

# **IRISH RAIL TOUR**

## **3rd to 10th June, 1961**

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**The Irish Railway Record Society**

**The Railway Correspondence and Travel Society**

**The Stephenson Locomotive Society**

**SOUVENIR OF THE JOINT IRISH RAIL TOUR**

**4th to 9th June, 1961**

and

**THE IRISH RAILWAY RECORD SOCIETY'S TOURS**

**3rd and 10th June, 1961**

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1962



*Party at Banagher, 8<sup>th</sup> June 1961. (T.J. Edgington)*

# THE IRISH RAIL TOUR - 3<sup>rd</sup>-10<sup>th</sup> June 1961

Over one hundred members of the I.R.R.S., R.C.T.S. and the S.L.S. spent the first week of June 1961 on the Irish railways. It proved a memorable experience in the "twilight" of Irish steam, which can never be repeated.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> June: I.R.R.S. Meath Lines Rail Tour

Although it was no part of the official tour, passengers arriving at Dun Laoghaire on a rather grey Saturday morning were delighted to find at the head of the boat train to Westland Row J15 No.184, still resplendent in green livery and with her maker's plate marked "Inchicore 1880". The rest of the morning was spent at Inchicore where, in both works and shed, dieselisation was virtually complete and relics of steam hard to find. However, there were a few locomotives about including the Works 0-4-2T "Sambo", a G.S.W. F6 class 2-4-2T No.42, and G.N. (I) SG2 class No.184, still bearing on its tender the initials G.N.R. CC1, the turf bunting locomotive was tucked away among the wagons and coaches.

The afternoon and evening was taken up with a tour of the long branches to Kingscourt (M.G.W.) and to Oldcastle (G.N.). The train consisted of five modern C.I.E. coaches and the inevitable van plus a G.N. kitchen car, hauled throughout by G.N.R. (I) class QS 4-4-0 No.132. Departure from Amiens Street was via Newcomen Junction, the former M.G.W. main line being joined at Liffey Junction and followed to Clonsilla. The section of the Kingscourt branch between here and Navan was, from a traffic point of view, in a state of suspense, but still bore the signs of solid construction appropriate to a line which once carried the aristocracy to the hunt. The different history of the section from Navan to Kingscourt was reflected in its simpler stations and flat bottomed track - see the view of Wilkinstown - but in fact thanks to the gypsum mines, this carries more traffic than the southern section. Time was lost at Kingscourt due to difficulties arising from the relative dimensions of the locomotive and the turntable. More time was lost taking gas for the kitchen car on the return to Navan and having set off for Oldcastle, through the tardy performance of a crossing keeper. But the return to Amiens Street was made in fine style. As far as Drogheda the running showed proper respect for branch line conditions and was accompanied by intermittent whistling for the benefit of slumbrous crossing keepers. But once on the main line, No.132 was really opened out and a spectacular run back to Dublin followed in gathering darkness. The first day ended with a short pre-tour meeting at which Mr. Clements made a special appeal to those proficient with coal shovels.

## 4<sup>th</sup> June: Dublin (Amiens Street) - Cork - Cobh - Cork

The first part of the morning was spent at Amiens Street Shed which, enriched with the contributions of Broadstone, Grand Canal Street and Inchicore, probably possesses the best collection of steam locomotives in the Republic. The train, in which we were to spend the next few days consisted of five modern coaches, including a buffet car and with the usual 4-wheeled van. Over the main line to Cork the locomotive was G.N.R.(I) class S 4-4-0 No.174 still in immaculate blue livery (see the photograph at Thurles). A little after 11:30 a.m. we moved off to the accompaniment of exploding detonators. Calls were made at Kildare, at Thurles where 4-6-0 No.800 was brought out of the shed for our inspection, and at Limerick Junction whose unique layout with a single platform may be seen in one of the accompanying illustrations. After a final call at the important junction at Mallow, No.174 ran down the steep incline throughout the tunnel to be perhaps the first G.N. engine of its class to visit Cork. In Glanmire Road station its place at the head of the train was taken by No.464, a 4-6-0T of the former Cork, Bandon and South Coast Railway. A pleasant run followed along the shores of Cork Harbour to

Cobh. The line reflected a prosperity arising from a lack of road competition and the terminal station had been rebuilt, giving a favourable impression of the Irish railways to the American tourists who land here. (A former Mersey ferry boat, now used as a tender, was moored alongside the station.)

However, some regrets were expressed that the promised 6-wheel coaches had not been forthcoming. Although it was a Sunday evening, a telephone call produced the desired result and a rake of vintage 6-wheel coaches made the round trip to Cobh late in the evening, some of the participants having the unusual experience of travelling in a gas-lit coach. Other members of the party succeeded in finding the buildings - or the sites - of Cork's five closed terminals - Albert Street (Cork, Blackrock and Passage), Albert Quay (Cork, Bandon and South Coast), Capwell (Cork and Macroom Direct), Western Road (Cork and Muskerry) and Summerhill (Cork and Youghal).

#### **5<sup>th</sup> June: Cork - Newmarket - Castleisland - Fenit - Limerick**

This was a "soft" morning and No.801 started up the bank from Glanmire Road shrouded in rain and steam. The view of this large 4-6-0 entering Blaney shows clearly the extent to which she outstripped all the other locomotives in size and apparent power. At Mallow she was replaced by J15 No.131 which worked through to Limerick. We left the Killarney line at Banteer to make the journey up the Newmarket branch and this gave some of our party their first impression of the West of Ireland, with pigs mingled with motors and horse drawn carts at a level crossing. At the terminus No.131 bulldozed through long grass and shrubs to the little used water column. Back at Kanturk the school master had lined up his pupils to watch the rare sight of our train passing on its return journey to the junction. In fact, on the 1 in 66 bank approaching Kanturk there had been some doubt as to whether this would be achieved but judicious use of regulator and sand had saved the day. Inspection of the accompanying photograph will show the grass grown track and wet rails which added to No.131's difficulties.

We were not due to stop at Killarney but a layout as curious as that at Limerick Junction made it necessary to almost enter the station before reversing to get on to the line to Tralee. On the way to this important centre there was a diversion to visit the Castleisland branch. The run across the bog from Gortatlea was made behind another J15, No. 109, with No.131 following behind. Castleisland proved to be typical of the small market towns which we found quite common in the West of Ireland but which have faded from the English scene with the mechanisation of farm transport. At Tralee two of our five coaches were detached and the diminutive 0-6-0T, No.560 of the former M.G.W., took over for the run along the north of Tralee Bay to the port of Fenit. If No.801 was the largest engine of the tour, No.560 was certainly the smallest, as the views taken at Spa and Fenit will show. Throughout the tour there was a friendly spirit of co-operation between passengers and staff and this was well displayed at Fenit in the combined onslaught on the blocked waste pipe of the buffet car. On return to Tralee there was time for rapid visits to the shed and to the remains of the Tralee and Dingle Railway.

No.131 and the two coaches we had left behind were replaced and we ran on to Listowel. Here there was opportunity to seek the rather slender evidence of the unique Listowel and Ballybunion Railway with its distinctive monorail. Between here and Newcastle West No.131 surmounted the formidable bank with an impressive display of smoke and fire. The terminus at Newcastle West provided plenty of interest as did the interior of the adjacent Dooley's Railway Bar. We finally reached Limerick a little before ten after a very full but satisfying day in the South West.

#### **6<sup>th</sup> June: Limerick - Portlaoise - Mountmellick - Waterford - Mallow - Limerick**

The following morning No.125, another J15, made an impressive start out of Limerick, passing the unique ticket platform. However, when we stopped at Roscrea to pass a special train it was confirmed that she had dropped a bolt. After a cautious run to the main line junction at Ballybrophy she was

replaced by the Portlaoise pilot which, being a diesel, broke the uninterrupted succession of steam motive power which most of us had enjoyed since our arrival in Ireland. However, the replacement cleft its way efficiently through the long grass which screened the track of the Mountmellick branch and regained some of our lost time. After reversal, it took us on to Kilkenny where No.461, a 2-6-0 of the D.S.E. K2 class, was waiting for us. A pleasant run followed down to Waterford where there was time to inspect the shed and the "Cambridge" style station. The return to Mallow was, scenically, perhaps the most exciting part of the tour. First No.461 followed the bank of the Suir and then tackled the formidable climb up to Kilmacthomas before descending, in glorious evening sunshine, to the seaside at Dungarvan. The photograph taken here shows No.461 as a somewhat odd looking machine, with the appearance of a distorted 0-6-0. There was another stop at Ballyduff to pass the diesel-hauled Cork to Rosslare boat express which included a magnificent 12-wheeled buffet car with a clerestory roof. After a reversal at Mallow and a short stretch of the Dublin Cork main line, Limerick was reached over the direct line from Charleville Junction. The station was not entered by the direct route but instead we took the original line round the Foynes Loop with a reversal near the ticket platform. This enabled one member of the party to detrain in order to complete his day by a nocturnal visit to the running sheds.



C.I.E. 132N (formerly G.N.R.) entering Wilkinstown on the Kingscourt branch of the former M.G.W.R., 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1961. (D. Holmes)



C.I.E. (G.N.R.B.) Class S 4-4-0 No.174 Carrontuohill at Thurles, 4<sup>th</sup> June 1961. (T.J. Edgington)



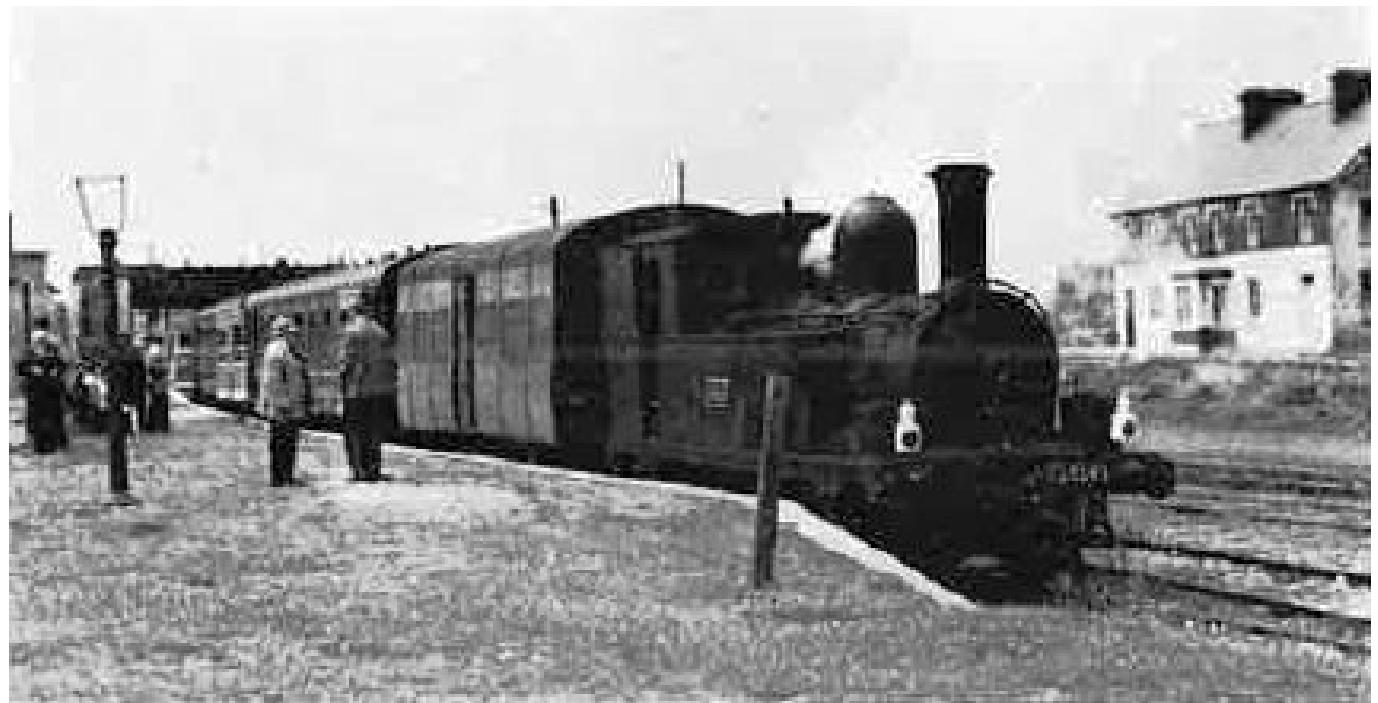
*C.I.E. 174N (formerly G.N.R.) entering Limerick Junction on the former G.S. & W.R., where all trains have to reverse into the platform, 4<sup>th</sup> June 1961. (R.O. Tuck)*



*C.I.E. 464 (formerly C.B.S.C.R.) en route from Cobh to Cork, 4<sup>th</sup> June 1961. (D.A. Lawrence)*



C.I.E. 801 (formerly G.S.R.) entering Blarney on the former G.S. & W.R. between Cork and Mallow, 5<sup>th</sup> June 1961. (D.A. Lawrence)



C.I.E. (M.G.W.) Class J26 0-6-0T No.560 at Fenit, on arrival from Tralee, 5<sup>th</sup> June 1961. (D. Luscombe)



C.I.E. No.131 (formerly G.S. & W.R.) climbing the 1 In 65 bank approaching Kanturk on the G.S. & W.R. Newmarket branch, 5<sup>th</sup> June 1961. (D.A. Lawrence)



C.I.E. (D.S.E.) Class K2 2-6-0 No.461 at Dungarvan, 6<sup>th</sup> June 1961. (D. Luscombe)



*C.I.E. 560 (formerly M.G.W.R.) at Spa on the Tralee - Fenit branch of the former G.S. & W.R., 5<sup>th</sup> June 1961. (W.A. Camwell)*



*C.I.E. A30 about to leave Ballybroypho (former G.S. & W.R.) after replacing Class J15 No.125, 6<sup>th</sup> June 1961. (J.C. Gillham)*



C.I.E. 125 (formerly G.S. & W.R.) leaving Ennis and passing the works of the West Clare Railway, 7<sup>th</sup> June 1961. (R.O. Tuck)



C.I.E. (M.G.W.) Class G2- 2-4-0 No.654 at Loughrea, 7<sup>th</sup> June 1961. (D. Luscombe)



*C.I.E. 603 (formerly M.G.W.R.) at Tubbercurry en route from Claremorris to Sligo, 7<sup>th</sup> June 1961.  
(D. Luscombe)*



*3ft. Ford inspection saloon No.6 at Ennis, former West Clare Railway. Remains of carriage shed in background, 7<sup>th</sup> June 1961. (J.C. Gillham)*



*C.I.E. B132 at Ballaghaderreen terminus of former M.G.W.R. branch from Kilfree Junction. Branch locomotive No.655 (ex-M.G.W.R. Class G2) is standing outside shed, 8<sup>th</sup> June 1961. (W.S. Sellar)*



*Banagher signal box and vintage signal (former G.S. & W.R.), 8<sup>th</sup> June 1961. (W.A. Camwell)*



*At Edmondstown on Ballaghaderreen branch, 8<sup>th</sup> June 1961. (M.C. Burdge)*



*C.I.E. No.719 (formerly G.S.R.) at Banagher, terminus of the G.S. & W.R. branch from Clara, 8<sup>th</sup> June 1961. (D. Luscombe)*



*Level crossing with Bord na Mona 3ft. gauge line near milepost 6, Banagher branch, 8<sup>th</sup> June 1961. (J.C. Gillham)*



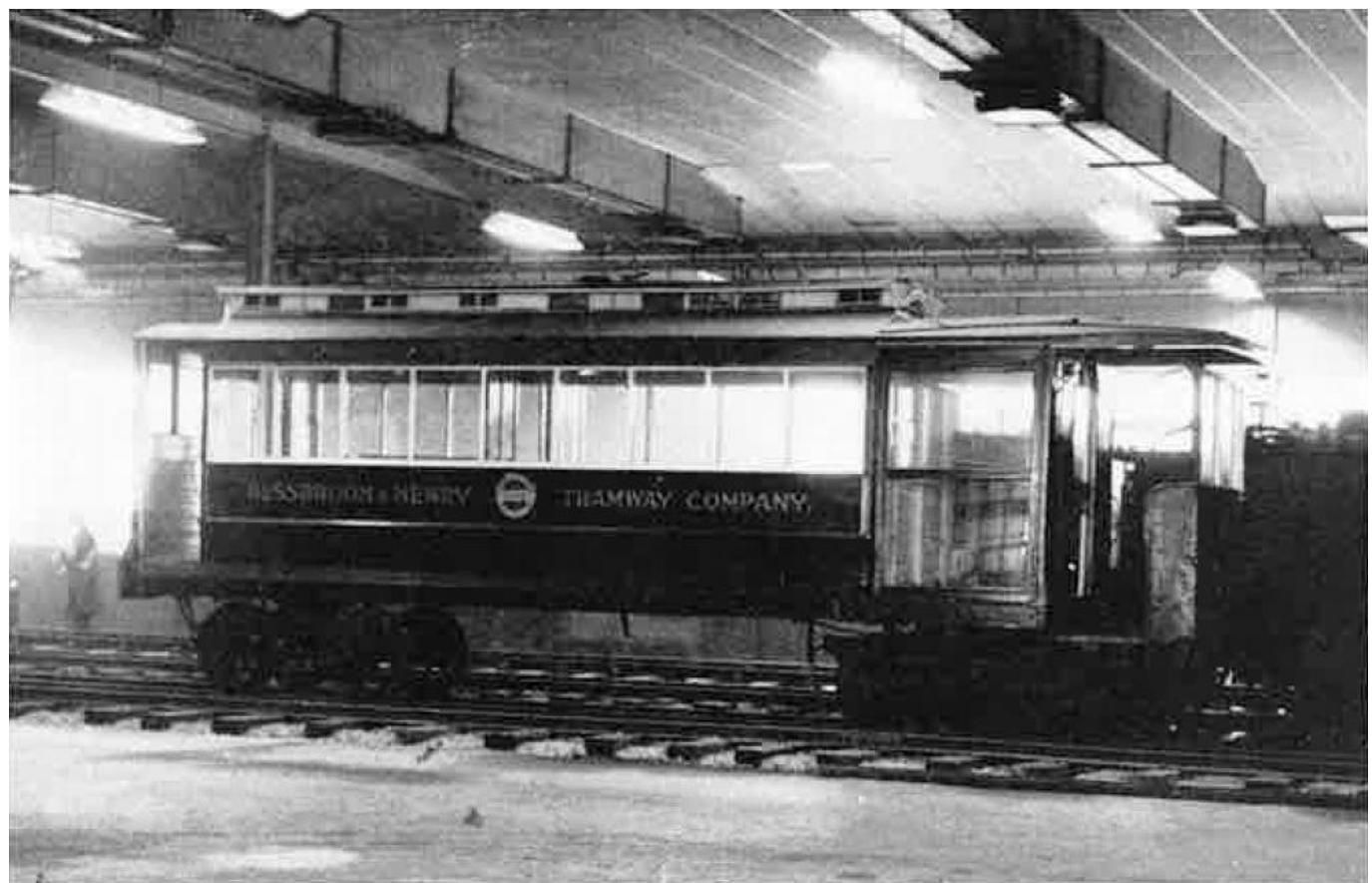
*C.I.E. 184 (formerly G.S. & W.R.) at the cattle dock at Edenderry on the M.G.W.R. branch from Enfield, 9<sup>th</sup> June 1961. (T.J. Edgington)*



*C.I.E. (G.N.R.B.) Class V 4-4-0 No.85 "Merlin" and U.T.A. Class WT 2-6-4T No.55 at Dundalk, 9<sup>th</sup> June 1961. (T.J. Edgington)*



*Whilst en route from Dundalk some members sampled the Warrenpoint branch (formerly G.N.R., now U.T.A.). U.T.A. No.42X (ex-G.N.R.) is at Warrenpoint, 9<sup>th</sup> June 1991. (W.S. Sellar)*



*Bessbrook and Newry Tramway Co. car at Belfast Museum, 10<sup>th</sup> June 1961. (J.C. Gillham)*



*U.T.A. No.74 "Dunluce Castle" at Antrim (ex-N.C.C.) after arrival from Belfast via Greenisland, 10<sup>th</sup> June 1961. (W.A. Camwell)*



*U.T.A. (S.L.N.C.R.) Class Z 0-6-4T No.26 "Lough Melvin" at Antrim, 10<sup>th</sup> June 1961. (D. Luscombe)*

#### **7<sup>th</sup> June: Limerick - Loughrea - Athlone - Claremorris - Sligo**

By the morning No.125 had had its bolt replaced and started the day with a sprightly run to Ennis. Here the demolition of the West Clare Railway was proceeding with rather depressing rapidity. The track had been lifted from the narrow gauge bay platform and the West Clare yard was filled with stock awaiting disposal. The track was still in situ beyond the Works, which can be seen in the background of the photograph showing our departure from Ennis. On through Athenry to Attymon Junction where No.125 was replaced by M.G.W. class G2 2-4-0 No.654. The station master agreed to the attachment of a vintage gas-lit M.G.W. 6-wheeler to the mixed branch train for Loughrea and a number of the party followed the special in this interesting collection of rolling stock, hauled by J19 No.610. Then on by the M.G.W. main line, singled but with occasional evidence of its double track of years gone by, to the impressive M.G.W. station at Athlone. There was an opportunity to visit the sheds while engines were changed again, the newcomer being M.G.W. class J18 No.588. Leaving by the Westport line, the lakeside scenery contrasted with the bogs which we had traversed west of Athlone. By Donamon the news had leaked out that all was not well with No.588 ; a hot axlebox on the tender was giving the driver some concern. At many places, our special train was welcomed and at Castlerea we received a written welcome from the local garage proprietor who proved to be a member of the I.R.R.S. Finally No.588 reached Claremorris just as flames began to leap from the offending axlebox and the chances of arrival at Sligo on the intended day began to fade. However, relief came from an unexpected quarter. M.G.W. J19 No.603 was requisitioned from a weed killing train. A stop at Tubbercurry to pass another train gave an opportunity for more exploration of Irish market towns and their refreshment facilities while a second stop at Carrowmore exhausted the booking office of its supply of Waterford and Limerick First Class tickets. Sligo was reached after another day of steam haulage.

#### **8<sup>th</sup> June: Sligo - Ballaghaderreen - Mullingar - Athlone - Banagher - Dublin**

This was not to be repeated the following day, on which the effect of bright morning sunshine was offset by the news that No.603 had a cracked cylinder cover. A General Motors diesel was shunting down at the Quay and this was hastily commandeered to take us through to Ballaghaderreen. Although this form of traction was a disappointment to some, B132 ran well and certainly did nothing to detract from the historical interest of the branch to Ballaghaderreen and the beauty of the lakeside scenery. On returning to Kilfree Junction diesel B129 was waiting to take us on to Mullingar. A special stop was made at Dromod, the junction with the now abandoned Cavan and Leitrim Railway. Most of the track and rolling stock had already been removed but the narrow gauge 4-4-0T C. & L. No.2L, together with a coach, was carefully placed for the benefit of photographers. The C. & L had a separate station whose platform was in use by thirteen hens. At Mullingar there was time for the shed while "curiosities" included a traction engine supplying steam heating for tar wagons, and a station bell rung before the departure of our train. Here steam haulage was restored in the form of G.S. class J15B No.719. Another stretch of the M.G.W. main line was traversed to Athlone for although Clara was our objective, the direct line from Streamstown was impassable. Reversal at Athlone was followed by departure on the G.S.W. line which gave an opportunity to see that company's now abandoned Athlone station - few towns of its size can have been provided with such impressive stations as Athlone. There was a further reversal at Clara before we set out over the bog to Banagher. This provided the setting for the official photograph and also an opportunity for the river and canal enthusiasts to inspect the Shannon Navigation. On the way back to Clara a stop was made at the level crossing with the 3 foot gauge line of the Bord na Mona. The Dublin - Cork main line was rejoined at Portarlington but on the last stretch into Dublin we suffered considerable delays. An unscheduled stop in fading light opposite Inchicore Works gave one well-known passenger the opportunity to photograph a bicycle shed adjoining a small diesel locomotive. Amiens Street was reached very late but all the objectives of the day had been achieved.

## **9<sup>th</sup> June: Dublin - Edenderry - Dublin - Belfast**

On the last day of the main tour, 31 of the party were up in time to join the special train at 8:10 a.m. for the run on the M.G.W. main line out to Enfield behind the green J15 No.184. The majority, haying weighed the attractions of steam haulage against an extra hour in bed, caught the express to Westport leaving Westland Row at 9:10 behind diesel A50. The Edenderry branch proved the most difficult of the whole journey with thick grass, overhanging boughs and straying cattle adding to the task of No.184. The terminus was reached safely but at one time there were serious doubts about the accomplishment of the return up a steep and grassy track with No.184 running tender first. However, agile passengers ran ahead throwing sand on the metals and finally No.184 "got hold" of her train. Having done so there could be no stopping for the public spirited sanders who had to run after the train which awaited them at the top of the bank. Needless to say, the return to Amiens Street was late but a rapid turn round was achieved, special credit being due to the catering staff for the speed with which a trolley load of chips was conveyed from the station kitchen to our buffet car.

On the last stage of its journey, our special train was hauled by 4-4-0 No.85, the last survivor of the G.N. V class still resplendent in blue livery. She made an excellent run up the G.N. main line but received two severe set hacks and it became clear that it would not be possible to visit Dundalk Works and Shed and catch the 3:55 service train to Belfast. Under the circumstances the party divided. the minority enjoying a lively run behind U.T.A. WT class 2-6-4T No.55 which replaced the C.I.E. diesel at Dundalk. A detachment from the minority left the train at Goraghwood to visit the Warrenpoint branch, travelling in coaches which retained the G.N. teak livery, and hauled by G.N. 4-4-0. No. 42X. The main party completed the journey to Great Victoria Street in a C.I.E. railcar unit which had been added to the "Enterprise" express in Dublin, giving the train, which included stock in the U.T.A. and G.N. liveries, a pleasantly heterogenous appearance.

## **10<sup>th</sup> June: Belfast Area Rail Tour**

In the morning, with the aid of a hired bus, the party visited Adelaide Sheds, York Road Shed and Works and the Belfast Transport Museum which was in process of re-establishment in new premises.

The train which awaited us in York Road station for the afternoon rail tour, apart from its livery, would have looked little out of place in Derby. Despite limited use for some years, N.C.C. 4-4-0 No.74 made a spirited run, starting out tender-first in driving rain along the shore of Belfast Lough to Greenisland. After reversal the original route was taken to Antrim; the accompanying illustration indicates clearly the Midland influence on No.74. From here the route back to Belfast was over the G.N. route following their branch to the main line at Lisburn. The train was hauled as far as the Belfast Central connecting line by S.L.N.C. 0-6-4T No.26 *Lough Melvin*, which was replaced by G.N. U class 4-4-0 No.65, also *Lough Melvin*. No.65, still in blue livery, made a good run over what remains of the Belfast and County Down Railway - the line out to Bangor which carries passengers only. For most of the party, the end of the tour carne with a right time arrival at Queens Quay and by the evening, they were sailing down Belfast Lough.

## **Conclusion**

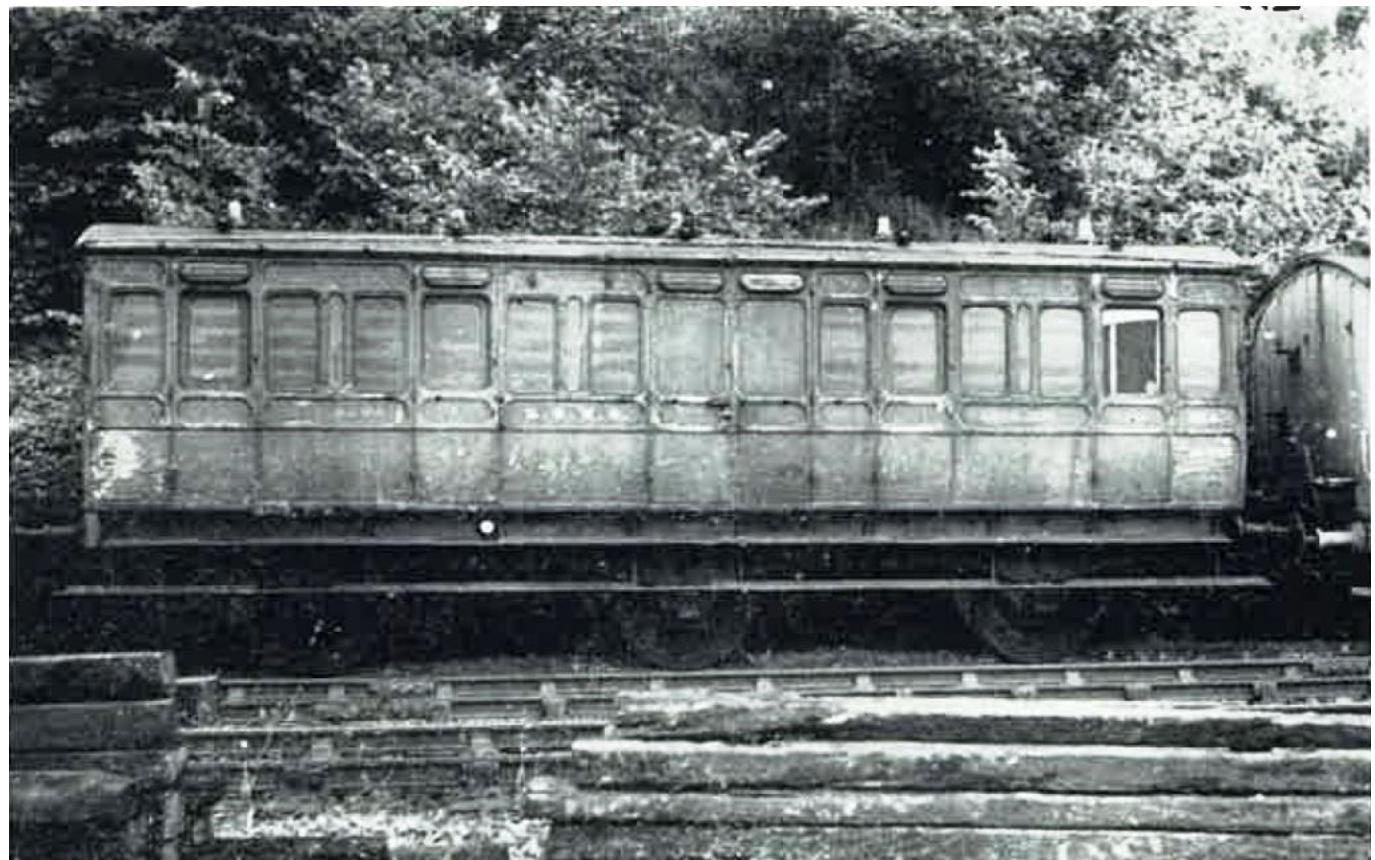
First, grateful thanks are due to the authorities of C.I.E. and U.T.A. who made the tour possible. It would be invidious to thank particular train crews; all contributed to the success of the tour. However, an exception must be made for John Doran and his colleagues who worked up to 12 hours a day in the buffet car throughout the tour, serving countless meals and filling a fair number of glasses. On the Society side, Mr. R.N. Clements proved indispensable, both in the planning and the execution of the tour. Again, it is difficult to pick on individual members of the Tour Committee but special thanks are due to Messrs. A.J. Boston, H.C. Casserley, J.S. Davies and L. Hyland while quite apart from his help in

other directions, but for the summoning whistle of Mr. A.E. Hurst, some railway enthusiasts would still be waiting for the next train on some remote branch line in Ireland.

(E.A.C.)



U.T.A. No.26 "Lough Melvin" (ex-S.L. & N.C.R.) being replaced by U.T.A. No.65 "Lough Melvin" (ex-G.N.R.) on Belfast Central line at Maysfields, 10<sup>th</sup> June 1961. (W.A. Camwell)



C.I.E. (ex-G.S. & W.R.) Six Wheel coach still bearing pre-grouping lettering at Waterford, 6<sup>th</sup> June 1961.  
(J.J. Davis)

