (later CIÉ) formed the cornerstone of his railway interest, and we are fortunate that the fruit of his rich experience of performance and the discriminating eye which he turned to design matters have been encapsulated in his book "Decade of Steam", as well as in several articles he wrote during his editorship of "Five Foot

Three”.

To the less technically minded public he was known too for his photographs, many of which have appeared in books and articles relating to Irish Railways. His prototype railway knowledge of course informed and guided his gifted hands. During his college days the nucleus of his unique layout was conceived, and after the collapse of main line steam on CIÉ he kept the memories fresh by a model railway of infinite complexity on which most prototypes of the more important Great Southern classes could be seen at work on track nights. Often professional railwaymen would call to see the line, and it pleased him especially when CIÉ men made the journey north and found themselves carried back to their own steam days by what they saw. His models travelled widely, and over the years have appeared in exhibitions in Dublin and London as well at various centres in Belfast. Most of us probably saw Drew at his most contented (if not his quietest) seated at his workbench at work on a new engine or a motor repair, with the cat keeping a wary eye from a safe distance.

As a railway enthusiast and a modeller, Drew's whole approach was shaped by his personality. Idiosyncratic (and at times rather exasperating) in manner, he was withal a basically shy man with a deeply honest outlook on life, a charm which in its own way could be very engaging, a zanily eccentric way of going about things, and certainly a delight in any company as he related a fund of racy stories on all manner of topics related to railways and to his indefatigable cycling journeys. If we were sorry about one thing it was that his depth of knowledge was restricted in its breadth, and certainly those of us who knew him felt that the wider world of scholarship on British and Continental steam matters could have been greatly enriched by his contribution. The very wide circle of friends who delighted in his company, learned from his knowledge and shared with him in the recording of locomotive performance will remember Drew Donaldson with affection, and mourn his passing with great sadness.

## **SOME THOUGHTS ON GOODS WAGONS**

**Martin Hewitt**

---

My purpose in writing this article is firstly to tell of the fate in store for CIÉ's fleet of loose coupled goods wagons - soon to be a thing of the past under the "Rail Development Plan" envisaging a railway operated only by continuous braked block trains - and secondly to put forward some thoughts and suggestions concerning their preservation and possible operation behind a steam locomotive. Goods wagons are at present a common sight on our railways and carry a variety of traffic.

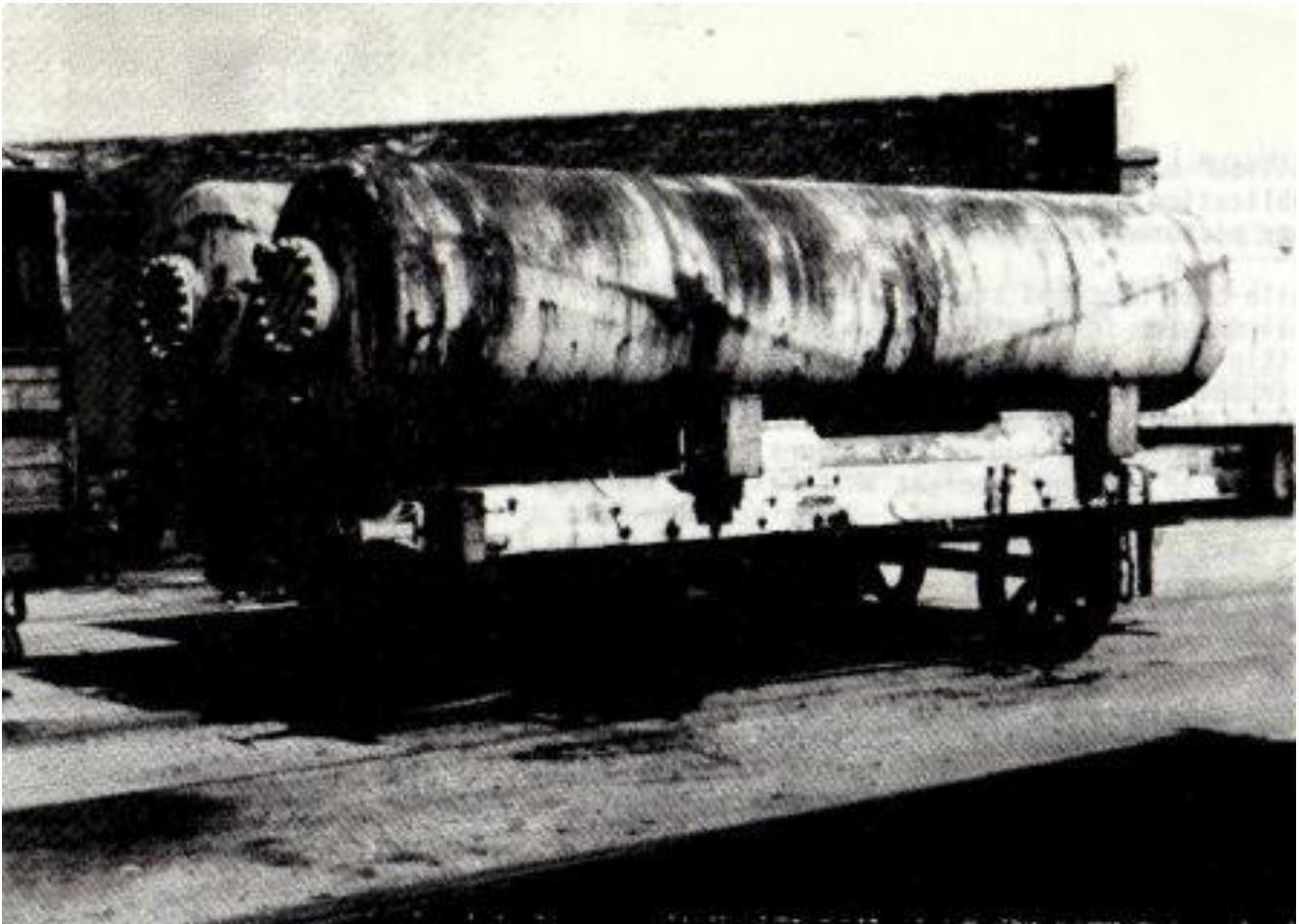
At present wagons of every type are being cut up in Mullingar scrap-yard. The yard, once a track depot in the days of the MGWR Bretland tracklaying machine, is now used exclusively for the breaking up of goods wagons plus from time to time old coaches (latterly departmental vehicles), railcars and some old 30ft vans. The Newbrook Sidings, which formally served the town's now closed racecourse (now an industrial site), are also kept full of condemned wagons and other marked-off stock which form a queue there until there is space in the actual scrap-yard.

During the last year and so far this year the sight of a CIÉ diesel hauling a long rake of withdrawn wagons has become a familiar sight. These 'cripple specials' as they are known by the railwaymen, composed of as many as fifty wagons each, can operate as often as one each week at peak scrapping times.

Living in Ballinasloe on the main line to Mullingar from the west I have been able to do a lot of recording and researching into the whole aspect of the withdrawing and scrapping of wagons. Many of these 'cripples' come from yards like Rathpeacon and Kilmallock on the Cork line while others are wagons sent to Limerick Wagon Works for repairs but which, after inspection, are written off. Many cripple specials contain cattle wagons, out of use since 3<sup>rd</sup> November 1975 when CIÉ livestock traffic ceased. Almost all these specials make their way to Mullingar via Limerick, Ardahan, Athenry (old wagons can often be found at these last two places stabled there and waiting to continue on a few days



or weeks later), Ballinasloe and Athlone. Perhaps it is ironic that so many broken down cattle wagons now on their last journey should pass through Ballinasloe, at one time one of the busiest stations for livestock traffic on the ex-MGWR system. The great fairs, especially the week long October Fair, kept these wagons very busy in MGWR, GSR and early CIÉ days. My observations and recording of the movements of wagons for scrapping would seem to indicate that there is a rapid scrap and refill programme at Mullingar scrap-yard, where, I have heard, as many as forty wagons a week can be scrapped.

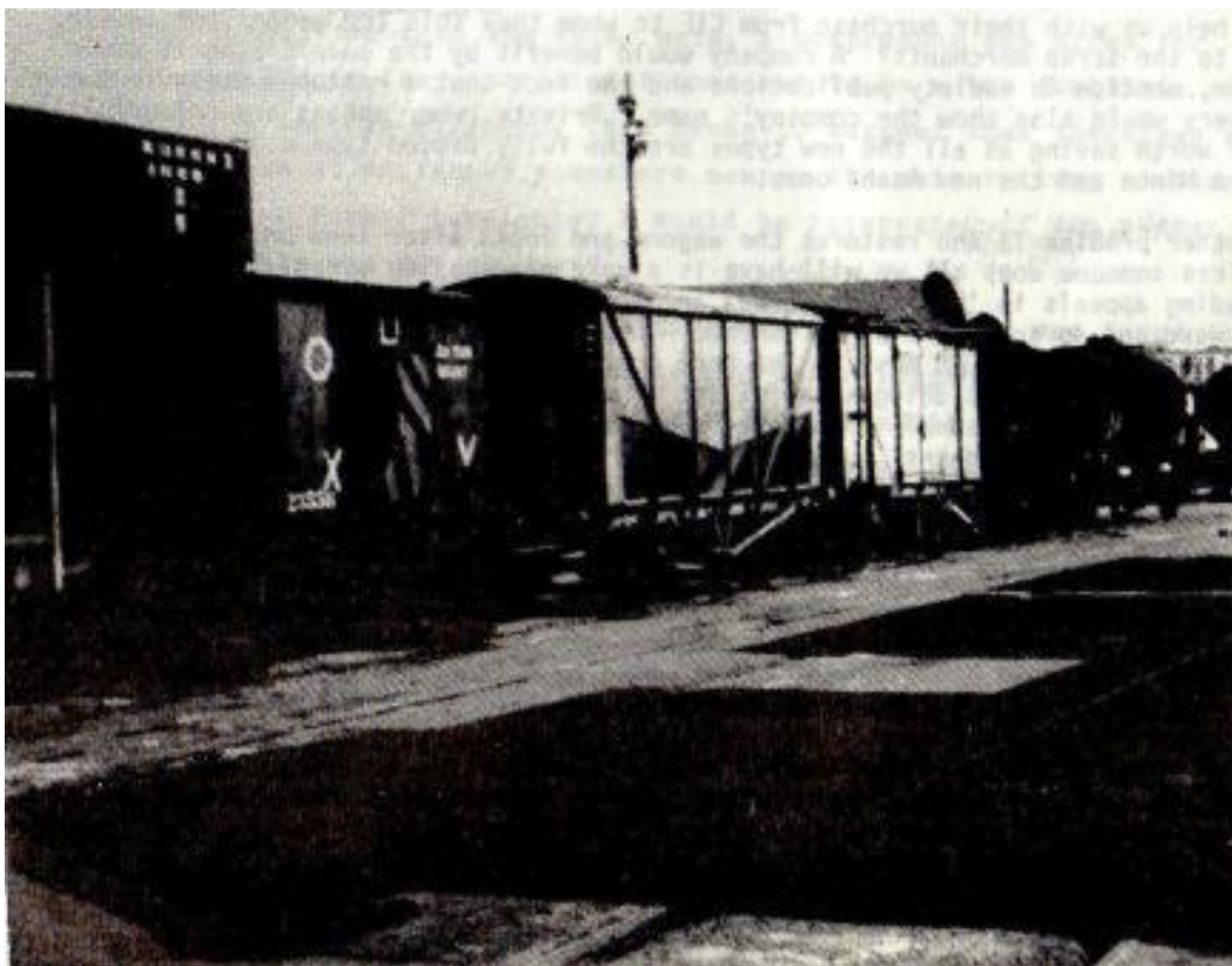


As wagons continue to move into the yard it is only a matter of time before the last of the cripple specials will have set off for Mullingar and then the last of the old type wagons will have fallen under the breakers torch or end up as a shed in someone's back garden. As I said, all types of wagons are to be found at Mullingar at present with the exception of horse boxes, all of which seem to have gone into history now as the last surviving ones were withdrawn from service during 1973. Wagons there include cattle wagons, bulk grain wagons, open 2-plank and 5-plank wagons, oil and petrol tank wagons, bitumen tar wagons, four wheel flats of the type used once to carry cars, brake vans (some old GSWR) and a few old gunpowder vans. Items there from the PWD also ready for scrapping include old GSWR and GSR ballast hoppers, later CIÉ ones and some interesting old PWD plough vans complete with ploughs. There are also hundreds of the common covered wagons (hardtops) although there are a few old wooden bodied covered wagons dating back to GSR days and also many open beet wagons. Many types of wagons there still bear their old company number plates (some GNR bulk grain wagons). However, I know of only one wagon bearing a MGWR number plate still in service so I would be interested to hear from any reader who knows of any other MGWR wagon still surviving in one piece. Therefore, in the light of the frightening rate at which the things that made up one of the commonest



sights in bygone days (the long steam hauled goods train) are disappearing I feel that it would be nice if some wagons were to be preserved and maybe some day a steam hauled goods might take to the rails again and recreate another scene from the past. One scene that comes to mind is that of "Slieve Gullion" hauling a mainline goods of assorted loose coupled wagons in the recent publication "Irish Railways in Pictures Number 1, The Great Northern", or of the many pictures in any album of a J15 on a goods train.

While open beet and standard covered wagons (not the old wooden bodied ones though) will survive for another while yet the other types are either no longer or very little used. Cattle, bulk grain, wooden open wagons, etc., will soon have disappeared from this island completely unless something is done to save even one or two examples of each type. At the moment Society finances cannot be expected to provide money for buying old wagons while more important jobs have to be financed. I refer to the shed roof at Whitehead and the expensive restoration and maintenance of our locos and carriages. Therefore, the idea of having a wagon appeal is out, at least for the present. I do understand though that the Committee might later on be prepared to consider accepting one or two private donations of suitable goods vehicles if time, money, manpower and space then permit their restoration and use.



When suggesting all this I do realise there are certain problems that would have to be overcome. One is where are these wagons to be kept? Whitehead is full even with the extra sidings laid by the Society and keeping a rake of assorted wagons there would involve more expenditure on even more tracklaying and a subsequent cramping of conditions. The cost of renting a siding elsewhere would, of course, also militate against the idea. We are unfortunate in not having a line of our own like our counterparts

across the water as it does not cost a society anything to simply fill up sidings at stations when they own both the stations and the line. During a week's holiday in the West Country recently, I visited three preserved lines and found that on the West Somerset Railway (Taunton-Minehead) a number of goods wagons had been preserved at stations along the line. This company also owns some private owner wagons (petrol tank wagons) which were donated by their former owners and this I feel is something that could work equally well here. I have seen several Esso and Shell tank wagons (these two companies gave wagons to the WSR) at Mullingar and my photo of one of three Ranks (Ireland) Ltd bulk grain wagons awaiting their fate in the siding at Enniscorthy last year shows another type of PO wagon. Is it too much to ask that these and other such firms might either donate a wagon or two or help us with their purchase from CIÉ to whom they sold the wagons for passing on to the scrap merchants? A company would benefit by the advertising it would gain, mention in Society publications and the fact that a restored wagon in their livery would also show the company's name. Private owner wagons are colourful and are worth saving as all the new types are the fully fitted type, e.g. Cement Ltd, Tara Mines and the new Asahi ones.

Another problem is who restores the wagons and looks after them once acquired? Unless someone does all we will have is a rake of decaying scrap. I am always reading appeals in "Five Foot Three" and the news sheets for more members to come forward and do some work at Whitehead. It seems that a group of faithful and overworked regulars do most of the hard work with many members going on tours and to the meetings but not doing an awful lot of work in return. Anyway the point is that with a few wagons as well, more workers would be an absolute necessity so the scheme must have members' support to guarantee success.

All projects have problems but once got going, however slowly, are worthwhile. By suddenly heaping a lot of extra work on ourselves we might only prevent ourselves from maintaining our present high level of activity which is most deserving of praise to all those responsible, especially for those who in the Society's early years never dreamed of owning eight steam locos and operating such a comprehensive tour programme. A project such as the one suggested in this article would come about gradually but would have to start soon if some of the really old wagons of historical importance are to be preserved for posterity.

These are some thoughts for the years ahead. All we can do right now is think it over and hope that some day soon some of these ideas will become a reality.

---

## THE DERRY CENTRAL RAILWAY

James McIlfrick

---

Come all ye loyal Men of Steam,  
And shed with me a tear,  
For the twenty sixth of August,  
Nineteen fifty being the year.  
For on that date, sad to relate,  
Through stupid men's design,  
Ran the final train, which left Coleraine,  
For the Derry Central Line.  
Now that final train, was a special train,  
Not just for the men of steam;  
There were 'Black men', bandsmen, women folk too,  
For the last 'run up' 'twould seem.  
As a matter of fact, each coach was packed,  
When the guard gave the "all clear" sign;  
And never again, would he marshal a train,

On the Derry Central Line.  
 The whistle shrieks, the engine pants,  
 The last sad trip's begun.  
 The 'Scottish' engine buckles to,  
 On a most nostalgic run.  
 Despite the load, she onward strode,  
 Defying each incline,  
 No chance to slip, on this last trip,  
 Up the Derry Central line.  
 And as she thundered up the Line,  
 By many a hill and dell,  
 Crowds thronged the little country roads,  
 To wave a last farewell;  
 And from the train, a mournful strain,  
 A sound hard to define;  
 A lament to me, it seemed to be,  
 For the Derry Central Line  
 No more she'll cross the river Bann,  
 To Aghadowey's plain,  
 No more by Garvagh's sparkling streams,  
 Will run the oul' steam train;  
 From sweet Kilrea, up Tamlacht way,  
 To Magherafelt you'll find.  
 A special set, who'll not forget,  
 The Derry Central Line.

Those of us who were born and bred within the precincts of this distinctive little railway, and who had grown to love its passing trains, will not likely ever forget it. The run down of the various branch lines had commenced long before the last World War. It's true, on the outbreak of hostilities, and during the war period, this process was temporarily arrested. On a return to normality, it soon became evident that the writing was on the wall for most of our little railways. The acquisition of the railways by the UTA in 1949, with its drastic schemes of reorganisation, certainly accelerated the run down process that eventually led to the closure of all but the main line railways.

Nevertheless, it was with surprise and anger that we read in the local press that "From the evening of Saturday the 26<sup>th</sup> August 1950, all passenger services will be withdrawn from Coleraine to Magherafelt on the Derry Central Railway."

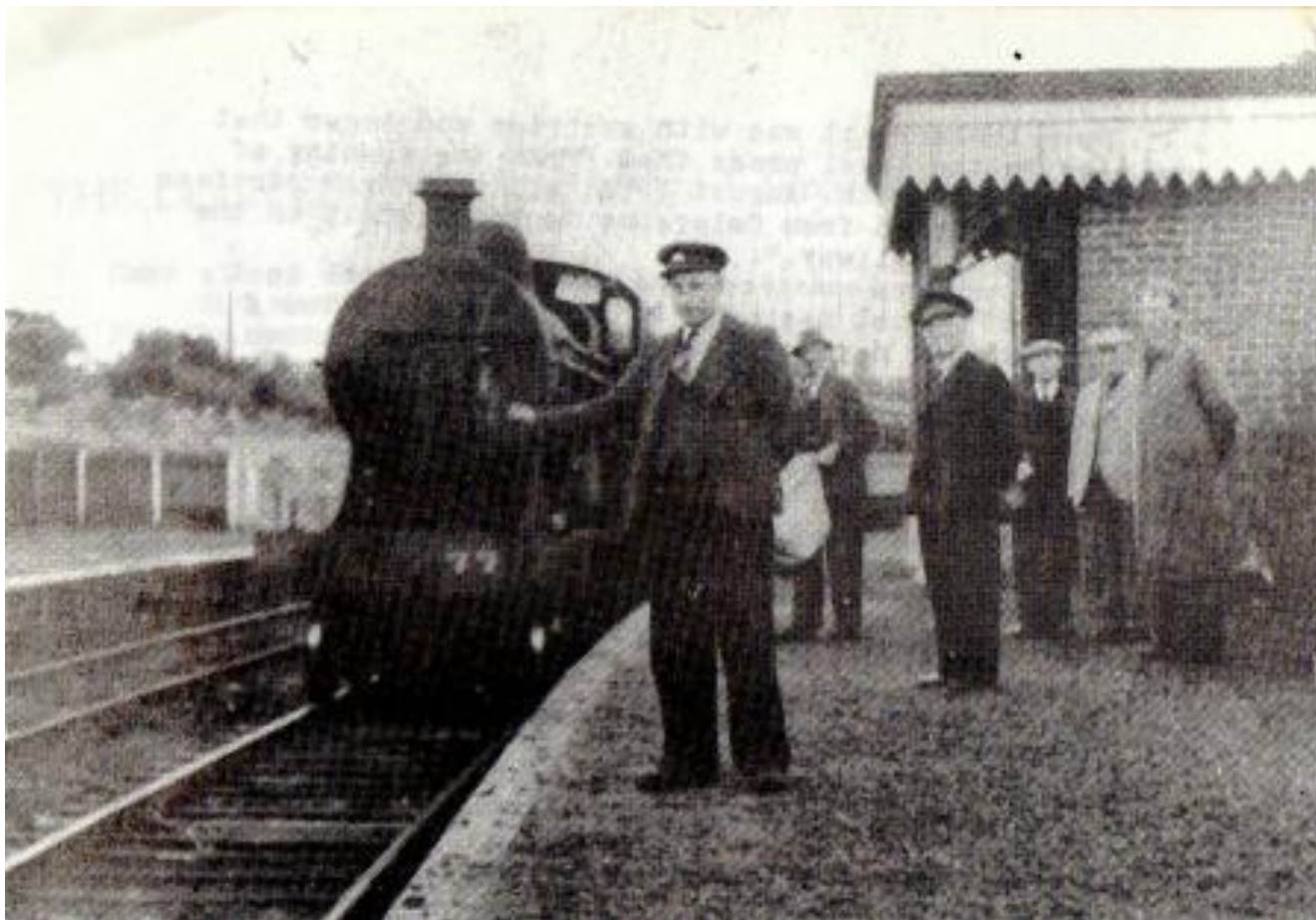
It is perhaps unnecessary to mention that the last Saturday of August has come to be regarded as the annual 'walking day' of the Royal Black Institution, when its members parade with bands and banners at different venues throughout the Province.

I am sure it was no coincidence that the last passenger train should run up the Derry Central on the "Black Saturday". In the past the walking days had been a potential source of income for the railway companies. Perhaps it was the most appropriate day for the dropping of the curtain on this seventy year old railway. For all of us who had travelled from childhood over its metals, and who had learned to love every inch of its track, it was indeed a Black Saturday.

The venue for the Black Demonstration of the County in 1950 was Coleraine. An ideal centre from the railway company's viewpoint, as it meant handling passengers from as far apart as Cookstown in Tyrone, to the City of Londonderry.

Looking back now, I feel proud to have been one of the hundreds of passengers that thronged No.3 platform in Coleraine, waiting for the last train to come in from Portrush. It was a colourful scene. The gay apparel of the women and children contrasted with the uniforms of the bandsmen, while the dignified attire of the members of the preceptories, with their bowler hats, black suits, and black regalia, seemed indeed fitting for this sad occasion, the funeral of the Derry Central Railway!

The 5:35 ex Portrush was to be the last service passenger train to run up the DC line. It was a long train, specially augmented, to cater for the Black men and their supporters, who had travelled to Coleraine earlier in the day by a special.



***Joe Boyd, at Garvagh station, with the tablet for the last service passenger train on the Derry Central Railway. (Willie Dallas)***

As the long train backed up to the platform in Portrush station, a big crowd was waiting to board it. It was natural that those who had used and loved the little branch railway should avail themselves of the opportunity to participate in this nostalgic last trip. But what was most surprising was the number of enthusiasts who had turned up for the occasion, coming from all over the Province, and indeed from across the water. Remember in 1950 steam was still predominant on all the railways.

However, it was at Coleraine station that the greatest enthusiasm was evident. In addition to the crowd who were to travel, was a large contingent of townsfolk who were determined to give the last train a royal send off. As No.77 glided gracefully past the station gates, a lusty cheer reverberated around the station.

No.77 was one of the famous “Castle” class. She and six sisters were built in Glasgow and were known as the Scotch engines. No.77 was the only nameless child of the family. Why she was deprived of this



honour no one can explain. It wasn't as though the powers that be had run out of castles. The writer can think of a castle near enough the railway - almost on top of it - to have merited the honour, Downhill Castle. For good measure its owner, Sir Hervey Bruce, had been a redoubtable warrior as chairman of the Derry Central Railway Co. in its many battles for survival during its brief life.

The Castles, fourteen in all, were known as Class U2 4-4-0, and were powerful and handsome engines. All of them in turn performed on the DC, including the sole survivor, No.74 "Dunluce Castle".

The man entrusted with the task of driving No.77 on this memorable run was Jamie Fillis of Coleraine. Nobody was better qualified for the job, for Jamie was an experienced and dedicated driver - a maestro of the footplate. After fifty one years of service on the railway, Jamie now retired, is still hale and hearty in his native town. Jamie drove over every broad line gauge of the NCC, and did a stint on the Ballycastle narrow gauge. He was familiar with every engine that steamed the track, Whippets, Castles, Moguls and Jeeps. You name them, Jamie drove them - and many more you didn't name.

You have only to enter Jamie's home to know that he was a real Man of Steam. On a shelf stands a little gleaming brass miniature locomotive, and poised on the mantelpiece, burnished to perfection, is the whistle of No.96 "Silver Jubilee".



***No.77 at Kilrea station with the last passenger train between Coleraine and Magherafelt. (James McIlfatrick collection)***

Jamie was a member of the old Borough Council in Coleraine, an honour surely unique for an engine driver. Hanging on the wall is a photograph of Jamie being presented to her Royal Highness Queen Elizabeth, and the Duke of Edinburgh, at Coleraine station in 1953, along with his fellow councillors. On shaking hands with Jamie, she asked him his profession, and must have been somewhat surprised when he told her that he was an engine driver. Asked what was the name of the engine he drove, Jamie

promptly replied, the “Queen Elizabeth”! This was strictly true for No.100 was shedded at Coleraine at that particular time, and Jamie frequently drove her. Hanging opposite is the photo of Jamie on the footplate of another mighty Mogul, No.91 “The Bush”, talking to Jack McGeagh, the well known broadcaster of yesteryear. This was during a BBC radio recording covering the run from Belfast to Londonderry.

When I asked Jamie if he had any favourites among the many engines he had driven, he seemed reluctant, probably through a sense of loyalty to his old girls, to differentiate between them. “Well maybe,” he admitted, “No.93 “The Foyle” run that wee bit smoother. There was a certain sweetness about her.” Surely a great compliment to any engine.

Talking about No.77, I referred to R.M. Arnold’s comment in his NCC Saga that she was regarded as “rather a weak engine”. But Jamie would not subscribe to that. “There was very little difference between them,” he averred. “Sometimes when they came back from the shops after some alterations had been made, you had to make adjustments on the footplate, but on the whole they performed much alike. They were all great engines!” And I could not agree more.

Jamie was a much photographed man during his long and happy career on the railways, but it could be true to say that on no other occasion had he came under the eye of the camera so often as on this fateful Black Saturday.

As he and his able fireman, Ned Carson, awaited the all clear signal from the guard, John McFadden, the cameras clicked merrily. Ned, by the way, a competent driver of later years, is still very much to the fore, and lives out the Ballyrashane way.

Eventually John McFadden blew his whistle and waved his flag, and Jamie and Ned set the valiant Scotch engine to it. What a send off it was! There was cheering, singing, and the bagpipes skirled. A flute shrilled out “Will ye no’ come back again?” to the accompaniment of banging detonators. Over all the challenging voice of No.77 echoed. The last trip had begun.

Soon we were past the Damhead gates, and rushing towards Macfin, all the while No.77 filling the Bann Valley with the sound of real engine music. At Macfin we leave the mainline, heading south, then veering west towards the Bann, we approach the Agivey Bridge.

The big woman from Aghadowey got to her feet, “Boys,” says she, “this’ll likely be the last time we’ll cross the oul’ bridge. A’ll hiv tae hae a last luk at it.” Her pal mopped the perspiration off her face. “Och Maggie, the breadth o’ ye!” she gasped, “Come awa’ frae that windae, ur we’ll be suffocated!”

In the corner sat a wee man with the Garvagh number on his collarette. He took the pipe out of his mouth. “I mine,” says he, “when we wur wains on the Sunday School excursion, we aye stuck our heads out o’ the windae when crossing the bridge tae see the Bann, but Boys a dears the sight and sound o’ them big railings in the middle, aye scarred the daylights out o’ us, and awl drew in our heads like a shot, fur we thought that we wur goin’ tae be beheaded.” And with that, just to illustrate the wee man’s story, the train thundered over the bridge.

Soon we were past the Curragh Halt, through Rusky and Clarehill, and slowly in to Aghadowey station. As porter Ernie Calvin obligingly opened the carriage doors, the long train began to disgorge its first passengers. A few old timers sauntered up for a last look at No.77, but by and large, there seemed a feeling of complete apathy. The bunch of youthful travellers filed out with scarcely a backward glance. To them it was just the end of another pleasant outing.

We are on our way again, through Ardreagh and over the Ballygawley bridge, and past Moneycarrie Halt, and now curving south-eastwards we cross the Agivey river, and glide leisurely into Garvagh station. Here there was quite a crowd awaiting our arrival. While the Sirs Knights of the Third Tree Town and their friends quietly evacuated, the photographers got cracking again. The local pro, Willie

Dallas, had his camera at the ready, and we have good cause to be grateful to Willie, alas now deceased, for the varied selection of photographs he produced of the last service train. In one of his pictures submitted, we see Joe Boyd, a porter, waiting with the tablet. Behind is stationmaster James Stinson. In the background is Sam Craig, who drove the jaunting car for the Imperial Hotel, with the mail bag. The other three are, William Davidson, a postman, Tommy Johnston, a well known building contractor, and the tall fellow is Billy Graham, a permanent way man.

The other Garvagh picture certainly gives a touch of pathos. James Stinson gives a farewell hand shake to Jamie Fillis, and Sam Craig does likewise to guard John McFadden, with Ned Carson, fireman, looking on.

The whistle blasts, the flag is waved, and we are on the move again, and for me the last stage of the brief journey. A mere five miles separate Garvagh from Kilrea, and on this occasion it seemed all too short. This was familiar ground to me. I seemed to know every field, bridge and stream and every house where we had come to expect to see the same familiar figures as they had waved to the special trains over the years.

Soon we had reached the Halfway Arch. All downhill now, past the dreaded Boveedy Bank, into Drumsara townland. Here the whistle of No.77 shrieks again as we pass the whistle board before Allan's crossing. Then over the Gortmacrane bridge, through the Restown, and under the old bridge into Kilrea station.

Here we are indebted to some unknown benefactor, an English enthusiast, strangely enough, for the fine photo of the last train. It was a well composed picture, depicting No.77 beside the water tower, and the entire length of the train with the unique old bridge in the back ground. Fillis and Carson look out of the cab, and the ubiquitous Billy Graham is on the far side. Billy, by the way, was not just a dedicated railway man, he was a true blue steam enthusiast.

So with a farewell glance at No.77, we reluctantly turn away, and the old girl, with a few defiant snorts, resumes her nostalgic journey.

Incidentally this was not to be our last run over the DC metals, although it certainly was in the Coleraine direction. It was to be my great privilege to later enjoy two special trips to Magherafelt and Moneymore respectively, before the ultimate closure of the line, but that is another story.

As we slowly filed out of Kilrea station, head porter Jamie Darragh stood by to collect the tickets. By a strange coincidence almost every one seemed to have mislaid their tickets, but Jamie grinned understandingly, "Not to worry," said he, "they'll all turn up some time!"

## **MISCELLANEOUS ITEMS**

---

### **Congratulations**

Our congratulations to two prominent members of the Society, Johnny Glendinning and Mary Friel, who were married recently. Both have been familiar faces on our railtours - Mary in charge of the diner and Johnny looking after the coaching stock.

### **R.H. Smyth**

On Wednesday 23<sup>rd</sup> August 1977, the Londonderry Port & Harbour Commissioners' saddle tank engine No.3 "R.H. Smyth" was formerly handed over to the Society by its previous owner amid much press and television publicity at Whitehead.

### **Quiz Answer**

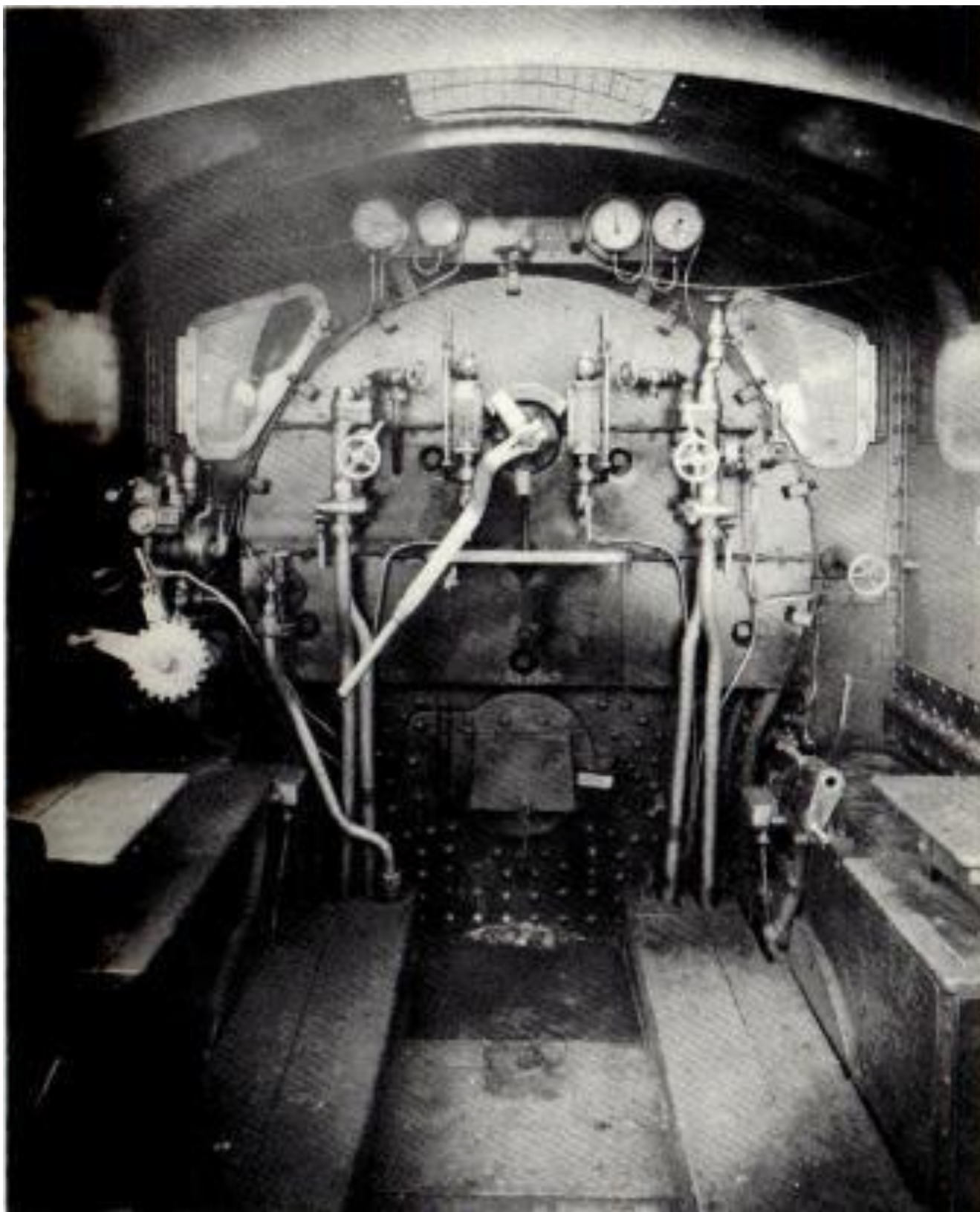
- 1) Stone pillar of Weir's bridge, near Enniskillen, on the Sligo Leitrim & Northern Counties Railway, photographed on 17<sup>th</sup> May 1978.

- 2) Small locomotive shed of the SL&NCR at Enniskillen, photographed in May 1977. Both by Alan Dickson of Kesh, Co. Fermanagh.



*The Mullingar band posed beside No.186 recently. Both the band and No.186 celebrate their centenaries in 1979. The photograph was taken during the filming of a TV feature on the band. (David Carse)*



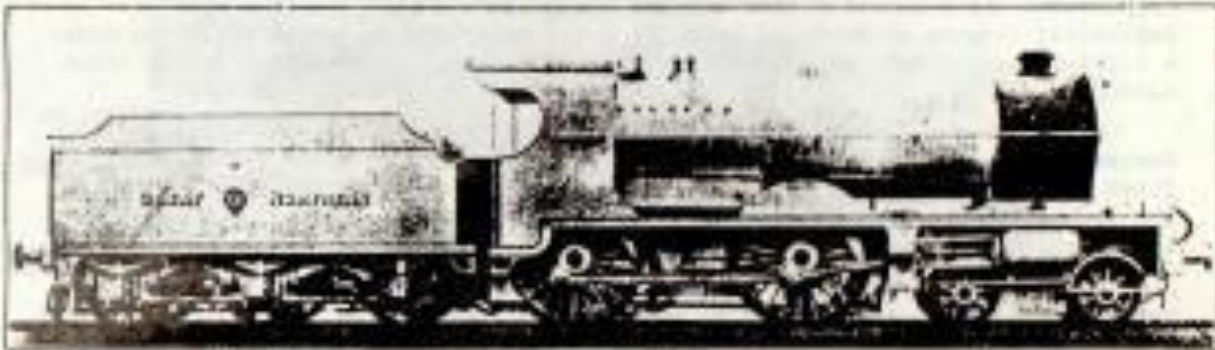


*Cab details of GNR(I) compound before the Belpaire fire boxes were fitted. (IRRS Library)*



## NEW LOCOMOTIVES AND ACCELERATED SERVICES, GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY OF IRELAND.

New Three-Cylinder Compound Locomotives, built by Beyer, Peacock  
& Co. Ltd., permit Important Train Accelerations in Summer Services.



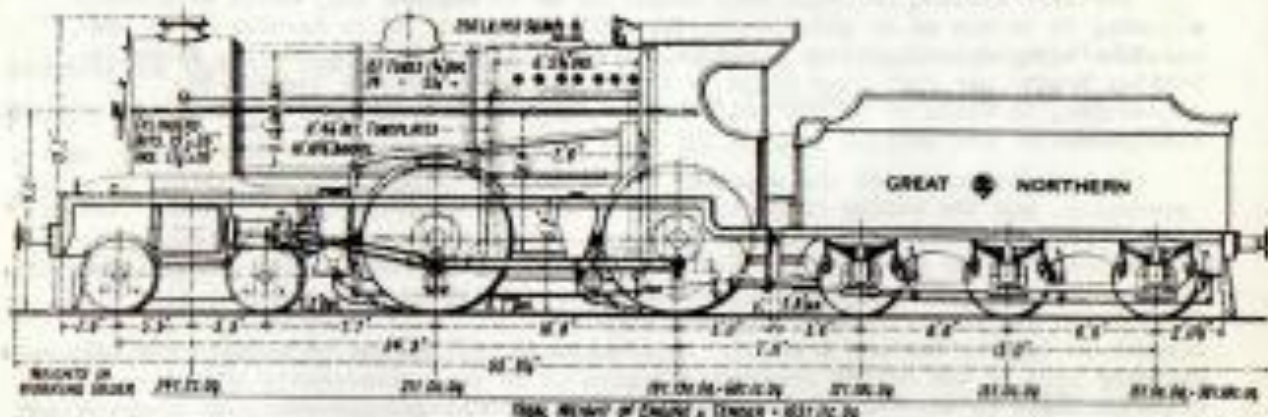
By the courtesy of Mr. J. H. Stephens, General Manager of the Great Northern Railway of Ireland, we are enabled to illustrate and describe a new class of 4-4-1 locomotives which has been introduced on that line and to give particulars of the important train accelerations which these locomotives have made possible. The new locomotives are three-cylinder superheated compound L.L.L.s having a boiler pressure of 250 lb. per sq. in. The following table taken in conjunction with the dimensional outline diagram reproduced gives their principal particulars:—

Cylinders—	
High pressure (1)	17½ in. x 28 in.
Low pressure (2)	20 in. x 24 in.
Boiler, outside diameter	68½ in.
Boiler working pressure	250 lb. per sq. in.
Heating surface—	
Tubes	1,000 sq. ft.
Firebox	162 sq. ft.
Total superheated	1,214 sq. ft.
Total	2,214 sq. ft.
Grate area	57 sq. ft.
Height in working order	
Engine	16 ft. 6 in.
Tender	24 ft.
Weight	
Total	140 tons

The tractive effort at 80 per cent. boiler pressure referred to L. P. cylinders is 53,702 lb.

In order to secure economy in fuel consumption, particularly as there are no supplies of natural coal of any commercial value in Ireland, about 75 per cent. of the G.N.R. (L.) locomotives are equipped with superheating apparatus of the Robinson return tube type. The success attending the use of this apparatus for pressures up to 300 lb. per sq. in., combined with the almost uniformly good quality of the water supply, has enabled the company to adopt higher boiler pressures, and in order to secure still further fuel economy the new locomotives have been provided with boilers working at a pressure of 250 lb. per sq. in., which supply steam to cylinders working on the compound principle, it being considered that for trains of from 300-500 tons behind the tender the three-cylinder compound locomotive was one of the most economical and successful types. The "Beeley" arrangement of regulator, which is incorporated in the new engines, has much to do with the success of the design, as no special skill is required by the driver, the regulator being operated as in a simple locomotive; the first 32 degrees traversed by the regulator handle puts the engine into "semi-compound," while the remainder of the arc controls compound working. When closing the regulator the whole is thrown compound working; if semi-compound is required on the journey the regulator handle must be brought to the completely closed position and then reopened. The company is indebted to Sir Henry Fowler and Mr. K. J. H. Lunn

(Continued on page 211.)



Dimensional Diagram of new Three-cylinder Compound Locomotives for Accelerated Services, Great Northern Railway of Ireland.

*Description of the GNR(I) Compound locomotives which appeared in the Railway Gazette at the time of entering service.*