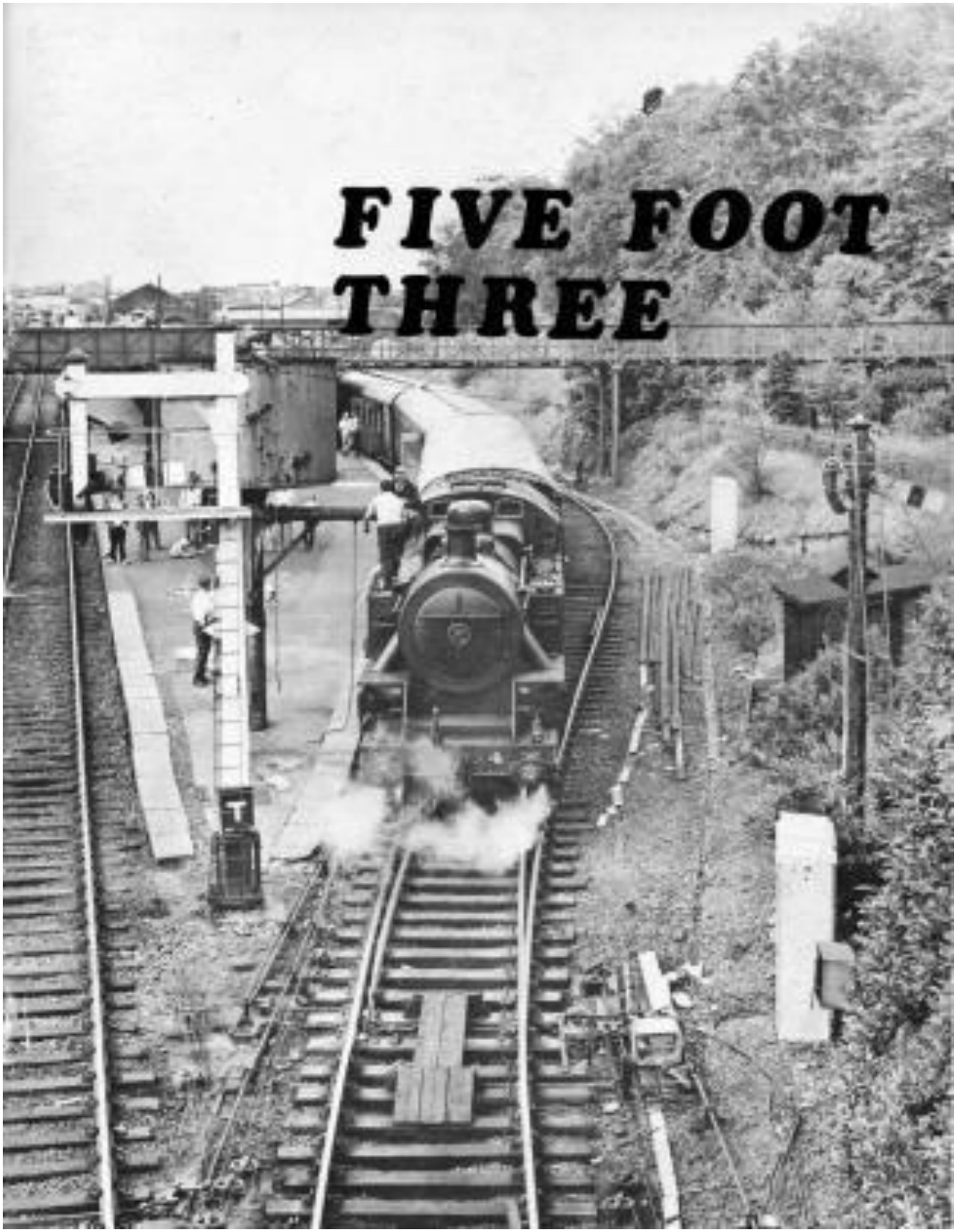
FIVE FOOT
THREE

FIVE FOOT THREE
No.31
Summer 1985

Editor: Alan Edgar

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

Front Cover: No.4 waters at Lisburn on 25th August 1984. Shortly after the photograph was taken a new signalling system was commissioned and the semaphore signals replaced with colour lights. (C.P. Friel)

EDITORIAL

COMMERCIAL BREAK

You will already have noticed the difference. Advertisements in Five Foot Three? Is there no corner into which commercialism may not intrude? Is nothing sacred?

I would like to assure members that there are very sound reasons for including adverts where none had gone before. It is my belief that benefits will accrue both to the Society in general, and to the magazine itself. If this proves to be true, the exercise will have been well worthwhile.

Traditionally, part of the membership subscription has been assumed to cover the cost of producing Five Foot Three. Nowadays this cost can be upwards of £1,000 per annum. If even part of this could be raised from other sources, the Society would be better off financially, a situation which few are likely to complain about.

We are therefore selling advertising as an experiment to see how much of the magazine's cost we can cover. It is a question of balance. The most profitable scenario would be to entirely fill the magazine

with adverts, a situation not guaranteed to please the discerning reader. I would be interested in members' comments on this issue. Is the quantity of advertising too much/too little/about right?

A very LMS scene at Whitehead (NIR) on 30th September 1984, No.4 and the North Atlantic Brake 91. (C.P. Friel)

Another possibility may be to attempt to sell Five Foot Three to a wider readership, thus bringing in additional revenue. The membership seems to desire the present content of the magazine to be retained, but some additional content may be required to bring wider appeal. Any suggestions along these lines would be welcomed.

Whatever way it is raised, the Society could well use additional capital, be it for the restoration of decrepit coaches, renovation of ancient station buildings, or indeed the raising of the Titanic.

I am extremely grateful to Heather Boomer, who has very kindly offered to act as advertising agent.

Finally, might I ask you to support the advertisers. I am given to believe that members of the Locomotive Department will be making spot checks to ensure that you are. (You know the chaps I mean - heavily built fellows in oily black boiler suits. They sometimes carry around the tools of their trade; a 4ft spanner, the odd sledgehammer; a large crowbar.) They are a pleasant bunch of lads, the Locomotive Department, though they do become ever so slightly violent when annoyed, you understand.

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN — Sullivan Boomer

By now you will have received the transcript of the Annual General Meeting, so you will be aware of

the general state of the Society and of some of our projects for the future. The main topic of discussion has been financial management, and during 1985 we will be reviewing our procedures and, where necessary, restructuring our accounting systems to improve our cost effectiveness. As I write this (before Easter) it is too early to deal with any of the Council thoughts in detail, but amongst other items being reviewed are the costs of train operation, particularly in the field of charter work. Some revision of charges may be necessary here to make our operations self-financing. No doubt future news-sheets will keep you posted on Council decisions as they affect the running of the Society.

One unfortunate fact which I must report is criminal activity, to the effect that within a fortnight there were two break-ins at Whitehead. As a result of these we lost all our hand held power tools, and Whitehead Railway Project suffered the same. As I write this, police investigations are continuing, and it is understood that a definite line of enquiry is being followed. We are certainly hopeful of prosecutions arising, and of the recovery of the stolen equipment, but it is now unfortunately necessary for us to consider the security of our premises, and steps will be taken to reduce the possibility of this sort of thing happening again. You will understand that I cannot reveal details of our proposals, but obviously alarm systems and more secure locking arrangements will comprise part of the measures we are considering. I can only deplore the need to turn our depot into a veritable fortress, but if that becomes necessary then you may be sure the Council will act. Unfortunately it will also involve increased expenditure, which is something we could do without.

On a more positive note, a delegation from the Council met senior management of CIÉ recently, and a most productive discussion was the result. We did not get, nor did we expect, any earth-shattering revelations, but we did discuss frankly and fully the future development of the Society, particularly in relation to our Southern operations. It is my earnest hope that from this meeting our working relationship will grow and prosper, and I believe that both sides of the table managed to understand and respect the position of the other. That alone will ensure that our future dealings are on a realistic and businesslike basis.

Several other meetings have also taken place recently, with the Tourist Boards (both North and South) and with District Councils. I do not propose to detail all of these, as relevant information is published in the routine news-sheets as a matter of course, but I think it important to make the point that the Council is always available to discuss our activities with public bodies, and that we are not always the people looking for assistance. Happily we do (occasionally) find ourselves in the position of being asked to help others.

Enough is enough, however, I hear the Editor cry! I have filled more than my allotted space, but hopefully I have given you some further insight into the Society's affairs. I hope my next report will be one of unmitigated success and triumph.

NEWS FROM COUNCIL — Robin Morton

My report to the AGM will have brought members up to date with a number of issues referred to in the last "News From Council" in FFT No.30. The proposed branchline EGM has been shelved to await further developments at Downpatrick and also to allow the Council to review other options.

However, the Council has agreed in principle to lend locomotive No.3BG to the Downpatrick and Ardglass Railway Society for a weekend in September, so that the steam engine can operate train rides along a short length of track as a promotional exercise for the DARS. No fee will be charged, but the DARS will shoulder all costs. As a further gesture of goodwill to the DARS the RPSI Council has agreed that informal quarterly meetings between representatives of our two societies should take place.

As reported elsewhere, RPSI delegations have now had high-level meetings with both NIR and CIÉ. The meeting with CIÉ included raising the possibility of the RPSI being granted a long-term lease for

Mullingar depot. At Mullingar the Society has its eyes on some ex-CIÉ open coaches which are coming on the market. The thinking is that these might form a Mullingar-based RPSI train which would allow us to make more use of locomotive No.184 without the expense of special stock workings from the north.

Further afield, we received an approach through the Association of Railway Preservation Societies about some 5'3" steam locos, which were being scrapped in Brazil. Some British societies have shown just what can be done in this field. However, the Council felt that we should not pursue this option mainly because as things stand we do not have sufficient traffic offering to keep all our mainline locos, busy. Take for example No.171, which spent all last year ready to go but cooped up in Whitehead shed, her only outing being to Galway with the two-day tour.

In recent months much of the Council's attention has been directed towards the Whitehead Railway Museum proposal. The Society took the view that Whitehead would be a suitable new home for Belfast Transport Museum, with a new 'roundhouse' style display centre being erected on the football field.

As Johnny Glendinning remarked, promoting the scheme has taken the Society through doors which it would otherwise not have knocked upon - for example an RPSI deputation gave evidence on the proposal to the education committee of the Northern Ireland Assembly. Now it is over to the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum, and we trust they will look favourably upon our well thought out proposal.

The UFTM, incidentally, approached the Society with a view to buying from the RPSI the high-sided Great Northern tender which is to run with No.85. Their rationale was that such a purchase would provide the Society with much-needed income and the UFTM with one complete exhibit - locomotive plus tender. But after much deliberation the Society decided to retain ownership of the tender as it might at some future stage be required for operation with No.171. However, we made it clear that if the tender was not immediately required by the Society during a period in which the loco, was on display at the UFTM, there would be no problem about the tender accompanying No.85.

After the AGM the Council found itself one man short - we were without a Site Officer. Thankfully, Johnny Glendinning was persuaded to fill the post in the meantime so we now have a full team again. However, the episode brought home to all Council members the desirability of finding someone to fill their shoes. Most of the Council members are old-stagers and none of them wants the job for life. It would be refreshing and reassuring to see some new blood come forward.

Both the ACE scheme and the Whitehead Railway Project continue to make a valuable contribution to the Society's activities. The WRP has been of particular assistance to me in despatching circulars to the membership. One of the most arduous and fallible aspects of this task is the updating and running off of members' names and addresses. Our old addressograph machine has just about breathed its last after many years of faithful service and we are now exploring the possibility of going computerised - courtesy of our philatelic agent, Peter McBride, of the Belfast Stamp Shop.

While on the subject of stamps, there is a possibility that No.171 will feature on a set of stamps being marketed by Club Loco. Philatelia.

The Belfast area meetings concluded another successful year with the annual Fred Cooper night and our thanks go to all who contributed. Charles Friel is at present compiling suggestions for the 1985-86 programme and anyone with any ideas should contact him.

While the 20th anniversary dinner in December was a great success, the proposed 21st anniversary dinner dance in March had to be cancelled, due to lack of support. Perhaps the two events were too close to one another, and notice for the latter function too short. We may try to re-launch the dinner-dance later in the year.

Operations Officer Ernie Gilmore (right), Site Officer Johnny Glendinning (centre) and architect Raymond Leith (left) examine the model of the proposed railway museum at Whitehead. The model was made by member Tony Ragg. (Belfast Telegraph)

A comparison between (top) the APPS Award and (bottom) the Coat of Arms carried on the front of the GNR(I) 1903 Royal Train (see last FFT). The ARPS Award has been temporarily transferred to an obscure branchline in Shropshire. (C.P. Friel)

The Coleraine turntable project has been on the drawing board for some time now, but there is a distinct possibility that it might get under way in 1985. Enterprise Ulster have advised the Society that they would be willing to undertake the job, and at the time of writing we were hoping our NI Tourist Board grant could be carried over to 1985-86 and tying up other loose ends.

The following members have been appointed to posts of special responsibility:

Mervyn Darragh	Membership
Brian Ham	Legal adviser
Derek Young	Insurance Liaison
Charles Friel	Belfast Area and Photographer
Gavin Martin	Assistant Editor
Paddy O'Brien	Mullingar Locomotive Maintenance
Alan Love	Portrush Flyer
Tony Ragg	Steam Enterprise
Denis McCabe	Mullingar Coach Running
Colin Holliday	Assistant Coach Running
Thomas Charters	Assistant Carriage Maintenance and Safety

May I close by appealing to all members to keep the RPSI on the move in these simple ways:

- Support more RPSI events and trains yourself.
- Spread the word to friends and family.
- Interest a friend in taking out membership.
- Book early for trips and pay your subscription promptly.

FROM THE TREASURER'S DESK — John Richardson

On receipt of the AGM reports a young member telephoned me and remarked at length that he found my report disturbing - it should not have been couched in the terms used, in fact he thought that those reading it would feel the Society was not worth supporting.

Firstly, let me again stress that figures cannot be disguised nor the facts behind them. Our auditors Coopers and Lybrand and our bankers are anxious that trends of the past two years are reversed. My remarks at the AGM were based on the 1984 Financial Report prepared by our accountants. Hopefully the membership at large will see that I, with 24 years banking experience, made comment in an effort that the truth would sink in to all concerned and that efforts would be made to reverse past trends.

I would refer to the Financial Reports - period 1978 to date. Every year except one we suffered deficit (a shortage of Income over Expenditure). The exception 1980 which in fact carried a surplus - and this only because of a massive injection from Fund Raising of over £13,000. It must be surely obvious to all that my report and the points in it were accurate and relevant to the situation.

Easter trains were an outstanding success with 812 children and 904 adults in attendance. This was a great hop forward and those present congratulated the Society on a great day out with superb value being the order of the day. Much goodwill as well as turnover was generated with the two-day event - could I suggest however, that more of the active membership, including my young caller, should bear in mind that the public are the most important factors in our decline or growth. Much could be learnt with an exercise in public relations.

It has been suggested that my recent comments on the Society's financial affairs were open to misinterpretation. I should like to take this opportunity therefore, of stressing that there is no question of my being at variance with Council policy. It should be apparent from my 100% involvement in the current year's activities that my primary concern is the furtherance of the Society's activities and all

utterances from me, whether verbal or written, are intended to be constructive!

LOCOMOTIVE MAINTENANCE — Peter Scott

The following is a summary of the present state of the art.

3 (Londonderry Port and Harbour Commissioners 0-6-0 ST)

Available for traffic, with routine maintenance being carried out.

3BG (Guinness Brewery 0-4-0 ST)

In store, and now beginning to look rather sorry for itself. As I have stated before, there seems to be little prospect of this locomotive returning to traffic except in some sort of branchline scheme.

4 (LMS. NCC 2-6-4 T)

Currently awaiting a set of firebars. This includes the manufacture of wooden patterns (courtesy of R.C. Edwards Esq.) before the new bars can be cast.

Peter Scott checks No.85's smokebox for leaks, Christmas Eve 1984. (C.P. Friel)

23 (Irish Shell 0-4-0 DM)

In traffic. A relatively long period of trouble-free service has recently been interrupted by electrical problems, quickly traced to worn out dynamo brushes. Unfortunately difficulty has been experienced locating replacement parts. Can any reader help?

27 “Lough Erne” (SL&NCR 0-6-4 T)

In store. The same applies as for No.3BG. No.27 is becoming extremely bedraggled in appearance, and a rough application of paint may be in order to tidy her up.

85 “Merlin” (GNR(I) 4-4-0)

Steam testing is now in progress. No major faults have come to light, but there has been the expected profusion of minor defects such as: boiler tubes leaking at firebox end, i.e. require further expanding, tender brake cylinder faulty, hole in vacuum pipe at rear of locomotive, minor steam leaks at various joints, piping runs, etc. Once these faults have been rectified, running in can commence.

171 “Slieve Gullion” (GNR(I) 4-4-0)

In traffic. A worn out smokebox door caused much head scratching. To have a replacement manufactured by traditional means would have been extremely expensive. Fortunately the Little People stepped in and made one out of magic mushrooms.

184 (GS&WR 0-6-0)

Boiler repairs are in progress on this locomotive, now the only one present at Mullingar. The foundation ring washout plug holes have been rethreaded and a new set of plugs made.

The replacement smokebox door for No.171 being manufactured. (C.P. Friel)

186 (GS&WR 0-6-0)

In store as for No.3BG and No.27. The problem with our smaller locomotives is a question of the economics of restoring them at a cost of (at least) several thousands of pounds, when opportunities for using them are limited. The advent of a more powerful loco, such as No.461 in the South would place No.184 in the same category when she came up for overhaul. Only the emergence of some form of

branch line scheme, run either by ourselves or others, seems to offer the opportunity for our smaller engines to earn their keep.

461 (GSR, ex D&SER, 2-6-0)

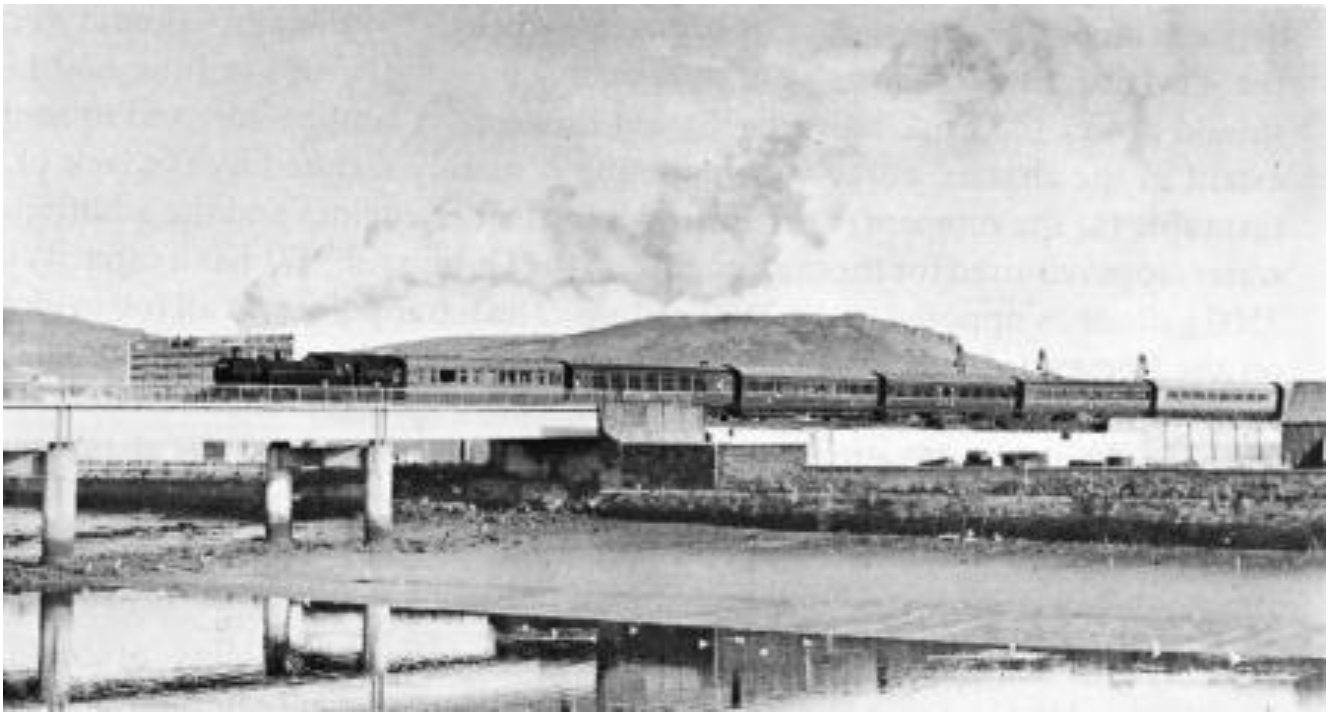
Moved to Whitehead by road. Restoration has now commenced, see elsewhere in this magazine for a full report.

Carlow Diesel (Comhlucht Siúcre Éireann 0-4-0 DM)

In store. There may be a prospect of some work on this potentially very useful shunting locomotive starting soon.

LOCOMOTIVE RUNNING — Brian Hill

1984 saw locomotive No.4 successfully haul all the "Portrush Flyer" and "Steam Enterprise" trains to mark her return to traffic, the mechanical performance of the engine reflecting the special attention needed to overhaul and run-in a steam locomotive in a preserved environment.

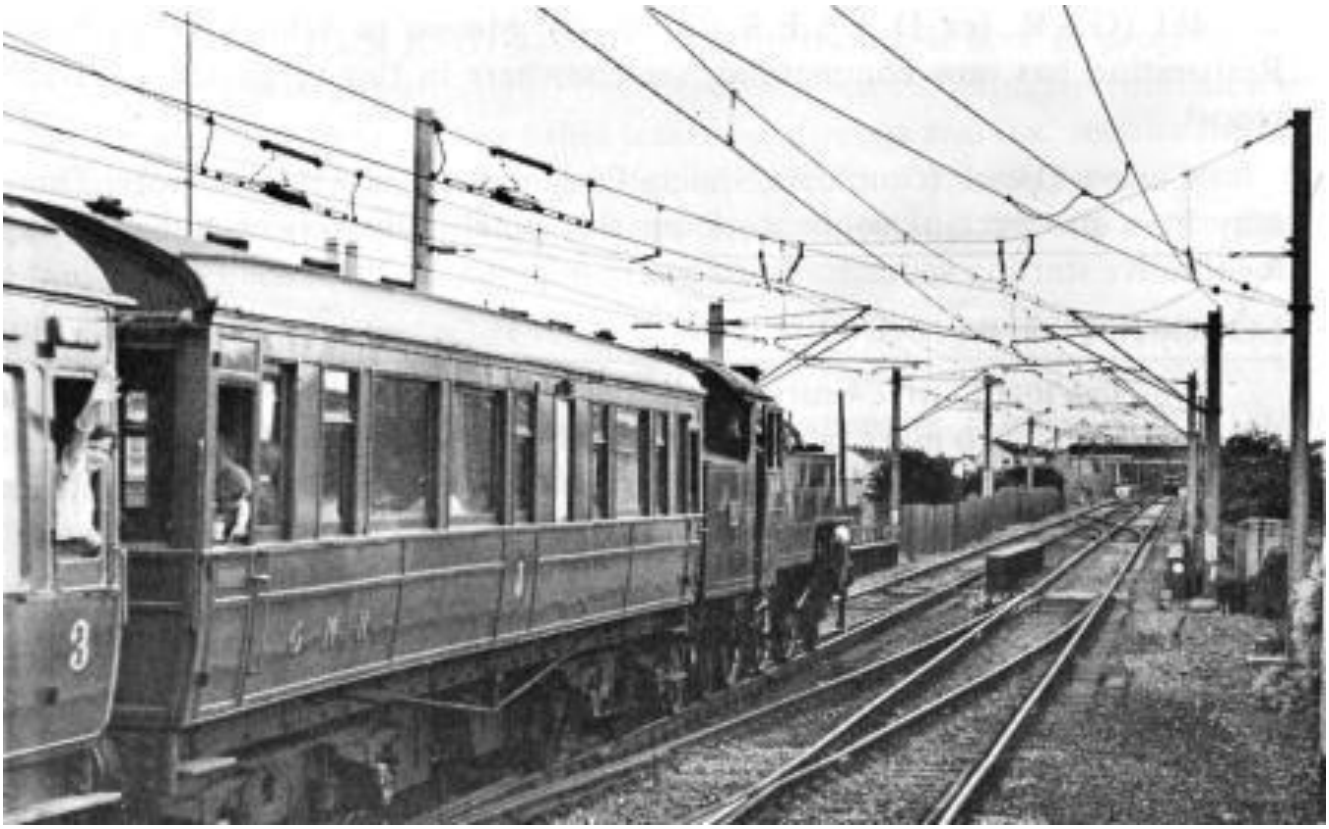


The stock for the Steam Enterprise of 15/9/84 crosses the Lagan Viaduct en route from Central Services Depot (Queen's Quay) to Central Station, Belfast. (C.P. Friel)

Locomotive	Train Miles	Light Engine	Total
4	1,647	247	1,894
171	731	162	893
184	398	184	582
	2776	593	3,369

From the 1984 mileage figures above it is clear that the tank engine (No.4) was the most travelled of the Society's motive power; this is not all that surprising given that both No.171 and No.184 did not turn a wheel after completing their involvement in the May tour to Galway.

With No.4 and No.171 at Whitehead, and No.184 at Mullingar, all available for traffic in 1985, it is hoped to have a more balanced utilisation of resources. No.184's usage depends largely on the availability of coaching stock at Mullingar, No.4 should work the "Portrush Flyer" trains and most of the possible private charters in June, and No.171 should power the Cork tour, the "Steam Enterprise" and be involved to some extent in the charter work. Such planning is mainly dictated by the lack of a turntable (at the moment) near Portrush for tender engines and the additional water stops required for the tank engine on the Dublin run; No.171 has a capacity of 3,500 gallons as opposed to No.4's 2,500 gallons. The latter point was all too evident on the homeward legs of the "Steam Enterprise" last September when delays resulted with the need to take water during a busy spell at Dundalk. There was little that could be done to alleviate the position, especially as the engine was required to operate to Dublin as the next logical step in running-in prior to being allowed beyond Dublin; the operating parameters that are normally in force should dictate a large tendered locomotive on such a duty.

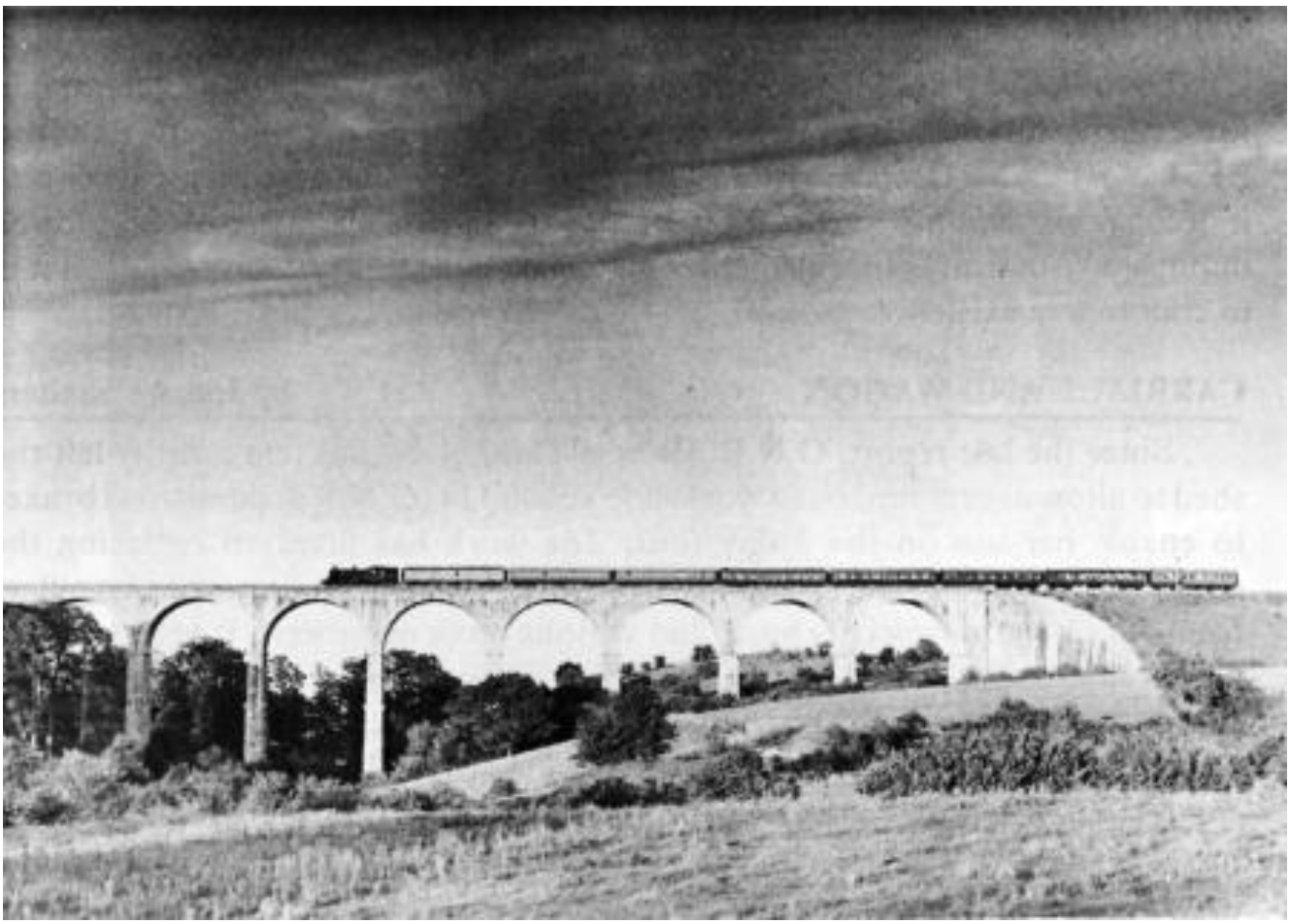


No.4 passes Howth Junction on the Steam Enterprise of 1st September 1984, beneath the paraphernalia of the Dublin suburban electrification. (C.P. Friel)

Criteria such as the location of turntables, the availability of coaling facilities and the location and nature of water always appear to be paramount in locomotive running. Turntables are by their nature outside the scope of the Society, but water and coaling areas can usually be found in one form or another, the problem is that their provision can be time and labour consuming. Consider as an example the May tour to Cork. In theory locomotive No.4 could be used, but to accommodate the additional water and coal stops necessary the daily schedule would need to provide another 2 hours for operating purposes. This would result in a 'straight' run from Dublin to Cork (excluding servicing halts) on the Saturday eliminating the majority of photographic stops, runpasts and lineside buses; not very attractive for the customers, and not very desirable.

Turning to matters black, the British coal strike may have terminated, but the return of 'Rossington

Cobbles' to provide Irish Steam may be some time off yet. 1984 saw 'mixed' imported fuel being burnt in the fireboxes, performances turned out to be surprisingly good but clinker was a devil of a nuisance. The tank engine's grate could not be cleaned in Dublin on the "Steam Enterprise" and on return to Belfast the rocking firebars were not capable of rocking, grate clearance being accomplished a few days later when things had cooled with the aid of a hammer and chisel. It is quite probable that this clinker was a contributory factor in the partial collapse of No.4's grate. To fulfil the 1985 season's requirements a source of steam coal has been secured courtesy of a well known 'premier' preserved railway in Britain and an equally well known Paul Newell of Belfast; the sting in the tail is that there has been a 40% increase on the pre-strike price delivered.



The Steam Enterprise heads North over Craigmore Viaduct on the evening of 15th September 1984. (C.P. Friel)

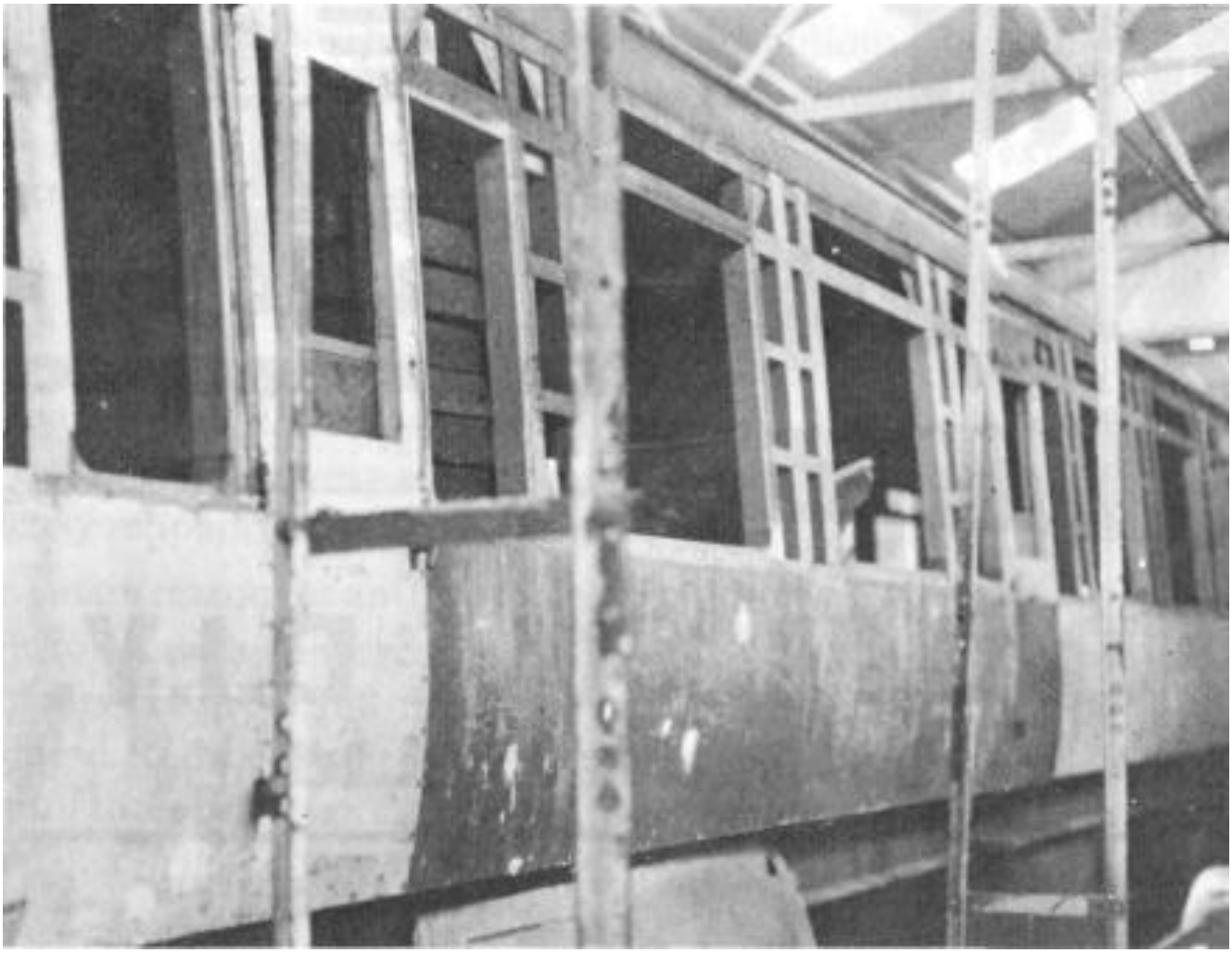
By custom and practise the Locomotive Running Officer has also been responsible for rostering personnel to prepare and operate RPSI trains. However with the growth in steam outings and the lack of growth of the Operating staff it has become increasingly difficult to provide carriage cleaners. This situation could not be allowed to continue, after all the customer only sees 10 minutes of the locomotive at the front of the train but may have a seat in a coach for several hours. Thus the task of cleaning the train has been transferred to a sub-committee of the Operations Committee, and has released the Operating Staff for other additional duties. Anyone willing to be involved in the job of carriage cleaning will be made most welcome, it is one of the main factors in presenting the RPSI to the public, our market.

As has been stated elsewhere, the RPSI is marketing its steam train for private charter, this passes the

task of filling the coaches to the contractor but can cause complications for the locomotive and carriage departments, particularly regarding the desired route. On one Sunday in June train rides will function as usual at Whitehead whilst an eight coach special runs from Portrush to Bangor and return. This will require two mainline and one Whitehead-only locomotives, 4 RPSI locomotive crews, 10 coaches and a carriage support team to complete the day's programme; the train will depart from Whitehead at 06:00 and return home around 23:00.

Locomotive Running often seems to go through a variety of problems, but these can usually be overcome, albeit at a price, by the co-ordinated efforts of the RPSI as a TEAM. Despite written and verbal pronouncements by some people, it is obvious that no single facet of the RPSI can claim to be of greater importance than any other element. The Society must be united in purpose if it is to continue in existence.

CARRIAGE AND WAGON — Jeremy Saulters



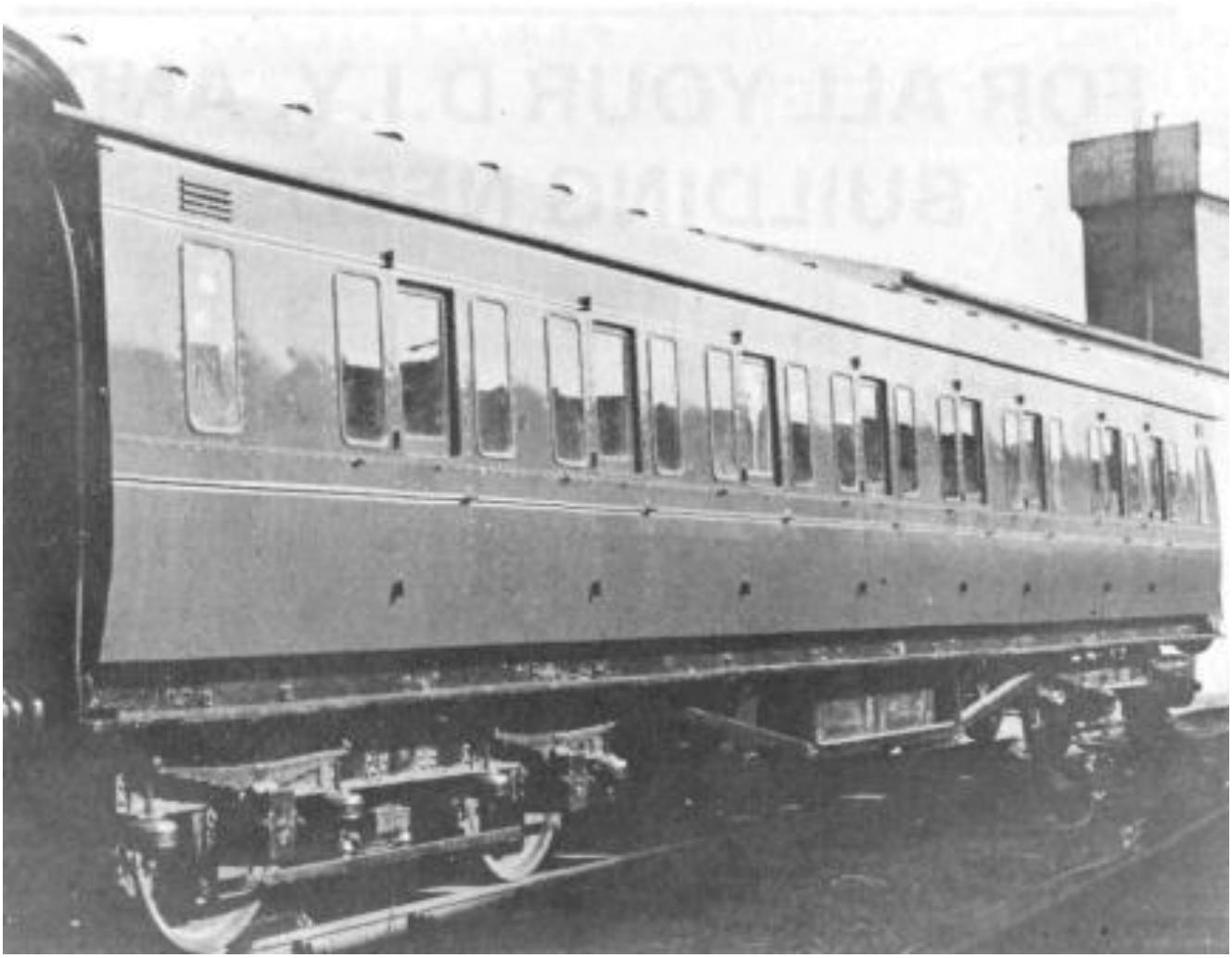
GNR Third No.9 begins to take shape once again : seen here with the lower panels refitted to the body work. (C.P. Friel)

Since the last report, GNR(I) open third No.9 has temporarily left the shed to allow urgent repairs to workshop coach 114 (GNR(I) open third brake) to enable her use on the 2 day tour. The work has involved replacing the structural-framing at one end of the coach (the two corner pillars, the two pillars from which the gangway is hung and various cross members). It was defective timber in this area that

led to the coach being ‘carded’ in Connolly last May. A section of sill in the luggage van and part of the floor have also been replaced, along with various minor repairs. It is intended that 9 will re-enter the shed for completion of her overhaul after 114 is completed.

By the time this report is read 68, the LMS composite restored by Whitehead Railway Project, will have been placed in traffic while 1335 will have undergone a complete overhaul and will hopefully be nearing completion in time for the Flyers.

The Treasurer has recently expressed opinions about carriages, in his financial report, which were rather less than enlightened and certainly less than helpful. Perhaps I should explain to the membership why expenditure on our carriages has increased, and why this represents a good investment for the Society.



NCC Composite No.68 (ex derelict) as out-shopped by Whitehead Railway Project. (C.P. Friel)

Our coaches have suffered from a lack of investment in past years; the attitude that ‘a coat of paint is all they need’ prevailing. Proper carriage maintenance does not come cheap. Items such as moquette for the seats and heavy duty floor covering are very expensive. It can cost as much as £2,000 to completely reupholster a carriage.

The main reason for an increase in expenditure on carriages is the simple fact that we now have an unprecedented level of carriage restoration at Whitehead. At our services are 4 full time staff (ACE), 5 full time staff and 25 trainees (Whitehead Railway Project). The results are there for everybody to see.

An average of three carriages completely restored per year, not to mention ongoing maintenance. This concerted effort will hopefully produce, within this season, a completely restored train fit for many years service providing it is adequately maintained.

It may appear to be economically attractive to acquire modern(?) 1950s stock from CIÉ in ready to run(?) condition and to dispose of the old derelict coaches at Whitehead (such as 861?). I might point out that we have already disposed of five of the derelict coaches at Whitehead. They are now running in our trains and earning revenue for the Society.

Advocates of this course of action should consider what would happen in 2 to 3 years time when the 'modern' coaches require (say) new upholstery. It costs the same to reupholster a carriage whether it was built in 1900 or 1950. The suggestion that our passengers have no interest in the history of the coaches that they travel in contradicts the experience of our Operations Officer. As he stated at the AGM, the normal sequence of booking sees the historical coaches filled first - by popular request. There is clearly a market for historical carriages.

The newly excavated and ballasted trackbed for No.1 carriage siding. To the right are some of the carriages awaiting overhaul. Nearest the camera is NCC Third No.243 which retains much of its original wooden panelling. (C.P. Friel)

As the beginning of the operating season is near at hand I would like to remind members that there is an increased need for coach cleaners this year. Charlie Friel has already mentioned this at a St. Jude's meeting, which at the time of writing produced one person. Anyone considering this should contact Michael Henderson who will be pleased to hear from them. My thanks to Messrs Hamilton, Charters, Holliday and Martin and to the ACE and Whitehead Railway Project Staff for their efforts.

SITE **Johnny Glendinning**

Work on the site during the past six months has concentrated on realigning the carriage sidings following the excavation of the site for the new No.1 siding. Sidings 2 and 3 had to be slewed in places to make way for the new trackwork. No.1 siding is now partially laid. Cost has been kept to a minimum by using materials recovered from last year's relaying elsewhere on the site, but these materials will not last forever. On the electrical front, both old and new sheds have now been fitted with new lighting and single phase sockets. The next job to be tackled is the 3 phase supply to lathes, drilling machines, etc.

Looking to the near future, work will soon be starting on a new tool store. This building will be divided into three sections; Loco, C&W, and Site. The Council has agreed to bring this work forward because of the recent break ins.

General view of Whitehead Yard. No.23 is sitting on the first lengths of the new No.1 siding. (C.P. Friel)

Lisburn Signal Box.

Northern Ireland Railways are at present negotiating to rebuild Lisburn signal box on our site. The box is at present part of a listed building and can only be taken down if it is reconstructed elsewhere.

Whitehead Station Building.

NIR's station building at Whitehead will soon be surplus to requirements and is thus threatened with demolition. However, NIR has offered to assist with the cost of renovation of the building providing the RPSI takes it over and maintains it.

We do not wish to land the Society with an ongoing drain on funds without any income. Therefore, uses for the buildings must be found which will generate at least enough income to cover maintenance costs, before we can agree to take them over.

We feel that the potential is there, and I think that with the help and encouragement of Carrickfergus Borough Council the buildings can be saved. Who knows, we may even win the best kept station competition some time in the future!

King's Road Bridge

The DOE Roads Service are considering ways of replacing this bridge and initially proposed shortening the span of the bridge - from two 12 metre spans to one 15 metre span. This would have cut us off from the outside world unless we shortened our platform and made major alterations to our track layout, considerably shortening our run round loop. Discussions are at present under way with the DOE, and it seems likely that a solution satisfactory to all parties can be reached.

Whitehead Railway Museum Proposal

Talks are continuing on this interesting project.

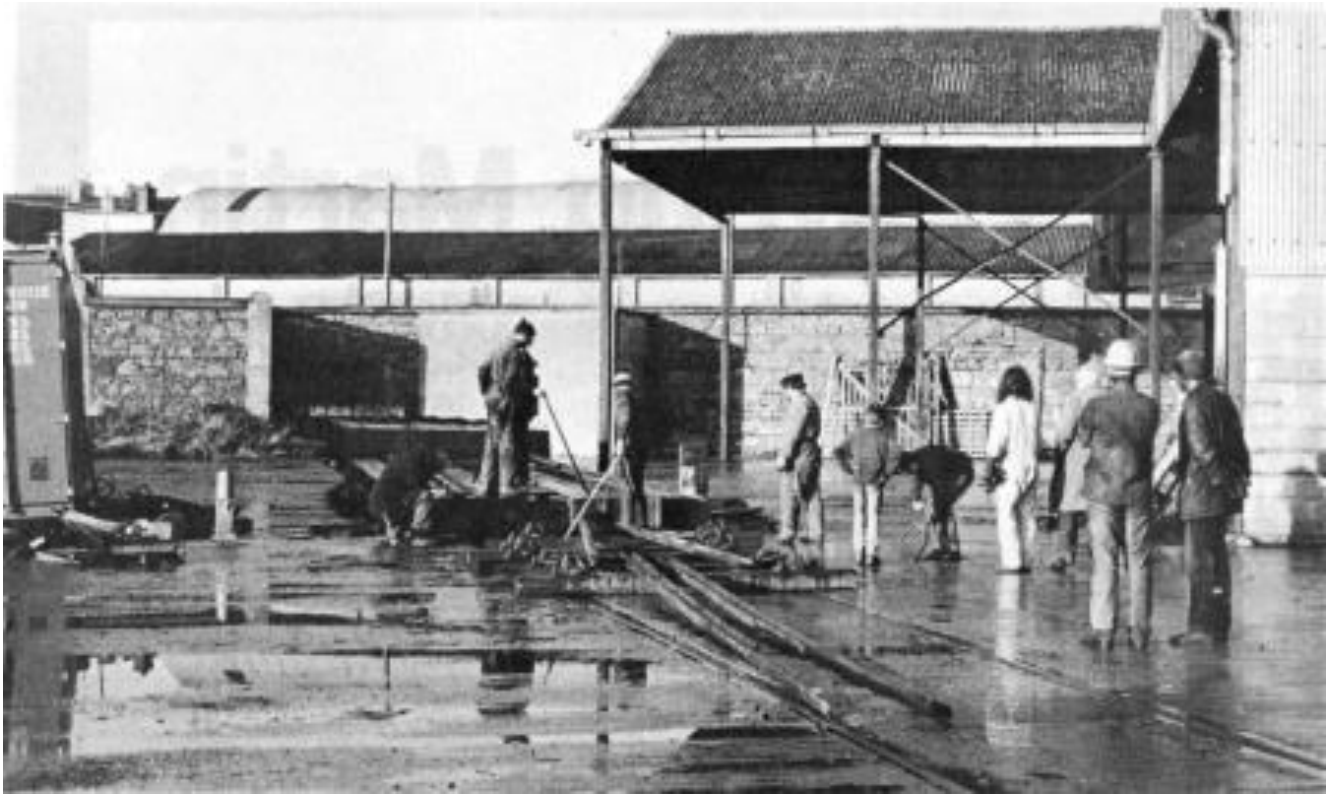
High speed electric: Bob Collins at work on the new electrical system in the locomotive shed. (C.P. Friel)

QUANTITY: ONE, DESCRIPTION: RAILWAY ENGINE 'Roadtrain'

With locomotive No.85 approaching the culmination of her overhaul, thoughts turned to the next restoration project and how No.461 should be moved from Mullingar to Whitehead. Costings were obtained for transportation by road and rail, but conditions eventually dictated that the engine and tender should be moved separately by road.

By the end of October it had been decided to proceed and the last full weekend in November was selected for the transfer, weather permitting. Preparations somewhat akin to a 2-day tour commenced involving the police, customs, CIÉ at Mullingar and Dennison Heavy Haulage of Antrim who were contracted to do the roadwork having had previous experience of moving engine No.85 (Five Foot

Three No.27). No.461's weight of 45 tons was inconsequential when the F1233 6x4 road tractive unit for the job could pull 250 tons, but the 13 feet from rail to chimney top of the loco required careful choice of low-loader to keep within the 16 feet 3 inches maximum when loaded.



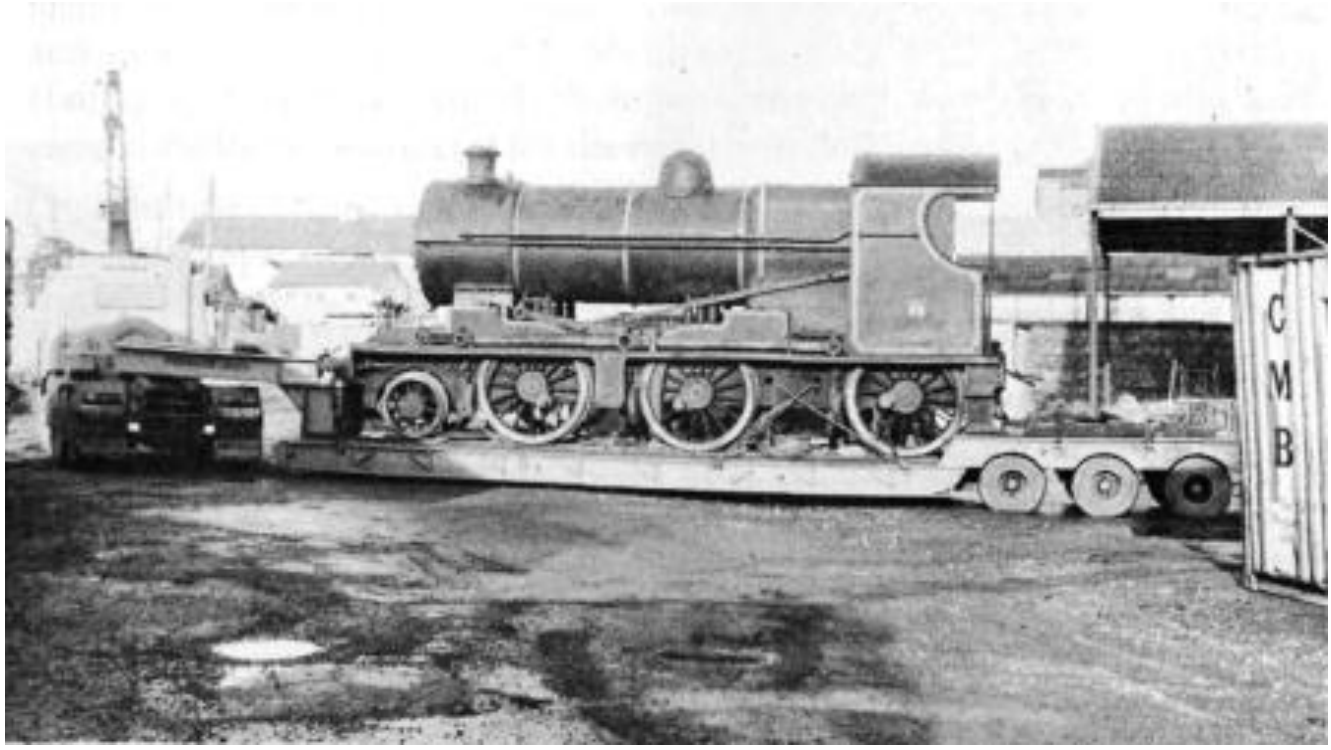
Assembling the loading ramp in the fertiliser yard at Mullingar. (Alan Edgar)

The convoy prepares to leave Mullingar. 019 on cement train to left. (Alan Edgar)

Everything was finalised during the last week prior to the event with prospective participants steeling themselves for a marathon that would put No.85's road jaunt in the shade.

Events commenced at Whitehead on Friday 24th November with the road/rail interchange area in front of the engine sheds being enlarged to accommodate a 70 feet road combination plus 42 feet of unloading ramp. In the afternoon the trailer was hauled to Whitehead and loaded with Peter Scott's patent ramp consisting of special rails, sleepers and packing, as featured in issue 27 of this journal.

Saturday saw the low-loader and a car full of Whitehead-based members heading to Mullingar, where by mid-afternoon the special ramp had been assembled in the fertiliser yard (where engines are coaled on 2-day tours). The original plot had called for locomotive No.184 to be steamed on Sunday morning to push No.461 onto the trailer, but with the excellent progress that had been made this would be feasible on the Saturday if an engine was available. By chance a CIÉ diesel on a cement train was lying over until Monday, and was willingly commandeered to fulfil No.184's role. So with daylight virtually extinct the diesel pushed No.461 into position, a scrap suburban coach being coupled between the locomotives to prevent the diesel running on to the ramp. With the load temporarily secured, the ramp dismantled and on the trailer, and the tractor unit re-united with the trailer, everyone retired to dinner and liquid refreshment.



No.461 is carefully manoeuvred out of the fertiliser yard on the Sunday morning. (Alan Edgar)

After breakfast No.461 was chained down for the journey and a final height check made before the departing in an interlude in the Sunday morning Mullingar traffic. A Garda escort was on hand to see the lorry to the town's periphery, especially as it was necessary to run 'wrong road' at the roundabout in the main street.

Those readers familiar with the Mullingar to Ardee road will be well aware of it's twisting nature so to prevent any entanglements with the RPSI entourage a car was positioned ahead of the truck to slow down or even stop oncoming motorists where required. The Kingscourt line overbridge with the a road height clearance of 14 feet 8 inches was by-passed by a narrow side road, but the Christmas lights above the streets of Kells came ominously close to No.461's chimney. The only incident of note

occurred when a small boy on a bicycle promptly fell off when confronted by the large load, fortunately without obvious injury.

Negotiating the Main Street in Ardee. (Alan Edgar)

A short stop in Dundalk to replenish the inner man gave rise to a lot of interest in No.461. By mid-afternoon the convoy arrived at the border where the load was left to await customs clearance on Monday morning.

With quick customs work and a police escort, No.461 arrived at Whitehead around 11:30am where, after some difficulty in entering the RPSI site, the locomotive renewed its companionship with rails north of the border, courtesy of the ramp and locomotive No.3.

Mastermind of this weekend outing was Peter Scott assisted by various members. Mention should be made of the help given by the police both north and south, customs, CIÉ staff at Mullingar and the staff of Dennison Heavy Haulage of Antrim, particularly the driver Ernie and his co-driver Jim who both came complete with cameras for the novel venture.

The title of this article is taken from the delivery note when the locomotive was signed over to the RPSI by Dennison's driver at the end of the weekend's work; it caused some hilarity and a lot of relief that the quantity was only one!

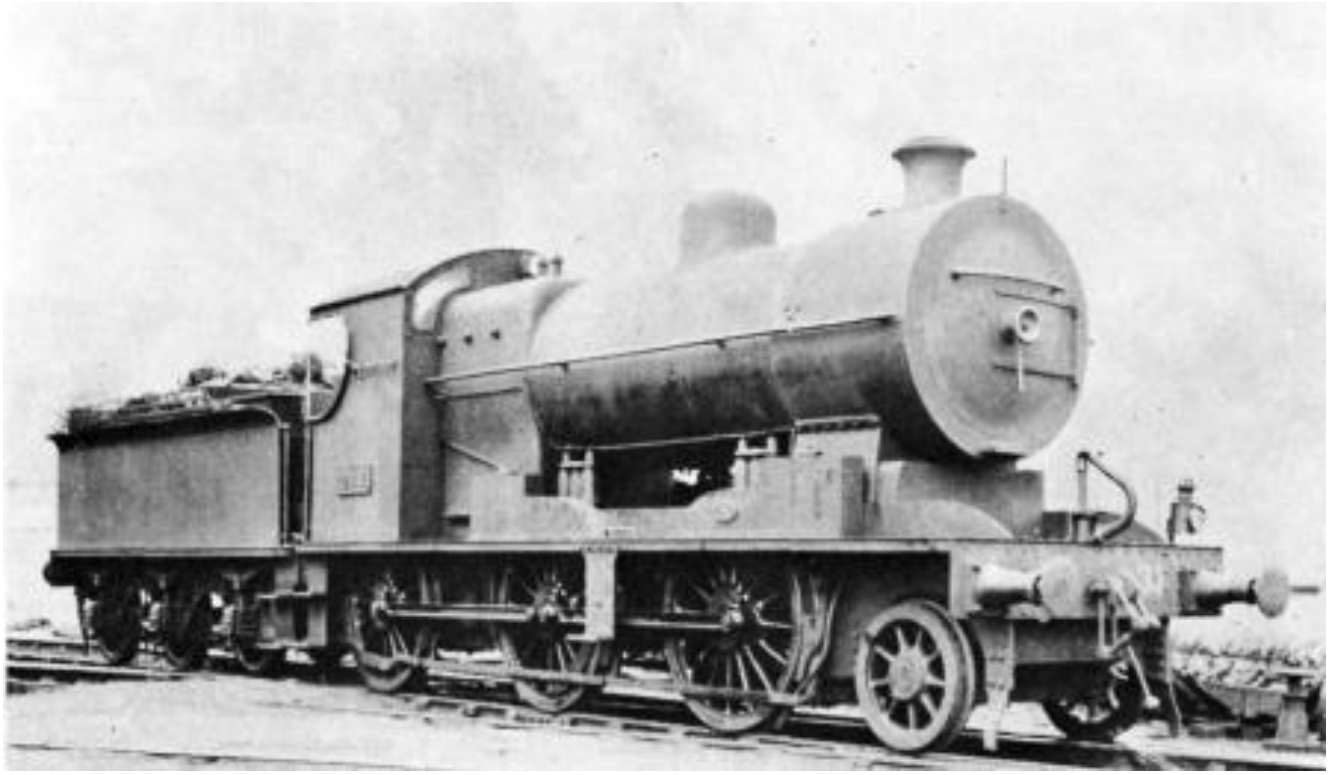
No.461 is reversed into the Society's site at Whitehead. (Brian Hill)

As the loading ramp is assembled outside the engine shed, "R.H. Smyth" waits to shunt No.461 off the low-loader. (Brian Hill)

WAITING IN THE WINGS? - No. 461 **Peter Scott**

Perhaps the least well-known of the Society's main line engines is the former Dublin and South Eastern Railway No.15, latterly GSR and then CIÉ No.461. Since being transferred to the Society on permanent loan in 1977, this inside cylindered 2-6-0 has lain at Mullingar in a partly dismantled condition. Only those adventurous enough to penetrate the engine shed there will have been reminded of its existence. By way of a brief history, No.461 was built in 1922 by Beyer Peacock for the D&SER as their No.15. There were only two in the class, the other locomotive No.16, becoming No.462 at the 1925 grouping. At the time of their delivery, a civil war was raging in Southern Ireland with the railways suffering particularly heavy damage. The D&SER were understandably reluctant to expose their newest locomotives to such risks, and so an arrangement was made with the Great Northern Railway to store the engines in Adelaide shed for a period.

In order to keep within the dimensional and weight constraints of the D&SER, the original concept of a large boilered 0-6-0 was modified on the drawing board at a fairly early stage by the addition of a leading bissel truck, and by slightly reducing the size of the boiler. The resulting locomotives had 5'1" driving wheels and the maximum axle load was just under 15 tons.



No.461 at Grand Canal Street in 1931. (Loco and General Railway Photos 6869)

vIn service No.461 and No.462 proved powerful and reliable. They were well liked, and their reputation for a good turn of speed led to their use on heavy passenger trains in addition to the goods work for which they were designed.

No.461 survived until the end of normal steam in 1963, although was latterly reported to be in very run-down condition. Nonetheless she worked a number of railtours in her final years.

Following the end of steam No.461 was converted, and used for a time as a stationary boiler at Inchicore. There then followed a period of uncertainty over her future, and for a time it seemed likely that she would be broken up along with other surviving locomotives. Fortunately she was then

externally restored for display at an Inchicore open day along with GNR(I) No.131 (the latter looking rather strange in GNR blue livery). I believe that the Irish Railway Record Society were instrumental in having these locomotives retained. No.131 was subsequently mounted on a plinth at Dundalk, but No.461, in the company of No.184, languished at Inchicore for another number of years. Rumours abounded that No.461 was destined for a plinth in Waterford, but this never materialised. Then, surprisingly, in 1976, both locomotives were hauled dead from Dublin to Cork "for storage".

Even more surprising, shortly after No.186 had to vacate Sallins shed and was moved to Mullingar, were rumours that the two locomotives were on their way to Mullingar. These rumours proved to be true and soon Mullingar had taken on the appearance of a working locomotive depot with no less than three locomotives in the shed. In the ensuing weeks, both engines were offered to the Society on permanent loan.

Had No.461 been available for restoration as soon as she came out of traffic, the work required would probably have been little more than that undertaken on No.184 at the time of the film contract. Unfortunately, very serious damage has subsequently occurred to No.461, so that her restoration is probably more akin to that of some of the refugees from Barry scrapyard.

No.461 pauses at Dungarvan during the joint IRRS/RCTS/SLS Railtour, 6th June 1961. (S.C. Nash)

When converted to a stationary boiler, the blast pipe, main steam pipes, and superheater elements were all removed and disposed of, together with the regulator valve and steam castle. Fortunately the regulator valve is available.

Not surprisingly the steam ports, valves and cylinders then became choked with soot, and as a result of trying to move the locomotive in this condition, the right hand piston head became jammed in the cylinder and cracked. CIÉ found it necessary to cut through the piston rod to render the locomotive mobile.

The main axle journals and valve spindles became severely pitted as a result of lying stationary in the open. On the trip from Cork to Mullingar before acquisition by the Society both leading axleboxes ran

badly hot severely damaging axleboxes and journals.

No.461 also bears the scars of an earlier mishap in that both the front buffer beam and the framing of the Bissel truck are bent from a collision. Can any reader recall the incident in question?

Initially, Society policy was to overhaul the locomotive on a standby basis over a number of years as money and manpower became available. Some dismantling and repair was started at Mullingar, but the pace then slowed down and it became clear that restoration would have to be carried out at Whitehead where heavy equipment is concentrated.

Since locomotive No.171 will have to come out of traffic for boiler work and tender repairs in 2 to 3 years time, and No.184 will need re-tubing at about the same time, the decision was taken to transfer No.461 to Whitehead and progress the overhaul there with a greater degree of urgency.

No.461 was transported to Whitehead by road, since the cost of rail transport would have been excessive, and considerable work would have been required to render her safe to move. The loco arrived at Whitehead on 26th November 1984, and the tender on 26th January 1985.

Shortly after arrival, the locomotive paid a visit to the wheel-drop where the driving wheelsets were removed. Various other dismantling, chiefly the motion, springs, and sundry fittings, has taken place, and cleaning and examination of parts is now proceeding.

The main items requiring attention are as follows: driving wheels - skim journals, true up tyre profiles (wheel lathe); axleboxes - re-metal, machine and fit; renew volute springs as required, overhaul eccentrics; make two new piston rods; valve spindles, one new piston head. New gudgeon pins, piston and valve rings. Overhaul glands. Repair two cracked driving horn blocks. Re-tube boiler, make superheater elements, renew crown stay nuts, renew ashpan and firebars, make and fit steam pipes and blast-pipe. Provide steam castle and pipework, vacuum ejector and steam brake (available), and one safety valve.

The tender requires renewal of corroded platework at the drag box, i.e. the box section where the drawbar from the loco is connected, and also renewal of the internal baffles and flared coal rails. The tender is remarkably sound other than at the above places. The boilermaker employed under the ACE scheme is currently working on the tender and has removed most of the corroded platework. In addition, the tender is being fitted with a ‘well’ to increase its water capacity by 500 gallons.

The above list covers only the major easily described items; experience with locomotive No.85 highlighted the fact that minor less obvious work takes every bit as long and nearly as much money.

At present £6,000 has been allocated to No.461 for materials purchase over the next three years. Her return to traffic will of course depend upon the ability of the Society to actually provide this capital.

Progress will also depend upon the continuation of the ACE scheme and upon the volunteers who, sadly seem to become fewer all the time.

I have used the number No.461 throughout this article since a definite decision was made to restore the loco as GSR No.461 rather than D&SER No.15. The reasons for this are firstly that only those over 60 will remember her as No.15 (and only for 3 years) and secondly that as No.15 she never carried the N class boiler.

IT’S NOT SO SIMPLE - A LOOK AT THE COMPOUNDS — Irwin Pryce

I was gratified recently to find that, when speaking at a meeting of the Belfast Area of the Society, I and the other guest speakers were addressing what was surely a record attendance at such a meeting. Any feelings of pride I may have had at the level of interest in my words were dispelled when I considered that I was talking on the premier line in Ireland and that the world must contain a sizeable

number of people of sound judgement who shared my special affection for the Great Northern, its engines and its men. Even after sampling other fine engines all over the world, I still confess to a weakness for the products of Dundalk.

Perhaps my affection was inherited. After the dissolution of the company, my father treated each year's new issue of uniform to major surgery. The trouser seams were carefully slit and the green UTA piping removed before sewing up again. The chrome jacket buttons were consigned to the bin and a carefully guarded set of GNR(I) black buttons substituted. "I'm not going to look like a busman," he explained.

Any attempt to place locomotives in their just place in the historical roll of honour is fraught with difficulty, even if one is careful to set one's personal taste aside. Simple measurements within the scope of any amateur, combined with a knowledge of basic physics, can be used to assess a locomotive's work. The late Professor Tuplin reminded us that no locomotive was ever built that did not obey the laws of Physics. Yet the true fascination of the steam locomotive lies in those enigmatic features which are beyond measurement and in the unique relationship between man and the most human of all machines.

Even in those cases where exhaustive trials were conducted, controversy still rages half a century later. The result in any case usually bore little relationship to the work of the locomotives in the rough and tumble of everyday service, after the experts had lost interest.

Perhaps now the distance in time can lend a degree of objectivity to a look at the Great Northern Compounds and their place in history.

The late 1920s and 1930s were years when the railway companies were improving and speeding up their services and the Great Northern was determined to be in the forefront of any such changes. The introduction of Glover's new compound locomotives allowed an acceleration of quite startling proportions. It would be tedious for the reader not avidly interested in locomotive performance to list each train in detail, but a look at the 3:15 ex Dublin will show the high standard. This train became the most celebrated of all, introducing for the first time in Ireland a mile a minute booking. The Great Northern had joined what was a small and elite band of railways, the only other example in Ireland being the NCC's 31 minute booking from Ballymena to Belfast.

The 54¼ miles from Dublin to Dundalk were booked for 54 minutes, notwithstanding a restriction through Drogheda and over the Boyne Viaduct for almost ¾ of a mile. This booking was followed by a startling 22 minutes to the stop at Goraghwood, including the 10 mile climb through the Gap of the North.

A descent over the curving Bessbrook Viaduct, and the sweeping reverse curves high on the embankment over Mullaglass. Those who have had the thrill of reading a 12 second time on their stopwatch will not need reminding of the pulse quickening effect of this rollicking descent. The 15¾ miles to Portadown were allowed an easier 19 minutes, though with severe restrictions at Poyntzpass, Scarva and Portadown Junction it was still not an easy task. The remaining 25 miles were reeled off in 27 minutes.

The total running time was 2 hours 3 minutes, equal to a non-stop run in 1 hour 58 minutes. What progress when 2½ times the power is provided today to complete the journey in 1 hour 59 minutes. *And* remember that the railway in those days did carry a vast and varied traffic which had to be fitted in round these trains.

The five trains on the Dublin line could hardly be expected to be covered by the five Compounds alone. The S class, that doyen of 4-4-0s, also worked the slower (!) trains with total competence.

The startling nature of these timings caused Cecil J. Allen to devote his monthly article "British Locomotive Practice and Performance" to the trains.

Before looking at the work done by the Compounds let us consider some of the factors influencing the design.

The Great Northern was no different from other railways in having the Civil Engineer looking over the shoulder of the Mechanical Engineer. In this case the Civil Engineer was persuaded to accept a total loading of 41½ tons on the driving wheels, including 1½ tons hammer blow. The S class had a static weight of 34 tons plus 10.89 tons allowed for hammer blow at 70 mph, making a total loading of 44.89 tons. Thus a larger two cylinder engine was out of the question on grounds of weight. The only simple way out of this problem was to build a three cylinder locomotive, the cranks of which could be arranged at 120° instead of 90° of the conventional two cylinder locomotive. Smaller balance weights on the driving wheels are then needed, and a greatly reduced hammer blow results.

Glover having come from the North Eastern Railway's Gateshead works in 1912 where the progenitors of the Midland Compounds were hatched out in 1898 would have been watching the success of their later developments on the Midland Railway. An intensive series of tests had proved to the satisfaction of the LMS authorities that the Compounds were just what the doctor ordered to solve the crisis in the motive power department.

No.85 in black livery at Adelaide in rather less than spotless condition. (Unknown)

O.S. Nock makes the point that the tests were fortuitously conducted over routes and at speeds which favoured the Midland Compounds, their valves being well suited to the solid plodding at 30-40 mph called for by long stretches of 1 in 100 gradients on the Midland routes over Ais Gill and the Peak Forest. Had the tests been carried out on lines requiring sustained running at 70+ on the level a decidedly different picture would have emerged.

Glover arranged for Inspectors Willis and Hanratty to travel on the Midland Compounds between Carlisle and Glasgow over the Caledonian section, and between Carlisle and Hellifield, while he himself travelled between Manchester and London. A Dundalk draughtsman also made a visit to the Derby Drawing Office, and Sir Henry Fowler himself supplied a set of drawings to Dundalk.

All concerned seemed happy with what they saw and Glover, in a memo to the General Manager dated 22nd February 1930, set out in detail his plans for a 3 cylinder compound 4-4-0. In a later memo, he was rash enough to promise a saving in fuel of 6 pounds of coal per mile due to compounding. I feel he may have regretted this later.

The comparison between the NCC's new Moguls of 1932 and the Compound could hardly have been more striking, for by rights the NCC with its predilection for the products of Derby might well have chosen a 5ft 3in version of the familiar Midland Compound. The Moguls incorporated the old and proven G8AS boiler in a new design, using the traditional NCC 6 ft wheels with two cylinders, provided with as good a valve design as ever ran in Ireland. The two designs still provide food for discussion for those interested in locomotives!

For his Compounds Glover chose to combine a higher boiler pressure of 250 psi with smaller cylinders. This had the advantage of increasing the theoretical thermodynamic efficiency of the engines. He also made minor alterations to the valves, increasing the lap slightly. This should have made a freer and faster engine.

By 1938 blue livery had replaced the black. Immaculately turned out, No.85 waits to depart from Amiens Street. The sanders to the rear drivers have been removed and note how the tender side sheets have been extended to accommodate more coal. (Real Photographs X48)

The use of such a high boiler pressure was to prove almost the undoing of the Compounds. Throughout the UK boiler pressure had been raised only slowly and tentatively as experience was gained. Indeed any similar leaps forward - for example Bulleid's Pacifics and Hawksworth's County Class were quickly followed by a drop back to a more modest figure as soon as the eyes of the press were off them. Boiler construction changed little in the 20th century and the traditional design of riveted copper firebox with copper stays had perhaps reached its practical limit at rather less than Glovers proposed 250 psi.

Bulleid indeed moved to a welded steel firebox for his boilers.

In any case, Glover had covered himself by suggesting that, should the boiler pressure have to be reduced, then the tractive effort could be maintained by boring out the cylinders. It did and they weren't.

At an early stage some trouble was experienced with leaking stays, and then other difficulties appeared from an unexpected source. The combination of high boiler pressure with a high degree of superheat (the Compounds had a 24 element superheater against the S class's 18 elements) meant very high steam temperatures and consequent problems with maintaining effective lubrication of valves and cylinders, and resulted in rapid wear with many headaches for shed staff. Modern lubricants would have avoided this, but a solution was sought by reducing boiler pressure followed by use of a mechanical lubricator rather than the traditional Detroit displacement lubricator.

Footplate conditions were hot and a heat shield was later fitted to protect the crew. An amusing aside to this concerns a light engine trial trip where Driver, Fireman and Fitter were engaged in deep conversation and neglected to notice that Lissue gates were against them. A panic application of the brake cast all three in a confused and cursing mass against the hot faceplate.

No.87 "Kestrel" takes water at Dundalk. The date is around 1955. No.87 passed to the UTA and was withdrawn in 1960. (Unknown)

Coal consumption was rumoured to be very high, although with the work demanded of them a figure of 40-45 pounds per mile was not excessive. Against this those paragons, the S class, were running on 31-35 pounds per mile. An added problem was that the longer grate demanded 5% extra work to throw the coal to the front of the firebox. Ease of work for the fireman was not a problem likely to concern the Drawing Office, however.

Incidentally, I often wonder why there was such an obsession with coal consumption in the early part of the century, for with coal prices so low, complicated coal dodging devices were scarcely worthwhile.

Even a hungry Compound could take perhaps 300 people from Belfast to Dublin and back for a cost of less than £10 in fuel.

The design of the boiler, with its deep firebox and adequate water space was nonetheless a fine steam producer and a VS or Compound was a vastly superior proposition compared to the average Mogul. Dick Greer, a veteran on the Dublin line, made the job look easy as he fired them at over 60 years of age. Dick, a short man, claimed that he got his mileage money on the Dublin turns by virtue of the distance he had to walk when firing, for each shovel had to be carried.

I often wonder if Dick Greer's long run on the Dublin line was not, as was claimed, due to poor eyesight, but rather a realisation that promotion to driver would involve years of interruption to his entrepreneurial activities before he again reached Dublin - as a driver. One direction of his trading activities was rumoured to involve goods of the non-Vatican approved variety. Billy Jackson of Portadown, a devout and God fearing man, was once mortified when Greer asked him to move aside nearing Balmoral, and calmly lifted the footboard he had been standing on, revealing bundles of contraband which were duly off-loaded passing Lislea Avenue, the handiest place to home.

Small wonder the Customs men viewed him with distrust, heightened by the fact that he was always several steps ahead of them!

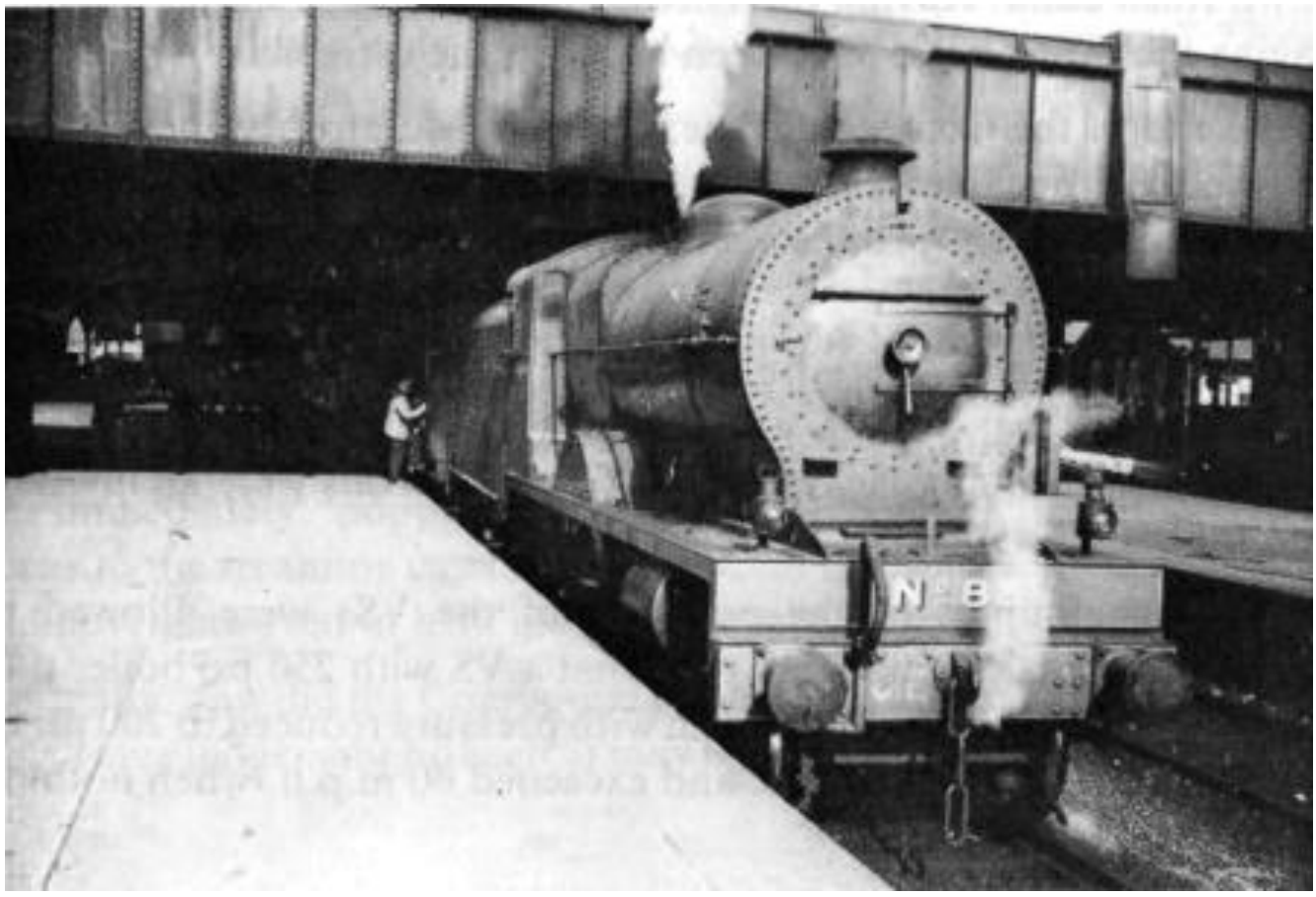
No.85, by now rebuilt with the Belpaire firebox, coasts into Dundalk from the north, 28th March 1959. That she has passed to CIÉ is indicated by the stencil on the front buffer beam. At the dissolution of the GNRB, No.85 was being overhauled at Dundalk. Two of the VS Class, No.209 "Foyle" and No.206 "Liffey" were due to be shopped but were instead withdrawn. (They were only 10 years old.) Subsequently, No.85 was paired with a VS tender. (Kelland Collection 22039)

Returning to the initial problems with the engines, bogie axleboxes had a recurring tendency to run hot, and the locomotives' riding was lively at the front end. The riding problem was overcome by substitution of volute springs in the bogie, these having the capacity to damp unwanted movement. In the early days too, high temperatures at the boiler faceplate caused a few headaches for firemen as

overheated injectors refused to start.

Well! After these preceding paragraphs the reader may be wondering had the engines any good points at all. A look at some work typical for their time will reveal what a fine engine they were.

In a run published by Cecil J. Allen No.84 "Falcon" in the hands of O'Farrell covered the 54¼ miles from Dublin to Dundalk in 53 minutes 25 seconds with a 9 bogie train of 310 tons loaded. Maximum before Drogheda was 77½ mph with 50½ mph being attained at Kellystown summit and 83½ mph on the descent through Dromin Junction. The equivalent drawbar horsepower on the climb to Kellystown is approaching 900 e.d. bhp.



No.85 ended her days in railway service as 'Ruck Engine' at Dundalk. This involved filling in for the frequent failures of the 'A' Class diesel electrics. Here she has found her way on to the 6:15 Belfast-Dublin. Seen here at Platform 4 in Great Victoria Street, July 1961. (Irwin Pryce)

Allen also travelled from Dundalk with Davy Ryan on No.87 "Kestrel" with 5 bogies. The climb from Dundalk was done with a minimum of 46½ mph and Goraghwood stopped in 20 minutes 55 seconds. A through coach from Warrenpoint was added and No.87 went on to cover the difficult section to Portadown in 18 minutes. From Portadown onwards speed rose to 64½ mph at the top of the climb to Post 96, and a modest 75 mph beyond Moira contributed to a 5½ minute gain on the 1932 timings.

Further logs would only bore most readers, suffice it to say that they were of uniformly high standard. In summary, the Compounds ran daily at speeds in excess of 80 mph and developed equivalent drawbar horse-powers of up to 900. Few, if any 4-4-0s in the world did this on a daily basis.

The highest reliably recorded speed seems to have been 88 mph.

A decade later, huge loads, decreased standards of maintenance, poor coal and the loss of experienced

men to war service were all taking their toll. The need for economy in the wake of the General Strike and early mechanical problems had seen to it that the brilliant times of 1932 were never again to return. But, just look, in random logs from Dublin to Drogheda the average time to stop at Drogheda was 36¼ minutes and the average load 350 tons. In the section to Dundalk, only one of the ten trains failed to reach 75 mph and four of the ten trains exceeded 80 mph.

A particular gem recorded by Drew Donaldson shows a Compound, piloted by one of the tiny PPs class 4-4-0s doing 83 mph with a 12 bogie train down Rush bank. Having travelled on a PP at speeds a lot less than this, I can imagine the riding must have been hectic in the extreme.

By the end of the Compounds' next decade, McIntosh's fine VS class had stepped into the front line. It is an obvious conclusion that compounding had not lived up to its early promise, since McIntosh chose a 3-cylinder simple arrangement.

Though the VS class were fine locomotives, the curtain was drawing on Great Northern steam. Morale was low and encouragement for enterprising footplate work was totally lacking. Indeed early arrivals were an invitation to step onto the carpet.

Tantalising glimpses of the potential of the VSs were allowed to the despairing timers, making us think just what a VS with 250 psi boiler pressure and a keen crew would have done. Even with pressure reduced to 200 psi the VS class have reached 1,000 e.d. bhp and exceeded 80 mph when nothing else ever did.

The short lived heyday of the VS class. 210 "Erne" on the northbound "Enterprise" enters Dundalk, 3rd June 1950. First carriage appears to be the Society's GNR 1st Brake, No.231. (H.C. Casserley)

Newry was a shed with a long tradition of good running and it must have delighted Herby Patton to find that when he took over the 8:15 ex Belfast at Goraghwood that instead of the customary BUT diesel set he had No.208 "Lagan" with a 10 coach load of 315 tons. For that period 78 mph at Mount Pleasant was good, but to cover the 31¾ miles from Drogheda in 32 minutes 17 seconds was proof of the potential of the VS class, the climb to Mile Post 16 bringing speed down only to 67 mph before a

maximum of 77 mph at Donabate.

Chatting to a driver in Newry one Sunday in 1964, he enquired who had been on the 9:30 ex Belfast, as he likened the noise of No.207 passing through Bessbrook a couple of miles away to that of a passing jet. A trip to meet this train on its way back was obviously called for. Jimmy McAllister did not let us down, for his climb from Dundalk to passing Adavoyle in 12 minutes 14 seconds with a 9 coach load has surely never been bettered. After shutting off at the summit the valves immediately 'popped' a tribute to the skill of Fireman Kevin Byrne as much as to the steaming capacity of those tubby boilers. I feel sure that Glover would have approved of his 'grandchildren'!

Finally, how did the Compounds compare with the opposition? If I can give a short value judgement on each, it may prompt you to voice your own opinions.

The S Class

Relative to their size the 170s can claim to be the best 4-4-0s ever to run in Ireland, and to be in the first division of 4-4-0s in the British Isles.

The Compounds

For a period of 30 years they coped successfully with all that circumstances could throw at them. They also worked the fastest timetabled service in Ireland, albeit for a brief period. Were it not for the other nasty German, Dr. Diesel, they might still be doing so!

VS No.207 in CIÉ days on a Drogheda local at Howth Junction, 10th July 1960. (H.C. Casserley)

The VSs

Capable of greater power uphill, but circumstances prevented them from demonstrating a capacity for more than 83 mph downhill. Perhaps with 250 psi pressure and 1932 standards of driving they might just have given the Compounds a beating.

The Moguls

I just have to bring them in! Fast and powerful, with a superior design of valves. But inferior in maximum steam generation and harder on water. The basic geometry of a 2 cylinder 2-6-0 made them prone to lifelong complaints of rough riding, cracked frames and loose cylinder bolts.

The Jeeps

Combining the best features of the Moguls with the inherent stability of their wheel arrangement, they were capable of almost 1,000 e.d. bhp at speeds in excess of 60 mph, but proved a less satisfactory plodder on steep climbs than comparable Great Northern engines. Timers will have noted the spectacular climb by No.4, on one of last year's Steam Enterprise trains, from Dunleer to Kellystown. Figures show that this run was fully the equal of 1932 compound work.

Other runs where 66 mph was maintained on the climb from an Antrim start with 5 bogies and a van (No.4, driver Alan Robinson) and 60½ mph was held after passing Antrim at 39 mph with 7 bogies (No.4 again, driver Tom Crymble) show a capacity to use steam effectively at high speed.

A reliable maximum has been recorded of 86 mph.

Unfortunately, it would probably be impossible to design a tank engine with adequate coal and water capacity for all conditions on the Dublin road.

Even a Great Northern man *has* to admire them!

BOOK REVIEW

The Permanent Way Institution Irish Section Centenary Booklet.

1984 was a good year for anniversaries - from Traen 150 to RPSI 20. But one which may have escaped general attention was the centenary of the Permanent Way Institution. The PWI, which comprises railwaymen on the civil engineering side from chief civil engineers to trackmen, was set up in Nottingham in 1884 and since then sections of the Institution have been established in many countries of the world, including Ireland.

RPSI members will have a much higher awareness of the PWI come June 1985 when the body is hiring our steam train to take its members on a trip from Portrush, the venue for this year's international convention of the PWI. To mark both its centenary and the 150th anniversary of Irish railways, the PWI has published a commemorative booklet which is now available to RPSI members.

The 40-page booklet may lack the smooth presentation of other contemporary railway books and magazines, but its closely printed pages are packed with facts, figures and maps which will prove fascinating to the Irish enthusiast. Of most interest is a paper on the 150 years of Irish railways, which is both compact and well-researched and which contains details which will be of interest. Imagine, for example, the early years of the century in which up to a dozen special excursion trains would be seen leaving Rosslare on a summer's day - full of people from the Midlands of England enduring two nights and a day of travel just to spend a few hours in Killarney. Another rather more specialist paper will delight the Whitehead track gang - it's all about the intricacies of relaying a yard. Also reprinted are details of the Dublin section's visit to Mullingar in 1920 where the chief attraction was a "cold sawing plant" for re-processing lengths of rail. And just to bring matters up to date there is a report on the DART electrification programme. Congratulations to the PWI for a useful reference book which will no doubt find its way onto the shelves of many RPSI members' bookcases. **ROM**

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Editor,

Page 22 of the Galway Bay railtour brochure mentioned “unconfirmed reports of a lorry converted to rail use operating alongside the mainline near Oranmore”. The lorry in question, a Scammell, registration number JZA 979, has four flanged wheels bolted on in place of the road wheels. It was used by Cold Chon Ltd., to shunt tank wagons into the shed where unloading took place.

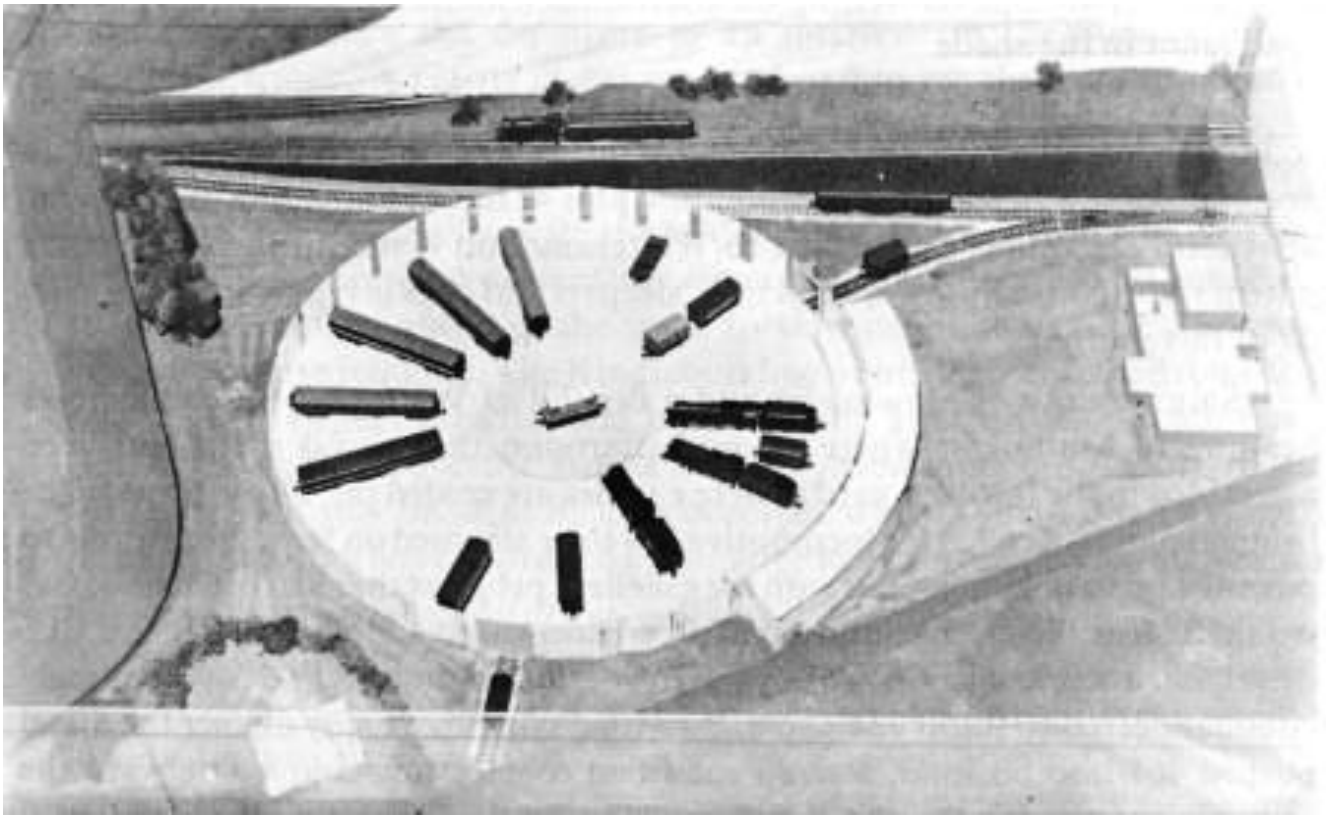
I first noticed this lorry here in 1977, and visiting the site a year later I was told by one PW man that it had been here “for a few years” while another said that it was there “about ten years”, so the dates of 1979/80 given in the tour brochure are obviously wrong. This traffic was changed from tank wagons to container type tanks in mid 1981 which were brought by road from Galway, and the siding has been disused since then. The final official closure was as stated, on 16th June 1983. The lorry was still in the shed on 1st January 1985.

The video films shown after the Galway railtour dinner included scenes of an electric monorail at Belfast Gas Works and I understand that Carlow sugar factory at one time had an electric overhead line with a self-propelled hopper wagon. Can anyone supply further information on these or any other industrial railway, past or present, with or without locos, anywhere in Ireland? Any information will be gratefully received.

Dan Sheehan

Dublin

Scammell lorry converted to rail use at Cold Chon Ltd, Oranmore, Co. Galway. (Dan Sheehan)



Another view of the model of the proposed railway museum at Whitehead. The roof has been removed to expose the interior. The Society's platform and sidings can be seen in the background and Castleview Road in the foreground. (C.P. Friel)

Going, going ... Inspector Frank Dunlop impatient to get away from Larne Harbour. The semaphore signals are soon to be replaced by a modernised signalling system. Larne Harbour was an isolated stronghold for LMS upper quadrant signals in Ireland, the NCC being furnished with somersault signals. (C.P. Friel)