



August 2019

# NEWS LETTER

## LOCOMOTIVE NO.105

**Update:** The project is to rebuild an LMS "G8AS" boiler which will serve either as a spare for 2-6-4T locomotive No.4 or for the NCC Mogul project.

Copper plate for this project was acquired some years ago and work has concentrated on renewing the firebox. It is progressing as time permits.

The mogul has proved to be the more attractive project rather than a second "jeep". The two types have their obvious strong and weak points - for example, the jeep is less dependent upon turntables, the mogul has greater coal and water capacity and is a much simpler and more basic loco. Both types used the same basic boiler, cylinders and motion, and performance was similar. It was originally assumed that drawings for the Mogul would be largely unavailable, however this has proved not to be the case and all the essential drawings have been located, either in the Society's possession or from other sources. Thanks must be expressed to everyone who has

helped, including the donation of several vital parts ranging from a chimney and part of the valve gear to a brass plate indicating the direction of the reverser.

The Society is fortunate to possess about a quarter of the value of the loco in existing parts - which makes the NCC project more achievable than say a GNR(I) VS class or GSR 400, or any other type now sadly no more. Substantial preparatory work is currently under way, mainly pattern equipment for items like the cylinders and motion brackets. The latter are steel castings.

The frames have been profiled, i.e. cut from plate, and are currently being machined. They are due to be delivered to Whitehead shortly for further marking out for the rest of the drilling.

To date this work is being privately funded, but for meaningful progress a funding appeal will clearly be necessary, and would logically follow the current appeal for completion of the overhaul of GNR(I) S class No.171. The mogul will be numbered 105, the next in the NCC series. These locomotives were named, so it will be

interesting to see what title it will eventually carry. For example, some moguls were named after rivers in the NCC territory like "The Braid", "The Bann", etc., others after notable personages. That and the livery will be food for debate no doubt.

A fuller report may be found in the Members section of the website.

## BELFAST MEETINGS

**Dates:** The subjects are yet to be confirmed, but the dates are: 9<sup>th</sup> October, 13<sup>th</sup> November, 4<sup>th</sup> December, 8<sup>th</sup> January, 12<sup>th</sup> February and 11<sup>th</sup> March.

Put the dates in your diary!

## TRAINS & EVENTS

**Steam & Jazz:** The trains on 28<sup>th</sup> June, 5<sup>th</sup> July and 23<sup>rd</sup> & 30<sup>th</sup> August all sold out in advance.

No.131 operated the 28<sup>th</sup> June train on a very fine, warm, dry night - the band and passengers were all in sparkling form.

On 5<sup>th</sup> July, No.4 was in operation on its first public appearance since getting a complete set of new tyres between January and June this year.

**Steam Saturday:** July and August Saturdays have been busy with train rides at Whitehead.

On 29<sup>th</sup> June the Museum had its first Teddy Bears Picnic and the event proved to be very successful, with around 300 passengers travelling.

The Museum hosted a visit by the European Federation of Museum & Tourist Railways over the weekend of

5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup> July. Nine members of Fedecrail's Central Council held their quarterly meeting at the Museum on Saturday morning, having enjoyed a trip on the Steam & Jazz special on the Friday evening.

On 13<sup>th</sup> July No.4 was once again in steam for the train rides. A series of light duties has been prescribed to properly run in the set of new tyres.

On 20<sup>th</sup> July, No.3BG "Guinness" was back in action. For the duration of the Golf Open, there was a 'find the golf balls' competition at Whitehead.

**Sea Breeze:** On Sunday 7<sup>th</sup> July, the weather was perfect with the sun shining along the east coast. There was a group of potential charter customers, 8 people who were travelling to Dun Laoghaire to sample what type of experience they could expect on board.

Water was taken in Avoca, but it was necessary to stop on the platform at Arklow to build up steam.

The train arrived at Gorey 15 minutes down when the crew declared they were unhappy with the performance of locomotive No.85, and failed it.

The Operations Manager made the decision to terminate in Gorey.

Passengers were informed and told that the departure time would be 17:00. A diesel loco was sought from Dublin Connolly and 074 arrived just before 16:55.

The carriages were shunted onto the Down platform and No.85 was moved into the siding adjacent to the station, Dublin end.

Wexford was notified and all passengers booked on the local trip

from Wexford to Rosslare were notified by email and fares refunded (all done on line).

With 074 in front, the train departed at 17:42, 22 minutes off path and arrived in Dublin Connolly at 19:40, 3 minutes late.

No.85 remained in Gorey until the evening of Friday 12<sup>th</sup> July, when a diesel hauled it back to Connolly.

**The Boyne:** On Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> July, No.85 was running tender-first owing to a problem with the turntable at Connolly. This restricted the outward journey to 40 mph so the schedule was altered by Irish Rail. David Houston travelled ahead to Drogheda to keep the passengers informed of the changes.

The trip to Dundalk and return operated successfully.

Next was the trip to Skerries Loop which was uneventful until about 3 miles south of Drogheda when the train was halted (hot box detector?). The matter was quickly resolved and the train proceeded.

Back at Drogheda, the Dublin-bound passengers were waiting under the shelter of the canopy as the weather had broken.

Lisa Adair and Rebecca Laverty from the Whitehead office travelled on the trains ex-Drogheda, and took the opportunity to speak with various members of the Dublin operations team.

**Portrush Flyer:** The three trains (Sundays 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup> August) were all sold out in advance. They proved to be a mixed bag.

The first day, with No.4, was an excellent day of timekeeping, with some great running.

However, Day 2 (also with No.4) was not so great, with delays on both legs of the journey.

No.131 was substituted for the ailing No.4 for the final train. This was probably the most testing work that this locomotive has done since entering service and its performance, which was excellent with spot on timekeeping, showed that it has the potential to be a very good and strong pulling engine.

**Rockin' Food Festival:** Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> August was another disappointing day on the Dublin South-Eastern!

This train was advertised as Dublin Connolly to Enniscorthy with a local trip to Wexford and Rosslare Strand. Both trains were sold out.

It soon became apparent that the day ahead was not looking good. The Operations Manager began receiving text messages from Irish Rail indicating that there were serious signal problems on the D&SER between Grand Canal Dock and Sandymount. There were no trains passing Pearse Station heading south.

The carriages were held at Inchicore as Connolly had no room for them. Members of the catering staff were on board and had the kitchen up and running.

The signal problem was sorted at around 10:00, and the carriages arrived into Platform 5.

The Down Rosslare railcar left on time and only got as far as Pearse when the signals failed again. This time it

was as far as Dun Laoghaire. It returned to Connolly and passengers were brought to the car park to wait for bus transfers.

Meanwhile, No.85 was on the Wash Road waiting for the signal to travel over and hook up. The signaller directed that it return to the shed as he needed the road to store railcars. Time was running out - if we did not get away immediately, then the loco crew would be out of their permitted hours.

The Operations Manager made the decision to run to Dundalk instead. Announcements were made over the train PA and a number of passengers opted not to travel and registered for refunds.

Incidentally, the line opened at 12:30 - too late for the crew!

Departure for Dundalk was at 12:38, and there was good running until Malahide where we were informed that there was a points failure. The train was held from 13:10 to 13:34 as there was a DART in front and there was a wait for an Up Enterprise to proceed. Signals had to be passed at danger.

We arrived into Drogheda at 14:04, where the engine was watered, and we departed at 14:15, arriving into Dundalk at 14:46. The train was shunted onto the Up platform where the engine was watered from the column.

The train departed Dundalk at 16:00 and arrived back at Dublin Connolly Platform 2 at 17:40.

Fortunately, the weather was fantastic with the sun shining for

most of the day. The views along the coast were magnificent.

**Marble City:** The train to Kilkenny on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup> August booked out very early.

**Steam Dreams:** Charter trains will be running on:

6<sup>th</sup> Sept Dublin - Killarney

7<sup>th</sup> Sept Killarney - Cork & return

8<sup>th</sup> Sept Killarney - Limerick - Athenry - Galway

10<sup>th</sup> Sept Galway - Athlone - Westport - Athlone - Galway

11<sup>th</sup> Sept Galway - Dublin

**European Heritage Open Day:** Train rides and Museum tours will be taking place on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> September,

**Volunteers Day:** Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> September at Whitehead will be your chance to hear more, to ask questions and to see if there might be a way in which you could give us a bit of your free time.

There will be no obligation, however, so don't feel under any pressure.

If you are an existing volunteer, please come along too. This could be an opportunity for you to see if there are other capacities in which you might be able to use your talents.

As part of the day you will be able to explore the Museum and learn more about what is involved in being a guide or a gallery supervisor. We have jobs to suit all aptitudes, abilities and interests. So please come along and hear more.

**Steam Enterprise:** The first Belfast to Dublin trip of the year will be running on 29<sup>th</sup> September.

**Cobh Rambler:** Don't forget to book for this double-headed diesel trip (071 and 201 class) to Cobh and Killarney on 5<sup>th</sup> October.

**Santa Special:** It has been announced that tickets for the Dublin trains are expected to go on sale in late September or early October.

Belfast and Portadown trains will be advised at a later date.

**Appeal:** As an aside, the income from the raffles on board all our steam outings is going to the 171 Completion Appeal, and a big thank you to all who contribute that way.

## LOCOMOTIVES

**No.4:** After the locomotive was steam tested following renewal of tyres and some minor remedial work, it shunted the yard for the first time on Sunday 23<sup>rd</sup> June.

The first public appearance was on the Jazz train of 5<sup>th</sup> July. All involved said the locomotive showed no ill effects from the work!

Some issues with injectors arose on the second Portrush train and these are being attended to at the time of writing.

**No.85:** Following the incident in Gorey in July the locomotive was declared fit to work the Boyne trains two weeks later.

**No.131:** The locomotive operated the first two Steam & Jazz trains, and the third Portrush train.

Following some problems on a Jazz train, newly-made injector cones were tested in late July. The tender was well drained to challenge the

injectors more. Operation seemed generally improved but more parts and trials may follow.

The approval process for operating south of the border is progressing. Fitting of the Irish Rail train radio was completed in late June.

**No.171:** Following the decision, as a priority, to progress the interrupted overhaul, preliminary work has started with dismantling for lifting out of the boiler. The boiler needs completion of work to stays and tubes.

The 171 Completion Appeal has been opened to raise the funds necessary for returning the locomotive to traffic.

**Diesels:** Work is expected to resume shortly on the bodywork of B134.

## WHITEHEAD SITE

**CDR:** The County Donegal Railways cattle van, which has been at Whitehead for a number of years, was dispatched on a lorry back to Donegal on Saturday 29<sup>th</sup> June.

**Shunt:** Complicated shunts at Whitehead are not as frequent as they used to be but a significant one took place on Sunday 21<sup>st</sup> July, to exchange vehicles for maintenance purposes at the HEI's request.

B142 seemed to welcome the now rare-enough opportunity to perform some significant work. (B142's main shunting rival No.3BG has also found things very quiet this year and has spent a great deal of her 100<sup>th</sup> year with her proverbial feet up.)

The shunt involved exchanging first-

class MK2 181 in D-Road Paintshop (which it has occupied since construction around 3 years ago) with standard Mk2 302, the subject of a HLF grant - and until now a resident of B-Road - which will go into the Paintshop for floor timber replacement next door to the woodworking machines. 181 is in the final furlong before re-entering traffic and its removal from the Paintshop to B-Road will permit the outstanding jobs of minor gutterwork, a few good coats of paint\*\* and lining to be completed.

Access to the D-Road Carriage Workshop and Paintshop necessitates shunting through the Carriage Gallery of WRM and subsequently this section of the site was closed to visitors for the day.

To avoid B142 entering the shed, it was decided to use two Gatwick coaches as barrier vehicles to fish out 181 from the far reaches of D-Road and then likewise to deposit 302 in its place.

And there the story would normally end but ...

Gatwicks being locked together in pairs, the natural pair to use would have been the Larne-ward pair, 8948+8946. However, upon B142 buffing onto 8946 a swarm of wasps erupted from gaps around the top of the vestibule doors and swarmed over B142's cab. The driver and second man duly slammed their windows shut. Fortunately the wasps did not think to look lower and the shunter hastily hooked on and hauled the infested pair out to be exchanged

for 8945+8947 which had been parked elsewhere for the duration. For the rest of the shunt a cloud of wasps hung around at roof level where 8946 had been and would descend upon, and mull confusedly around, 8945+8947 when they were shuffled past on barrier vehicle duty.

The shunt was completed well before 15:00 with only one sudden undue prolonged stop which turned out not to be due to any sort of loco failure but the wasps having found a way into the cab prompting the occupants to deploy the defect book, tough old gloves and whatnot until in a position to concentrate again.

Re-parking of 8946 in its normal spot finally dispersed the cloud, and wasp air traffic control had things running smoothly shortly thereafter.

\*\* *The issue with painting in the Paintshop is you can't get far enough away from the vehicle to paint it!!*

## WHITEHEAD RAILWAY MUSEUM

**Sign Of The Times:** Translink have kindly erected signs to the Whitehead Railway Museum at their own Whitehead station.

The new signs direct intending visitors from the Down platform over the crossing and along Chester Avenue. A second sign at the Park and Ride reinforces the message.

The WRM is now well-signed, so no excuse for you not to find it if you haven't already done so!

**Afternoon Tea:** Dates for the autumn are: Saturdays 7<sup>th</sup> September, 19<sup>th</sup> October and 23<sup>rd</sup> November.

These events are now available to book.

## CARRIAGE & WAGON

**Mk2s:** All First 181 has been shunted out of the Workshop's D-Road Paintshop (which it has occupied since construction around 3 years ago), prior to being shunted to B-Road for finishing. It is now in a primer undercoat.

Work completed to date by both HEI and RPSI volunteers has included glazing, steel work, running and brake gear overhaul and interior decor work. It is envisaged that it will return to service in time for the winter season.

A new webpage has been created for the carriage. Better quality photographs of the vehicle would be appreciated - indeed for any of the locomotives or carriages illustrated. Please do send them in!

## GENERAL

**Members Section:** For those with internet access, a number of railtour brochures have been added to the website.

Also a significant number of photo galleries have been added or updated, highlighting, among other themes, railtours of recent years. A gallery on the overhaul of GNR(I) brake van 'Ivan' is a major addition, as is a gallery of No.131's first dates in steam.

**AGM:** The annual general meeting notice is enclosed and members are asked to note the vacancy for Vice-

Chairman.

This is a vital position and we hope that some among the membership with the relevant skills will see fit to step forward.

Nomination forms are available on request.

**Sales News:** New items have been added to the on-line shop:

- 2020 calendar - also available on any train.
- Donegal Railway Diary, Part Two 1956-2018, by Michael Brunch. Paperback, 30 x 21 cm, 13 colour, 190 b&w photos, 1 map, 118 pages, £15.

**No.171 Completion Appeal:** The Treasurer reports: "The appeal has now reached the £20,000 mark. I feel that this is a super start to our project and that is without any major donation / sponsorship for the locomotive. I would thank those members who have supported the appeal so far, and request those who haven't to please consider doing so soon."

See the brochure circulated with the June News-Letter or download from the Appeals/Donate page on the website.

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# Memo From The General Manager

A whole twelve weeks in post and I'm beginning to feel rather immersed in all things RPSI and beyond. There remains a great deal to be done but I am picking through the more pressing things to hopefully show that we continue to concentrate on operating a sustainable and professional heritage railway product. For example, I have developed Corporate Key Performance Indicators to help us track our progress in relation to important financial and visitor numbers; I have developed a Business Risk Register to ensure that we concentrate on the governance issues which have been in abeyance since the Courtney Report and which distil out some of the issues from the Marsh piece; I have convened and chaired the first meeting of the Belfast Management Committee since January (a very positive meeting it was too); I have begun to explore new income streams and have started to include additional events in the period from now until the end of the year. I could go on but I fear you may start to drift off!

Looking back at the previous paragraph you will see that 'I' have been fairly busy but that's not entirely factual. 'We' have. Rebecca is tireless and infectious with her enthusiasm and I am completely distraught (yet more than happy for her when I remember not to be selfish) to have had to accept her resignation. Our saving grace is that Rebecca has kindly offered to remain with us for two days a week as her new post is part time.

In her two days, she will be concentrating on a slightly different role in terms of Education and Outreach, a precondition of one of our funding streams. This will be a new challenge and one which I am sure will bear fruit in terms of positive engagement and younger people being exposed to our heritage railway product. On behalf of you all, I wish Rebecca every success in these two new ventures.

Finally, can I express our gratitude to all volunteers who made Rebecca, Darren and I so welcome, both North and South of the border. We thoroughly enjoyed Steam and Jazz and The Boyne - quite different experiences but equally enjoyable.

Our customers - old and young were also clearly entranced with their experience, many commenting that they would return and spread the word. It's always great to hear these comments first hand.

We had already met most of our Whitehead-based volunteers so it was particularly pertinent to be introduced to the volunteers based in Dublin who made sure we had a solid understanding of operations their end. Thank you and I certainly will be back as part of a paying family - they can't wait.

In signing off, I would, as always, encourage volunteers to come forward to help in whatever way they can. For example, our kitchen in the Tea Room needs a coat of paint, the canopy on the platform needs painted, there are still substantial works to be completed on carriages, and we could really use some volunteer bar staff on our trains.

Please get in touch if you think you could donate a few hours. Or come along to the Volunteers Day at Whitehead on 28<sup>th</sup> September.

After all, your Society needs you!!

*Lisa*

26<sup>th</sup> July