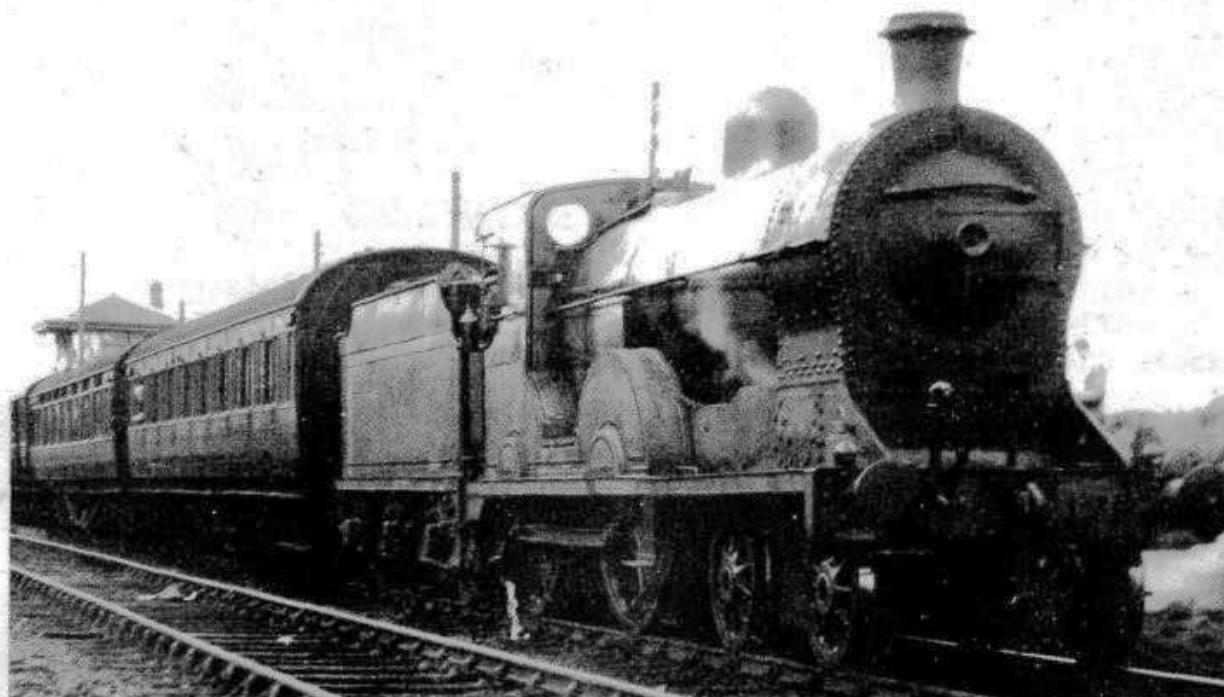


BROAD GAUGE



INTRODUCTION TO
THE RAILWAY PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND



PRICE

3'6

THE PRESERVATION SOCIETY OF IRELAND
BROAD GAUGE

CONTENTS

1. Introduction
2. Foreword
3. The Society
4. The Engines
5. Railtours
6. Whitehead
7. Rolling Stock
8. The Future

Edited by: Sullivan Boomer

Photographs: Neil Hamilton, Sullivan Boomer, John Richardson

Front Cover Photograph: No.171 at Ballycarry on the Society's outing to Larne Harbour in September 1966. (NH)

INTRODUCTION

This booklet is intended to serve as an introduction to the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland, and to provide you with information about its aims, its activities, and the engines and stock which it possesses.

The title "Broad Gauge" was chosen to convey one of the unique aspects of the Irish Standard gauge railway system - namely that the "metals" here are five feet three inches apart, a full 6½ inches wider than the standard European and American gauge. This, however, is only a small facet of the attraction of the Irish railways. The great diversity in engine design between all the individual railway companies, and the progress of design within companies could provide the locomotive enthusiast with a study which would be an entire life's work. The intricacies of train working over different lines and under different regimes likewise provide a subject for study, the surface of which has only been scratched.

With this small pamphlet we hope to interest you in our hobby and to encourage your support. We have tried to give you an aperitif in the hope that you will join us for the rest the banquet. If you are interested, fill in the enclosed form and join NOW. If you are not, we are sorry, but we hope your support for us will continue.

FOREWORD

By the Society's Patron, The Rt. Hon. The Lord O'Neill

At the time the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland came into being in 1964, the reduction of steam services was already well under way. Indeed, steam had virtually disappeared in the South, and was declining rapidly in the North. Fortunately, a number of well known locomotives had been preserved in the Belfast Transport Museum owing to the foresight of a few members of the Corporation. However, it was essential that 'live steam' should be preserved as long as possible, and the RPSI has devoted itself to this objective with some success. If the present attitude of British Railways prevails, it could be that Ireland will be the only place where main line steam can be seen in the British isles.

The Society has now acquired three steam locomotives; one express passenger, one goods and one industrial. It is hoped to acquire one more before steam finally disappears from the Irish railway scene. A suitable rake of carriages has been earmarked for preservation, and a number of representative goods wagons have already been saved.

All this rolling stock and other items of railway interest will be concentrated at the Whitehead site, which the Society is currently improving. New track has been laid, and the loco shed reroofed - much more needs to be done.

As in any other society, the success of the operation depends on its membership. At present the burden of work is carried by a hard core

which is prepared to devote time and energy to the task. The amount that can be done is strictly limited by what they can reasonably undertake. Undoubtedly, more could and should be done, if the Society is to progress in the direction which I'm sure all members will want. The officers and committee members will be only too pleased to discuss this with anyone in a position to help. There are a considerable range of jobs which should appeal to all interests, and any amount of time spent, however small, will advance the cause.

THE SOCIETY

The Society was formed after an inaugural meeting in Belfast in September 1964, with the aims of "acquiring, maintaining and operating a number of Irish steam locomotives, coaches and other items of railway equipment." To this end the Society hired from the Ulster Transport Authority locomotive No.171 "Slieve Gullion", one of the ex-Great Northern Railway Class S 4-4-0 express passenger engines.

Shortly before this the Society was presented with Guinness 0-4-0ST No.3 and following upon this Córas Iompair Éireann presented us with ex-Great Southern and Western Railway class J15 0-6-0 mixed traffic locomotive No.186.

The Society has always believed that outings are of major importance and from the autumn of 1965, with the inaugural tour to Portrush, a minimum of two outings per year have been organised. Since 1968 this has been increased to four railtours per year, comprising two major outings, one in May and one in September, and two smaller ones.

The Society has acquired a site at the old excursion station at Whitehead and in 1967 the engine shed there was re-roofed and refurbished, and the track into it was relaid.

Further information on each of these aspects of the Society's activities are included elsewhere.

For members a journal is produced bi-annually. Called "Five Foot Three", it contains news of the Society, previously unpublished photographs, feature articles and topical information. Between journals a quarterly news-sheet is produced as well. Areas of the Society have been organised and these hold monthly meetings during the winter, where talks, slide and film shows are combined with a social "get-together" for local enthusiasts.

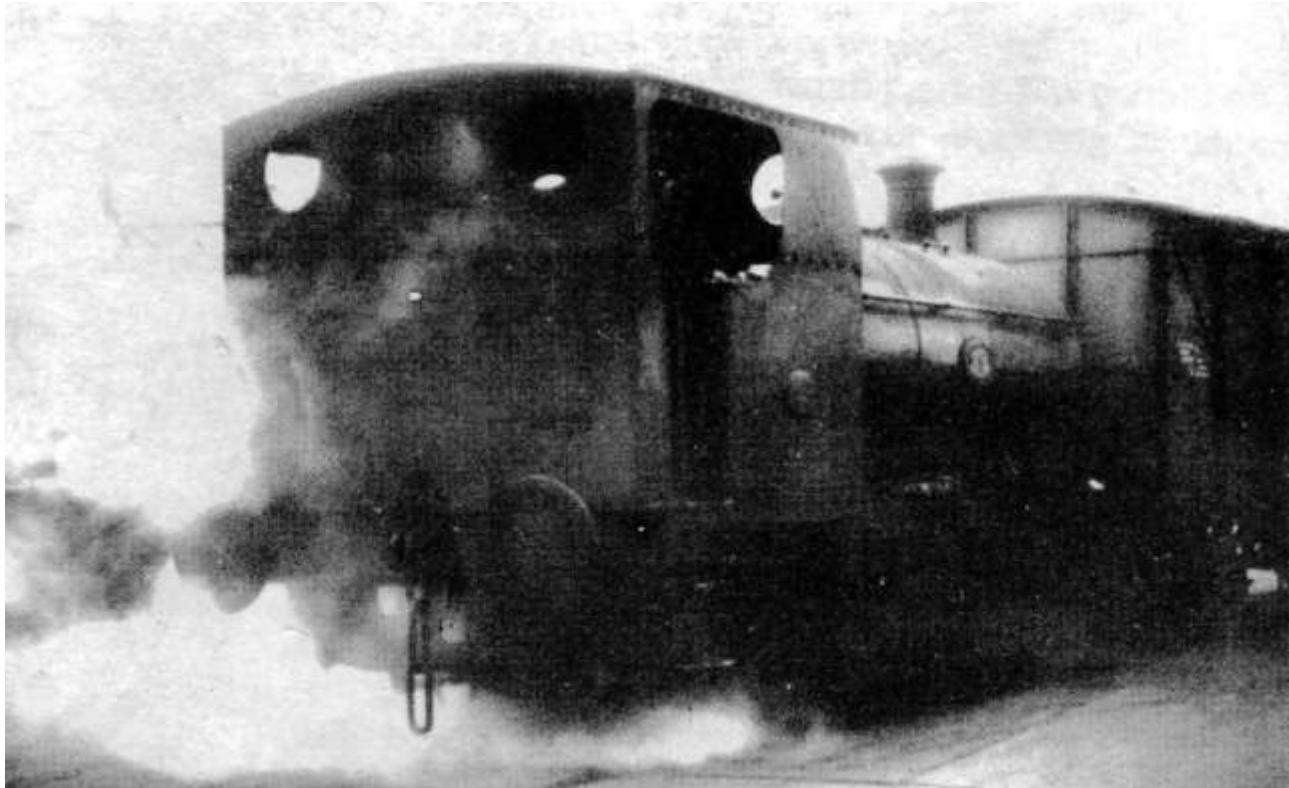
The Society is expanding and will continue to expand, provided more support is forthcoming. There is something for everyone in the Society. Why not join?

THE ENGINES

GUINNESS NO.3BG

This 0-4-0ST was built by Hudswell Clarke in Leeds in 1919 and carries the maker's number 1152. She was exactly the same as her

sister engine, No.2, which was delivered in 1914, and operated over the two miles of broad gauge track, mostly sidings, within the St. James's Gate Brewery in Dublin. She was a tramway engine and the wheels and motion were originally skirted over - these were removed by the Society in 1968 for the Olderfleet railtour, and this improves her appearance.



The two outside cylinders are 15" x 22", with inside direct motion Stephenson valve gear. Her wheels are 3'4" diameter, with a six foot wheelbase, and at 85% of her original boiler pressure of 175 lb/sq.in. she generated a tractive effort of 18,400 lb. Her pressure has been reduced to 160 lb/sq.in., although for her 1968 boiler test she held a hydraulic pressure of 240 lb/sq.in. without difficulty. The boiler was new in 1950 and was re-tubed about 1962, the heating surface being made up of 130 tubes of 2" diameter, with an area of 649.3 sq.ft., and the firebox area of 66.45 sq.ft., which gives a total heating surface of 715.95 sq.ft. The grate area is 10.13 sq.ft.

To assist the Society with the maintenance of the engine, Arthur Guinness, Son, and Company, when presenting her, also presented a wagon load of spares, including springs, brasses and new tyres. Several other items were also given from engine No.2, and these have proved very useful, since vandals stole the single-feed displacement lubricator while the engine was in store at Carrickfergus, and quite a lot of copper piping was stolen. The Society has removed the flange lubricating system, as this is no longer needed. It may eventually be restored for appearance sake.

Early in 1968 the engine was repainted and hauled a train of goods

wagons and brake vans over the Belfast Harbour Commissioners' tramway during the Olderfleet outing, mentioned elsewhere.

The chief duty of this engine, when in use in the Brewery, was to haul 11-wagon rakes from the loading bay up a gradient of 1 in 40 on an almost impossibly tight 50 foot radius curve to the main sidings. She also occasionally worked the interchange, when loaded wagons were taken along the St. John's Road tramway to Kingsbridge Goods Yard, and empty wagons were taken back to the Brewery.



Guinness No.3 at Whitehead Shed. (WSB)

Like all tramway vehicles, No.3 ran on her flanges instead of her tyres when on St. John's Road, and on her arrival in Belfast by rail on 31st August 1965, on a low-loader, her flanges were turned in York Road locomotive works to standard profile. For this our thanks are due to the Ulster Transport Authority Engineering Department.

GREAT SOUTHERN AND WESTERN RAILWAY CLASS J15 0-6-0 NO.186

It is possible that this locomotive is the most important of our engines, for it is a representative of the most numerous class in Ireland, once numbering 121 engines. (Only 119 engines of this class ever ran on the Great Southern and Western, for two were delivered to the Dublin and Belfast Junction Railway, finishing their days under Great Northern Railway ownership as Nos. 40 and 41. On the Great Southern and Western, however, there were never more than 111 of the class at any one time, some of the earlier engines being broken up and replaced about the turn of the century.) It also represents one of the longest lived classes, the J15 centenary being celebrated in 1966.

No.186 was built by Sharp Stewart in 1979, maker's number 2838, and was delivered in November of that year. The engines are attributed to Alexander MacDonnell, but it seems likely that the design was in fact done by Beyer Peacock, who delivered the first batch of the class. The inside cylinders are 18" x 24", and the vertical slide valves operated by Stephenson link motion have steam ports 13½" x 1½", the exhaust ports being 3½" wide. Valve travel is 3¾" with 7/8" lap, and

the valve spindles are supported by swing links hung from the motion plate. The crossheads run in four slidebars per cylinder, and No.186 has recently had hers trued up. Her big-ends and outside rods have also received attention to tighten up her motion and eliminate a rather annoying knock.

Her driving wheels are 5' 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ " in diameter, and originally the class had cast iron wheels. No.186, however, has a new leading axle made by Krupps in June 1935, a driving axle made in May 1940, and other wheels and motion parts from a Beyer Peacock engine, No.190, as well as several Inchicore-built engines, including Nos. 107, 118, 182, 195 and 199.



J15 No.186 at Whitehead, with 2,730 gallon tender.

No.186 received new frames in 1935, and her 'Z' class super-heated boiler in 1932. This boiler, which has an inside diameter of 4' 3" is the one which she carries at the moment, and has been restored to her original working pressure of 160 lb/sq.in. This gives a tractive effort (at 85% pressure) of 17,170 lb.

The total heating surface of 886 sq.ft. is made up on paper as including 185 tubes of 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ " diameter, but Inchicore practice frequently varied from this. Grate area is 18 $\frac{3}{4}$ sq.ft. and the front half of the 5' 7" long flatgrate can be dropped to assist in fire cleaning.

In working order the engine weighs only 37 tons 15 cwts., which gives a maximum axle-load on the driving axle of just 13 tons. For this reason the J15 class engines could go very nearly anywhere in their heyday, and No.186 is now a completely universal engine, being permitted, theoretically at least, over every line in Ireland still in existence.

Her original 2,730 gallon tender unfortunately leaked so badly that repairs were impossible. She is now equipped with a 3,345 gallon tender which, with 7 tons of coal as well, weighs 36 tons 1 cwt.

The last years of service for Córas Iompair Éireann, who very generously presented the engine, saw No.186 on the Birr, Castlecomer and Cherryville - Kilkenny branches, as well as that from Macmine Junction to Waterford, and up to 1963, when officially steam services terminated, she was based in Waterford, where she was the pride of the shed. After working an all-Ireland railtour in 1964, she was presented to the Society in 1965, and was hauled to Belfast on Saturday 11th December 1965 by diesel locomotive B163. She was stored in Adelaide shed for some months before receiving some minor repairs and being repainted in plain black.

In 1969 it is planned to repaint the engine in Great Southern and Western Railway livery of olive green, lined black, white and red. In 1968 the first step in this direction was taken when she received new cast numberplates, which are exact replicas of her 1879 originals.

Performance details are legion for these engines, and detailed accounts can be found in other Society publications, but a speed of 69 mph has been recorded on a GAA excursion, hauled by No.198, and No.171 (J15), piloting No.198, on a Naas race special of 265 tons, ran 10 miles in 10½ minutes, reaching 63 mph.

GREAT NORTHERN RAILWAY (IRELAND) CLASS S 4-4-0 NO.171 "SLIEVE GULLION"

The last passenger engine design of Charles Clifford before he retired, a batch of five engines was ordered from Beyer Peacock in 1913, and were the first Great Northern engines which were superheated when delivered, being fitted with the Schmidt type superheater.

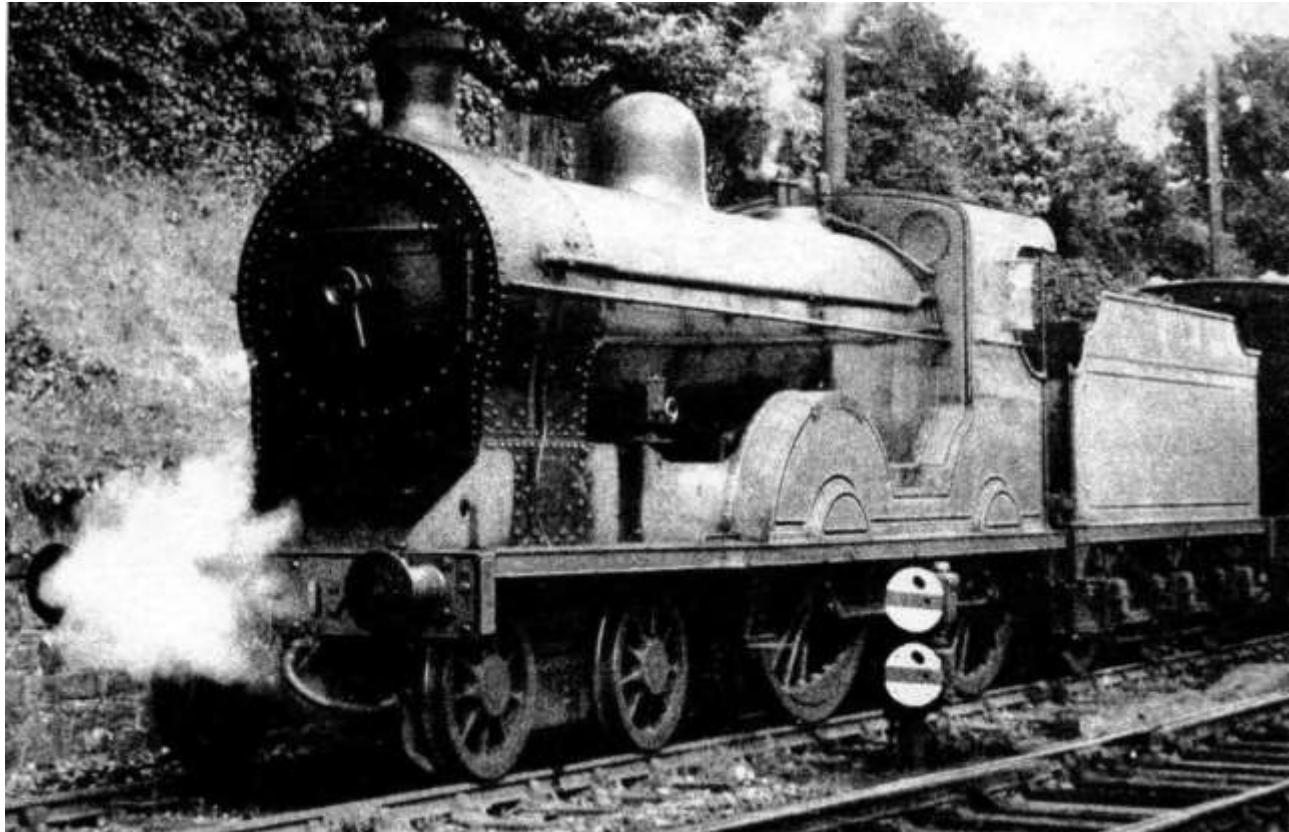
The two inside cylinders were 19" x 26" and the Stephenson motion drove 8" piston valves through rocker arms. Originally the valve travel was only 3½", but this was subsequently increased to 5¼" when the engines were rebuilt.

The 6'7" driving wheels were standard on Great Northern express passenger engines. Originally working at 165 lb/sq.in., raised to 175 lb/sq.in. in 1914 and again to 200 lb/sq.in. in 1926, the engines had 1,309 sq.ft. of total heating surface and weighed 52 tons 2 cwts. The maximum axle-load was only 17 tons.

In 1938-39, however, after the renewal of the Boyne viaduct and the introduction of the heavier V and SG3 classes, it was decided to renew the S class and in August 1938 No.171 was turned out from Dundalk Works, the third of the class to be rebuilt.

New, heavier frames were incorporated, bringing the maximum axle-load up to 18 tons, and the overall weight up to 53 tons 6 cwts. The valve travel was increased to 5" as already mentioned and the boilers were

fitted with Robinson superheaters, bringing them into line with the S2 class of 1915, which were built to a slightly modified design by George Glover, who succeeded Clifford as Locomotive Engineer. This reduced the heating surface to 1,240 sq.ft., made up as firebox 141 sq.ft., tubes 905 sq.ft. and superheater 214 sq.ft. The grate area is 22.9 sq.ft.

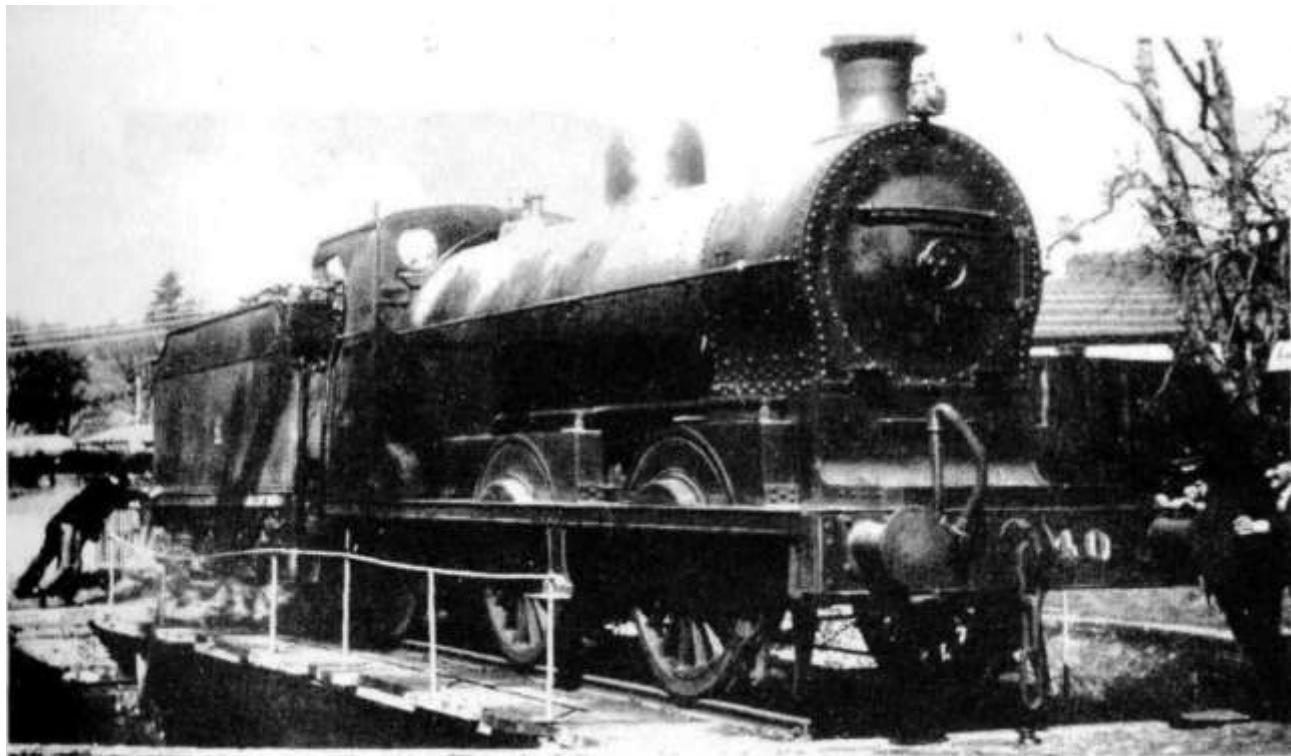


The brake rod was moved from outside the wheels to inside, and with the rearrangement in brake gear the injector on the fireman's side was moved outside to a new position in front of the footstep. On some S class engines this injector was a new exhaust injector, while others, including No.171, carried a specially designed live steam type, the only pattern ever made in Ireland, which was arranged for maximum ease of servicing. Boiler pressure stayed at 200 lb/sq.in., but was reduced to 175 lb/sq.in. in 1946. At 85% of 200 lb/sq.in. pressure, the tractive effort was 20,198 lb.

The engines ran with the standard 3,500 gallon tender, but it was not unusual for different tenders to be fitted. No.171 has a standard 3,500 gallon tender, which also carries 6 tons of coal and which, when laden, weighs 38½ tons. There is also a 4,000 gallon tender from a VS class engine, which can be fitted to her.

In 1968 No.171 was given a complete mechanical overhaul and renewal by Harland & Wolff, the world-famous Belfast ship-building and heavy engineering firm, and is distinguished as being the only engine in Ireland to carry on her frame, on the driver's side, in place of a Dundalk Works plate, a plaque bearing the inscription of Harland &

Wolff. (Harland & Wolff did, in fact, overhaul engines before, several LMS-NCC Class W 2-6-0s being overhauled by them about 1946. They also built several diesel locomotives.)



No.40, ex-18 class SG2, turning at Warrenpoint on a Summer Sunday in 1961, after working an excursion.

No.171 is being restored to her post-1938 condition, through the generosity of Messrs Samuel Courtney Ltd of Belfast, who manufactured and supplied free of charge the coach varnish and paints with which the engine is finished, and who even went to the trouble of specially matching the original colours. When delivered in 1913, the S class were painted green and named. Near the end of the First World War the nameplates were removed and the engines painted black, some of them being lined out in red. In 1938 the engines were painted azure blue, a shade similar to the old Caledonian Railway livery, and lined black and white.

The buffer casings were vermillion, as were the insides of the frames, and the footplate valancing, tender frames and buffer planks were vermillion edged with black and white. The smokebox, chimney, cab roof, underframes, axle ends and tyres were painted black, as were the recessed letters on the radiused brass nameplates, which were carried on the driving splasher. The cab interior was light brown. The engine number carried on the buffer plank and cab sides was composed of 6 inch high numerals in gold leaf, shaded with black. On the tender was an 18 inch diameter coat of arms with 12 inch high gold letters, lined black and white, on either side, proclaiming G.N.

The performance of the S class engines is already well documented,

and No.190, an S2, is accredited with a 97 minute run for the 112½ miles from Belfast to Dublin. No.173 been timed at least twice at 90 mph descending Mount Pleasant, and in 1939 ran the 31¾ miles from Drogheda to Dublin in 30½ minutes start to stop with 10 coaches on the 5:40pm up train.



No.62, ex-190 class S2, arriving in Omagh on the 3pm from Belfast in 1961. This was a common turn for the S class engines during the summer. (WSB)

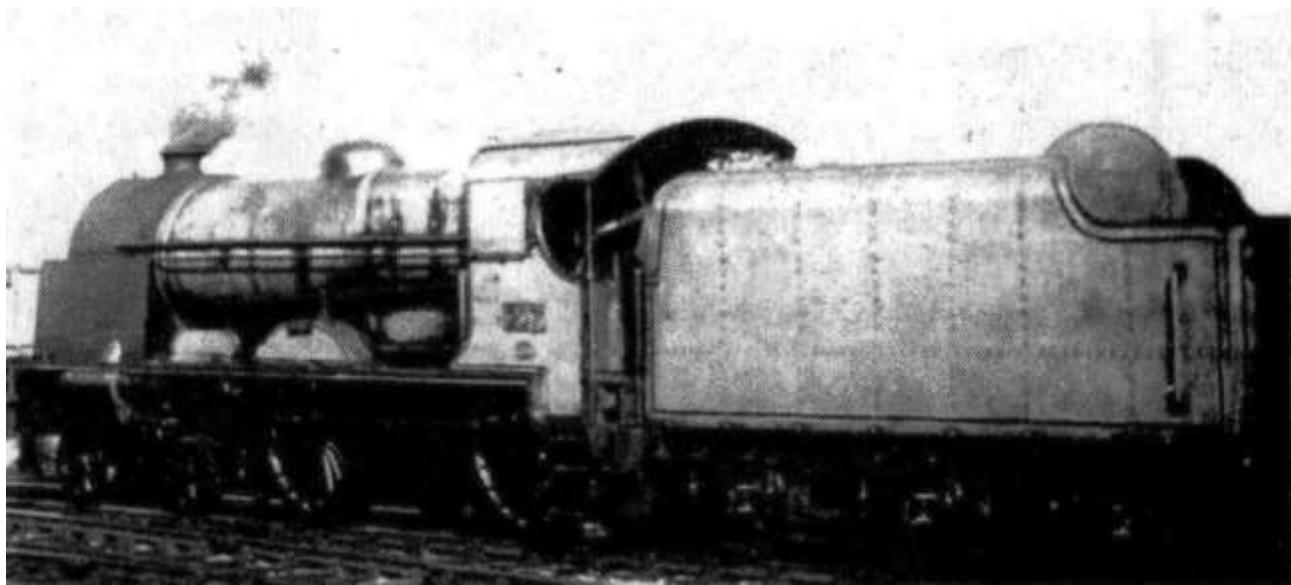
No.171 was normally stationed at either Belfast or Dundalk and does not seem to have been worked with great endeavour as a rule - many a train she worked over the "Derry Road" from Portadown which was an unspectacular performance. Coming from Dundalk to Goraghwood on the 3:15pm down in 1939, however, she maintained 40/42 mph to Adavoyle which was passed in 12¾ minutes, and 78 mph down the Wellington bank found her in Goraghwood in 22¾ minutes, a very good time for the 17½ mile start to stop journey with 7 bogies. The remainder of the journey to Belfast was executed equally briskly. In 1964 she worked a five-coach excursion from Dundalk to Belfast in 69¾ minutes (67¾ net), whilst the diesel "Enterprise" time for the same stretch is 70 minutes, and the railcars are not as heavily bound by some of the speed restrictions.

A sister engine, No.174, in her lifetime reached Portrush, Londonderry (Waterside) and Cork (Glanmire Road). No.171, like her sisters, is a smooth riding, docile and thoroughly likeable engine,

popular with footplatemen, and it is the Society's hope that No.171 will also be far travelled, pleasing many enthusiasts with her crisp, hard exhaust beat. We are deeply indebted to the Ulster Transport Authority and their successors for hiring this engine to us.

TOURS

In September 1965, the Inaugural Railtour made known the shape of things to come. With ex-GNR class UG 0-6-0 No.149 (UTA No.49) at the head of the train, the special ran to Portrush and back to Antrim, where it diverged on to the branch to Knockmore Junction. On arriving at Lisburn, the passengers were greeted with a sight to take the light from one's eyes. There were two engines awaiting us, both shining, the result of many hours of hard work by Adelaide's cleaners and enginemen. The pilot was No.171 and the train engine was the sole surviving class VS three-cylinder simple 4-4-0 express passenger locomotive, No.207 "Boyne". This was her final run before an ignominious end under a scrap merchant's acetylene burners. The two engines took over the train and worked it to Portadown. There they turned at the not long closed engine shed, the last engines to use that turntable, and then hauled the train back to Belfast.

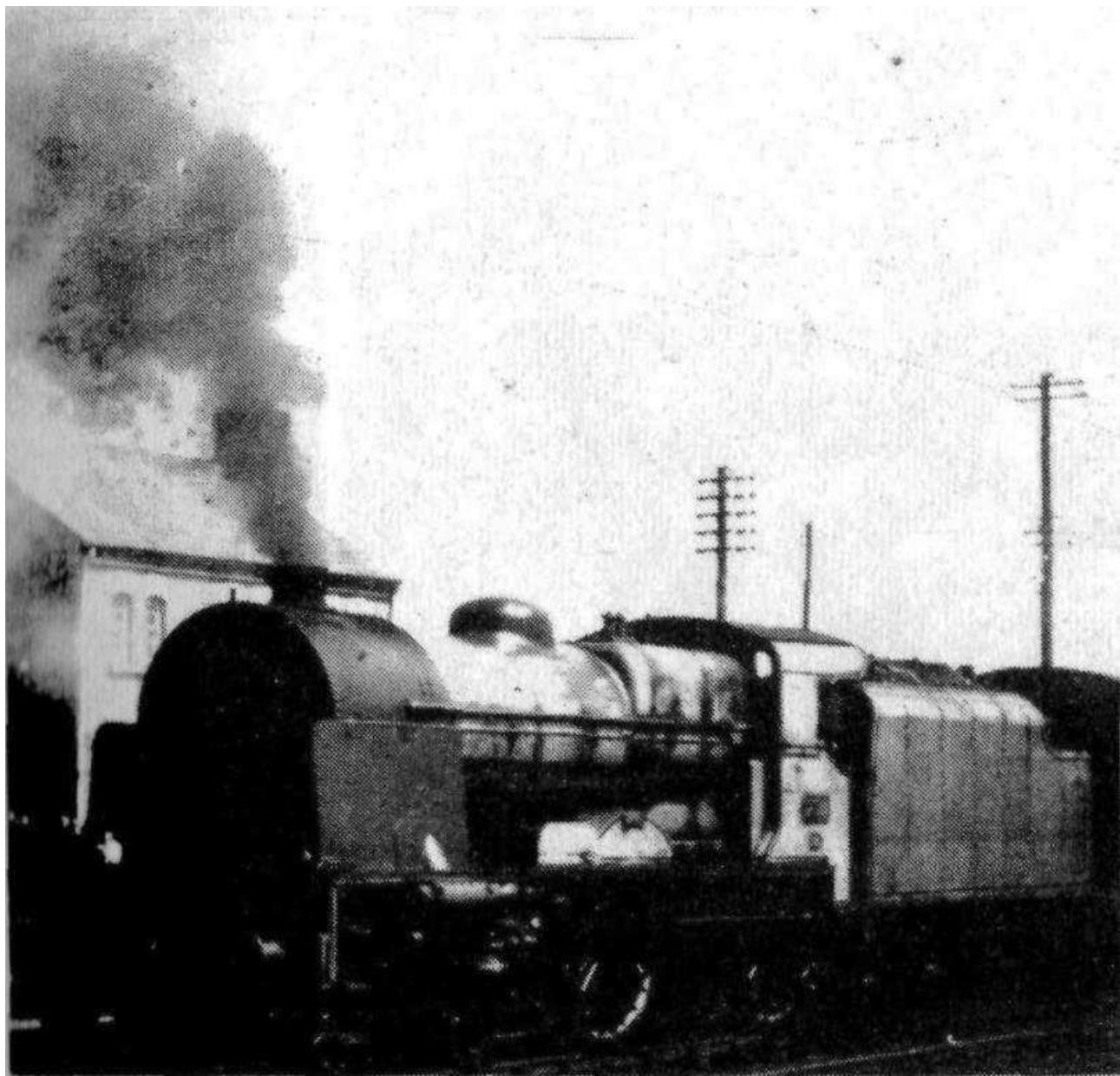


No.207 at Amiens Street on a Belfast Tourist Train. (WSB)

On Saturday 14th May 1966, the Society ran the "Province of Leinster". Again UG No.49 was used, but this time she set off early in the morning and ran light to Dromin Junction, south of Dundalk. Class WT 2-6-4T No.54 worked the six-coach special to Dromin, stopping for water, passengers, and the Customs & Excise at both Portadown and Dundalk. At Dromin the UG worked the train up the 4½ mile branch to Ardee, and then ran back into Drogheda. After turning No.49 worked the special up the goods-only branch to Kingscourt, where again the engine was turned. The branch, nearly 40 miles long, was crossed again and at Drogheda No.54 backed on to the train and whisked it to Belfast. It was this tour which featured the first

"run-past" for photographers, and so successful was it that they have become a permanent feature of the Society's railtours.

The September following saw No.171 out again, this time working a train to Larne Harbour and back. The outing, which was designed to 'fill in' a Saturday afternoon, was one of the finest examples of locomotive performance observed for a long time. It was No.171's last operation before being taken out of service pending an overhaul, which has recently been completed (though not before vandalism delayed the work, as a result of the theft of virtually irreplaceable boiler fittings).



No.207 'wrong-roaded' at Knockmore Junction on a special.

1967 was an auspicious year for the Society, and the first railtour was both an interesting and unique experiment, and the first occasion when No.186 was used.

The Dalriada railtour, named, as all Society railtours have been, to characterise their destination, was an eight-coach load pulled out of York Road by class WT 2-6-4T No.55. (No.4 had been readied for the tour but some last minute difficulty delayed her at the shed. Rather than delay the tour, No.55 was taken off a Sunday School excursion waiting to follow us, and put on our train instead.)



Once a more common sight than it is today, two class WT 2-6-4Ts climb past Bleach Green in February 1965. (NH)

A brisk run to Ballymena ensued, and there we waited while No.186 hooked on as pilot. The Sunday School special arrived, hauled by No.10 with No.53 as pilot. No.53 came off and ran up the headshunt - she had come to work a goods overload to Londonderry - and No.10 went on with her train. No.55 and No.186 restarted and provided a sparkling run to Coleraine, where No.186 came off and the train was divided into two four-bogie rakes. No.55 took one, No.186 took the other, and the two trains worked a shuttle service between Coleraine and Portrush for the rest of the day. Most of the trains stopped at Portstewart, two terminated there, and there were a number of interesting permutations in the working, trains crossing at each of the three stations at some time during the afternoon. In the early evening the trains were re-combined at Coleraine, and the two engines, No.186 piloting, hustled the train back to Ballymena. There No.186 came off, and to the surprise and delight of everyone on the train, No.53 arrived, having rushed back light engine from Londonderry. She attached herself as pilot, an unexpected and, indeed, an unplanned bonus, and the train returned to Belfast at an outstanding pace, maintaining the North Atlantic Express schedule in spite of a check at Drumsough (Cookstown Junction) gates. Observing all speed limits meticulously, but climbing steep banks as if they did not exist, the train arrived in York Road after an impeccable performance.

The September outing, known as the Cuchulainn Railtour after a legendary hero associated with Dundalk, was a chance for No.186 to show her paces once again. With a well-filled five coaches behind

her, she ran from York Road to Antrim, where, after running round, she worked to Lisburn, ran round again and proceeded to Portadown. After a water stop the train continued to Poyntzpass, where it 'wrong-roaded' to allow the Enterprise to pass.

After a stop at Goraghwood to take water again, No.186 ran on to Dundalk, stopping at Bessbrook and Adavoyle, the first train to do so in over thirty years. At Dundalk No.186 ran on to three elderly GS&WR gas-lit coaches, which it worked as a train to Barrack Street goods yard. This was the first steam passenger train over this line since the Greenore section closed, and on returning to Dundalk Junction No.186 transferred to her original five-coach set and returned to York Road, stopping only at Portadown, Lisburn and Antrim.



No.186 at Bessbrook on the Cuchulainn Railtour.

One month later a local tour on a crisp October Saturday took No.186 over part of her route again, albeit in more leisurely fashion, when she worked the Killultagh railtour from York Road to Great Victoria Street. It was also the first passenger train which the SL&NCR 0-6-4T No.27 "Lough Erne" had worked in over seven years.

No.186 piloted No.27 on the six-coach train up to Kingsbog Junction before uncoupling and running on to Antrim to turn and wait. No.27 ran leisurely in her wake, stopping at Doagh on the way, and at Antrim No.186 ran on to the other end of the train, No.27 hooked off to turn, and No.186 took the train down the Antrim branch, stopping at several stations on the way to Lisburn, where, after taking water a "local train" run, stopping at several suburban stations, was made into Great Victoria Street.

The return behind No.186 to Antrim was equally a "local train" type of run, and No.27 rejoined the train as pilot for the return from

Antrim to Kingsbog Junction. Here No.186 again ran ahead, this time with the train, into York Road, and No.27 followed her down light engine to conclude a most enjoyable tour.

At the time of writing (Autumn 1968) the most ambitious programme of tours yet attempted is over half-way through.

On Saturday 23rd March, a rather misty, damp, spring day, No.27 had another chance to show off her abilities when she worked a packed four-coach train to Larne as the first part of the Olderfleet railtour. The run to Larne was brisk, stopping only at Greenisland, to allow two spoil trains to pass, Downshire Park for photographs, and at Magheramorne Loop to cross an ordinary passenger train. After running round and taking water at Larne Harbour the train ran back to Glynn for a "run-past" and then on to Magheramorne Loop to enable the passengers to watch spoil trains loading. Pausing only for a local railcar to pass, No.27 ran on to Ballycarry for a photographic stop and then ran to Whitehead, where she set back into the old excursion station, now the site of the Society's shed. Here the train stopped for water, while the passengers had their lunch and examined the shed and installations.



No.27, Class Z ex SL&NCR 0-6-4T, crossing Duncrue Street with wagons for the Docks. (NH)

The train then ran on to Belfast, with several photographic stops on the way. At York Road Guinness No.3 was waiting with three brake vans and six open wagons, and the passengers quickly transferred to this train which, after setting back to the signal cabin, ran through Whitla Street goods yard, across Duncrue Street and stopped just short of Garmoyle Road on the Belfast Harbour Commissioners' tramway. No.3 ran round her train and headed off up the Northern Road as far as she could go. She ran round again and pulled her train back down to the Pollock Dock. Another run round and back up the Garmoyle Road, unfortunately this time only getting as far as the Milewater Basin.

Another run round and back down through the Pollock Dock and out on to the Albert Quay. A further run round and then back to Whitla Street, before setting back into York Road platform. This was the first occasion No.3 was used by the Society for a railtour, and she acquitted herself nobly over the six mile route.

On a sunny Friday in May, No.186, resplendent with new polished numberplates and with her buffer beam number repainted in gold, properly shaded with black, blue and white, steamed gently south towards Dublin, pulling the NIR Directors' Saloon, in its livery of royal blue with a yellow band round the waist, and a brake coach. She started from York Road a little late, after a night of feverish activity preparing her for the big job ahead.

The Saturday dawned warm but cloudy, with a suggestion of a wet day, and class WT 2-6-4T No.56 came round to Great Victoria Street from York Road to collect her six coaches filled with expectant enthusiasts. Stopping at Portadown and Dundalk for the usual reasons, No.56 made a brisk run to Dublin, arriving sharp to time.



No.186 at Wicklow Goods station on the Slieve Cualann Railtour in May 1968 (NH)

After a break for lunch a brief ceremony ensued, attended by our guests from CIÉ at which No.186 was formally handed over to the Society. Then, with four high capacity Dublin suburban "Park Royal" coaches and the Directors' Saloon, packed with enthusiasts and CIÉ officials, who were invited as guests of the Society, No.186 set off along the Loop Line to Westland Row, and thence along the D&SER main line to Wicklow, stopping at many of the stations en route to enable the passengers to take photographs. Two spectacular "run-pasts" also pleased the many photographers. After arriving at Wicklow Goods, No.186 worked into Wicklow passenger station and then ran round. For operating reasons it was necessary to be piloted back, non-stop to

Bray, by a diesel locomotive. No.186 ran off, turned, rejoined the train, and whisked it smartly into Dublin. At Amiens Street No.56 was waiting on her train and with the same two stops as made on the morning run, she reached Belfast early, after a most classic example of the skill a good engineman can put into the job.

As these words are written the next outing is only a week or two away, in September. The Saint Ciaran railtour to Athlone, however, will be the Society's first two-day tour, the most ambitious yet attempted. In November, No.186 will be heading towards Londonderry on the Columbkille railtour.

The outings described here are an example of what the Society plans for the future. Four railtours a year, worked by the Society's engines, but with, it is hoped, 'Company' engines participating as well. There is a lot of line still left to travel over, and more passengers will be welcomed. If you would like to come on one of our tours, drop a line to the address given elsewhere or, better still, join the Society - you'll get a reduced fare.

WHITEHEAD

During the 1930s, the LMS-NCC put a great deal of effort into developing the Whitehead area for excursion traffic, and amongst their improvements they opened an excursion station on the Larne side of Whitehead. This excursion station consisted of a main platform road over 600 feet long, a bay platform at the back of the main one, much shorter, (about 300 feet), with a run-round loop and spur to a turntable, and between the main platform and the Larne line ran a third road, which, once past the water column, diverged into the two-road shed, which with the water tower is the oldest installation, being built in 1909. The turntable was contemporaneous.

The Society in 1967 spent over £1,000 in reroofing the engine shed and making it secure from vandalism. The road into the shed which for the last few years has been the only existing track on the site, was resleepered for its entire length, and some new rail was put in to replace old, badly corroded lengths. In early 1968 arrangements were made with Courtaulds Ltd of Carrickfergus, who were demolishing their private sidings, to acquire some second-hand sleepers. Courtaulds very generously gave the Society 400 sleepers and these were removed to Whitehead by a small group of members. NIR were also approached and agreed to install a point for the Society, the work to be done by the local gang. This was put in at the Belfast end of the site and members began to relay the main platform road - this work is nearing completion.

Work was also put in hand in 1968 to restore the water supply and a rotary pump was acquired from the old water tower at Dungannon. A member provided an electric motor, a hose which the Society had "on hand" was connected, and the water supply was restored. Another member generously paid for the installation of an electrical supply,

which made life a great deal easier. Apart from pumping water, we could now use power tools for drilling, sanding, etc. There is now good lighting and hand inspection lamps, which provide excellent illumination, are also cleaner and less smelly than "tallow pots".

On arriving at the end of the access road, one walks up it for a couple of hundred yards until a large brown shed appears on the left. This building is the Pavilion, built like a typical NCC goods shed, and was put up to provide shelter for the excursionists in inclement weather. It was also used by Sunday Schools as somewhere to make tea and dole out the bags of buns.

Immediately past the Pavilion, on the left-hand side, a roadway leads one out on to the platform. Towards Belfast can be seen the remains of the bay platform and, beyond it, slightly to the left, just before the road bridge can be seen the turntable well, the table having been removed in 1968 after lying out of use and, indeed, unusable for several years. To the right the platform runs along the back of some one-time railway houses and ends just beyond them. In this direction also can be seen the water column, the water tower and the engine shed itself.

The water column is not typically NCC, since most of these were very ornately fluted, the column casting looking rather like a Grecian pillar. It is fed directly from the water tower, which is very typically NCC, and similar to the one at Ballymena. It must have been very nearly the highest water tower on the system - indeed on any system - and the head of water was over 120 feet above the shed hydrants; an invaluable asset for washing out locomotive boilers. The water was originally pumped up to the tank by a windmill, the base of which can still be seen several yards away on the Larne side of the tower. This wind pump was later replaced with electricity, but the Society has had to install its own pump, the original pump having been removed some years ago. The water for the tower is taken from the concrete sump at track level in front of the shed. This is one of a series of three, the other two being across the Larne line, and these are fed by a natural spring. The water is soft, low in dissolved solids and slightly alkaline - ideal for a boiler and naturally we are using this original supply.

The shed itself is a two-road one, standard NCC, and can hold two locomotives. In recent years the shed was used to store engines which were surplus to traffic requirements, this usually occurring in the winter, and in the late spring an engine would be sent out to tow in the stabled locomotives. As late as the early 1960s, Nos. 96 and 98, both class W 2-6-0s lay there. (No. 96 "Silver Jubilee" was, in fact, towed in to be cannibalised and then scrapped. A noted performer, she was the engine involved in the 1936 locomotive exchange with the Great Northern. No. 98 was also famous. Named "King Edward VIII", she was the only engine in the British Isles to carry the name of the monarch who abdicated.)

At the rear of the shed, the one-time offices have now been combined into mess-room, cloakroom (for changing oily overalls) and a store room. The main shed is well equipped with benches, a heavy vice, power points, inspection pits, tool boxes, etc., and some engine refurbishing work has been carried out here, though of course only minor repairs can be handled. A low brick building on the seaward side of the site near to the shed, is a stable and is private property.



No. 97, class W 2-6-0, on the 5:35pm to Warrenpoint at Balmoral (MP 110) c.1964. (WSB)

Originally the main Larne line ran along the course of the engine siding, before plunging into the cutting which can still be seen, now much overgrown, between the water column and the shed, roughly level with the shed road splitting point.

The only immediate planned extension is the construction of a lean-to shed beside the main shed, to accommodate the Guinness locomotive.

Expenditure on the site is heavily restricted, and extra funds are much needed. Extra hands at work parties would also be welcomed, and information on membership is enclosed in this brochure. Donations should be sent to the same address. A cheap fare, at present 3/6, is available by rail, if you present your membership card, to help you down to Whitehead for a work party. (The evening return excursion fare from Belfast in 1938 was 6^d - no wonder an extra station was needed.)

ROLLING STOCK

The Society has at present an ex-GNR six-wheeled 25 ton brake van, which was built in Belgium, an ex-B&CDR horse box, an ex-GNR bogie bulk grain van, originally used for carrying barrels of Guinness (who presented the vehicle) and an Inglis & Co. Ltd bread container on a con-flat (presented by Inglis). The Society was also presented with an oil car by Shell-Mex & BP Ltd. It is regretted that full details of these vehicles are not available at the time of going to press.

THE FUTURE

One of the most difficult arts of all is clairvoyance, and to predict the situation in ten, five or even two years time is well nigh impossible. The Society naturally hopes to acquire more engines, but it must acquire more funds first. The present policy of main line

tours will be continued for as long as possible, these using the Society's engines, and it is hoped, eventually our own coaches.

The railway situation looks settled up to about 1972 and possibly beyond, but if the worst were to happen, and all lines (in the North at any rate) were to close, the Society would hope to acquire and operate a section of line, in an attempt to preserve for posterity the might and the majesty of the Irish railway system and to show the entralling spectacle of a steam locomotive at work.



No. 67, ex-202 class U, calls at Victoria Park Halt on a Sunday School excursion returning from Bangor. (JR)



GNR class T2 4-4-2T No. 2 in Platform 5 at Great Victoria Street c.1959. (JR)