

FIVE FOOT THREE



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FIVE FOOT THREE

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Editor: Nelson Poots

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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.461 leaving Waterford for Kilkenny on 9th May 1998. (C.P. Friel)

EDITORIAL

As the age of steam in Ireland entered its death throes in the 1960s, the RPSI was formed with the aim of preserving railway vehicles and artefacts from the pre-diesel era. In our early years, apart from the loss of various items of the steam infrastructure, we did not encounter too many problems in operating steam-hauled trains in an environment where the attitude of the railway management, North and South, varied between active encouragement and tolerance of what may have been perceived as harmless eccentricity.

However, since the 1980s, what was a fairly easy-going relationship has seen many changes. The goalposts have been not so much moved as put into a continual state of flux. One might speculate as to the reasons for this: new brooms appear to feel a compulsion to do some sweeping, if only to advertise

their presence, and in many cases ignore the ancient precept, "If it works, leave it alone".

As mentioned in the last Editorial, we now live in a 'claiming society' in which everyone has rights but fewer accept personal responsibilities. Thus, in addition to the 'nannying' activities of the State and its assorted agencies, we suffer from the efforts of such bodies and the claiming industry to keep ahead of each other.

The effect on the RPSI is that we are subjected to ever more restrictions. Vehicles which have been certified as fit to run are nonetheless required to creep around the country at impractical speeds and even to stop when meeting a service train lest the two should attack each other. One tends to look back to thirty-plus years ago when steam locomotives worked a more intensive and faster service (see Laurence Liddle's article) and could and did cross each other at a combined speed of up to 150 mph without wholesale carnage resulting. Apart from the type of traction, trains haven't changed all that much - so what has?

On the railway on which they did this day-to-day operation was largely in the hands of persons who did not aspire to academic qualifications. Despite, or perhaps because of, this they made on-the-spot decisions based on common sense and years of experience. Probably, due in no small measure to the matters referred to earlier, the present day situation appears to require a Master Plan set in tablets of stone. All very well until one or more trains get off path, in which event an ad hoc deviation from the Plan appears difficult, if not impossible, to arrange. In such a situation, the main sufferer is the passenger who neither knows nor cares about the arcane aspects of railway operation but simply wants to be taken from one place to another without being messed about. Are Mr. & Mrs. Passenger better catered for now than several decades ago?

Those who have read recent News Letters will have seen that the RPSI is approaching something of a crisis in the area of passenger stock and that several options have been put forward. Apart from the matter of the structure of coaches there is the question of their braking systems, i.e. vacuum or air. The trend of railways everywhere is to the latter and in a previous issue of FFT the question was posed in a semi-jocular manner, "Should we be searching Eastern Europe for Westinghouse pumps?" In the light of current practice the answer must before long be, "Yes", or, alternatively, to install some kind of compressor in a coach with control gear on the locomotive. With our present coaches steam heating is not a problem unless they should happen to require diesel haulage for a significant distance at a cold time of year.

The Cravens coaches which we hire from time to time from IÉ are handsome vehicles and are the last design to have worked in steam-hauled trains, albeit for a short time. They are compatible with a vacuum braking system and would appear to be desirable acquisitions for the RPSI. However, one might have a niggling fear that, with the moving goalpost syndrome, they may be acceptable to IÉ only for as long as that company cannot do without them and that when IÉ have acquired sufficient replacements they may decree that Cravens are no longer acceptable. Bearing in mind what has been said about the alternatives, we would appear to be moving towards NIR's surplus Mk2 coaches. With heating, etc., in mind should we also be looking for a "roaring van"? Whilst at present we can use our existing coaches over most of the NIR system - albeit at speeds which we may feel unreasonable - we may eventually be pushed in the direction they would like us to go. If this should come to pass, coach maintenance will be entering a new and unfamiliar field in which it should be borne in mind that NIR are unlikely to be parting with the coaches simply because they are tired of looking at them.

Assuming the railway companies, North and South, to be satisfied with our vehicles the most obvious move would be to resume running the popular and potentially lucrative Belfast-Dublin trains. For several years it was optimistically suggested that, since the hire of Cravens was uneconomic, we would be able to negotiate some kind of dispensation in respect of our own stock. Not only has this failed to materialise but the regular Dublin service has since increased in speed and frequency. Could we now be

fitted in? This would surely be a “kill or cure” situation for No.85 on her home ground, given her perceived unwelcomeness on several other routes, as witness her inactivity in 1998, and her general unsuitability for working local-type trains.

On a topical note, wouldn’t it have been nice to have been able to help out by running a Dublin rugby special in January - assuming that NIR had a couple of drivers to spare!



Is this the first 4'8½" gauge loco in Ireland since the Silent Valley contract in the 1930s? “Robert Nelson No.4” was recently brought from England to work a pleasure line from the Craft Centre at Riverstown, Co. Louth. The Editor thought he had a scoop when he photographed it in May 1998, only to find that someone else had been there earlier - when it was in steam! (P. Scott)

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

John F. Creaner

In fairness this article really should be written jointly with Norman Foster who, between March and my return to what the charitable call “normality” at the end of August, stood in for me and was very effective while “in charge”. My thanks, and that of the Society, are due to him in measure large and overflowing.

The operating year got off to a splendid start with the international Two/Three/Five Day Railtour. Who will ever forget No.171’s incredible run between Dublin and Belfast on the Monday morning?

I am now going to be slightly sour. For the first time in years, indeed since the waiter spilled the soup down the back of my neck in Sligo, I attended the Railtour Banquet. From where I was sitting I could see nearly everyone present and with slight help from the person beside me was struck by the age profile of the participants. There may have been one or two people under the age of forty, but I would be inclined to doubt it. Apologies to anyone there whose age I have overestimated and who is offended

on that account. As you know, the majority of the people who come on the Big Tour are enthusiasts. Are there no young enthusiasts? Alternatively, is there something about the Tour that deters them from coming? It cannot be denied that Railtours are tremendous craic, so that can't be the problem. At the very start of the Tour I had also noticed the absence of our friends from Yorkshire and several other regulars from Great Britain. My view is that the putting-off factor of the tour is cost. Other people have noticed a falling off in attendance and in particular the missing faces. They also feel that price may be a problem... and that on an enthusiasts' tour. I suggest, very tentatively and respectively, that perhaps we should take a hard look at our fare structures.



After her spirited performance in more southerly parts, No.171 is seen here at Lisburn on 11th May 1998. (C.P. Friel)

The workings of Council and the various Operations during the year will be covered elsewhere in this edition. I can only add that I was on almost every train that the Society ran. Easily the most remarkable - for reasons, let me say, entirely outside the Society's control - was the six hour journey to Portrush on the first of the year's Flyers. It must have been very difficult for parents with young children. One can only hope and pray that it was not a deterrent for the other Flyers and will not be for future years. The Operations team must have been nearly apoplectic with the sheer frustration of it all. There really must be some way round this, though I can't say what it might be in present conditions. Any ideas?

All, however, is far from doom and gloom. All our trains ran. Most were very well patronised. Some had actually to turn custom away in large numbers. It was apparent for the most part that people on our trains were having a grand time.

We are certainly not dead yet, not even moribund.

Well, 1998 was the year of the new Council structure - much debated and discussed beforehand but, when put into practice, not much really changed. That's life I suppose.

The new Council had to face the same old problems as every other year: raising money, deciding how to spend it (no shortage of candidates asking for their share), operating trains, dealing with railway companies, maintaining locomotives and carriages and, this year especially, trying to agree certification and operating arrangements in the north.

We are grateful to Dr. Garret FitzGerald for chairing our AGM in Dublin this year. The meeting went reasonably well, with a minimum of contentious issues being raised. Most notably, we saw the stepping down of our long-serving Chairman, Sullivan Boomer, with the equally long-serving Legal Advisor, John Creaner, being voted in to take his place. During the year, Charles Meredith stepped down and was replaced by David Houston in the role of General Officer of Council.

One of the main themes running through all this year's Council meetings was the proper procedure for the handling of the sums of money lifted by various members before, during and after each operation of a train. Following problems last year, it was felt that a tightening up of procedures was called for. The Treasurer and his team spent quite some time drawing up an adequate set of proposals - no easy task when it is remembered that there is a diversity of points of income and not always an accurate means of recording that income. The safekeeping of income, cash especially, before it could be banked was the major concern.

Another continuing item on the agenda was the discussions with Northern Ireland Railways, our insurers A.C.E. Engineering Insurance, and the consultants Halcrow Transmark over the means by which our locomotives, carriages and, importantly, our members could be certified for operation on NIR metals. Council member Evan Pamely committed a substantial amount of his time to these negotiations, and during the year a significant amount of progress was made. So far 3 members have been certified to carry out daily inspections on locomotives before an operation, and 3 further members have been certified to do likewise on carriages. Council has an agreed policy statement on this subject: "The policy of the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland is that its locomotives and rolling stock will be restored and maintained to the best practical standard, and in such a manner that all safety critical components are known to conform to defined standards."

Operations in the north this year suffered from problems which were threefold. Firstly, because of the lack of operations last year, it was necessary to start building up the momentum of publicity again. Secondly, due to engineering works and a slackening of schedules generally on NIR, it was more difficult to fit our operations between the company's own trains, and our schedules suffered accordingly. The "Portrush Flyer", in particular, was affected as the substantial income derived from the usual extensions to Castlerock was lost since no path could be found to take us there. Thirdly, the now apparently 'traditional' political upheaval in the province during July. The Society is not alone among tourist attractions in suffering a massive falling off of trade around this time. Of the first two causes, we are hopeful that the situation will improve next year - NIR have undertaken to include our paths in their working timetable, and track upgrading is scheduled over the next year on the Bleach Green-Antrim and Coleraine-Portrush sections. A solution to the third problem remains to be seen.

Operations from Dublin continued much as previously and all trains were more or less as successful as last year. Income was much boosted by several film contracts during the year. Following the work on "Amongst Women" late in 1997, the result of which was screened very successfully on RTÉ and BBC during the summer, further filming took place on "Her Own Rules" and "Durango" in August, and on "Angela's Ashes" during November.

Among the notable events during the year was the receipt of one of the AIB Better Ireland Awards for

the Society's work on Irish State Coach 351 - an initial £5,000 was won, followed by a further award of up to £10,000 to cover our expenditure on the project. Also unusual was the work on the underframes of 6 redundant carriages which were strengthened and converted into rail wagons for Mowlems, currently working on the last section of the track renewal between Belfast and Lisburn. A worthwhile addition to our income has arisen from this contract, and it is hoped that more might come if the wagons can be hired out during the renewal of the Central Junction-Central Station and Bleach Green-Antrim sections of track. Another contract, previously reported, is that for the mechanical overhaul of the Downpatrick Railway Society's Orenstein and Koppel locomotive. The timescale for this project has had to be extended as we are awaiting the return of the boiler (not an RPSI contract) before overhaul can be completed.



No.85 about to pass Whitehead tunnel on her return with the 1997 Coleraine Shopper. Several things here are now out of use - the oil jetty served Kilroot power station which now uses coal; the down Larne line, on the right, is out of use due to rock falls near the tunnel; while No.85 had an inactive 1998. (I.C. Pryce)

The Society's 25 year lease for the site at Whitehead came up for renewal late in the year. Discussions started early with our landlord, Carrickfergus Borough Council, with the matter being discussed in the Council chambers. Although no outcome has been notified to the Society as yet, the indications are that there should be no problem in having the lease renewed on similar terms to before.

It has to be reported that there has been no progress on the claim submitted to the Northern Ireland Office for reimbursement of the value of the coaches destroyed by arson at Whitehead in May 1996. We have been informed that the NIO are accepting liability but no settlement has been decided. The Society is pushing for a Chief Constable's Certificate which should help to further the settlement.

Membership figures for 1998 were slightly up on 1997, being 994 compared to 972. The membership breakdown was: Northern Ireland, 364; Republic of Ireland, 322; Great Britain, 276; Overseas, 32. Alternatively: Adult, 695; Senior, 175; Junior, 26; Life 61; Honorary, 12; Family 20; Societies 5. The number of Senior members has increased from 168, mostly due to the increasing age profile of the membership - a worrying trend! On the positive side, the number of Junior members, although still low, did increase from 20.

During the year, the Council decided to give new members joining after 31st July in any year the following year's membership free. Previously, any new members after this date were charged 66% of the full rate.

The usual thanks for help during the year, and the annual plea for more volunteers, now follows.

Firstly, our insurance brokers, J.H. Marsh & McLennan, continue to provide an excellent service at what are, for insurance cover, reasonable rates. Our premiums have settled down and are not escalating as fast as they might.

My thanks as usual to Northern Ireland Railways and Iarnród Éireann for allowing us the use of their respective board rooms for our Council meetings. However, during the year Council took the decision to meet on Sundays in a Dundalk hotel instead of the usual Thursday or Friday evenings alternating between Dublin and Belfast. There is now more time to discuss all items on the agenda, something that did not regularly happen when meeting in the evening. It must also be said that proximity to a bar does help to concentrate the mind wonderfully!

Posts of Special Responsibility to the Secretary for 1998 were: Charles Friel (Belfast Meetings); Nelson Poots ("Five Foot Three" Editor); Johnny Glendinning (Museums Liaison Officer). As usual Peter Rigney in Dublin keeps me up to date with southern information, gossip and trivia for the members' News-Letter. Thanks also to Barry Carse who helps process a large number of the membership payments in the south. There was no Legal Advisor this year as the previous incumbent had to relinquish the post when he became Chairman - thankfully a replacement was not required, although I am assured that should the need arise suitable candidates have been identified!

Also, thanks to all those members who served on the various sub-committees: Operations both north and south who organised the running of our trains; Finance which ensured that our financial situation stayed on the rails, setting budgets for all the spending departments; Workshop which has responsibility for the general running of the site at Whitehead.

Of all the above committees, the operations committees operate under very difficult circumstances, having to deal with the needs of the railway companies (themselves under great pressure from governments and the general public), the requirements of the health and safety bodies, the expectations of an increasingly more sophisticated travelling public, the advance notice demanded by tourist boards and, by no means least, the hopes and wishes of Society members. Gone are the days when a steam train movement could be organised at a few days' notice, and it is significant that provisional programmes of trains are now made available up to a year in advance. In fact, preliminary proposals have already been drawn up for a grand millennium tour for the year 2000. These arrangements take a lot of planning and both the Dublin and Belfast committees would be keen to have extra help, especially in the areas of marketing and publicity for their operations.

Likewise, although not directly related to operations, workers are required in the Carriage & Wagon Department, especially at Whitehead. Over the past number of years there has been a significant falling off in attendance at Whitehead to work on carriages, and this has caused considerable disquiet at Council. The effect on operations will become apparent when a carriage is not available to operate on a train, as has already happened this year. So a plea from Council: give up one or two days a year to help out at Whitehead - it could make all the difference.

Finally, my thanks to all our members for helping to keep steam on the rails, particularly those who take an active interest and are not mentioned by name above.

NORTHERN OPERATIONS

Heather Boomer

Years come and go but 1998 will go down in history, at least for me, as one of the most frustrating and unpredictable on record. However, I will start on a positive note, and take great pleasure in reporting that the Gaultier Railtour was a great success and one of the most varied for several years. The main changes this year were the diesel departure from Heuston and the use of the southern based carriages. The fast start to the day enabled us to make better use of the RPSI stock and to cover more of the

branch lines. This also allowed us to run a wonderful selection of lineside buses (the most we have ever run, covering nearly 50% of the tour route!) and photographic stops. The other advantage was that the travellers were able to spend time on board and make use of the superb catering facilities provided by the DAOC. The Monday proved to be a great success with some very spirited running along the Great Northern main line which has been recently upgraded for 90 mph running.

Easter proved to be a good start to the year with well-filled trains, but an attempt to make the "Midsummer Steam" out of Belfast more popular, by aiming at Country Music, failed miserably. Then we came to the Portrush Flyer season! The single line working between Belfast and Lisburn added time to the schedules, which were slow to start with, and made it a very long day for passengers and crew alike. The other problem we encountered was of a political nature - the Province emptied in July so we cancelled the first Flyer. The rest of the trains filled reasonably well but due to a number of unforeseen circumstances did not always keep to path as well as they should have done. We also missed the Castlerock runs, which could not be scheduled because of service trains, and this reflected on the profitability of the entire operation. The Atlantic Coast Express ran without a hitch, and we finished the year with an extremely successful Santa season.



*Another Coleraine Christmas Shopper - this time 1998 and with No.171, passing Galgorm.
(I.C. Pryce)*

This will be my last year as Operations Officer as I am finding the commitment harder and harder to keep. This does not mean you have seen the last of me; I will back my successor and continue to do as much as I am able. Already the schedules for next year's trains are with the railway companies and NIR have offered to write us into their working timetable in future. This should help to cut the journey times and make the longer trips more attractive to the public. Also, in line with previous practice, I am taking responsibility for the "Saint Munchin", the 1999 International Railtour, which this year goes to Limerick. It will be my last formal duty.

Finally I would like to thank the many people who, through my years of wearing the "hat", have put in a lot of effort to keep steam running. For our trains to keep running, we still need more support from members to help on the day - Coach Stewards have been at a premium this year! I find it hard to understand that, in exchange for a little effort on their part, we find it well-nigh impossible to give members a free day's travel!

“No news is good news” is a truism that occurs to the writer. All our trains ran, all were well filled and none, thankfully, were afflicted with breakdown or delay.

Our regular season consists of a Good Friday opener to Mullingar, an Enfield shuttle in May, a barbecue special to Mullingar in June, two specials to Rosslare Europort in July and one in early September and six Santa trips over two Sundays in December. The Greystones shuttles were not in the 1998 programme due to engineering work consequent upon the extension of the DART. However, one Santa train ran to Greystones due to PW work on the Maynooth line. The 1500v wires were strung but not energised, while colour light signals now control the altered layout.

Having thus outlined the regular season, I propose to deal in detail with three aspects of it. These are the coaching fleet, special activities during the year and the repairs to No.461 in the early season.



Paddy O'Brien and Denis McCabe at work on 1463, the last surviving laminate coach in the Dublin fleet, under overhaul at Mullingar. Note the new steel roof members. (P. O'Brien)

The Coaching Fleet - It is indeed a sobering thought that out of the eight vehicles turned out for Millennium Steam a decade ago, only two remain in traffic - brake 1916 and 64-seater 1463. Both of these vehicles received overhauls in Mullingar, with 1463 emerging this year after extensive repairs which saw its timber roof members replaced with steel.

The backbone of the Dublin fleet is the three Park Royals acquired between 1992 and 1994. With 70 seats each they provide more than 50% of the train's capacity, but possess only one toilet between the

three of them.

The two compartment coaches, 1142 and 1335, are favourites for film makers while the other “double act” is the two diners - 88, the only GNR vehicle in the set, and 2421 (whose twin 2422 is in the museum at Cultra). 88 is a “tea car”, dispensing tea and food, while 2421 is one of the 51 railway vehicles licensed to sell alcoholic drink. Recent learned research by a former editor of FFT, one Tim Moriarty, has uncovered the fact that dining cars are not constrained by the normal licensing hours!

The livery carried by the set is dictated entirely by film companies. For example, all the Park Royals were originally in green but were painted crimson for the “Michael Collins” film. Three coaches reverted to green in 1997 for “Amongst Women.” At the end of 1998 all the set is in red - including 1463 which was repainted shortly after emerging from Mullingar in green! *[It may have been the latter which a Dublin wag suggested would be out of gauge if it got much more paint! - Ed.]*

This amounts to nine coaches. Of these, one is usually in Mullingar undergoing repairs. In the early part of 1998 it was 1463, while 1383 was worked down on the special in October. A significant amount of interior and electrical work is undertaken in Heuston yard. This has included complete interior refits for Park Royals 1383 and 1416. The latter received a new roof and panels in Inchicore, but the recent rearrangement of workshop space now makes this less possible.

There remain four other vehicles for mention. 1549 was a crash-damaged Craven, which was acquired in 1996 and disposed of in 1998. TPOs 2979 and 2981 have widely differing roles. 2981 is in use solely as a store. It was acquired by way of a swap for laminate 1470 which was scrapped in its place. Its only revenue earning move for the Society was to Pearse station and back for the “Michael Collins” film.

2979 is owned by An Post but unofficially under the ‘care’ of the RPSI. It was restored by IÉ in Inchicore and now resides in Heuston station. Restored as a TPO, it sports a green livery which it never carried in traffic, having been turned out in the 1950s silver livery which proved so short-lived. This vehicle participated in the Thurles 150 celebrations, to which it was hauled in a liner train, and on the RPSI Mullingar 150 trip. State coach 351 is a venture all on its own and is dealt with elsewhere.

Coach No	Company	Seats	Toilets	Running
88 Diner, non-licensed	GNR	24	Nil	Yes
351 State coach	GSWR	-	2	No
1142 Compartment 1 st	GSR	56	2	Yes
1335 Compartment Bredin	GSR	56	2	Yes
1383 Park Royal	CIÉ	70	1	No
1416 Park Royal	CIÉ	70	Nil	Yes
1463 Laminat	CIÉ	62	2	Yes
1916 Brake/generator/crew	CIÉ	40	Nil	Yes
2421 Diner, licensed	CIÉ	36	1	Yes
2423 Park Royal, ex-snack bar	CIÉ	70	Nil	Yes
2979 TPO	CIÉ	Nil	1	***
2981 TPO	CIÉ	Stores Vehicle		No

1549 Cravens, crash victim, disposed of in 1998

*** Not in the regular running set but ran as a shop/exhibition coach on the Mullingar 150 trip.

All coaches are wired for a 220v supply, fed by the generator in 1916. Lighting is by the pre-existing 24v system. Dynamos have been decommissioned in 88, 1335 and 1142 and removed from all other vehicles. In the case of the latter, ½ ton should be deducted from their rated weights as listed in "Steam's Silver Lining".

Special Events - Although part of our scheduled programme, the Good Friday was notable for being diesel hauled (by GM 074) due to the unavailability of No.461. It is also worth noting that very few of our customers seemed in any way put out by this. The reason for this may be found in the Intoxicating Liquor Act of 1924 which provides that almost the only place where one can legally procure liquor on a Good Friday is in a railway refreshment vehicle - provided that it is moving and that the traveller is in possession of a valid travel ticket! Thus 2421's bar did an extremely good trade. The prospect of a revision in the licensing laws makes the continuation of this trip doubtful in the long term.

August provided much activity. This was **not** intended, as no trips had been planned to run then. However, two films combined to make it a busy month.

On Monday 17th August a casual driver on Dublin's North Strand would have seen GM 216 hauling five RPSI coaches and six Cravens to Connolly where No.461 was waiting, having come over from Inchicore. A midday departure saw an arrival at 12.22 at Malahide where possession was taken of the Up platform for a TV production entitled "Her Own Rules". A number of static and arrival shots were done and the train returned to Connolly at 15.40, clearing the road before the evening rush hour.

The next day, at 19:10, the train left Connolly crewed by Dan Renahan and Seamie Brennan with Inspector Dan McLoughlin. The destination was Arklow, for stabling and availability over the next three days for the shooting of "Durango" in Rathdrum station. Rathdrum has virtually no siding accommodation and can be quite busy with ammonia and fertiliser trains, as well as the Rosslare passenger trains.

The journey southwards to Arklow was uneventful - apart from being interrupted by a jogger wearing headphones who brought the train almost to a standstill by running along the track between Greystones and Wicklow, oblivious of the loco whistling behind her! *[On the footplate on the first Rosslare trip I had the same experience - twice and without headphones - in the Newcastle/Kilcoole area where the railway appears to be treated as an extension of the beach. Had the offenders been run down due to their gross stupidity an expensive farce in the Courts would nonetheless almost certainly have ensued. - Ed.]*

Filming was scheduled for Wednesday, Thursday and possibly Friday. The train stabled in Arklow goods yard and the coaches of the morning Arklow passenger, which normally stable there overnight, were worked empty back to Dublin. Shooting took place on Wednesday and on Thursday when a marathon 14 hour day obviated the need for Friday's schedule. IÉ's requirement for drivers meant that the coaches were worked back to Dublin by diesel on Friday, with No.461 staying in Rathdrum for another week.

This week's work marked the return to service of coach 1463, which had been outshopped from Mullingar and brought to Dublin on the Barbecue special. Her pristine green livery was changed to crimson and the upholstery work was undertaken in the week before the film, being finished off on the way to Rathdrum. This coach actually re-entered revenue service for the RPSI before it carried a single passenger!

The next special event took place in October when we ran a special to Mullingar as part of the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the opening of the MGWR. An active local committee had

arranged two return trips to Killucan and the RPSI acted as contractor to that committee rather than as event promoter.

The local nature of the event was emphasised by the VIP welcoming party at Mullingar, which was led by local TD and Minister responsible for CIÉ, Mary O'Rourke and included Joe Meagher, Chief Executive of IÉ. It is doubtful if this level of public presence could be organised by the RPSI on its own. The partnership with the local committee was a key ingredient.

Rather than run empty to and from Mullingar, the trains from and to Dublin were sold to about 50% capacity. This contrasted totally with the capacity crowds on the two Mullingar-Killucan trips. The local organisers said they could have sold a third train if we could have got a path for it.

The train consist on this trip was unique in a number of ways. Newly restored TPO 2979 acted as exhibition vehicle and proved very successful in that role. Additionally, it was the first time we attempted nine coaches to Mullingar, with the harsh climb from Connolly to Coolmine. The ninth vehicle was Park Royal 1383, heading for overhaul, which was quietly shunted to the shed courtesy of a passing PW train. The success of this type of event in conjunction with a local committee gives us all food for thought.

December saw two days' film work, with two Santa days in between, leaving us working four successive Sundays. The film was "Angela's Ashes" a film version of Frank McCourt's Pulitzer Prize-winning account of life in Limerick in the forties and fifties. The original plan was for four scenes to be shot on 29th November. Three of these were to be day scenes and the fourth a night sequence, all to be shot in Pearse in the old platforms now used for Engineer's trains.

This was a tall order, given the shortness of the December day. The fact that the loco had to run to Connolly to turn made the plan all the more unlikely. When the loco did arrive, on time at 08:00, the film company decided that it was facing the wrong way - so back to Connolly to turn!

We eventually started work at 10:30, shooting being interspersed with DART movements. Things were going slowly - even by filming standards! This turned out to be due to internal tensions on set leading to the acrimonious departure of a senior member of the production staff who did not return.

While RPSI staff stood around and drank endless cups of brown liquid, tentative approaches were made for a second day's work. As the next two Sundays were committed for Santa trips it had to be 20th December. The deal was agreed and the director, Alan Parker of *Midnight Express* fame, set about completing the night arrival shots.

20th December dawned cold and as the RPSI crew trooped up the ramp from Erne Street, replete with a hot breakfast, they could see the dim outline of a GM diesel against the RPSI set. Just as the sun began to hint at appearing over Lansdowne Road No.461 drifted in from the north, wreathed in steam. After a quick confab the diesel shunted the RPSI coaches and No.461 headed in under Pearse's overall canopy, where it stayed stationary for the duration of the day. A lack of movement should not be taken as a lack of action; as lights and cameras moved around, a number of scenes were shot in the fake Limerick station.

The director, dressed for December, seemed to lumber around like a giant king penguin as he set up each shot to his satisfaction. One shot was in towards the footplate while for another, No.461 had its number erased with water-based paint to fake a second arrival. Bored RPSI volunteers whiled away the hours on both days by busying themselves with coach maintenance tasks. Our train spends most of its time in Heuston yard and being in a platform allowed much easier access to roofs and gutters.

Eventually, at about 15:00, the director called finish. As the film company crew took away their equipment the diesel shunted the train and released No.461 which crossed the loop line in the sharp sunlight of a December afternoon, leaving more than one of the RPSI crew to bemoan the fact that they

had no camera.

So ended 1998. In the nine months between March and December we ran on 22 occasions, of which 21 were behind steam, 6 were film related, 2 were test runs and one a placing move for the Two Day Tour. This compares with 17 trips in 1997. As always, our thanks are due to IÉ staff at all levels, without whose co-operation we could not run.

The Trials And Tribulations Of 461 - At about 14:30 on Thursday 7th May No.461 sat at a signal between Waterford West and Waterford Central for what seemed an age while the blast of a diesel horn heralded the passing of the 14:25 passenger to Dublin. As the IÉ and RPSI persons on No.461 were supposed to return to Dublin on that train the language was choice, but at least we had got the loco to Waterford with all its bearings cool, thus putting an end to a spell of bad luck that had dogged the loco since March.

When last mentioned in Five Foot Three, No.461 had received a new set of tubes. Work undertaken in early 1998 included the re-metalling of coupling rod bushes and the overhaul and refitting of all the tender springs. The latter operation was carried out at Inchicore in the blacksmith's shop. When completed, the loco was hauled to the North Wall wagon weighbridge, an ultra-modern piece of equipment which allows all axles to be weighed simultaneously. All seemed well and a trial trip to Kildare was arranged for the following Saturday.



If there is such a thing as a 2-0-2-2 then this is one. Here No.461, with coupling rods secured on the running plate, awaits the return of her leading coupled wheel and the re-metalled bearing. April 1998. (D. Carse)

On the trip to Kildare disaster struck. On arrival back at Inchicore the middle left hand tender axlebox was found to be badly hot. Reaction was two-fold, firstly to ascertain the cause and secondly to effect repairs. The tender was separated from the loco and removed to a shop that was in process of conversion to the new wagon shop and equipped with lifting facilities. The relevant axle was removed and taken to the machine shop for turning, while the pattern shop and foundry did sterling work at short

notice and produced a replacement axlebox brass which was despatched to Cookson's of Navan for re-metalling.

With an eye to the long term commitments of the loco, it was decided to run the Good Friday trip with a diesel. Thus on that day some RPSI members headed to Inchicore to - as they thought - put No.461 together again. But our problems were only beginning as it was found that the front left hand driving axlebox had also run hot and melted a lot of metal.

The cause of these incidents cannot be established with certainty although it seems likely that the hot box on No.461's tender was due to the brass shifting or mis-aligning in the course of the job on the tender springs. The cause of the heating of the driving axlebox on the locomotive had not yet been finally established but, following analysis of the white metal by the Chief Chemist in Inchicore, a higher grade was ordered for the replacement.



Seen here is the driving wheel axlebox from No.461. It has been more than a little hot as is evident from the almost complete absence of white metal from the pockets in the bearing. The slot in the middle is designed to deliver oil to the top of the journal while lubricant is supplied to the bottom by an oil-soaked pad. (D. Carse)

Following a day spent stripping the connecting rods and re-fitting the tender axleboxes, No.461 was moved to Diesel 1 shop. On Saturday 25th April the loco was lifted and the offending wheelset and axlebox taken out. The box was despatched post-haste to Cookson's while the wheelset was examined and the journal cleaned up. By this stage the Two-Day Tour was not far away and another evening was booked for the following week, by which time the axlebox would be returned. While the loco was lifted

the opportunity was taken to examine the trailing driving axle, which was found to be in order.

We were now getting perilously close to the Two Day Tour. A day was spent fitting the newly metallised box to the journal and final assembly was carried out on the Monday and Tuesday prior to the Tour. A trial trip to Sallins and back was run on the Wednesday. Temperature strips were fitted to all crucial bearings. Thursday was set for the placing run to Waterford, with a 09:00 start from Inchicore. The offending tender bearing was suspiciously warm at Cherryville but cooled after an easy run to Athy. Although we missed our train back from Waterford we were happy that the repair job had been successfully accomplished.

It must be clear to the reader that the only reason we could turn out No.461 in the time concerned was the excellent co-operation we got from all concerned at Inchicore, in the office, the foundry, the machine shop and Diesel 1. The excellent and speedy service provided by Cookson's of Navan is also much appreciated. One result of the experience has been that, on the advice of IÉ, all crucial bearings will carry temperature strips, which eagle-eyed photographers may already have noted on the wheel bosses. They are one aspect of our continuing efforts to reconcile 19th century technology with a 21st century railway.

IRISH STATE COACH, GS&WR 351

David Humphries

Progress Report, 6 months ended 31st October 1998

Exterior: All decayed and damaged body side quarter panels have been removed. Replacement panels have been machined, fitted and fixed. All securing slips have also been removed, examined for decay, etc., and, where appropriate, replacements machined and installed. Where it was possible to salvage existing slips these were cleaned of old paint, etc., sanded and refitted. Body side shell mouldings have been machined, fitted and fixed.

In respect of two of the exterior doors, both the interior and exterior framing and panels were removed and examined for decay and damage. New panels, as required, were machined and fitted and exterior panels replaced. Fascia mouldings were machined and fitted, the interior framing was stripped of paint and varnish and decayed/damaged sections replaced. Raised panels were scrapped and new ones machined, veneered, etc., and fitted.

A third door which had been fabricated earlier required new material for both the outside and inside. All of this had to be specially machined and moulded from new material and the fitting of the new pieces is now in hand.

All damaged or decayed exterior framing has been removed and replacement or refurbished parts fitted.

All screw and nail holes have been filled, the whole exterior body shell prepared for painting and the first undercoat applied.

Interior: The old skirting has been removed and replacement material machined and installed.

Centre Vestibule: All walnut/mahogany framing was removed and examined, new framing being installed as required. All 10 raised panels were also examined - half of them requiring replacement. The rest were stripped of damaged veneer and all were re-veneered, prepared for French polishing and refitted to the framing. This operation was completed by fitting new moulding to all of the framing.

End Vestibule: This required the same process as the centre vestibule, with 14 raised panels being restored or replaced. The end bulkhead is still being worked on, a further 8 raised panels being involved here. The cantrail moulding had to be scrapped and a new one machined and fitted. The same applied to lamp bases, and a cabinet for electrical controls is also being manufactured and fitted.

Running Gear: Work has commenced on the overhaul and refurbishment of both bogies. Two period-

style gangways have been salvaged from another Society vehicle and are now being repaired in preparation for fitting. The vacuum brake cylinders have been overhauled and made ready for fitting.



State coach 351 in "The Ramps" at Inchicore, November 1998. (Courtesy D. Humphries)

LOCOMOTIVE REPORT

Peter Scott

The current status of the Society's Locomotives is as follows:

No.3 Ex-LPHC 0-6-0 ST shunter, built 1928 by Avonside Engine Co. In Traffic, Whitehead shunter/train rides loco.

Scrutiny of the last three editions of "Five foot Three" revealed that identical comments have unwittingly been made about this loco on each occasion - namely that it could do with an overhaul, that it works very well in spite of this and that its duties are in the mundane rather than crowd pulling category. My apologies to those who have found this true but non-original statement becoming tedious. There must be something else to say about LP&HC No3 and I will try and think of it before the end of this report!

No.4 Ex-LMS(NCC) and UTA 2-6-4 T class WT mixed traffic tank loco, built 1947 at Derby. Undergoing major boiler and mechanical overhaul at Whitehead.

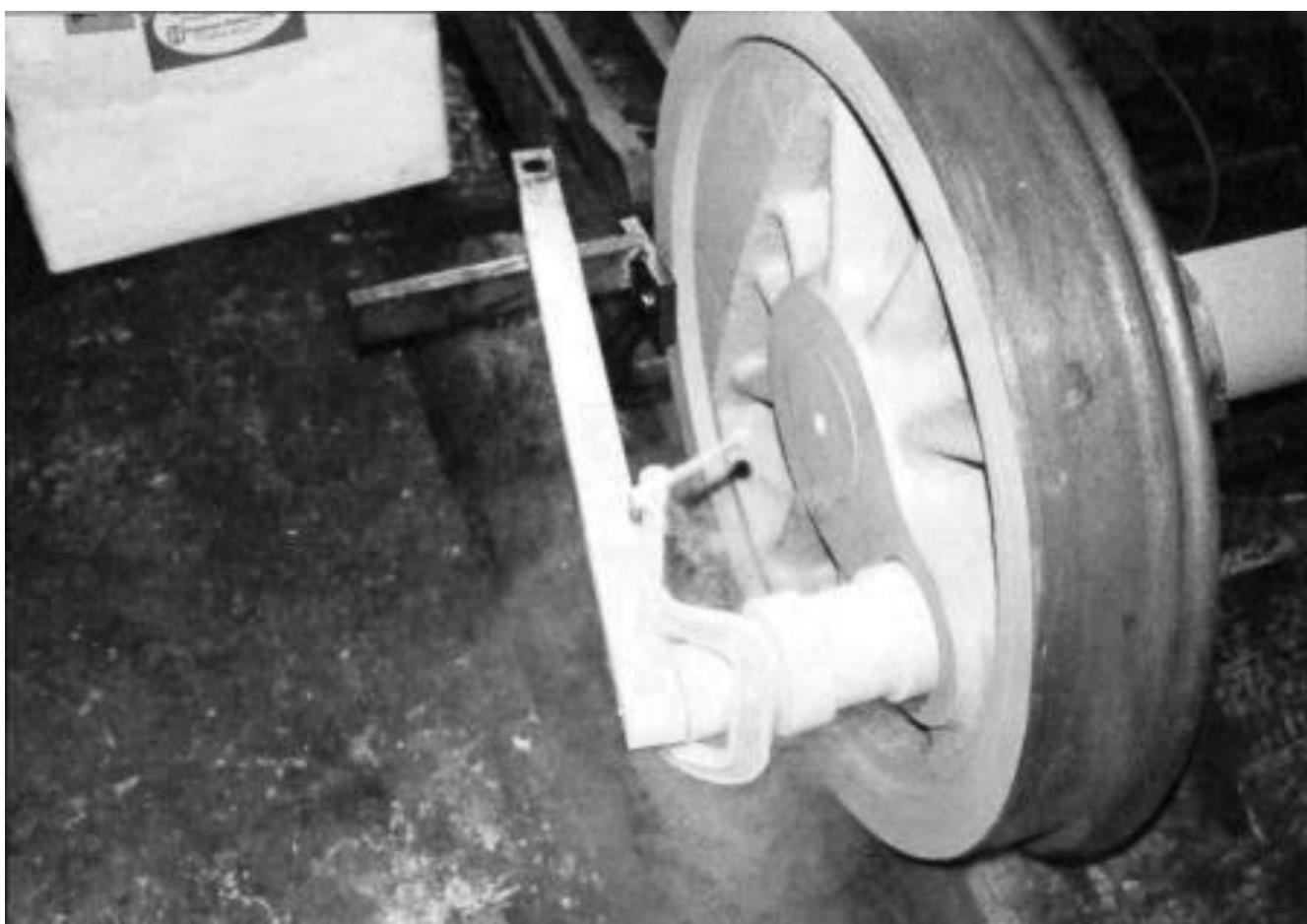
Structural repairs to the boiler have been completed, it has been hydraulic tested and is being steam tested at the time of writing. For this purpose it has been mounted on a temporary bogie outside the engine shed, with essential fittings in place and all unnecessary apertures mainly at the smokebox end temporarily closed up.

Mechanical overhaul consists of complete stripping down of the locomotive to the frames leaving only the cylinders and motion plates in place, thorough cleaning and inspection of all parts followed by repair and replacement of worn components and rebuilding. This sounds easy enough when

compressed into one sentence, but a lot of both voluntary and paid work is involved, together with new materials, e.g. brass bushes, piston rods, etc. Of course it means money and we are always looking for this. Some European Regional Development Fund assistance was given (mainly for the boiler) for which we are most grateful. Much of the materials have already been acquired and major parts of the work are already complete or in hand - for example overhaul of the bogie and pony trucks is nearly complete and corroded sections of the framing renewed. But the remaining work is enough to take up much of our paid and volunteer personnel's time for at least the next year, and the dismantling and inspections referred to above have revealed more and more unserviceable parts in need of renewal. So anyone who feels inspired to contribute either assistance or funding, now is the time!

No.85 Ex-GNR(I) and CIÉ 4-4-0 class V compound express passenger loco, built 1932 by Beyer Peacock. Minor repairs, Whitehead.

The boiler will be due for intermediate repairs in 1999. The loco last worked at Easter, since when loco 171 has been available.



A new crank pin being fitted to one of the O&K loco's driving wheels. It has been shrunk in liquid nitrogen in the tub seen in the background. The rod is temporarily clamped on for handling purposes. (P. Scott)

No.171 Ex-GNR(I) and CIÉ 4-4-0 class S express passenger loco, built 1913 by Beyer Peacock and rebuilt by GNR(I) in 1938. Minor repairs, Whitehead.

The boiler has had its intermediate attention and the loco is due for major overhaul with boiler removed in 2001. Since her return to traffic, 171 has handled the lion's share of the northern operations together with the Railtour to Waterford last year. I am told by those who make a study of locomotive

performance that 171 acquitted herself well. The only criticism that I hear is regarding the livery (she is still in black) but there, I suppose it's a case of one man's meat - my own view is that the loco should not be repainted in the blue livery until after the forthcoming general overhaul, to avoid disturbing the lining out which is a major exercise.

No.461 Ex DSER, GSR and CIÉ K2 class 2-6-0 goods loco, built 1922 by Beyer Peacock. Minor boiler repairs, Dublin.

The boiler received mid-term attention in 1997, and the loco is due for major overhaul in 2000.

461 has handled all the southern operations together with the Waterford tour. Some work has been carried out to bearings and tender leaf springs. The "volute" bearing springs with which all the wheels on the engine are fitted are to be renewed.



With parts of the new foundry and loco workshop in the left and right backgrounds, the large power hammer starts its journey to the workshop (J. Wolsley)

Diesel Locos:

No.23 Ex Irish Shell "Planet" 4 wheel diesel mechanical shunter, built by F C Hibberd. Whitehead shunting loco.

Another "unsung hero" along with No.3 mentioned earlier that we would be hard pressed to do without.

Carlow Shunter. Ex Irish Sugar 4 wheel diesel mechanical shunter, built by Ruston and Hornsby.

Overhaul nearly complete but requires rectification of gearbox fault.

Unilok Ex UTA road/rail shunter. In store, Whitehead.

Locos Out of Traffic:

27 Ex SL&NCR and UTA class Z 0-6-4T mixed traffic loco, built Beyer Peacock in 1949. Requires major overhaul of both boiler and mechanical parts.

3BG Ex Arthur Guinness 0-4-0 ST shunter, built Hudswell Clark. On hire to DARS at Downpatrick. In store at Downpatrick, requiring general overhaul.

184 Ex-GSWR, GSR and CIÉ J15 class 0-6-0 saturated goods engine. In store, Mullingar. Requires major boiler and mechanical overhaul.

186 Ex-GSWR, GSR and CIÉ J15 class 0-6-0 superheated goods engine. In store, Dublin. Requires boiler overhaul. Mechanically in reasonable order.

202 Maybe this is not quite the right place to include comments on the cut-away model of GNR(I) SG3 class No.202, late of Great Victoria Street Station. Restoration of this model is continuing when time permits but it is not quite ready for display purposes. Major items still required are the tender superstructure and the locomotive coupling rods.

General Comments On Locomotive Policy:

It will be seen from the foregoing notes that the operational locos are all coming up for work of some description in the next two to three years. It is may be timely to open the whole topic of locomotive availability and to ask for views from any interested parties. Unlike the mainland of Great Britain, we do not have the luxury of a seemingly endless supply of locomotives, or a Barry scrapyard, and indeed the available Irish main line locomotives can be readily counted on the fingers of two hands. What appears at the head of our trains - and the type of train we are able to operate - has been dictated over the years by circumstance rather than by choice.

From the above notes, it can be seen that by about the end of year 2001, we will have only locos 85 and 4 in traffic, unless either 461 or 171 are taken out of traffic earlier than their “running certificate” would allow, to enable overhaul work to start. I am assuming that major overhaul would take approximately two years depending upon “emerging work”.

The alternative would be to get the overhaul of another locomotive started right away. Obviously I can only speak for locomotives owned by or under the control of the Society, and the choices in this case are:

186 0-6-0 goods loco. Was operational until she became due for general boiler work. Mechanically should be a reasonably inexpensive loco to render operational (The J15s are beautifully uncomplicated compared with say NCC No.4. There simply are very few components to wear out.) Boiler repairs should not be too extensive but the loco has been stored in the open and the boiler is an unknown quantity. This loco will not haul any “Steam Enterprises” but would be very suitable for moderate speed, moderate train size operations. She has the great advantage of being easy to maintain and is also exceedingly “user friendly” - important in the context of crew training.

184 0-6-0 goods loco - the earlier “saturated” version of 186. Also operational until major boiler and mechanical overhaul became due. Every bit as useful as 186 but may require a new cylinder block which would add considerably to the cost of overhaul. Limited in range by her small tender unless 186’s tender is available.

27 0-6-4 tank loco. Similar in haulage capability, etc., to the above J15 locos. Requires major work both mechanical and boiler.

So those are the options; in theory we could start right away on the overhaul preliminaries of any of the above, with 186 the most effective option.

But the locomotive scene is that which engages the most widespread interest both inside and outside the Society, and is certainly not the prerogative of the Locomotive Officer alone! So what are your views? But before making suggestions, however modest, do remember that all projects have to be funded. Locomotive overhaul costs have increased dramatically for two reasons - first the necessity, as time goes on, to carry out much more in-depth inspection, certification and overhaul work. Secondly because such work is outside the scope of volunteers alone we must add a wage bill or specialist fees to our costs. While the "spending" departments (loco, carriage and site) rarely contribute to the coffers, this has recently changed with the taking on of some contract work - thus helping to secure the continued employment of essential staff. But the plain fact remains that our present operations are less and less able to fund the vehicle overhaul bills and external money is vital. Grant aid has been a major factor in the past but the present tranche is now at an end and who can predict any more? So before rushing to suggest that we build an NCC mogul from scratch (we do have a set of wheels to base it on after all) or a GNR(I) VS with 3 coupled axles instead of 2, think also as to where the cash is to come from!



The road crane referred to in the Site Report can poke its nose into almost anywhere. Here it has made its way into the new loco workshop and is lifting the driving mechanism of the former Queen's Quay overhead crane into position. (J. Wolsley)

Locomotive Workshop:

The current position is that the fabric of the building is complete and an additional switch and compressor room is nearly so. Main lighting is operational and the compressor is wired in temporarily. The railway track has been laid and a concrete floor installed in the machine tool area at the Larne end.

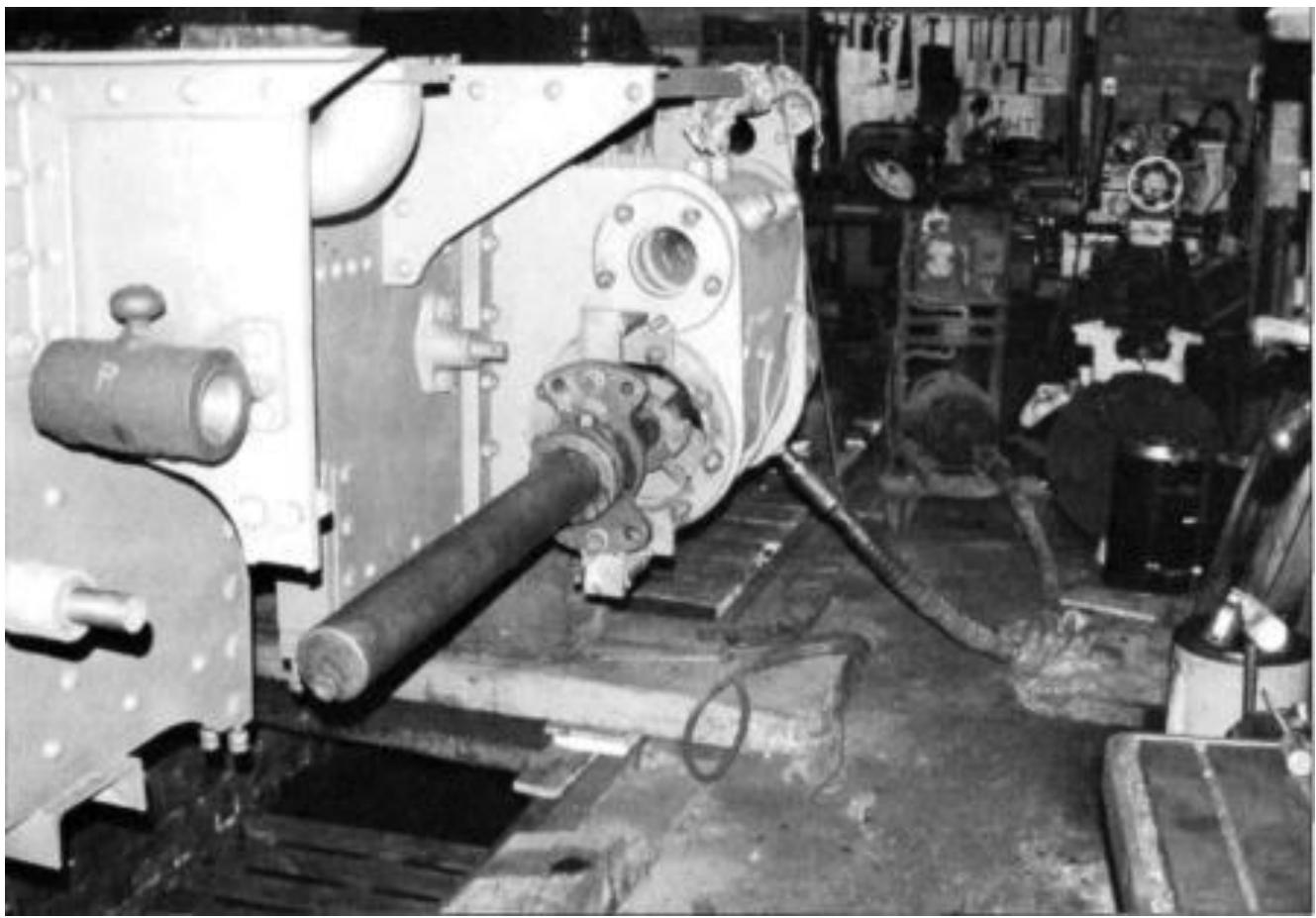
Installation of the machinery itself must await the completion of the wiring.

At the Belfast end, the blacksmith's and boilermaker's equipment is being installed and this work should be moved away from the engine sheds shortly, releasing one track in the engine shed for its proper purpose - housing and servicing a locomotive. The former wheel house, which enclosed the wheel lathe, was encapsulated by the building of the workshop and is currently being demolished. We try to waste nothing and its roof timbers have gone to the new switch room.

The 1897 ex-BCDR overhead crane was lifted into place before the roof was completed, and the remainder of its machinery is gradually being overhauled, lifted up and assembled.

To date the new workshop has been used for the Mowlem wagon conversions and for the current bogie overhaul programme, the first two bogies being nearly ready for fitting to ex-UTA dining car 87.

A rather sudden development has been the setting up of limited iron casting capabilities at Whitehead. This arose because of the closure of the last of the local iron foundries prepared to do our type of work (principally locomotive firebars and brake blocks). Our thanks are due to the proprietors of the former Edenderry Castings for making equipment available and assisting with the setting up of the facility at Whitehead.



The O&K loco's right hand cylinder is being bored out by a handy little machine about 8 feet long. The valve chest, above, later received similar treatment from another machine of much more delicate appearance. (P. Scott)

“The Derry Engine” - I said I would try and come up with something original to say about ex Londonderry Port and Harbour Commissioners No.3. An obscure and rarely photographed engine, she

worked up and down the quays on the City side of the Foyle at Derry, shunting both broad and narrow gauge wagons. This was possible because of the dual gauge trackwork and the narrow gauge coupler mounted to the right side of the headstock - see Five Foot Three No.44, p 16. The coupler was still in place when we acquired the locomotive, but was removed partly because it no longer had any practical function and partly from the safety consideration for the shunters. The loco was built in 1928 by the Avonside Engine Co of Bristol, and we are fortunate in possessing the original file of correspondence between the Harbour Commissioners, Avonside and the National Boiler and General Insurance Company. This contains some interesting revelations of the late 1920s - not the least being the purchase price of the loco, £1,904 (yes, nineteen hundred and four pounds!). A spare spring supplied in 1934 cost £4-5s including carriage to Derry! Such a spring would nowadays cost something like £300. One consequence of the involvement of the National Insurance Co was the use of their own design of fusible plug in the firebox - a complicated type which applies to No.3 but not to any of our other engines. When we had to renew this plug, National not only supplied the new plug but loaned a tap for cleaning up the threads - the age of chivalry is not dead.

The first major renewal of inner firebox copper plates which we carried out was to No.3, and in this respect she was something of a guinea-pig for similar more extensive work done to No.85. The major difference between the two jobs (apart from size) was that the copper used in No.3 was unsuitable for welding and the new bottom half of the firebox had to be riveted. In the case of No.85 the new plates were welded. The reason for the repair was of course exactly the same in each case - copper plates thinned by a lifetime of hard work together with maybe not the most ideal of fuel!

Orenstein and Koppel Loco No.3 - Overhaul contract for the Downpatrick and Ardglass Railway Co.

At the time of writing, the mechanical overhaul of this locomotive is nearly complete and we are awaiting delivery of the rebuilt boiler so that all connections, pipework, controls, etc., can be completed and the locomotive commissioned.

CARRIAGE & WAGON REPORT

Mark Kennedy

The flower beds outside the shop at Whitehead were cleaned out and planted up with seeds in the spring. By the start of the summer train rides, there was a good display of hardy annuals. Four varieties of bulbs kindly donated by Brian English of Whitehead Hardware have just been planted and will hopefully bring a splash of colour to the platform in time for the Easter Bunny.

As mentioned, previously, Whitehead Scout Group has expressed an interest in helping out at the site. This would be a part of their Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme. What we need now is someone to think what the Scouts might be able to do for us and oversee this project. It is a shame that when we receive an offer like this we don't appear to have the manpower to organise it.

I reported in the last newsletter that there was a worrying shortage of volunteer carriage workers at Whitehead and that contractors continue carrying out even simple maintenance. Despite a short flurry of activity (mainly in the bar over Christmas), nothing has changed.

The carriages at Whitehead need considerable attention to keep them in good order. Currently they are only receiving essential safety maintenance. A backlog of general and cosmetic work is beginning to build up which will see vehicles dropped from the running set causing loss of revenue and ultimately resulting in an non-viable Northern operation.

What is wrong? Whitehead Carriage and Wagon Department has the best collection of vintage carriages in Ireland, the biggest shed to work in, good tools, spares and equipment and it is easily accessible by rail and road. The Dublin carriage squad doesn't have these facilities but still manages to attract a dozen volunteers every weekend.

So come on down to Whitehead some weekend - it's cheaper than going shopping.

I would like to thank the Carriage & Wagon Squad (or Thomas as he's known), for all his effort throughout the past year and also the Loco Department, Site Department and Evan Pamely who have helped out when no one else was there to.

GNR 9: In traffic. Passed annual insurance inspection November 1998. Two top lights were recently damaged by branches.

GWR 1097: In traffic. Passed annual insurance inspection November 1998. The corridor end board for this vehicle was run over by the engine during shunting but has now been repaired. A new set of batteries was fitted after the summer season. A break-in the night before the last Santa Special resulted in two broken windows that will have to be replaced before Easter.

NCC 87: In traffic. Both vacuum cylinders have been overhauled. It passed its annual inspection with flying colours recently.

NCC 68: In traffic. Passed annual insurance inspection November 1998.

NCC 241: In traffic.

NCC 238: In traffic. Passed annual insurance inspection November 1998. All drop lights have been remade and fitted with safety glass.



Bogies for the "Mowlem's" wagons under overhaul at Whitehead. (P. Scott)

NCC 91: In traffic. Passed annual insurance inspection November 1998. Problems with the lighting appear to have been solved by fitting a complete set of new batteries. A number of minor roof leaks were shown up by the soft weather experienced this summer. Subsequent inspection of the roof covering showed that it was life expired. This is not really surprising as it was one of the first

replacement plastic fabric covers to be put on by Alan Edgar and Ken Pullin in the late 1970s. Given the number of people needed to replace a roof cover and the current lack of volunteers, a high tech roofing paint has been applied which should keep the damp out for another season. Some panels were damaged by overhanging branches during the Santa runs. NCC 91 and GNR 9 suffer most from the undergrowth (overgrowth)? as they are normally marshalled at the end of the train and therefore take the full initial impact.



Two of the wagons converted from coaches at work with Mowlem's - R5 looking as though it has a full load. (P. Scott)

The main battery charger in the shed blew two fuses in the Autumn. Suitable replacements have been found (the charger is so old that the fuse holders had to be updated at the same time). These were fitted and worked for 3 seconds before one of the fuses blew again. It looks as though the rectifier has gone. If anyone has any knowledge of industrial 24volt battery chargers, I would be grateful if they would take a look at it. Otherwise a new one will have to be bought as it is essential to charge the batteries regularly throughout the winter and before each trip.

GSWR 1097 and NCC 91 were due to go to Dublin for filming in late November. This did not happen and has been rescheduled for early in 1999.

The first pair of bogies for overhauling are nearing completion and will most likely be fitted to NCC 87. It was hoped to re-temper the springs on the old bogies but they were found to be beyond repair so a brand-new set have been made and fitted. This has pushed up the overall cost of the overhaul. It was estimated that rebuilding a pair of bogies would cost £2,000. This first set will cost nearer to £3,000. Subsequent bogies shouldn't cost quite so much as they have previously been kept in running order.

We had enough unused old stock spring hanger rubbers to complete the first pair of bogies, but new ones will have to be purchased for the others and to date Peter Scott has been unable to locate replacements. If we have to commission a special batch, it may be expensive.

Waste of Space

I am pleased to report that for the first time, the whole running rake of 7 coaches is housed under cover. Thomas Charters and Evan Pamely spent some time in December shuffling the contents of the carriage shed and managed to get more to fit in than previously thought possible. Road 1 houses 1097, 87, 241, 68, 91 with Lough Erne at the Larne end. Road 2 houses 238 and 9, completing the running set. Behind them are stored MGWR 62M, NCC 243, GNR 50 and GSWR 861. Two vehicles had to go out in the cold; NCC full brake 411 and NCC brown van 697.

This year, volunteers permitting, it is hoped to carry out the following work - continue bogie overhauls, concrete more of the carriage shed floor, improve the organisation and storage of spares, continue restoration of NCC 243 and carry out general overhaul of NCC 238.

I would also like to see, volunteers and money permitting, a carriage workshop and store built, a carriage washing platform on the land side of the site, completion of the carriage shed concrete floor, improved lighting in the shed and around the site generally and obviously the carriage shed extended to be able to house every vehicle under cover.

SITE REPORT

Dermot Mackie

January was a busy month in the Locomotive Workshop, when track and concrete sleepers were being laid with the help of the hand crane, diesel No. 23, Trevor Mounstephen, John Wolsley and Tim and Philip Lockett. We also filled a 20-foot container with scrap iron and ballasted the track, all with the additional help of Robin Morton, Robert Davison and Alan McRobert. On the 24th we had a 30th birthday for our JCB, complete with a specially commissioned cake! The last week saw the outer block walls of the workshop being plaster rendered and dashed in a smart red colour by an outside contractor.

With the extra help of Drew and Trevor Wood most of February was occupied with scrapping our old laminate coaches. The aluminium alone netted £280 and Johnny Lockett's enthusiasm for a bonfire soon reduced the rest to ashes. On St. Patrick's Day I purchased a very good second-hand ram for the back bucket of the JCB - what you might call a belated birthday present. The next day, contractors came in to the rear of the workshop to dig out and pour the large concrete base for the heavy machine area. Completion of this meant that we could finish laying the track through to the Larne end of the building. Further scrap drives in late April and early May earned us £260 and left the rear of the site neat and tidy and a vast car park for the use of volunteers.

Meanwhile, a new touch pad controlled alarm system had been fitted on the site to control both the workshop and loco running sheds. The Wednesday night project for the summer months was to realign the carriage sidings and make them serviceable. A small group of the stalwarts plus Thomas Charters and David Henderson completed this task by mid-August. It's wonderful what you can do with a hand jack! In the meantime, the Saturday squad poured concrete sills in the workshop and ballasted the new turnout with forty tons of stone. Colin Smith, a great painter of coaches, also proved to be a good hand with a spade. I spent the last Saturday in August on the Stables roof, making it waterproof. September saw us putting up a new service duct to carry electricity and compressed air into the carriage shed and loco workshop. On top of this was laid the concrete base for the new compressor house and part of the pre-mix load was also used to form the base for the large power hammer in the workshop.

Demolition of the wheel lathe house started in October and the installation of the lighting in the workshop was supervised by Johnny Glendinning. On the 27th a large mobile crane spent all day on site and moved several heavy items into the workshop, including the power hammer and a furnace. It also

lifted the winding gear up to the indoor overhead travelling crane. November was taken up with levelling part of the workshop floor with stone and the movement of the large sliding doors from the old wheel lathe house to the inside of the new foundry. Before the Santa Trains we spent several Saturdays doing the track maintenance that was needed for the safety and comfort of the expected customers.



Word of the cake has obviously penetrated the loco shed as at least three of its inhabitants have emerged to assist Dermot and his merry men to celebrate the JCB's 30th birthday. (D. Mackie)

In the new year we aim to install the trunking and cabling for the rest of the electrical system in the new workshop. It is not often that the Site navvies get an indoor job for the winter months, so any volunteers who wish to benefit from this unique opportunity should arrive at Whitehead any Saturday, willing to tackle all. You will be most welcome.

FIVE FOOT THREE TO THREE FOOT THREE

Archie Morrow

In 1946 the 2-6-4 tank engines started to arrive at York Road and were immediately given the name "Jeeps" by Sam McCullough, the night Head Cleaner who had earlier given the name "Doodlebugs" to the ex-LMS 0-6-0T shunting engines, 18 & 19, known on their home ground as "Jinties".

Since the numbers 1-4 were already carried by the "Glen" class 4-4-0s the Jeeps did not arrive in numerical order, indeed the existing No.4 overlapped the new one and was renumbered 4A for a short time until it was withdrawn. Thus the first consignment of Jeeps were numbered 5-8. Derby works obviously had their own views about how engines should be numbered - perhaps because their own engines' numbers consisted of four or five digits - and so whilst the Jeeps carried brass number plates on their bunkers the figures were plain and not at all like the traditional ornate NCC numerals. The same applied to the numbers on their buffer beams, which initially looked cheap and nasty but were later repainted in the more familiar blocked and shaded style.

The first of the Jeeps created quite a stir at York Road. It wasn't so much the locomotive itself, which

was basically a Mogul in tank form but with a bogie under the rear tank and bunker instead of a tender wagging behind. The driver could sit and drive with a clear view ahead while the fireman was in heaven, being able to sit and look out between firings and with not only a rocking grate to assist him with cleaning the fire but also a self-cleaning smokebox. It was like a new dawn in the age of steam but was regrettably short-lived.



2-6-4T No.5 in new condition in NCC livery. The lever for the hopper ashpan can be seen midway along the rear coupling rod. (Real Photographs Ltd)

Around this time I was firing to Bill Wilson (Swiz to his friends and enemies) as his regular fireman, Ben Bowman was sick, and, after No.4 had had her running-in period on shunting, Swiz and I took her to Portrush and back on her first main line trip.

Bill Wilson was an NCC character, having in the early part of his career driven the Portstewart tram - probably the last person to do so - and was fireman to Con McAllister on the successful Mogul trials on the GNR in the 1930s. Like many of us, Bill was a wee bit vain - he just showed it more. On the Moguls at night when the firebox door was open we got a reflection on the front cab lookout windows, and sometimes out of the corner of my eye when firing I could see Bill straighten his cap and tie, roll from side to side more than was necessary, smile and nod to his image as if to say, "You're some guy". He hated to arrive late with a train at York Road as the staff at the engine shed would have been out pretending to look at their watches as he went past.

I was fireman to Tommy John McAuley for the NCC winter timetable of 1952-53 on the tank engine link; ours at that time was No.54. Although he and I did have the odd flare-up when hot words were exchanged, to the amusement of anyone within hearing, the fall-outs never lasted long and I considered him one of my best friends. We had a long history of flare-ups, as this wasn't the first time I fired to T.J.; I was his fireman for a while when he had No.5, the Green Goddess. This was at a time when the railway company was experimenting with different shades and styles of green paint. Mogul No.90 "Duke of Abercorn" got a deeper shade of green, with lining, and one of the "Scotch Engines", (the U2 class 4-4-0s) received similar treatment, while No.5 was something of a poor relation, in a paler shade

and unlined. When I got married and moved to live in Glengormley in 1951 T.J. helped me to get a very good bicycle cheaply and helped with lots of other little things that were very useful to a young couple starting out.

Going back to the 1952/52 winter timetable, one of our turns of duty was to book on at 00:30 and bank two goods trains to Ballyclare Junction. After banking the second we stayed at Ballyclare Junction to marshal and work the Larne goods. This was a loose-coupled train and sometimes very heavy, having gypsum for Magheramorne cement works and any driver who left Ballyclare Junction without a clear road was a fool. We generally got into Larne around 07:00 and had a bit of time to ourselves before working the Boat Train from Larne Harbour at 09:30.

On the morning of 31st January 1953 we coupled up to the Boat Train at about 08:45 to heat the carriages and prepare for the 09:30 departure. At 09:50 the Larne Harbour foreman informed us that we would have to work the 10:00 stopping train to Belfast as the "Princess Victoria" was in trouble in Loch Ryan. News was scarce when we got to Belfast and I went home and went to bed. When I got up that evening the news was very bad. The "Princess Victoria" had gone down with great loss of life. This is very well documented in Bill Pollock's book "Last Message 13:58 - Death of the Princess Victoria".

By the late 1940s and early 1950s I had reached the dizzy heights of being a top link fireman, firing to such NCC stalwarts as Shiels, Gregg, Keenan, Hagan, Hanley, McAuley, etc., and then DISASTER struck! The entire Belfast and County Down Railway, with the exception of the Bangor line, closed and we, the NCC that is, had a flood or shower (and sometimes more expressive language was used) of BCDR enginemen descend upon us. As we all now had the same employer, the Ulster Transport Authority, they were able to retain their seniority. I was demoted to engine cleaner and received a letter telling me that I might be made redundant.

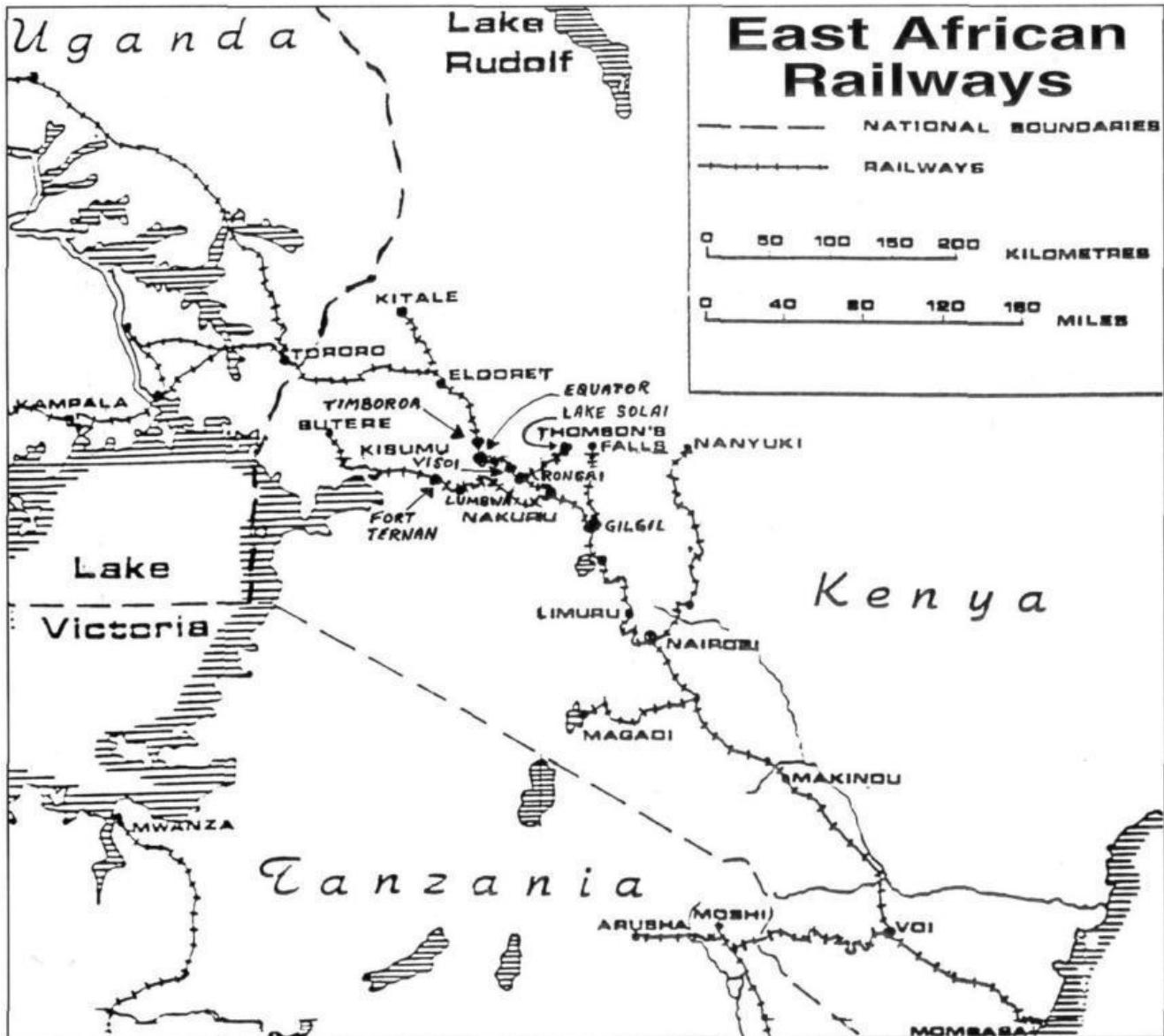
As I mentioned earlier, I was married in 1951. My wife was working and earning as much as I was so we took a mortgage and bought a house in Glengormley. Our son, Lawrence, came along a year later so Jane had to leave work and we now had some serious thinking to do.

Around that time some NCC firemen applied for and got jobs with Rhodesia Railways, as career opportunities with the NCC were limited. I applied to the Crown Agents in London for a job as locomotive driver anywhere in the world. As I mentioned in Part I, I'll always be grateful to Inspector Billy Hanley who, on being told of my plans, agreed to pass me out so that I could honestly describe myself as a driver in my application. I received an application form from the East African Railways and Harbours in March 1954 and I was in Nairobi on my birthday, 24th July 1954.

This was a Sunday and none of the railway offices were open and I was taken to be signed into the Railway Bachelors' Quarters but we never got past the Railway Club. As a new Irish recruit I was made very welcome and ended up the worse for drink and without lunch. I was told later that I had sung "When Irish Eyes are Smiling" - badly. At dinner that evening I think I was set up and given a very very hot curry but with the drink in me I didn't turn a hair. Later that evening I went to bed and remember nothing until the next morning when I awoke to the words, "Chai B'wana", and a black face looking through the mosquito net. For a few minutes I thought I was Sanders of the River!

I attended Nairobi Locomotive Training School to learn about the Westinghouse brake which was used in Kenya because vacuum is difficult to create at high altitudes. After passing the Westinghouse brake test I was transferred to Nakuru which is the capital of the Rift Valley province of Kenya. The Great Rift Valley is an earth fault that runs throughout East Africa from the Red Sea to Malawi and is believed to be the place where man began to walk upright. *[In Archie's case this probably took place some time on the Monday. - Ed.]* Nakuru is just south of the Equator and in the Rift Valley but, at an altitude of just over 6,000 feet, has a wonderful climate.

Nakuru shed was quite modern steam-wise, servicing a large fleet of rigid and articulated oil-burning locomotives and having a drop pit, wheel lathe and machine shop. It supplied motive power to work Nakuru - Nairobi - Mombasa, ruling grade 1.5%; Nakuru to Kisumu, ruling grade 2%; Nakuru to Eldoret, ruling grade 1.5% plus the Gilgil to Thompson Falls and Rongai to Lake Solai branch lines. (2% = 1 in 50 in old money). After learning routes and being passed by the Locomotive Inspecting Officer (LIO), I worked pick-ups for about three months. The shedmaster, Don Owens, called me to his office and gave me my first Garratt, No.5302, just out of Nairobi workshops after a heavy overhaul. Did I feel some kid?!



My first trip on 5302 was a night freight to Eldoret, returning to Nakuru after rest the following night with another freight. As we were about to leave, three LIOs appeared out of the gloom and asked me not to rock the boat as they would be sleeping in two coaches at the rear of the train. One of them, as an afterthought, said, "Driver, if you have any problems do not hesitate to wake us." The trip was uneventful until we were approaching Visoi where the signal was at danger. The signal dropped and I released the brake and proceeded to enter the station. As we passed over the points, to my horror, I could see the pointsman turning points under the boiler unit of the Garratt. I slammed on the emergency brake, thinking that the LIOs would now be tossed out of bed and far from pleased. The train stopped

with the front unit of the engine on the main line and the rear one entering the crossing loop. That was my introduction to Garratt working! Fortunately, the incident was held to be not my fault and I received a commendation for stopping quickly.

I had 5302 for about nine months without any more problems. In late 1955 Nakuru shed received an allocation of new 60 class Garratts. They ran like sewing machines. Some wag of a driver said, "The working class can kiss my #!@, I've got a 60 class at last!" I received No.6018 "Sir Charles Dundas", all this class being named after colonial governors.

One trip I will always remember was when coming back from Kisumu with a mixed train. On a 2% upgrade between Fort Ternan and Lumbwa we ran into a swarm of locusts and slipped to a standstill. The cab was swarming with them and they were frying on the smokebox and hot pipes. Luckily some shrubbery was growing close to the line and we had a panga (African knife) on board. The fireman and I cut some heavy branches with plenty of leaves and pleated them into the cowcatcher so that they brushed the rails. Still slipping, we got away and arrived in Lumbwa one hour down.

My fireman was very partial to fried locust and had an excellent lunch, indeed I had trouble keeping him in the cab as he kept making trips to the smokebox to harvest the best cooked specimens. I tried a few but my palate would not accept them.

In 1956 there was a very bad runaway between Lumbwa and Fort Ternan. A double-headed heavy freight with a 57 class Garratt and a 29 class 2-8-2 locomotive left Lumbwa and gained speed very rapidly on the 2% downgrade. In the brake van at the rear the guard panicked and applied the emergency brake which jammed. The driver then had no way of building up air pressure in the train pipe and the train, by then out of control, derailed between Fort Ternan and Koru, killing one Sikh driver, two African firemen and one African guard. Bill Ewart, the driver of 5702, lost a leg and was eventually sent home. I had home leave in 1957 and visited him in Glasgow. He died a few years later.



5302, the Garratt which almost managed to travel on two lines at once. The photo clearly shows the boiler and cab pivoted between the two power units. The twin Westinghouse air pumps are mounted beside the smokebox - how would one of these look on 171?! (D. Durrant)

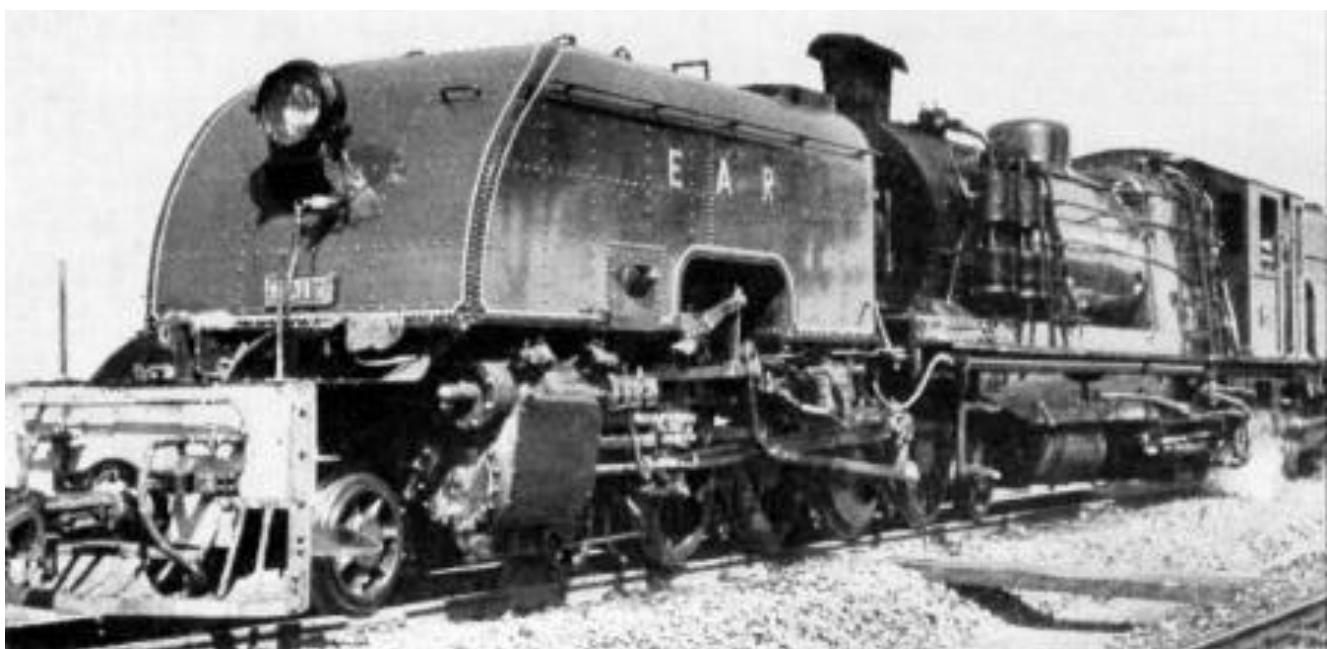
I worked the breakdown train with a 75-ton crane on this accident with very little rest for over two weeks, although my overtime was substantial. After this accident no driver was allowed to take charge of a train on a 2% grade without at least two years' experience on the Westinghouse brake. Fortunately, by this time I had qualified.

At this point, a few words on the Westinghouse Automatic brake might be appropriate. It is operated by compressed air which on the EAR&H was furnished by two Westinghouse compressors controlled by a steam governor to 100 psi. and stored in the locomotive's main reservoirs. This air is then fed to the

train pipe and auxiliary reservoirs on each vehicle in the train through the driver's brake valve at 80 psi. The air to each vehicle is controlled by a quick acting triple valve and the brakes remain off as long as train pipe pressure is held at 80 psi. Any reduction of train pipe pressure from whatever source e.g. driver's brake valve, guard's emergency valve, burst flexible hose or passenger communication cord being pulled activates the triple valves and allows compressed air from the auxiliary reservoirs into the brake cylinders at a rate proportional to the severity of reduction of the train pipe pressure - hence the term "Automatic".

On the long severe continuous down grades on the EAR&H, e.g. Timboroa to Rongai (around 60 miles of 1.5% down grade) it was imperative that the train pipe and auxiliary reservoirs were recharged at regular intervals and this could only be done when the driver's brake valve was in the full release position. During this vulnerable period speed would have increased rapidly and the driver had to use retainers to maintain control.

On every vehicle on the Kenyan section of the EAR&H the brakes were released through a valve at waist height. When closed, this retainer valve held compressed air in the brake cylinders at 15 psi and exerted a continuous braking effect. This was a more modern version of the procedure of pinning down wagon brakes which used to be practised in the British Isles. Sections of track where retainers were required were indicated by a "R" board at which it was compulsory to stop. The driver then had to decide, after taking into consideration the weight of the train and how effective the brakes had been so far, how many retainer valves he should instruct the fireman to close.



6017 "Sir John Hall", showing the less angular tank also carried by the 56 and 59 classes. Also plain to be seen is the rather unsightly chimney which accompanied the Giesl ejector fitted to almost all EAR locos from 1961 onward. (D. Ramaer collection)

The building of the Kenya Uganda Railway from Mombasa to Kisumu must rank high in the top ten great railway building engineering achievements of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the Nakuru to Kisumu section being the most difficult with its innumerable steel viaducts over deep chasms and valleys and still keeping to a 2% ruling grade. A great friend of Jane and me in Nakuru was Florence Preston, widow of R.O. Preston, the working engineer who was in charge all the way from Mombasa. Florence had the privilege of driving the mythical Golden Spike when the railway reached Kisumu on 20th December 1901.

The Kisumu line started off from Nakuru at an altitude of just over 6,000 feet and climbed to Mau Summit at 8,700 feet, all 2% upgrade for about 45 miles. Then it was 2% downgrade all the way for about 60 miles to Koru, at an altitude of 4,000 feet. After that it was more or less level through the Nyanza sugar fields to Kisumu on the shores of Lake Victoria at an altitude of 3,700 feet.

Kisumu is the capital of the Nyanza province of Kenya and has the highest dockyard in the world.

In the early part of the century this area was classed as a white man's grave. Fortunately, when I started to work to Kisumu health conditions had improved immensely. After the rains - and Kisumu got a lot - the grass grew fast and lush. This encouraged the hippopotami of Lake Victoria to come out at night and graze on the grass that grew between the engine shed and Hippo Point. Sometimes I thought that all the cars in Kisumu were there to shine their headlights across this grassy meadow. We drivers and firemen had the problem of getting from the engine shed to the running room without getting between a hippo and the water. Statistically, there are more humans killed by hippos than by any other wild animal in Africa, just because they got between the hippos and the water.

I have lots of fond memories of driving on the Kisumu line but two stand out and are worth recording. One was descending from Mau Summit at night and from a distance seeing an electrical storm over Lake Victoria, a sight I am sure only railwaymen or insomniacs enjoyed. Another one was coming back from Kisumu on the long 2% climb from Koru to Mau Summit when African children of all ages would run out of their huts and do a tribal dance to the rhythm and song of a Beyer-Garratt locomotive with a full load.

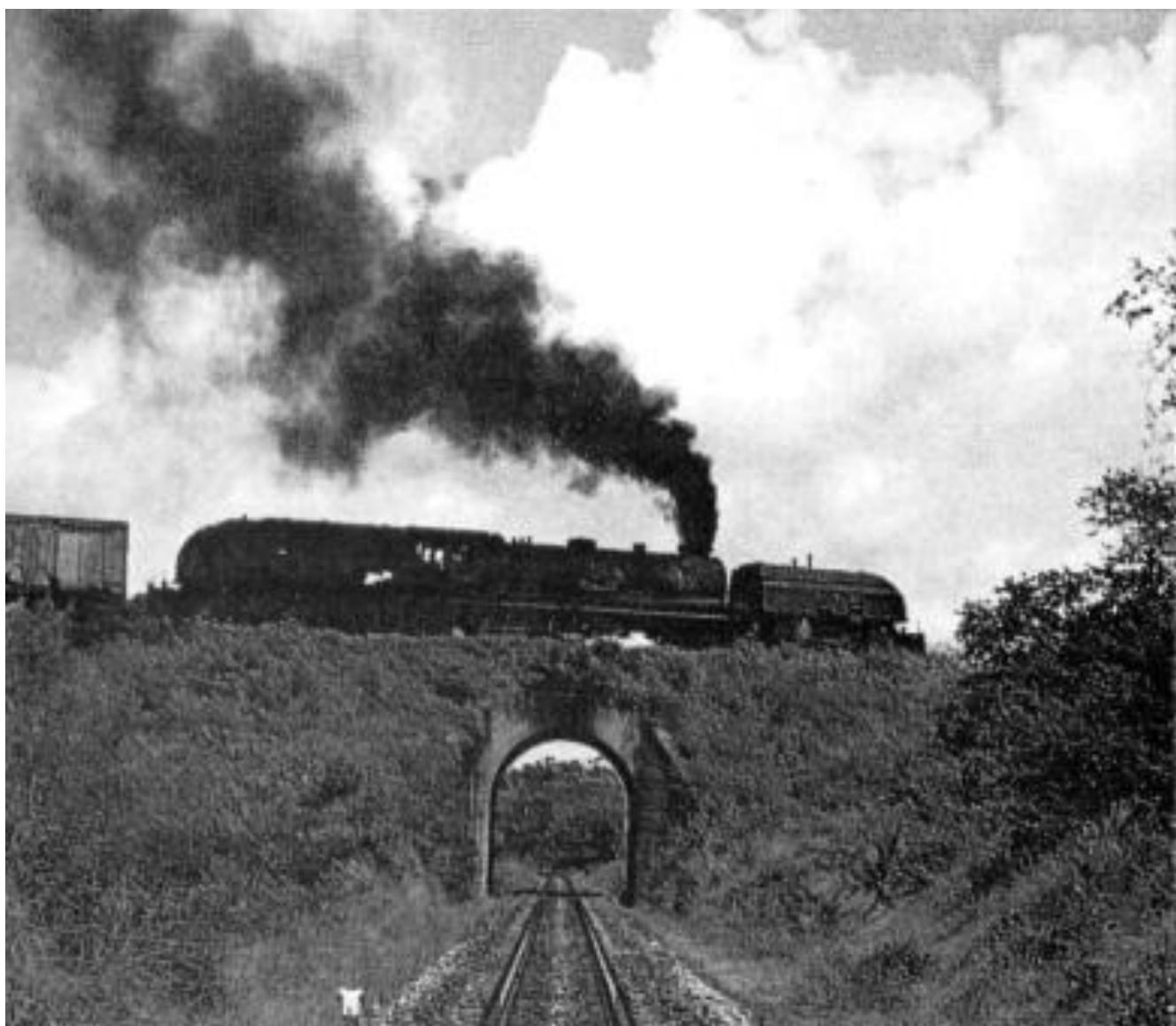


Kenya Uganda Railway No.88 at Timboroa summit. After the 1948 merger it became EAR No.5712. Sister loco 5702 was involved in the fatal runaway described by Archie. This picture was given to his wife by Mrs Florence Preston. (A. Morrow collection)

In 1957, after coming back from home leave, I was transferred to Eldoret due to a housing shortage in Nakuru. I was there for nine months, learning the road and on caboose workings to Kampala in Uganda. The line between Tororo and Kampala had been built in the 1930s when money was scarce and was momentum graded. This meant that trains were loaded for a 1.5% grade but had to negotiate

dips in the line which were graded at 2%. How this was managed was by running fast enough into the dip to gain sufficient momentum to get out of it again. This was not a job for the faint-hearted and one Eldoret driver had such problems as to clock up a record 28 days' pay fines in one month. The Chief Mechanical Engineer was in a quandary as if he sacked him he would have to pay his fare back to the UK. The problem was solved by promoting him to Locomotive Inspecting Officer where he could do no more harm. I believe he was the one who told me to wake him if I had any problems on my 5302 incident.

In the late fifties and early sixties some 59 class Garratts were allocated to Nakuru shed. There were thirty-four in the class, the last and largest Garratts ever built, with a tractive effort of 83,350 lbs., an overall length of almost 105 feet and a weight in working order of 252 tons. They were named after the mountains of East Africa.



A 59 class on the spiral between Voi and Tsavo. On a much smaller scale, a similar arrangement - also with articulated locos - can be seen on the Ffestiniog railway in Wales. (A. Morrow collection)

The Nakuru allocation was to work a daily heavy freight to Mombasa, a four day round trip which meant caboose working with two crews for each locomotive, one working and one sleeping, changing

over at eight-hour intervals.

Three incidents worthy of note happened to me when on this run. One morning after leaving Voi at first light my fireman drew my attention to a herd of elephants running along his side of the train and they appeared to be gaining on us. By regulating my speed I was able to keep them alongside for about a mile, a sight I will never forget. Voi is in the Tsavo Game Park and is the junction for Moshi and Arusha in the foothills of Mount Kilimanjaro which, at 19,340 feet, is the highest mountain in Africa. Despite this, the first of the 59 class was not named after it as one might have expected, that honour going to Mount Kenya, appropriately enough I suppose. The class as a whole seemed to be named in a random manner.

On another trip coming back from Mombasa with Garratt No.5923 "Mount Longonot" we hit and killed a giraffe. There was an African village nearby and the kill had been seen so I knew the giraffe would soon disappear. At the next crossing point I had a clear line and decided not to report it as I did not want to be delayed there after four days away from home. On examination of the locomotive at Nakuru I found a dent high up on the streamlining of the front tank where the giraffe's head had whiplashed. I still said nothing about it and several months later I heard someone wonder how a dent could get up there!

One Up and Two Down were the upper class express passenger trains that ran daily between Mombasa and Nairobi, both leaving at 18:00 and arriving at 08:00 after crossing halfway. These two trains were worked by the six senior drivers at Nairobi shed. On one occasion, due to a derailment, Two Down did not arrive in Mombasa in time for the engine to work One Up and we were called in to fill the breach. I felt quite chuffed the next morning rolling into Nairobi on time with thirty five coaches on my drawbar and no complaints of passengers having been thrown out of bed or diners having hot soup in their laps.

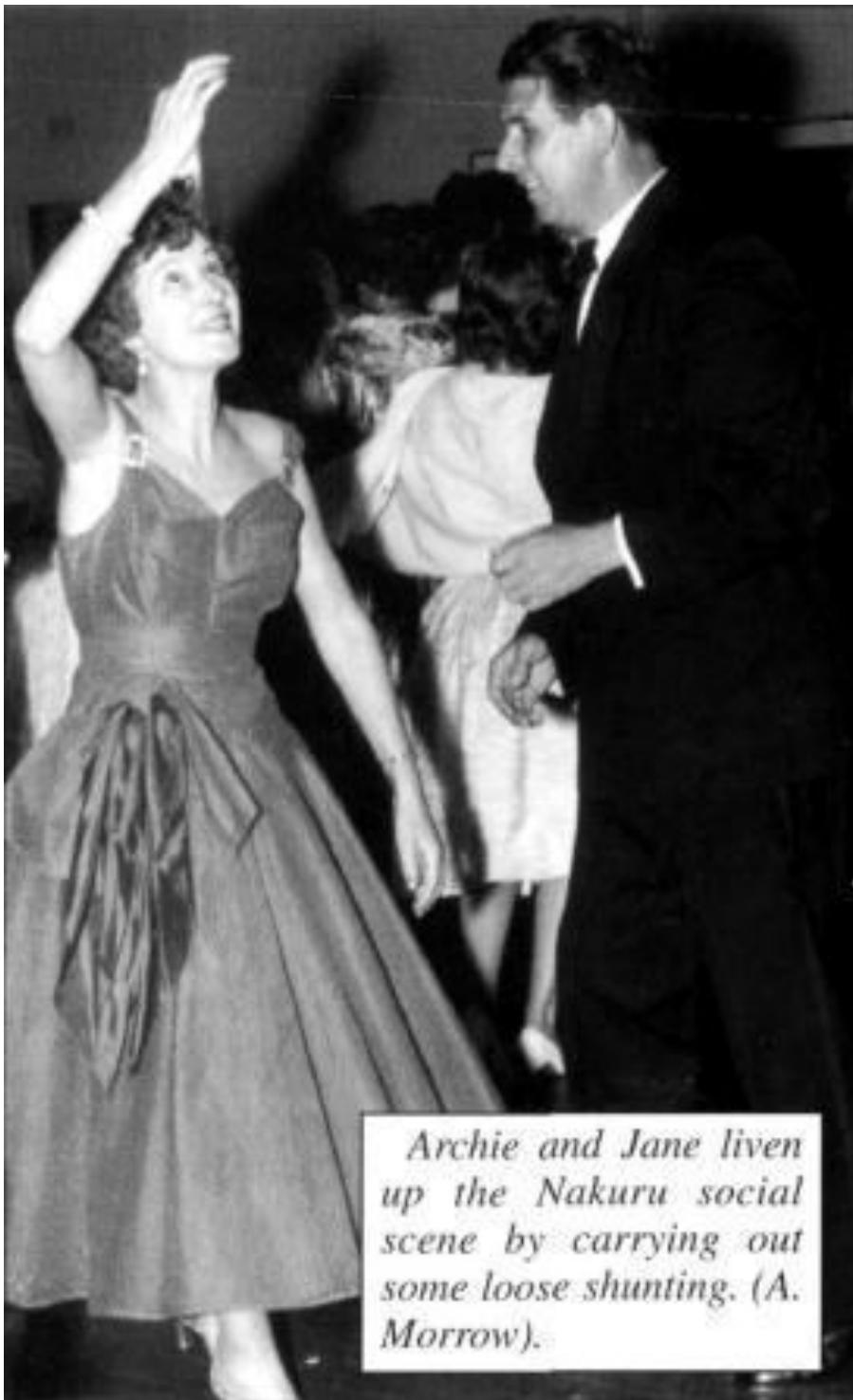
The 54 class Garratts had been built to a War Department order for service in countries involved in the war effort and seven were delivered to Kenya in 1944. They were an extremely powerful engine with a tractive effort of 58,260 lbs., but were lightly built, needing a lot of maintenance and could not stand up to being pooled. They were allocated to Nakuru in 1960 to work heavy freight between there and Eldoret and were given regular drivers. Mine was No.5402 and, after getting some lubrication problems sorted out, we were a dream team.



5402, Archie's last engine and the last of its class to remain in service. (East African Railways)

The Eldoret line was very interesting to work, having a spiral crossing on the Equator so that on each round trip we crossed the Equator six times. Also, at 9,136 feet, the summit at Timboroa was the

highest point on any railway in the British Empire. Now that there is no longer an Empire that statistic may have to be revised! Snow fell there quite regularly and it was very cold and foggy at night. Below the Equator line at about 8,000 feet bamboo grew profusely and was home to Colobus monkeys, black leopard and flocks of guinea fowl which we saw quite often. One Afrikaner driver carried a catapult on the footplate to kill guinea fowl for the pot. 5402 was the engine I was driving when I finished on East African Railways and I was sorry to hear she was scrapped in 1966.



With a good basic salary and lots of overtime, low cost of living, home leave with passages paid every three years, two weeks' local leave and a free house with basic furniture, a locomotive driver's lot with

the East African Railways was quite a happy one. We were able to employ a Cook/Houseboy, an Ayah (nursemaid) and a part-time Shambaboy to keep the garden tidy.

Our social life was good and sometimes quite hectic as in Nakuru, in addition to two cinemas, there were several social clubs. We had a great treat in Nakuru in the early 1960s when Louis Armstrong (Satchmo) and his All Stars gave an open air concert in the football stadium. As long-standing devotees of New Orleans and Dixieland jazz my wife Jane and I enjoyed a wonderful evening listening and dancing to Satchmo under a clear star- and moon-lit African sky. Very romantic, but no more so than when we tripped the light fantastic to Eddie Shaw and his Oldtimers in Belfast's Plaza ballroom, where we first met!

Jane was Secretary of the Rift Valley Irish Society for a few years. They held a formal dance and cabaret every St. Patrick's night when Irish people came from all over the Rift Valley and the religious divide was invisible.

After home leave in 1961 we travelled back to Kenya on the "Rhodesia Castle" from Tilbury to Mombasa via the Suez Canal. On our final journey home in 1964 we sailed from Mombasa to Durban in the "Kenya Castle" and from Durban to Southampton via Cape Town in the "Athlone Castle".

When we left Kenya in 1964 the East African Railways and Harbours was one of the most profitable and efficiently managed railways in the world. Sadly, the last report I had from Kenya, at Christmas 1997, was that the railway administration were unable to pay staff in full.

To conclude, in case anyone is still wondering how the article got its title, the gauge of East African Railways is 1 metre which is near enough 3'3"!

A WINTER EVENING AT CASTLEROCK

J.A. Cassells

After the success of last year's Coleraine Christmas Shopper the Society did well to try an even more ambitious winter day of steam in 1998 with afternoon trips to both Ballymoney and Castlerock. Last year I offered a few reflections on the Ballymoney shuttle: this year it was Castlerock which set me thinking, particularly but not exclusively about the rarity of travelling by steam beyond Coleraine in the depth of the winter.

The short answer to when I last came through Castlerock by steam so late in the day, and the year, is as long ago as December 1966. On most days of the week before Christmas 1966 there were two daily mail workings to Londonderry - thoughtfully conveying at least one coach which an obliging guard would usually let a timer slip into! - and on 17th December that year I had a very smart run with No.6 and Tom Crymble with no more than 2 bogies and 2 vans. The last of these trains was on 24th December, when R.J. Simpson had an 8:55 Derry relief (large numbers of people arrived off the steamers in those days and travelled by rail to the north west), Alfie Crawley had an 11:45 mails, and - very interesting for a Christmas Eve - Bertie Wright a 01:10 Ballymena special for a Ballymena United v Linfield football match! As a matter of record, these trains would have passed near engines 55, 56 and 57 stored at Ballymena, and 53 stored in Coleraine shed for that winter. I am fairly certain that 1966-67 was the last winter of this time-honoured NCC practice, for by the spring of 1967 the surviving "Jeep" fleet was in use on the Spoil Contract which would keep them hard at work all the year round for the last three years of their lives.

After the dieselisation of the NCC in 1958, surviving main line steam was mainly concentrated on Portrush, and in the 1960s Castlerock folk would have seen little enough of a steam engine outside of the summer months. St. Patrick's Parish Church in Coleraine had an annual Sunday School excursion to Castlerock, but the only other train of this kind I can remember was on 11th June 1966 when Dunlop Memorial Presbyterian Church travelled from Belfast to Castlerock with engine 5 and seven coaches, following which the train ran empty to Ballymena to form an afternoon Sunday School excursion to

Portrush. It was rather out of the ordinary too for a driver change en route, Stephen Friel of Coleraine taking over from Tom Smyth of Ballymena at the latter's home depot.

July and August, of course, saw trains for slightly different purposes at Castlerock. On 12th July 1967, for example, there was an Orange demonstration in Londonderry and special provision was made for no less than 1,600 passengers from Coleraine and 250 from Castlerock. These days, unfortunately for the enthusiast, Ulsterbus has the lion's share of this kind of traffic, but on that day the 05:55 ordinary train had engine 55 and R.J. Simpson, relieved by Laurence McCahon at Coleraine. The engines for the next two specials - 9:30 and 10:05 ex-Coleraine - were provided by a double-headed empty train from Belfast (engines 4 and 51 with the redoubtable combination of Alan Robinson and Dan McAtamney). Finally came No.55 again on a 10:15 special with Willie John McConnell. As usual, Inspector Frank Dunlop had the whole day well under control.



No.171 at Castlerock on 28th November 1998. The lamps are lit and Inspector McCrory is on his way to collect the single-line tablet for an on time departure. (J.A. Cassells)

Castlerock and Portrush were also popular venues for the Derry holiday week at the beginning of August. I first spent a happy week with engines 9 and 10 on these heavy trains in 1965. The last year of their operation was 1968, the final train being handled by No.10 with W.J. McConnell and fireman Albert Plews on 9th August 1968. The last public steam excursion on this section would almost certainly have been a Londonderry-Portrush special loaded up to 11 bogies with No.4 on Easter Monday 1969. This train returned in the evening with engine 53, and returned empty to Portrush the next afternoon to form an evening special to Belfast. My photograph of this working is interesting for a number of reasons: it was almost certainly the last "company" steam train to call at Castlerock, and at the same time both the old gates and the new lifting barriers were still in situ.

The Apprentice Boys' Demonstration a week later provided a great spectacle right up to the end of

steam operation. Mac Arnold describes the last two years of this traffic well in pages 214-5 of NCC Saga and to this I can add my own observations of 12th August 1967. Six engines (3, 4, 5, 10, 53, 55 & 56) worked specials from Belfast, Ballymena and Coleraine, and a look down the crew names is a roll-call of some of the best of the final generation of steam men. In addition to Harry Ramsey, Tom Crymble, Alan Robinson, Bertie Wright, Dan McAtamney and John Moore of Belfast, there were Coleraine drivers Paddy Elliott and Joe Cairns, and Bertie Davis of Derry. Sadly now all retired, and five at least no longer with us.

During the summer timetable, right up to 1968, there was regular Saturday steam to Londonderry and Portrush, notably during the summer of 1965 when for the last time a steam-hauled dining car would pause at Castlerock. This vehicle worked to Coleraine on the 8:35 Portrush, which shunted it back into the goods loop to be collected by the following 8:50 Derry train. The car stayed at Waterside each Saturday night before returning to Belfast in a diesel set on Sunday. The final day of this operation - 11th September 1965 - coincided with the RPSI's first main line tour, a most interesting venture which brought ex-Great Northern UG No.149 to Portrush; the first, and almost certainly the only time an engine of this class ventured so far down the NCC.



“Jeep” No.53 at Castlerock on the 15:35 empty coaches ex-Londonderry, waiting to cross the 14:50 ex-York Road on 8th April 1969. The all-Derry crew of Bertie Davis and Albert Plews had the distinction of working the last “company” steam train from their home city. In the picture can be seen the old gates and the new, as yet uncommissioned, barriers. (J.A. Cassells)

But Castlerock passed the occasional train “out of season” as well, the very last almost certainly being ballast and steam crane specials on 24th August 1969 with engines 51 and 53. The allocation of one of the new diesel shunters to Coleraine in the winter of 1969 put an end to steam ballast workings in the north-west, and the winter darkness would be disturbed only by the odd football special for Derry City matches during the time that club played in the Irish League. These trains were beginning to acquire a bad reputation, even thirty years ago, and this was certainly the reason why I didn’t travel behind No.50

on 9th November 1968. The last steam football special on the NCC was again with No.50, to Ballymena on 6th September 1969, but that earlier trip to Derry may well have been the last steam football special beyond Coleraine. Trains like these often found the tiny water column at Castlerock handy - though it did tend to block the main street as the train straddled the crossing - and I have a record of No.5 using it on 20th November 1965 on a ten-coach Up special.

Castlerock is a quiet station today, though the last through station in Northern Ireland where a steam train can be dealt with by semaphore signals. As No.171 sat in the gathering dusk on 28th November last, watched among others by retired driver Willie Cameron and signalman George Dunlop, my memories were stirred as well, and this further reflection on the last days of NCC steam is the result.

COMMENTS & RECOLLECTIONS

Laurence Liddle

Our last issue provided plenty of material for comment and recollection, so let us take a look at some of its photographs.

On page 16 we see "R.H. Smyth" in what was surely exceptionally clean condition for a dockside shunting engine. Was the loco just ex-works after a major overhaul? If so, would the work have been carried out by the Harbour Commissioners themselves, who would have had facilities for maintaining steam cranes and other machinery, or would some of the railway companies have done the job?

I was intrigued by the mis-spelling of "tope" for "rope" in the caption to this picture - a tope is a small species of shark! The rope was of course a tow rope used for hauling wagons on one road when the loco was on another. Tow roping was prohibited by most railway companies, though sometimes indulged in surreptitiously. Presumably this practice was permitted on the Derry dock lines. A variation of the practice, involving only one line of rails, could be, and may possibly still be, seen on the Dublin Port and Docks Board lines, to move rakes of vehicles, particularly oil tanks. The motive power was an ordinary road tractor. In such cases the tractor might be directly ahead of its train or, quite commonly, alongside it. In the latter case the rope would be attached to the rearmost wagon. I suppose that this procedure might be described as both hauling and propelling. *[Propelling, using a stout piece of timber, was another practice generally frowned upon here. It seems to have been sanctioned elsewhere as on a visit to the sugar lines of Cuba I noticed cup-shaped brackets on the ends of the buffer beams of many locos and wagons and it was confirmed that these were for that purpose. Presumably this could be used on arriving at a trailing junction where a wagon on the other road was fouling the points. It was not used on one occasion in 1997 when a train of several hundred tons of cane arrived in the mill yard to find the yard pilot parked thus and the result was two wrecked engines! - Ed.]*

Tow-ropes actuated by capstans were also used elsewhere in the Dublin docks; for example, to move vehicles from the LNW/LMS/BR yard at North Wall across the public road to the transit shed which served the Holyhead cargo ships. This procedure was also used further down the North Wall between the GSW/GSR/CIÉ Point yard and the quayside lines. Among the traffic handled here was locomotive coal, discharged directly from ship to wagon. In GSR/CIÉ days one frequently saw the large ex-MGWR purpose built steel hopper wagons on this duty. Presumably before the 1925 amalgamation these vehicles would have been loaded in the sidings at the Royal Canal dock. Although capstans were the usual motive power for moving vehicles between the Point yard and the quays I have seen a J15 0-6-0 engaged on this duty.

The picture of the ex-CSÉ Orenstein & Koppel 0-4-0T on page 19 reminds me that two of these little machines were acquired from the sugar company by a private purchaser at some time in the 1970s. The locos were stored for a while on the siding (now lifted) on the Down side of the Dublin-Rosslare line immediately south of Dalkey station. Who this purchaser was or what his intentions were for future use of the engines, I never knew. In any case, whatever the plans were they seem to have fallen through.

Apropos of this former siding at Dalkey, at the time of the electrification of the Howth-Bray line was there an intention of running some south-bound services to Dalkey only? Not only was the siding relaid but overhead wires were provided, thus making it possible for EMU sets to lie over.

[Before Downpatrick acquired their two O&K locos, they spent a time in the 1970s in open store on the site of Ballynahinch Junction. It was rumoured then that they had been bought as a speculative venture by an English scrap dealer who was aware of the preservation scene in GB - but unaware of the difference in gauge! Could these be the same two? - Ed.]

Mr Camwell's shot of a "Scotch Engine" at Cookstown Junction shed on page 35 is surely the outstanding picture in Five Foot Three No.44. What a timeless scene this is, one which, apart from the wind pump for the water tank (surely a rarity in the Irish railway world), could have been met with on or near rural branch lines in countless places in Ireland, Britain or elsewhere during the century and a quarter of steam traction.



Although wind pumps were not common, the Cookstown Junction one was not unique. Here is a similar machine photographed in 1933 at Magherafelt. The storage tank could be the subject of speculation - was it built for the purpose or was it a redundant stationary boiler, as a close study of the near end might suggest? (W. Robb)

Let us now move from Cookstown Junction to Barrack Street, Dundalk (reversal necessary at Cookstown, Portadown and Dundalk West or South junctions!) and take a look at the demounted coach body in the picture on page 51. No doubt this former vehicle was serving as a mess room or a foreman's or checker's office or a combination of these. However, it is not its use but its ancestry which makes this vehicle worth a comment. This is no erstwhile Great Northern coach - its birthplace was the former London & North Western Railway carriage works at Wolverton in the English south Midlands. In 1947 the GNR acquired from the LMS some ex-LNWR corridor coaches which, after the provision of Irish gauge bogies and a repaint, were used on secondary services for some years. These

coaches were of two types: a narrow variety dating from the 1890s, and a wider and slightly higher sort which had been built around 1910/1911. The subject of our picture is one of the older batch. There are several illustrations of these English exotics in that fascinating Colourpoint book "Fermanagh's Railways", notably at the frontispiece where a narrow-bodied carriage which has been flush panelled is shown immediately behind the locomotive, and at page 106 where a similar coach, but in its original form, is in the centre of the train.

To return to the picture on page 51: the horse wagon dates from the war years or just after that period; it was constructed from material more commonly associated with motor vehicles than with those of one (or at most two) horse power. Note particularly the wheels and tyres, and the semi-elliptical springs which would not have been out of place on the solid front axle of a motor lorry of the period.

On page 61, the picture of Alan Robinson in the cab of "Jeep" No.3 recalls a memorable footplate trip that I had with him from Belfast to Portrush and back in the summer of 1963 on sister engine No.8 with a train of seven bogies. For nine months of that year I spent almost every Saturday on steam locos, collecting material for "Steam Finale", a small book which was published by the London Area of the Irish Railway Record Society in 1964, but which has for long since been out of print. Here is a short extract of what I wrote about my day with Alan and his mate, (the latter's name now unfortunately forgotten).

"The next twenty minutes were memorable. As soon as the train was well over the summit at Kingsbog the regulator was put well back to leave just a small opening, cut-off was set at 25% and the engine, still showing 190 lbs nearly all the time, and never less than 185, ran the 22¾ miles to Ballymena in 23 minutes, 4 seconds pass to stop. From the summit speed of 25 mph we soon touched 72, which was held consistently from Templepatrick to Muckamore. There was a momentary easing for the curves before Antrim and then, with the same regulator and valve settings as before, we were away again. Speed was 67 before Cookstown Junction, 64½ through that station despite the one mile rising approach at 1 in 213, and the favourable road to Kellswater gave us 69, though here the regulator was even further closed so that the merest breath of steam could have been entering the cylinders. The restriction past Ballymena Goods was scrupulously observed and we stopped in the passenger station at 1:2:03 (13:02:03 nowadays). We stood for just over three minutes for water and then got away up the 1 in 101 towards Cullybackey.

At this point before going further with the journey I would like to point out that as well as the Ballyclare Junction-Ballymena time mentioned, the 15¾ miles from Doagh to Kellswater were covered in 14 minutes 10 seconds, an average of just under 67, and this without exceeding 72. I know that 80s have been recorded with "Jeeps" but nevertheless under today's conditions this was not bad for a mixed traffic tank engine."

No doubt several of the older members of our society have recorded faster runs with "Jeeps", or equally as fast with loads considerably heavier and of course there have been some striking performances by our own No.4 over both NIR and IÉ metals. Here I recall some very fine running by Tommy Blackwell on a trip to Boyle in 1988. *[Was that the day of "Who moved the ****ing distant!!" at Carrick-on-Shannon? - Ed.]* Nevertheless this Belfast-Portrush journey will always remain in my memory as an example of the quiet competence of Alan Robinson.

Mention of "Fermanagh's Railways" reminds me that on its page 52 there is a picture of GNR "Q" class 4-4-0 No.133 carrying express passenger headlamps approaching Maguiresbridge from the Enniskillen direction. The photo was taken by RPSI founder member and former 5'3" editor Drew Donaldson. This picture has been published before, in Part 1 of Mac Arnold's "Golden Years of the Great Northern Railway" with the caption "An unusual class of engine to pass Maguiresbridge". An unusual class of engine and an unusual class of train too. The only regular passenger workings between Enniskillen and Clones whose engines carried express headlamps were the Up and Down "Bundoran

Express" for which the motive power, on account of weight restrictions on the Bundoran branch, was almost invariably a "U" or "PP" 4-4-0, although occasionally a "UG" might be used. Certainly "Q"s sometimes worked between Enniskillen and Omagh, and in "Irish Railways in Pictures - the Great Northern" there is a shot of "QL" 4-4-0 No.126 entering Enniskillen at the head of the 10:45 ex Dundalk. But the 10:45 was an all stations train (Kellybridge Halt excepted) as were those between Enniskillen and Omagh and their engines carried the appropriate single lamp at the base of the chimney.

What then was the express train which 133 was hauling towards Maguiresbridge? I think this was a "circular tour" excursion from Belfast to Enniskillen; out via Omagh and back via Clones. However when I first saw the picture in the "Golden Years" it occurred to me that it might have been taken on one of the two occasions in the early post-war years when the 13:30 Belfast-Derry train, and the balance return working, operated by way of Clones and Enniskillen. But a moment's reflection was enough to quash this interesting theory; the GNR did not start painting engine headlamps white until some time after the second of these happenings occurred. In each case the diversions were due to the wash out of a culvert between Dungannon and Pomeroy on the Portadown-Derry line. So far as I remember the first incident was in 1946 and the second just a few years later. In each case the line was closed for several days during which time work at the railway company's quarry at Goraghwood went on 24 hours a day to provide material for rebuilding the damaged embankment and replacing the ballast which had been swept away.

During the times that the line was closed four of the five daily passenger trains in each direction between Belfast and Derry were replaced by buses between Dungannon or Pomeroy and Omagh. However, the 13:30 ex Belfast, and one Up train (I am afraid that after some fifty years I cannot remember which it was) ran through via Clones. As much Derry Road parcels traffic as possible was sent by the 13:30 in order to cut down the time taken in transferring articles from and to lorries at Dungannon, Pomeroy and Omagh. A substantial proportion of this traffic originated in England or Scotland, conveyed overnight by the shipping services from Liverpool, Heysham and Glasgow. This normally travelled by the 11:15 ex Belfast, the tail of which train was invariably adorned by two or three 4- or 6-wheeled vans. Presumably, though here again my memory is failing the lapse of half a century, the sealed van (brake third with the van portion sealed in 1946), which ran between Belfast and Strabane by the 09:00 ex Amiens Street and onwards from Portadown by the 11:15 ex Belfast, was routed via the Irish North during the emergencies.

Arrangements were made with the NCC, as it still was in 1946, for GN Derry Road goods to be conveyed via Coleraine to the extent that this was possible. Considering that there was always a heavier Belfast-Derry goods traffic over the GN than the NCC, the volume of wagons crossing the Craigavon Bridge in Derry must have been very considerably augmented during the times it took to restore the track between Dungannon and Pomeroy. My recollection is that the lower deck of the Craigavon Bridge (surely one of the draughtiest places in Ireland) was another location in which capstans were used to move wagons.

It was good to see our society taking a prominent place at the celebration of the 150th anniversary of the coming of the railway to Mullingar. No.461 and her train added a realistic touch that photographs and artefacts (relics?) on their own can never do. Considering the many years during which the day and night mails conveyed their Travelling Post Offices through Mullingar it was an appropriate gesture to include the recently restored TPO 2979 in our train's make-up.

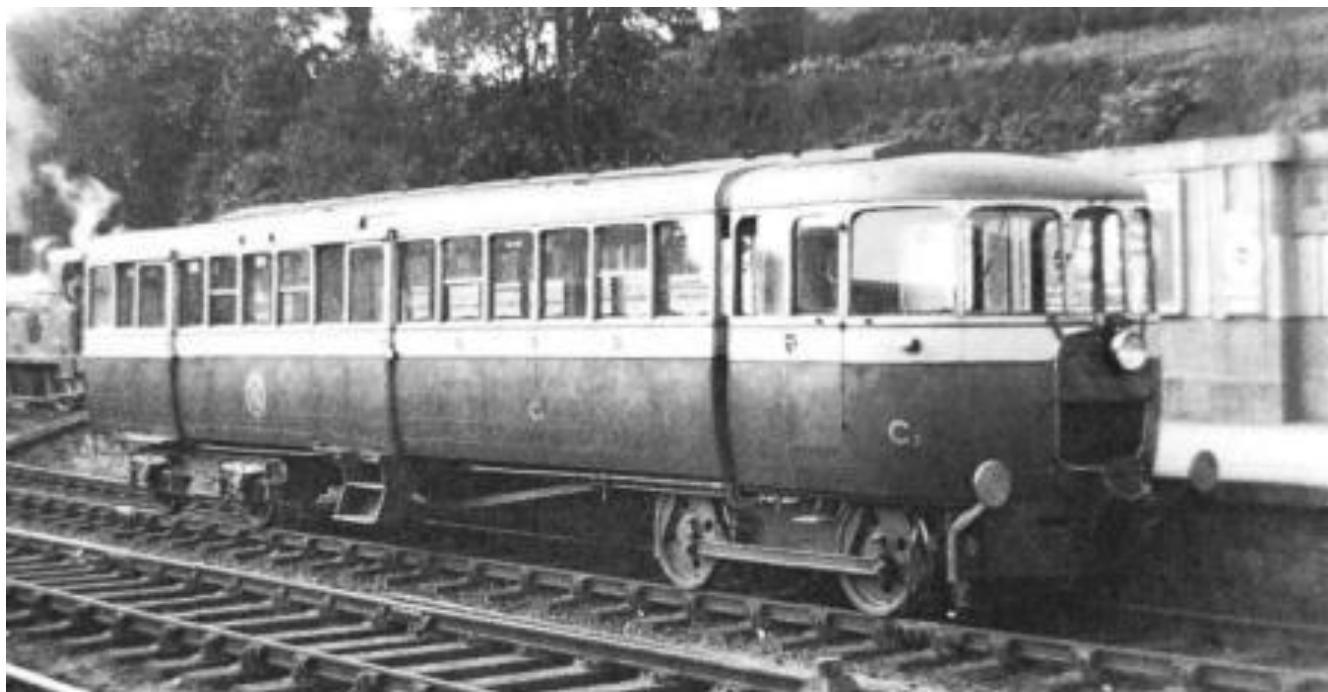
Another point of interest, at any rate to me as a thoroughgoing GNR enthusiast, was that company's bus No.389, in all the splendour of the well-remembered blue and cream livery and company's coat of arms, was on display in the station forecourt. This was quite an appropriate location since at one time the Northern operated a road service between Drogheda and Mullingar. Readers who have seen the film

of Brian Friel's "Dancing at Lughnasa" may remember seeing this vehicle in the scene depicting "Uncle Jack's" homecoming.



GNR Gardner bus No.389 at Mullingar station. Its Co. Louth registration puts it well within GNR territory. (L. Liddle)

It will be remembered by the more ancient of Society members that the GNR built its own buses at Dundalk, using 5-cylinder Gardner diesel engines. Actually No.389, though a perfectly genuine GNR Gardner vehicle, is not fully typical of the great majority of such buses. There are at least two points in which this vehicle differs from the majority of single-deckers built at Dundalk. The first difference is that in this case the body is not of the regular design; it may have been built by Harkness Coachworks.



GNR Gardner railcar No. C2 at Enniskillen in 1939. Note the articulated power unit with locomotive-type coupling rods. (Loco & General Photos)

The second divergence from the standard type is also a bodywork difference in that the roof is extended

forward to cover the engine bonnet beside the driver's cab. The "native" design was a half-cab with the vehicle's roof on the left side ending at the front of the passenger accommodation.

Gardner engines of various types were also used in the early Great Northern railcars A, C 1/2/3, D, E, F, and G. The first four of these each had a 102 hp engine; D & E, the first two of the "triplet" articulated type, had 153 hp, whilst their half-sisters F and G had 204 hp.

Although the double ended non-articulated car B was very similar to A, I am not sure if it had a Gardner engine. Unusually, this car had electric final drive and thus may have had a different make of basic power unit to the others. B ceased operating as a railcar during the second world war due to lack of essential spare parts. However, due to a shortage of conventional coaches, it was often used to form the early morning Dundalk-Castleblayney-Dundalk train, headed by a steam locomotive.

I travelled once in B while it was still functioning as a railcar, on the Warrenpoint branch. It may be that the car was relieving A on the Banbridge-Scarva service, for which the latter was the regular vehicle and whose daily schedule included a couple of trips to Goraghwood, at least one of which went on to the branch.

THE UNSEATING OF 'KING GEORGE V'

James Scannell

The picture and mention of Dublin & South Easter locomotive "King George V" in Five Foot Three No.44 brought to mind a rather strange incident in which this locomotive was involved in 1914.

At that time the DSER was concerned about the level of coastal erosion and the threat that it posed to the Killiney/Bray line and had embarked on the construction of the current line which connects those two towns. Just at the end of Strand Road, Killiney, beyond the Martello tower, a set of points had been installed to allow traffic on the line under construction to join with the existing line at that time - the remains of that line can be seen from the DART and take the form of a high embankment which is used as a pedestrian walkway at the present time.

Thursday 29th January 1914 was a cold winter's night and in the darkness, a person or number of persons waited for their opportunity to place an obstruction on the line with the aim of derailing a train - for whatever motive.

At 7:22pm the scheduled service to Bray departed from Killiney station with no other train on the single line until the 8pm Bray departure. During this interval a large boulder was placed in the middle of the controlling points with the intended aim of derailing the next train to use the line.

At 8pm Driver P. Byrne eased "King George V" out of Bray and began the run to Killiney and later, as he neared the approaches to Killiney station he shut off steam and began to apply the brakes to slow the train for a gentle crossing of the points and entry into Killiney station.

The first that he knew that anything was amiss was when the front wheels of his locomotive struck the boulder with a grinding crash, with the result that the locomotive left the rails and tore up the sleepers and iron chairs which bore the rails for about 100 yards before finally coming to a halt just in front of the road bridge at the southern end of Killiney station.

Inside the carriages, the fifty passengers on board were thrown about and suffered a considerable degree of shock and alarm. When the train had come to rest some of the passengers left their carriages in a confused state and, having been assured by the guard that everything was all right (!), were brought to Killiney station to recover from their ordeal.

Killiney station immediately informed Bray to the south and Dalkey to the north that the line was blocked, and all traffic was suspended. Word was also sent to Westland Row (now Pearse) station and very quickly a breakdown crew was dispatched to the accident site to re-rail the locomotive and get the

line open to traffic as soon as possible.

The accident happened at around 8:15pm and by 9pm the breakdown crew, working under the direction of Mr Richard Cronin, the Locomotive Superintendent, and Mr John Coghlin, the Traffic Manager, were at the accident site and at work. By 10pm the team had managed to re-rail the locomotive by the use of jacks and brute strength and have the line re-opened for traffic.

A detailed examination of the scene revealed portions of the boulder still stuck in the points and this was taken by accident investigators as a clear indication that the incident was malicious. However, despite the best efforts of Sergeant Hurst of the Royal Irish Constabulary at Ballybrack the perpetrator(s) evaded detection and prosecution, although it is believed that the police had a fair idea of who might have been responsible but lacked sufficient evidence to initiate a prosecution. No motive could be established either.

Two days later, on Sunday 31st January, resolutions condemning this outrageous attempt to wreck the train and endanger the lives of the travelling public and railway workers were passed at a meeting of the Kingstown (Dun Laoghaire) branch of the National Union of Railwaymen.

The Dublin & South Eastern Railway Company took the matter seriously enough to post a reward of £50 for evidence leading to the conviction of those responsible but this reward was never claimed or paid out.

“King George V” returned to traffic and continued in service with the DSER until 1925 when that company became part of the Great Southern Railways, when it was renumbered 455, continuing with this number until 1959 when it was withdrawn and scrapped, a victim of CIÉ’s policy of dieselisation.

LMS CARRIAGES ON THE NCC

Mark Kennedy

On the night of 7th/8th April 1941 during World War II, German bombers first visited Belfast. Little damage was suffered by railway installations. The Luftwaffe (German Air Force) attacked again on the night of 15th/16th April 1941 with incendiary and high explosive bombs, this time in greater numbers. Belfast York Road station was hit, and the railway fire services were quickly overcome. Following this raid, most passenger rolling stock and many goods wagons were removed from Belfast and stabled elsewhere at night. However it was often difficult to roster crews and locos to work the empty trains and the practice quickly lapsed. On the night of 4th/5th May 1941 only one train was evacuated to Greenisland when the Luftwaffe carried out another bombing raid on the city, and York Road suffered severely. The burning station roof crashed down setting fire to the twenty coaches parked underneath and destroying them all. More than 250 goods wagons in the sidings were destroyed or seriously damaged. The carriage and wagon woodworking shops, electrical shop and timber stores were also damaged.

The loss of rolling stock was most serious, representing over 10% of passenger vehicles and 15% of goods wagons. (Before the war the NCC had 178 coaches and 1,907 wagons.) The GNR and GSR each rebuilt 75 wagons using salvaged parts. The LMS shipped 150 ex Midland wagons across from Britain to be fitted with axles and wheels by NCC staff. The LMS also supplied 5'3" gauge bogies, followed by twenty coach bodies which had been withdrawn from their capital stock. In 1942, in response to further requests, the LMS sent 24 more coaches, 150 open wagons and 100 vans to the NCC. A third batch of 8 coaches was later sent from Britain.

Following the air raids the working timetable was completely altered so that all locomotives and passenger carriages were evacuated from Belfast at night.

The railways were also being expected to carry even more passenger traffic - mainly Belfast people who had been evacuated after their homes had been destroyed.

On the NCC in 1940 there were 3,921,000 passenger journeys, in 1941 this rose to 7,776,000 and in 1942 it increased again to 8,050,000. The extra coaches sent over by the LMS in 1941-1942 eased matters somewhat but care in allocation of vehicles was still required.

The following list was found in an NCC file NoAQ76/. Previously it was thought that a total of 44 coaches were sent from the LMS to Northern Ireland in two batches. However, this list shows a third batch of eight, bringing the total number of coaches sent to 52.



Female staff cleaning NCC carriage 199. The photo is said to have been taken at Great Victoria Street on 8th August 1942. However, that station had an angled roof whereas the arched roof here, with the framing looking the worse for wear and probably without glass, would suggest a post-Blitz York Road, as would the badge on the nearer girl's cap. (UFTM Belfast Telegraph collection)

NCC No	LMS No	UTA No	Remarks
1st Batch			
171	10857	357	
172	10951	361	
173	11013	517	Railcar Trailer 12/1956
174	11057	518	Railcar Trailer 11/1956
175	11059	363	
176	11211	519	Railcar trailer 05/1956

177	11386	520	Railcar trailer 05/1956
178	11392	373	
179	11425	375	
180	11531	377	
181	11539	621	Railcar trailer 05/1956
182	11583	379	
183	11677	381	
184	11695	385	
185	11764	391	
186	11767	522	Railcar trailer 06/1956
187	11847	523	Railcar trailer 06/1956
188	11939	535	Railcar trailer 06/1959. End compartment converted to driver's. Seating reduced to 96.
3	12025	393	Renumbered 170, 02/1943. Used as 1 st class with arms fitted until 1943.
4	12052	516	Renumbered 169, 02/1943. Used as 1 st class with arms fitted until 1943. Railcar trailer 06/1956.

2nd Batch

5	18193	353	Altered to 2 nd 09/1057. Scrapped 11/1963.
7	18194	181	
64*	4907	270	
65*	4913	272	
68*	4914	274	Built Derby 1922. Now preserved by RPSI.
69*	4916	276	
189	11956	524	Railcar trailer 12/1956
190	11218	371	
191	10878	525	Railcar trailer 06/1956
192	11066	365	
193	11094	367	
194	11664	383	
195	12160	536	Railcar trailer 07/1959. End compartment converted to driver's. Seating reduced to 96.
196	11702	387	
197	11737	389	
198	10886	359	
199	11127	369	
200	14363	355	
230*	3225	334	

234+	3228	336	
236+	3234	338	
238+	3235	340	Built Derby 1922. Now preserved by RPSI.
241+	3236	342	Built Derby 1922. Now preserved by RPSI.
242+	3238	344	

3rd Batch

20	23216	467	6 compartments. Third, 72 seats.
21	22890	469	6 compartments. Third, 72 seats. 1 compartment into brake. Sold 12/1961.
22	10513	351	7 compartments. First, 56 seats. Altered 02/1952 to 4 First, 32 seats and 3 Third, 36 seats. Again altered 12/1954 to all Third.
23	16936	275	7 compartments. First, 56 seats.
24	14102	343	8 compartments. Third, 80 seats.
25	14104	345	8 compartments. Third, 80 seats.
26	14222	349	8 compartments. Third, 96 seats.
27	14226	347	8 compartments. Third, 96 seats.

* Replacing Composites destroyed by enemy action

+ Replacing Thirds destroyed by enemy action

Further to the article on camping coaches in FFT No.43

The article implied that the camping coaches at Ballycastle were broad-gauge vehicles. David Dillon was sure he remembered them to be narrow-gauge vehicles. In fact, there were both broad and narrow-gauge vehicles at Ballycastle.

Historical details:

No.9 Caravan: Originally BNCR No.87 5ft 3in gauge, six-wheel, third class coach. Length 30ft 6in. Built 1885, withdrawn February 1936; mounted on n.g. underframe from No.314, 1st/3rd class composite coach. Length 35ft 6in. Built 1879, withdrawn December 1934. Arrived Ballycastle, May 1936.

No.11 Caravan: Originally BNCR No.144 5ft 3in gauge, six-wheel, brake third.

Length 30ft 6in. Built 1887, withdrawn February 1936; mounted on n.g. underframe from No.316, third class 'tramcar'. Length 36ft 9in. Built 1891, withdrawn December 1934. Arrived Ballycastle, May 1936.

No.16 Caravan: Originally BNCR No.327, 3ft gauge, bogie third class 'tramcar', length 40ft. Built 1895, withdrawn January 1937. Arrived Ballycastle, April 1937.

No.21 Caravan: Ex-BNCR No.328. Details and history as for No.327. Withdrawn November 1937, arrived Ballycastle, April 1938.

This information, along with a photograph, appeared in Railway World magazine, September 1961.

A caravan coach was also reputedly used at Greenisland during World War II as emergency office space for timetable planning.

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WHO WAS WILLIAM DARGAN?

Percy G Harris

I wonder, as we bless the M3 motorway bridge over the River Lagan or its sister rail link, the Dargan Bridge, joining as it does our Central Station with the Larne line, and hopefully later to Derry, do we ever think. "Who was Dargan?" Why was a bridge named after him and what was his connection with Ulster? Yes, he built the Ulster Canal, but he did a great deal more besides. Bray, Co Wicklow - what does the name of this east coast town of Ireland conjure up? Is it a picture of the Dublin & South Eastern Railway as it once was or even the Dublin Wicklow & Waterford Railway? Is it the one time conjugation of the then Harcourt Street line and that from Amiens Street, or is it as Bray was known, the "Brighton of Ireland"? This latter name was certainly the vision and brainchild of William Dargan, a man who hailed from close to Carlow where his father was a tenant farmer on the estate of the Earl of Portarlington.

He drifted rather than went into surveying and engineering work and through his early endeavours he came to the attention of Sir Henry Parnell, an Irish MP, who at that time was pressing for an improved route from Dublin to London, whether for his own convenience to improve his access to the then seat of government or to help the wider world I know not. Be that as it may, through Sir Henry's good offices Dargan got a job with the great engineer Telford who was at that time building the Holyhead line, with its great climax of the Menai Bridge linking mainland Wales with the island of Anglesey.

He apparently so impressed the great man that, when Telford was granted the job of making the Dublin to Howth mail coach road, he turned the whole project over to William Dargan who then went on to build the Dublin to Kingstown Railway - the first in Ireland. Then he built the Dublin to Drogheda Railway and also had time for the Ulster Canal.

At one stage he is reputed to have had contracts worth over a million pounds, not a miserly sum in those days, with the GSWR and also the Midland. It could certainly be said that he was responsible for the building of the greater part of Ireland's railways. By that time he had amassed a not inconsiderable personal fortune and his mind turned to other things.

He organised and financed the great Dublin International Exhibition of 1853, on which project it was estimated that he lost £20,000 of his own money, but in lieu of which Queen Victoria offered him a Baronetcy which he nevertheless declined.

He turned to agriculture, failing to encourage the farmers of Cork to follow the example of their northern cousins and grow flax. However, he did start a linen factory at Chapelizod outside Dublin, the produce of which gained international renown.

But perhaps it was his vision of the Brighton of Ireland which in his closing years was to come to fruition. Bray at that time was little more than a long street at the crossing of the Dargle river. He bought a hotel - now the Royal - and built a road linking it to his railway station which he opened in 1854. The railway line had stopped short of Bray but it is recorded that with his own money he finished

the job. He laid out the grassy strip on the sea side of the road, later to be developed into a fine esplanade. He built Turkish baths, this edifice standing well into post second World War years. He also bought Galtrim House and estate which, at the turn of the century, were developed into a fine road of red brick villas, in one of which the author lived for over twenty years.

Today Bray is hardly recognisable as the vision which spurred on William Dargan and yet, in some of its houses, there still lives the Victorian flavour of long ago.

Not many years after his vision of Bray was complete William Dargan fell from his horse and died in 1867. The present pillars on Bray railway station bear the date 1888.



*Seen from the top of Belfast's BT Tower, then under construction, No.85 approaches the Dargan Bridge over the River Lagan with a 1997 Santa train. The Bangor line diverges to the right.
(I.C. Pryce)*

TRAVEL BY AMTRAK

Brian McDonald

The following is a much-abridged version of a contribution describing the author's railway travels in the USA and readers may be interested to compare it with what is on offer in these islands.

Since 1971 the National Railroad Passenger Corporation - Amtrak for short - has maintained a network of passenger rail services across the United States. These are only a pale shadow of the vast network once operated by the private railway companies and, whilst in recent years Amtrak has invested a lot of money to improve its services, many towns and cities have no passenger trains although where possible Amtrak link them to their rail network with feeder buses.

It is a sad reflection on the decline of passenger railways in the United States that a city as large as San Francisco is not served by passenger trains. The former Southern Pacific Railroad station is used only

by suburban services and anyone wishing to travel farther has to take the bus across the bay to the neighbouring city of Oakland.

Here there is evidence of money having been spent, with new platforms and a new booking hall entirely of tinted glass. My train, due to depart at 9:35am, was the "Coastal Starlight" which runs daily from Seattle and Los Angeles. However, at departure time there was no "Starlight" but a north-bound freight followed by another passenger train. Eventually we were told that our train had been held at a yard north of the station to allow the freight to pass. The "Coastal Starlight" made its appearance at about 10:50am.

Despite compulsory seat reservation on this, as on most long-distance trains, there was a mad scramble as passengers looking for their seats surrounded the coach attendants who directed them in a calm manner to their seats in the upper deck of the bi-level coaches introduced in 1981. These were wide and roomy, with lots of leg-room and tinted glass and air-conditioning. The lower deck housed luggage racks, toilets and showers. The coach attendants made a series of announcements about services on the train. These included meals served on a first come, first served basis, the location of the sightseeing coach and play facilities for children. An entertainer later came through the train to ensure that the latter were amused.

At 11:05am the train moved off smoothly and quietly over the continuous welded rail, soon reaching 55 mph - which it did not subsequently exceed. Its route took it down the former Southern Pacific main line to San José which is the junction with the line from San Francisco and the terminus of the suburban trains from that city. Arrival at Los Angeles Union Station - which from the outside looks like a Spanish church - was at 10pm, having made up 30 minutes on the 470 mile journey!

A few days later I took the "Southwest Chief", composed partly of sleeping cars, for Flagstaff in Arizona. At the top of each stairway in the sleeping cars was a facility supplying free coffee, orange juice and iced water, while first class passengers were treated to a champagne reception in the dining car as we left Los Angeles. During the night the train ascended the Cajun Pass, climbing 2,743 feet in 25 miles before crossing the Mojave Desert and turning west towards Arizona. Arrival at Flagstaff was on schedule at 6:35a.m. but the short platform could not accommodate the last two sleeping cars whose occupants descended on to the ballast and walked to the platform. The station was clean and well maintained, with a tourist information centre which was open for business at 6:30am.

Three days later, after exploring the Grand Canyon, etc., it was back to the station to catch the "Chief" again for the remainder of its eastward journey to Chicago. This time the sleeping cars were properly positioned and walking on the ballast was not necessary. Leaving at 6:45am, the train travelled over the main line of the former Atcheson, Topeka & Santa Fe Railway, recently merged with the Burlington Northern to form the Burlington Northern Santa Fe, now one of the largest railroads in the USA. East of Flagstaff the train stopped to pick up a native Navajo Indian guide who gave a commentary as we passed through the reservation on our way to Albuquerque where there was a half-hour stop for servicing. Stall holders on the platforms offered souvenirs.

A wide range of meals was available on the train. Orders were placed with the head waiter and diners were then called over the public address system when a table was ready. Meals for first class passengers were included in the price of their tickets.

The train sped across the high plains of New Mexico at speeds of up to 90 mph before climbing the Raton Pass which, at 7,500 feet, is the highest point on the former Santa Fe and reduced our speed to 20 mph before we descended into Colorado where we ran at around 75 mph. At dawn, the train was passing the vast freight yards of Kansas City before running for some hours through the rich farmlands of the Missouri and Mississippi valleys. At the scheduled arrival time of 3:15pm the train had reached the approaches of Chicago Union station but ran past and then waited for some time before reversing

in, some 30 minutes late. This had to do with the fact that after a 6-hour lie over, it would continue to Washington DC as the “Capitol Limited”.

At Union Station the platforms were underground and gloomy, but away from the platforms the station took on its true appearance as the great railway centre of America, with trains coming and going almost continuously and great throngs of people. However, station facilities were poor, forcing many people to look elsewhere.

The final leg of the trip was a six hour journey by the “Lakes Cities” to Dearborn where it stopped to set down only. Between Chicago and Detroit the line seemed very busy with freight, passing many industrial sidings and small towns, each with its yard filled with wagons.

The overall impression of Amtrak was of clean, efficient, reliable and well run trains with modern rolling stock and well-kept stations, many of which seemed to have been renovated or completely rebuilt. The trains were well patronised by passengers from a wide variety of backgrounds - elderly couples, families with young children, backpackers and tourists. Many were there because they didn't like flying while others used the train as a relaxing way to see the country. However, most lines outside of the north-east of the USA have only one daily train each way, while some have only three per week. The high cost of operating these trains means that Amtrak depends on subsidies from federal and state governments and these cannot always be guaranteed. It is hoped that their value and contribution to the transport needs of the USA is recognised and that there will be adequate funding to continue their operation in the future.

BOOK REVIEWS

Fermanagh's Railways, A Photographic Tribute

Charles Friel & Norman Johnston, Colourpoint Press, £11.99

Surely one of the best books to be published in the last ten years; thoroughly recommended, essential reading!

The lines and companies in Co. Fermanagh are well covered by authors' reminiscences, a brief history section and then a most useful miscellaneous headings section.

The real substance of the book is the “picture” section which is complemented with station maps. Many of the (approx.) 175 photographs are well reproduced and have very detailed captions which are an excellent source of information. Lots of anecdotes included in the captions really do add to the excellent quality of the book.

Well done, Charles and Norman; what's next and when?

MMcM

Castlederg and Victoria Bridge Tramway

Dr E.M. Patterson, Colourpoint Press, £9.99

Bearing in mind the date of closure (1933), the total route miles (7), the remote nature of the line and the untimely death of the author during publication, that this book has appeared at all is noteworthy.

The “Tramway” appears to have had a fairly miserable life during its near 50 year existence; the book does “labour” this point.

I feel that the book is “light” in substance, particularly in the operating sections, but very amply covers the historical / pre-operating section. Photographic reproduction is average but, bearing in mind my opening comments, quite satisfactory.

Overall the book is useful and informative and a welcome addition to the Irish narrow gauge scene.

MMcM

Passenger Ships of the Irish Sea 1919-1969

Laurence Liddle, Colourpoint Press, £13.99

Colourpoint feature largely in this issue and not without good cause.

One might ask what has shipping to do with 5'3", and the answer is, quite a lot. The book covers not only the railway companies' shipping services but also those which had no railway affiliation. The author will be well known to readers of Five Foot Three as the octogenarian and currently Antipodean source of "Comments and Recollections". What may be less well known is that he has long had a concurrent interest in shipping and is a contributor to journals dealing with such matters. In the course of his travels on his professional and family duties Laurence crossed the Irish Sea more often than most. The book is the result of this, his quayside wanderings and general research and probably goes farther back than most can remember - not least myself, a mere sexagenarian although also given to quayside wanderings. Traditionally, everyone is supposed to remember what they were doing on the day President Kennedy was assassinated but in my case the big date is 31st January 1953, when the Princess Victoria was lost.

This well-illustrated book covers all passenger operations between Ireland and GB. and indeed goes somewhat beyond 1969, stopping short of the Seacat/HSS era but also giving a mention to Isle of Man services which have always been very much a part of the Irish Sea shipping scene.

Reproduction of photographs, in both monochrome and colour, is of a high standard. This, and the interesting and informative narrative, will give pleasure to those who remember what ships were like before they began to resemble blocks of flats containing amusement arcades. **NP**

The Belfast & County Down Railway

Desmond Coakham, Midland Publishing, £12.99

It is rare indeed to get a good railway book and rarer still to get an excellent one. Des Coakham's study of the BCDR falls into the latter category and could only have been written by a man who knew the railway intimately.

The illustrations are varied, well-chosen and excellently reproduced. The accompanying captions are the most informative and instructive I have ever seen. e.g. how many people knew that NCC 79 had been in Queen's Quay shops or that NCC 18 had visited Queen's Quay as a substitute shunting engine?

In the course of the 96 pages the author takes us on a trip over the County Down, describing each station with its architecture and facilities. Included are pictures of the BCDR's many and varied signal types, notices and other railway ephemera along with excellent plans of Queen's Quay and Downpatrick.

The book concludes with a section on the locomotives, carriages and wagons, describing each type with illustrations and much new information. The paragraph on the origins of the Baltics is particularly interesting and a classic example of the Civil Engineer interfering in the mechanical side.

In conclusion, the BCDR has finally got the book it deserved. Former BCDR men must be thin on the ground now but any survivors will find many memories in this book which is excellent value and should be on everyone's bookshelf. One's only regret must be that it was not longer. **WTS**

The Cavan & Leitrim Railway

Patrick Flanagan, Midland Publishing, £8.99

The last of the 3' gauge Irish lines to be operated by steam, the C&L was kept going for so long by the presence at Arigna of one of Ireland's few coal mines. The book gives a concise introduction to the railway and its coal traffic, with mention of its passenger services and dedicated staff.

A well-illustrated description of the line follows, with a chapter on Ballinamore and the locomotives, including the visitors from Cork and Tralee. The stations are described and illustrated, with especially interesting shots around Arigna and the mines. The book concludes with chapters on the rolling stock, closure and a section on the current preservation scheme.

This book is a very good companion to the author's first volume on the C&L and is excellent value at £8.99. WTS

Signalman's Memories - Railway Life in Rural Ireland

Albert Maher, Thurles Rail 150 Committee, £6.99

This little book is accurately described by its sub-title as it is a graphic description of how a railwayman working in rural Ireland remembers his life, his colleagues and the railway upon which he worked. The book is a collection of essays written over a number of years for the "Tipperary Star", the local newspaper serving the Thurles area, and has been published to celebrate the 150th anniversary of the opening of the railway through Thurles.

Like many similar works, this is almost a genealogy of railway staff and shows very clearly just how much a "family business" the railways of Ireland have been, and indeed still are to a certain extent. The number of staff who are third, fourth or fifth generation "railway" is clearly revealed and no doubt many familiar names will be picked up by readers. (Of at least four generations, I'm the first who didn't work on the railway!)

Although there are a few minor errors in the book they are not significant and the whole volume presents a delightfully sincere and nostalgic - one might say innocent - picture of the CIÉ system from the "Emergency" to the present day. The author also highlights how much our railways have changed, and he laments the passing of some lines and some working practices. I suspect he had an affection for the "Scut"!

The book is interspersed with anecdotes and stories which are typical examples of railway humour. One of the best tells of an employee who had "drink taken" holding on to railings to steady himself, when a passing colleague quipped, "I see you're going home by rail tonight!"

All the proceeds from this book are going to the Order of Malta Ambulance Corps towards the purchase of a new ambulance, and this makes it an even more valuable addition to the bookshelf. (Copies are available from the RPSI postal sales department.) WSB

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

Some readers of Five Foot Three may never have seen the underslung starting signal at Lisburn. It has crept into my photograph of PGs 0-6-0 No.151 which was passing through at a goodly pace, minus the top of its chimney, on 7th July 1956.

Referring to Laurence Liddle's comments on the "Gas Tanks", although they are not visible in my picture of the train headed by J15 No.235 on 10th September 1959 (FFT No.43) there were in fact two gas tank wagons at the extreme rear of the train.

G.G. Hayes

Auchtermuchty, Fife

Dear Sir,

Two items in a couple of excellent articles in Five Foot Three No.44 merit an explanation of some

apparent mysteries.

Firstly, Mr Scott's perceptive review of railway hardware makes reference to the serrated discs attached to a number of mileposts on the Wellington Bank. The fact that these were attached to "whole miles" only and not to quarters, halves, etc., gives a clue as to their purpose. They belong to the age of manual track maintenance, when a Permanent Way Ganger had his own gang of men to maintain a particular length of track, typically 3 miles of double track.



Great Northern PGs No.151 passing through Lisburn on 7th July 1956, showing the under-hung bracket signal. (G. Hayes)

During the District Engineer's annual formal track inspection - which supplemented many ad hoc inspections of particular lengths or sections - a particular length of track was selected as being the "Prize Length" for that year. In theory this was based entirely on merit, but in practice the honours were shared a little more widely to reward and encourage the gangs who would otherwise have come second or third each year.

In addition to an afternoon off to enjoy a free lunch (yes, such things did exist!) and a few refreshments at the company's expense, the winning ganger was allowed to place a commemorative plate on the milepost at the start of his section. These were the serrated plates as described, and included the wording "Prize Length 19xx" in small red letters at the centre. Of course, the gangers always "forgot"

to remove the plates at the end of the year and eventually the red paint faded away, leaving a plain white circular plate with black serrated edging. With the need for particularly good track on the descent of the Wellington Bank where train speeds were much higher than average, better track materials were provided, and with the particularly dedicated and competent permanent way staff in that area, led to a large percentage of prizes being awarded to that section of line.

I believe the system was introduced in GNRB days, and was continued by the UTA and for a while by NIR, until the introduction of mechanised track maintenance in the mid to late 1970s led to the abolition of localised track gangs.

Secondly, in his other article on Camping Coaches, Mr Scott speculates that the broad gauge carriage bodies must have reached Ballycastle by road. This would almost certainly not have been the case, due to the widely misunderstood meaning of the term “loading gauge” and the relatively unknown term “structure gauge”.

A railway structure gauge represents the minimum cross-sectional dimensions of bridges, tunnels, station platforms, platform canopies, etc. The loading gauge, however, is the maximum allowable size of rolling stock in cross-section, which is of necessity somewhat smaller than the structure gauge. The space between the two is known as the clearance. The clearance must allow for irregularities in the track alignment and level, the movement of vehicles on their springs (swaying, bouncing, etc.), and at the sides of engines or carriages for train crew or passengers putting their heads out of windows or loco cabs.

Typically a clearance of 3-4 inches is required above the roof, or at platform edges, but up to 18 inches is required at carriage sides. If this latter dimension cannot be achieved (for example, on the Cumbrian Coast line in England before partial singling) bars had to be placed over train windows to prevent people from putting their heads out. Special dispensation now applies to lines where all trains have power-operated sliding doors and no opening windows.

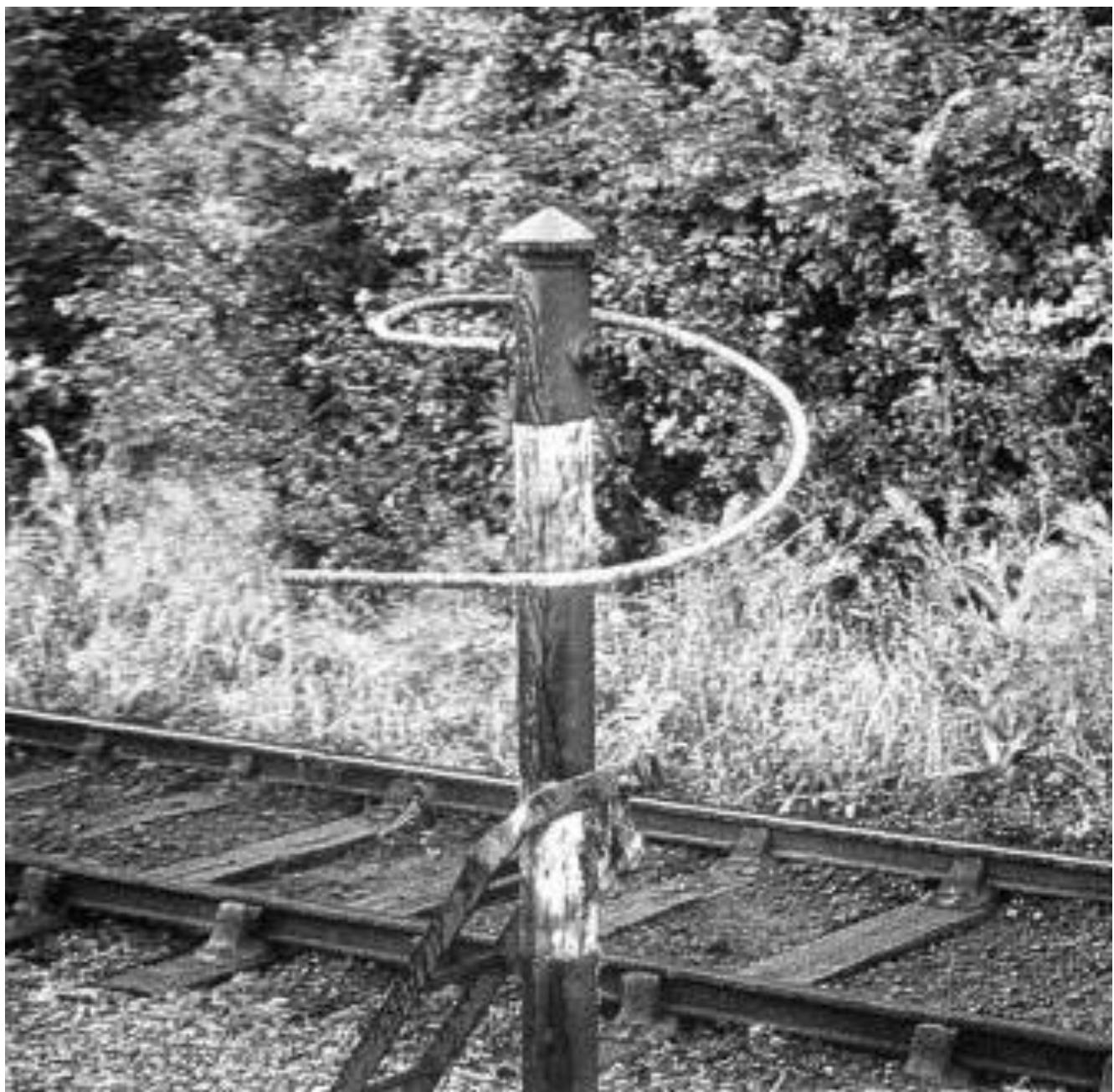
Whilst the Ballycastle Railway’s loading gauge was only 8 feet wide at the carriage waists, the structure gauge would therefore have been some 18 inches wider on each side, a total width of about 11 feet, leaving a side clearance of around 15 inches to the 8ft 6ins wide carriages, but possibly rather less at the eaves or at platform edges.

All railways had special rules for the movement of “Out-of-Gauge Loads”, which exceeded the normal loading gauge. Such movements usually took place at night or early on a Sunday morning before the normal train service started, after all bridges, etc., had been carefully measured, and at slow speed, which would be reduced to crawling pace at “tight” locations, to avoid any swaying or bouncing. Engineers would be on hand to check the actual clearance at any critical location, and of course there would be no passengers to stick their heads out of windows at the wrong moment! In some instances the track would have been temporarily slewed away from platforms, or towards the centre of arch bridges, and restored after the special train had passed.

It is therefore almost certain that the Camping Coaches were moved from Ballymoney to Ballycastle in this way.

Denis Grimshaw

Craigavad



A remarkable survivor in 1998 is this tablet catcher at Waterford West. (C.P. Friel)



On the afternoon of 9th May 1998, No.461 ran from Waterford to Kilkenny and back, and is seen here near Mullinavat on the return journey. (I.C. Pryce)



A 59 class Beyer Garratt in Tsavo Game park. (A. Morrow collection)