

FIVE FOOT THREE



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

Front Cover: County Donegal Class Five 2-6-4T No.4 "Meenglass" on the 2:45pm goods ex Strabane at Town Bridge Halt, Stranorlar on 12th August 1959. (A. Donaldson)

THE DISEASE

Jack O'Neill

The harsh noise of the alarm clock bell jerked the sleeping figure into wakefulness. He sat up in the bed rubbing his eyes and groaning. Rain drummed against the window, driven by a howling south-east gale. It was 4am on an August morning in 1958. He got out of bed and began to dress, shivering in the cold dawn. He was a medium sized man, slightly built with a mop of unruly hair which he constantly pushed out of his eyes. We'll call him Tom, for reference.

“God,” he thought, as he looked at the clock. “4am, the middle of the [*censored*] night!” At the far side of the room his companion - let's call him Dick - snored lustily, the bed clothes rising and falling with each snore that came from his slightly corpulent figure. Somewhere a cock crowed and that cock began a chorus of crowing which rose above the howl of the wind.

Casting a long, lingering look at the now empty, warm and inviting bed, Tom began the job of waking his companion. “Come on,” he said. “Get up, it's time.” “Go away, get lost, drop dead,” mumbled Dick. At last, after much prodding and pleading, he got his feet on to the floor, groaning and coughing and scratching his abdomen.

He swayed slightly as he dressed and asked, “What did we have to drink last night? It must have been nitro-glycerine, judging by my head.” “The fresh air and the walk will clear it for you,” said Tom. “Let's hurry now or we'll be late.”

Together they descended the stairs of the sleeping house to the kitchen where a table was laid for

breakfast. The kettle was quickly boiled and tea made and a hurried breakfast was eaten by Tom, the other man making do with four aspirins and two cups of tea.

Slightly refreshed, they left the house, buttoning to the neck their very inadequate shower-proof coats and bending their heads into the gale, they set out to walk through the sleeping village of Rosslare Harbour towards their destination, the engine shed.

The village of Rosslare Harbour is built on a hill overlooking the sea and the loco shed is situated at the edge of the beach at the base of the hill. A sloping path with a grade of 1 in 10 leads from village to shed. It takes a strong heart to climb the grade and iron nerve to descend it. Our heroes slithered down to the shed. It was 5:10am.

Inside the shed stood 0-6-0 No.351, GSWR E Class, on one of the two roads and on the far road a fireman, looking like Aladdin with his wonderful lamp, was oiling Woolwich 2-6-0 No.396. With a cheery grin he told them, "There's a drop of tea in the mess room if you care about it."

"That was a great night," he added. "Ye were in right form - you sang some lovely songs," he said, pointing the oil feeder at Dick.

Both men made their way to the mess room, Dick muttering, "What right has he got to be so cheerful? he should feel as badly as I do, he drank more than I did. It's most unfair." The driver of 396 was seated in solitary splendour at the table of the mess room wiring into a large steak smothered with onions and drinking from a big steaming mug of tea.

"Hello lads," he greeted, "a dirty morning, but it'll clear, the wind is from a good point." he added knowingly. "Get a cup of that tea into you and warm yourself," he said pushing the teapot across the table to the two pilgrims. "I'll add something to it to banish the cold," said he, taking a small bottle of Whiskey from his pocket and pouring a generous measure into the two cups.

Gratefully they accepted the tea and a slice of bread, the walk in the wind coupled with the aspirins had improved the general state of Dick's health and he was now feeling hungry but the steak and onions at 5:10am was a little too much for his very cultured, orange juice and cornflakes stomach and he politely declined to "have a bit of steak and onion with your bread."

Just then the fireman came into the mess room wiping his hands with a piece of cotton waste and announcing, "She's ready now, mate" pouring himself out a cup of tea and biting into a sandwich which looked like a bull between two bread-vans.

The driver, a man in his late fifties, consulted an ancient pocket watch with a steam loco on the face and said, "It's 5:20, we'll have to leave the shed in fifteen minutes." Turning to his two guests he asked, "Are you both coming on the footplate all the way?" adding, "You are welcome if you are and I'll give you a good run as this is the last steam run on the Rosslare Express." The last was said sadly and one could sense his regret at the passing of an era. Continuing before they had time to reply, and taking for granted that the answer to his question was in the affirmative, "It's grand to meet people like you. I always thought that only footplatemen were mad but you're mad too to turn out on a bad morning at five o'clock to travel on a Woolwich engine that would break your legs."

He continued to expand on this theory of the insanity of all loco men and their contemporaries, the railway enthusiasts, with particular reference to the enthusiast who climbs on to signals, runs round goods yards clicking his camera(s) like mad and giving palpitations of the heart to the drivers of the shunting engines in the various yards. He asked if these people ever have film in their cameras, adding if they had that he must have been photographed as often as Gary Cooper, yet he had never seen a print.

He was fascinated when told of the objects of the various railway societies and promised to point out all interesting places and things on the trip, and with that promise he announced it "was time we weren't here", so they climbed up on the very warm and gleaming footplate which smelled of hot oil,

smoke and steam, that indescribable odour that identified a railway station for well over 100 years.

They left the shed, stopping at Ballygeary signal cabin to tell the signalman that the loco was 'fitted' and staffs would be exchanged mechanically. Out of the shelter of the hill, the full force of the gale hit them and as they backed across the pier, they were drenched with spray from the storm tossed seas.

Jumping down before the buffers had touched, the fireman quickly hooked up and they formed their brake of 21 inches of vacuum on the six bogie train. The pier was a hive of activity, passengers, some sick, thankfully leaving the heaving boat and boarding the train, parcels were being quickly loaded into the two vans in rear and into the van next to the engine. The boat had been fifteen minutes late docking due to the storm which had now begun to abate and the sun was making a gallant effort to penetrate the clouds which were breaking up.

On the footplate, the fireman was setting his lubricator to feed at the required speed and the driver was oiling the reversing lever and cleaning up his side of the footplate with patches of cotton waste. Our two heroes meanwhile had gone down the pier to inspect the coaching stock on the train and the end of the pier. Dick dropped into the refreshment rooms and, taking the sound advice of the driver, "got a hair of the dog that bit him."

They pulled out of Rosslare Harbour at 6:27am, 27 minutes late and the loco danced her way across the pier as she fought for adhesion on the salt encrusted rails. The driver (whom we'll call Jim) took her easy, opening and shutting the regulator, finally steadyng her by leaving it open and applying the steam loco brake frequently to heat the wheels and so dry them giving the sand a chance to do its work. The fireman closed his fire with the picker and took the staff by hand at Ballygeary. This was necessary as the exchanger is not efficient if speed is below 30 mph and a speed restriction of 15 mph is in force across the pier to the cabin.

Kilrane was passed with half a glass of water and the pressure on the steam gauge gradually moving to 200 lbs. 396 began to gather speed and Jim eased his lever up towards middle but not touching his regulator which was three-quarters open. Our two friends had stop watches out and were busy trying to write in notebooks while the footplate swayed and rocked under their feet.

Reaching 200 lbs on the gauge, the fireman (we will call him Paddy) began to fire the loco in easy swinging strokes, keeping his feet in the same position and swinging only the top of his body from the waist. His movements were poetic, resembling a ballet dancer doing a difficult movement. He put on the exhaust injector, that difficult piece of mechanism which if not watched constantly watered the permanent way.

The sun burst suddenly from the clouds as they approached Rosslare Strand and the staff was placed in the exchanger. Steam was shut off for the 40 mph through the Strand and around the curve leading to the Waterford line. The staff exchanged, the curve safely negotiated, Jim put his shoulder under the butterfly regulator and opened it wide, quickly cutting off. 396 responded like a thoroughbred and she fairly flew along, Paddy feeding the hungry firebox, watching the water, checking his luber and watching the oil level in the brass boxes on the footplate that oiled the driving boxes. He seemed to have as many arms as an octopus.

396 skipped along, the roar from her exhaust being gradually softened by Jim's manipulation of the cut-off. Both our heroes began to write furiously, mumbling to themselves and watching their stop watches. Killinick was passed with a wide open regulator and Jim lengthened his cut-off for the heavy bank out of that station. The sun now shone brilliantly and the moisture on the grass sparkled like jewels. Dust swirled around the footplate and it had become very warm indeed. Tom and Dick removed their shower proofs and Paddy wet the coal with the injector hose. Jim filled his pipe, never taking his eyes from the road and soon the smell of strong tobacco mingled with that of coal, oil and steam.

As they sped along, Jim, true to his word, began to point out places of interest. He was a fund of knowledge and he freely imparted it shouting above the noises of the loco. With the whistle shrieking, Mayglass gates were passed and ahead loomed Bridgetown distant showing clear but Jim shut off steam, explaining, "It's thirty through this station and I have a very healthy respect for speed restrictions."

With perfect judgement Bridgetown was negotiated at exactly thirty and the assault began of the mile at 1 in 83 out of the station. The bank was breasted at full regulator and 1½ turns on the wheel. At the top, the regulator was eased to the half open position and the wheel was brought back as the loco gathered speed on "this washboard section" to use Jim's description and a very apt one it was; this stretch of line rises and falls like the waves of the sea and twists and turns like a corkscrew though a good speed can be maintained throughout the section.

Nearing Duncormick, Jim opened the regulator full whilst Paddy shovelled rhythmically, two front, two sides, three back, two front, four back and so on, keeping the boiler pressure at 180 to 200 and the water at ¾ glass level. The two men worked as one; it was perfect teamwork. They roared through the station, whistle shrieking, a cloud of dust stirred up by the vacuum of speed.

"You're doing 74.3 mph," said Tom, stop watch in hand as he stood behind Jim on the heaving footplate. "Don't be telling me things like that!" declared Jim in mock severity, "You'll upset me and worry me. I'm only allowed to do 60!". He shut off steam and 396 began the four and a half mile fall to Wellingtonbridge which Jim told them was the invasion port for the Normans, adding "and for all the other thieves and robbers that followed them."

Wellingtonbridge station marks the beginning of the major bank of this line, a sharply curving Taylorstown bank two miles long starting at 1 in 71/119 and graveyard of many a heavy train on a bad night. The bank possesses one of the finest viaducts in Ireland, a red brick structure which was damaged in the Civil War of 1922-23 and closed the line for a year, trains going via the DSER (New Ross line) for the period of damage.

The top of the bank was reached at a funeral pace of 27.6 mph despite Jim's efforts to do better and pressure going through Ballycullane was down to 160 lbs, being quickly raised to 200 down Campile bank and 396 had pulled up six of the lost minutes passing over the Barrow Bridge at the regulation 40 mph. This is the longest bridge in all Ireland and spans the meeting place of the three rivers, the Suir, Nore and Barrow. It's 2,131 ft long and at the Waterford end is the only tunnel on the line.

Leaving the tunnel, the line follows the curving course of the lordly river Suir for the six miles to Waterford. The banks of the river are thickly wooded and on this August morning, sunbeams danced along the tree-reflecting water as 396 made her last run on a line her class had dominated for well over thirty years.

The staff was handed up at the first of Waterford's four cabins, Abbey Junction and with a protesting squeal of flanges against the curving rails, along the longest platform (1,210 ft) in Ireland, Jim brought 396 to a dead stop exactly opposite the water column. Paddy was already on the tender ready to receive the bag and two agile young cleaners had jumped on to the footplate and were now busy shovelling coal into the almost empty bunker. Jim carried out a rapid professional examination of his bearings and springs, watched by a curious group of people who had been at the column when the train arrived. 396's two passengers were now in animated conversation with this group and they called Jim to introduce him; he shook his oily hand all round the ill-assorted group who were all members of railway societies.

Same were tall, others short, they were bearded and bald, hairy and clean shaven, thin and fat, and all carried cameras. One wore two slung across his body like the bandoliers of a Mexican bandit and the black beret he wore added to this impression. Most of them (they numbered ten) wore bush jackets and

jeans.

Paddy now joined the group and he and Jim positioned themselves at the side of the loco to have the battery of cameras levelled at them and with much clicking they were photographed by all twelve. The 'Mexican Bandit', however, was not quite satisfied; he took from his pocket a telescopic tripod and sighted his camera on it, setting a timing device and running forward to join Jim and Paddy to have himself photographed on this solemn occasion.

The group now joined the train, Tom entraining with them and his place on the footplate being taken by a tall, gangling, athletic man who wore oily overalls and cap and carried of all things, the traditional loco man's food basket and a black can! Paddy and Jim stared at him in fascination; he looked like a 1920 version of a footplate man.

He greeted them by saying, "I'll fire her to Dungarvan if you have no objection, and don't worry - I'm not an amateur, I've often worked these engines."



***D12 Class 4-4-0 No.307 on the 7:30am Cork to Rosslare special at Cappagh on 10th August 1957.
(A. Donaldson)***

They readily agreed and boarded the loco as the guard waved his green flag and blew the whistle. "The ball is in," said Jim, opening the regulator and moving up through the maze of crossovers which is Waterford station and goods yard. They passed J Class 187 shunting in the yard, steam pouring out of every joint, 'A' Class diesels throbbed against trains and a roofless shed housed four pathetic looking

steam locos, dirty and run down. From the windows of the train, cameras were busy photographing this twilight of steam. The train was nine minutes late.

The Kilmeadan staff was taken at the West Cabin, the fourth of Waterford's cabins and 396 began to climb towards the Suir bridge round the 20 mph curve, the new passenger (let's call him Harry) firing 396 in a most professional way watched by Jim and Paddy. "That's not your first time on the shovel," said Paddy as Harry put on the injector. He acknowledged the compliment by opening the food basket and removing large bottles of Guinness which he distributed to Jim, Paddy and Dick. They toasted him and drank. He was definitely one of the Boys.

The line follows the river from Waterford to within half a mile of Kilmeadan, winding to and fro on a narrow land shelf below the heavily wooded high banks of Mount Congrave Estate. The banks were a riot of colour from the blooming rhododendrons and it could be enjoyed, for a 30 mph restriction exists over 3½ miles of this stretch.

At the Kilmeadan distant signal, Jim opened 396 full and with a little less than two turns on the wheel raced for the 1 in 60 bank which begins at the station. This is a nightmare section, Kilmeadan to Kilmac; the line rises at an almost continuous climb for all but 2½ miles of the section which is nine miles long. Twenty four minutes was allowed to run the section and as well as the heavy bank, the train crew have five sets of gates to contend with, all of them carefully hidden around corners amid dense hedgerows which are a feature of the line, surely the most scenic in Ireland. The line runs through mountain country for most of its 78 miles to Mallow but rarely did the firemen see anything except the firebox; he had to work hard on this line. Harry was now working hard, casting anxious eyes on the steam and water gauges, watched by an admiring Paddy and an envious Dick, who many times seemed on the verge of asking if he too could have a go.

Carroll's Cross was passed on a wide open regulator, the steam gauge showing 175 lbs and the water uncomfortably low in the glass.

"Don't worry Harry," said Jim, noticing how the anxious Harry was watching the water level. "That bridge ahead is the bridge of hope - we shut off there and there's a good long run to Kilmac," he said.

The bridge seemed a long way off but was eventually reached at 160 pounds with fast disappearing water. Over the top of the bank, a few shovels by Harry to fill the holes in the firebed and 396 returned to good health with her pressure steadily mounting as she took a long drink from her tender, running down the bank unchecked and through the lovely village of Kilmachthomas, nestling at the foot of the majestic Comeragh Mountains.

No one told Jim his speed through Kilmac and perhaps it's as well. A battery of cameras on the train photographed 396 taking the curve out of the station as she raced for next short but sharp climb.

The sweat of honest toil ran off Harry and he glowed from the praises of Jim and Paddy who told him he was "as good a man as ever went through a pair of gates" and other such compliments.

There were eighty-one sets of gates between Waterford and Mallow, more than one per mile and this section, Kilmac-Durrow-Dungarvan had ten of these - no line for amateurs. There are two major banks in the section, both heavy, sharp and curving, while the rest of the section rises and falls to Durrow, the grade every few hundred yards varying at 1 in 80 to 1 in 66, up and down like a ploughed field. The scenery is magnificent and on this August day the cameras were busy.

Durrow was passed two minutes under the running time and they plunged into the narrow wet tunnel at the Dungarvan end of that station emerging on high ground over Dungarvan Bay which sparkled in the sunshine some 200 feet below.

40 mph around Ballyvoyle Viaduct and Knock curve and then the race down to Dungarvan, 396 blowing off steam, her boiler full and a contented Harry sharing his tobacco pouch with Jim.

Nearing Dungarvan the scenery changes from rugged mountain land, heavily wooded, to soft rolling hills. Here is some of the richest agricultural land in the South; the earliest potatoes of the year are grown here and the area is prosperous. 396 galloped through this verdant land, the farmers in the fields waving to her crew and guests and, with perfect judgement, Jim stopped her tender at the water column.

As the train stopped, the doors of the coach nearest the engine opened and the enthusiasts ran for vantage points from which to photograph. They looked like contestants for the Olympics and a bewildered station staff wondered what was happening.

Three minutes was allowed at Dungarvan and it was never sufficient. At least six were required to load and unload. Four minutes had been gained from Waterford, leaving arrival at Dungarvan five minutes late. Paddy placed the bag in the tank whilst Dick filled the bunker and Jim oiled the bearings, feeling each one for signs of heat. Harry was in earnest conversation with one of the enthusiasts and the 'Mexican Bandit' was placing his camera in various positions and racing to include himself in the picture. The signal cabin and signals were festooned with bodies of all shapes and sizes, but the guard's whistle brought them all scurrying like scared rabbits to the train. 396 was off again, assaulting the short heavy grade out of the station, this time Dick firing and looking very happy while Harry relaxed with his pipe.



**K1a Class 2-6-0 No.395 on 7:15am stopping Rosslare-Cork train at Dungarvan on 30th August 1955.
(A. Donaldson)**

Reaching the top of the half mile grade, Jim cut off, softening the blast on the fire and as 396 gathered speed on this relatively easy section to Cappoquin, he eased the regulator to first valve. Dick fired to Paddy's directions and soon he was perspiring freely.

“You’ll feel better,” Paddy consoled him, “when you sweat last night’s porter out of your system.” Dick replied with a series of grunts almost losing his balance as he made the fatal mistake of moving his feet when swinging the shovel on one of the heavy sharp curves of this section, which was also plentifully supplied with gate crossings.

Cappoquin station was situated in a hole with a heavy up grade at each end and this could be said for almost all the stations with the exception of Fermoy. Cappoquin was one of the loveliest stations in Ireland and was rightly famous for its annual floral display for which it won many awards. Here 396 was photographed amid a background of dahlias, stocks, roses, gladioli and many other more exotic plants during the three minute stop.

The line begins an abrupt climb out of the station and follows the River Blackwater - rightly called the ‘Irish Rhine’. The climb continues to a height of nearly a hundred feet above the river and again it’s mountain country, this time the Knockmealdown mountains. Below the railway reaching to the river banks soft fruit is grown (apples and blackcurrants) all the way from Cappoquin to Fermoy, a distance of over ten miles and this soft fruit was one of the principal freights of the area. It’s a heavy section with a continuous pull to half a mile from Lismore after which the line is level to the station.

Lismore is an ancient ecclesiastical capital of the Decies and here the group were joined by two more enthusiasts, a Rev. Fr. and a Rev. Mr., both equipped with cameras and arguing about the year that Woolwich locos first appeared on the Rosslare Express. They appealed to Jim to arbitrate. He decided they were both wrong and with a smile advised them to stick to theology, so having photographed 396 they joined the train and 396, on a full regulator, climbed out of Lismore.

The line levels at the Down distant signal and the grade is easy through Tallow Road station, dropping thereafter in a series of sharp curves to Ballyduff where a stop was again made, five minutes having been gained from Dungarvan.

Three counties meet at Ballyduff and the inhabitants live in County Waterford, go to school in County Cork and worship in County Tipperary. It was always a poor station for goods and passenger traffic, but the Express always stopped there, and loco crews often wondered why.

The line to Fermoy is a series of up and down grades with sharp curves and to run well, the loco must be worked to her fullest capacity. Dick sweated and shovelled, encouraged by Paddy while Jim and Harry chatted. Everybody was happy and the sun shone brilliantly on the apple-laden trees extending to the river bank, and so Fermoy is reached, 396 stopping exactly opposite preserved loco 90. There she sat in her green livery in solitary state below the signal cabin in what was once the Mitchelstown bay. The cameras clicked with abandon.

In the goods yard J Class loco 111 shunted the Down Waterford goods which had left Mallow at 7am while her driver insultingly shouted at Jim, “What kept you on the road? Do you need assistance?” The presence of the two reverend gentlemen prevented Jim from giving a suitable reply. However, he did attempt to assassinate 111’s driver with looks of anger, He was four minutes late.

The enginemen watched the enthusiasts play havoc with the nerves of Fermoy’s staff as they placed themselves in impossible positions and took photographs. They were having a field day, for on the goods was a MGWR butter wagon, a CBSCR coal truck and a DSER coach, now a sleeping van. Outside of Dublin, such a find is rare and they savoured their good fortune to the full.

Tom had now returned to the footplate and was busy filling the bunker while Harry was gathering up his belongings preparing to return to Waterford on the goods, explaining, “I’ve always wanted a trip on old Nelson.”

With much handshaking and a promise to meet Jim and Paddy again, preferably on steam, he took his departure, a strange likeable man who talked the footplateman’s language and looked so much at home

shovelling coal into the hungry firebox of 396.

Finally the guard gave the ‘Right Away’, the photographers hastily converged on the train and Jim, with a tug at the regulator, moved out of Fermoy to derisive whistles from 111.

The line from Fermoy to Mallow beggars description in its rises, falls, twists and turns and is crammed with gate crossings and speed restrictions in the most awkward places. Jim declared that the man that built it must have been an alcoholic and in a perpetual state of intoxication. Nonetheless, he did manage to achieve some wonderful bursts of speed and thereby showed his intimate knowledge of the road. Paddy had now returned to his firing and Tom and Dick to their stop watches and notebooks. They arrived in Mallow dead on time and here another group of enthusiasts joined the train for a last nostalgic run behind steam on the Rosslare Express.

Some approached Jim for a run on the footplate but he explained that only those that had the coveted footplate pass could travel that way and as he already had two guests who had “worked their passage” he couldn’t take any more even if they had passes. They accepted his ruling and returned to the business of recording the sights to be seen at Mallow on that August morning.

An E Class 0-6-0, No.263, shunted in the yard and a 4-4-0 No.306 sat cold and forlorn in the ‘Fermoy bay’. An A Class diesel throbbed against her train of wagons waiting for a signal to start her on the long haul to Dublin. 396 blew off steam as her tank filled and Paddy oiled her outside motion bearings. Two of the Mallow enthusiasts had climbed on to the tender and were filling the bunker. All the while the cameras continued to click.

Thirty-two minutes were allowed for the run from Mallow to Cork and every second of it was necessary as there is almost 7½ miles of steady pull from the Blackwater Viaduct to within two miles of Rathduff. The work at the station completed, the guard waved his flag and blew the whistle. Jim climbed up to find Dick missing. He spotted him running up the platform with Paddy’s can in one hand and a parcel of sandwiches in the other and puffing and blowing, he mounted the footplate as Jim opened his regulator.

“You’re going to have a running buffet,” he greeted Dick, pointing to the can. He nodded in assent and cups were produced, Paddy putting a sandwich between his teeth and firing the loco.

Tom and Dick found it impossible to “dine and run” standing, so on Jim’s suggestion they sat on the tender plate and drank coal dust flavoured tea and munched similarly flavoured sandwiches. They watched amazed at Paddy’s antics and method of dining. A swallow from the cup which was placed on the tallow shelf above the firebox, a bite of a sandwich and six shovels of coal to the firebox and so on. It was truly a running buffet.

Mourne Abbey was passed three minutes down and Jim declared, “I’ll pull it up on the Blarney curve, so hold on to all you have.” They flashed through Rathduff and galloped to Blarney taking the famous curve at a speed well up in the seventies. Tom and Dick were afraid to tell Jim his speed and Paddy sat on his seat enjoying a cooling breeze He had decided passing Rathduff that he had sufficient fire to take him to Cork and had stopped firing 396.

All signals green at Rathpeacon and Kilbarry, they plunged into the tunnel at 15 mph and 396 clattered and banged her way for the last time into Glanmire Road station one minute ahead of time.

Grimy, black, happy and leg weary, Tom and Dick got down and shook hands with a contented Jim and Paddy. The rest of the enthusiasts came up to congratulate Jim and Paddy on a fine run. Cameras were levelled for a final photograph and the ‘Mexican Bandit’ this time placed his camera on the platform, borrowed Paddy’s cap and photographed himself in the cab of 396. Thus he was recorded for posterity.

They departed, some to Dublin, others to the different parts of Ireland and England where they lived. They had done what they had set out to do, record the last steam run of the Rosslare Express on film

and in notebooks and they were content but sad. Never again would they thrill to the sound of beating pistons and shrilling whistle, the sound of escaping steam as the boiler pressure passed 200 pounds, the sight of the firebox glow knifing the winter darkness or the little J15 assisting the Woolwich giants from Cork to Blarney. This was the end, it was all going like the steam exhausting into the atmosphere. It was vanishing with regret but well recorded for all time by this and many other dedicated groups of people.

Having shunted the train and placed 396 in the shed, Jim and Paddy met Tom and Dick as arranged, and over creamy pints amid the babble of enginemens they saw the sun set on their day.

Jim said, "Not alone are you people mad like us, you have the same disease as we have - railwayitis and the bloody thing seems contagious if you and the rest that travelled today are any indication."

The footplateman is flattered that people outside 'the Brotherhood' are interested in the profession and to these amateurs, anywhere this article is read, I dedicate it.

RAILTOUR REPORTS

J.A. Cassells

RPSI tours always incorporate unusual features, and usually generate a few as they go along - and the Slieve Gullion and Coolnamona tours were no exceptions. There was, for example, railway significance even in the movement of the tour engine from Whitehead into Belfast, since the evening traveller on the Larne line on Friday 16th April could have seen two 101's coupled together - almost the newest product and the oldest survivor of Irish rail steam motive power separated by ninety-one years. The most important 101 was, of course, the Society's J15 No.186 and hauling it was one of the three 1,350 hp diesels delivered to NIR last year, No.101 "Eagle".

The railtour was two separate entities, with connections arranged so that participants could travel on either or both quite conveniently. On Saturday 17th April No.186 covered the length of the GNR(I) main line, including the Ardee and Drogheda Cement branches and on Sunday 18th April the route lay over the ex-GSWR main line as far as Port Laoighise, including the race-course siding at the Curragh, and Bord na Móna's peat processing factory at Coolnamona.

The Slieve Gullion began from Belfast (Great Victoria Street) with departure hard on the heels of the 08:00 Enterprise; and before the first (scheduled) stop at Portadown, there was the opportunity to see the new marshalling yard being laid on the site of Adelaide loco shed, and to sample some lively running. Even with a three-bogie load, it would have been rare enough latterly, for a GNR goods engine to stop in Lisburn in 13½ minutes after a max of 48, and even less likely that on restart it should be past Knockmore Junction in dead on three minutes, doing 50½.

The stop at the new Portadown station gave the tour train the distinction of being the first steam passenger train to stop there.

With permanent way work in progress over the notorious Cusher bridge, we ran wrong line from Portadown to Poyntzpass where the engine achieved another notable 'first' - this time for solving the water problem by means of a street hydrant, and the kind co-operation of Newry No.2 Rural District Council is gratefully acknowledged.

While the engine watered, the participants were able to choose either of two buses, which enabled photography of the train on either side of the Bessbrook Viaduct, as well as Bessbrook station and the Cloghoge Chapel near the summit of the bank. Everyone rejoined the train at Adavoyle for the run into Dundalk, where we made the first long stop of the day.

Because of good time-keeping, an extra stop at Castlebellingham was slipped in, and an extra bonus came with the revised arrangements for entry to the Ardee line. The original plan had been to propel on to the branch at Dromin but CIÉ generously suggested that we run on to Dunleer, where the engine ran

round the train and doubled back to Dromin Junction. Although closed to passengers for more than thirty years, the Ardee line still has its goods traffic, and was little changed since the Society's previous visit in 1966 behind GNR Class UG No.149.

Photographically, the next item of interest was Drogheda. There the imposing Boyne Viaduct just outside the station has a compulsive attraction for tour organisers, and a second bus was available to take participants out to get a shot of No.186 on it. The train ran right into the Cement Factory (an addition to what had been planned) while the bus made directly for an interesting vantage point along the branch; and after the passage of the train, most people made their way direct to the factory to see No.186 shunting her train, enveloped in cement dust, before the return to Drogheda up a stiff, curving bank which she negotiated confidently.

The last photographic stop of the day was at Malahide, where the whole train set back on to the bridge to be photographed, and despite a heavy permanent way check at Howth Junction, we arrived in Dublin dead on time at 4:35.



B1a Class 4-6-0 No.802 "Táilte" on first post-war Sunday train from Cork at Straffan on 25th July 1948. (R.N. Clements)

In recent years the Society has begun to blaze a trail back into diesel country beyond Dublin, and Sunday was to take the tour to two new places - the Curragh and Coolnamona. No.186 had an extra bogie for the second day and she hammered up the 1 in 84 to Inchicore with great gusto, never falling below 20 here, and getting away to 24 up the 1 in 138 before Clondalkin. Thereafter all that was necessary was to keep to schedule and avoid delay to the very heavy Sunday special traffic with which we shared the main line, and well up to time we were propelling into the Race Course platforms. While a procession of special trains passed by, No.186 crept quietly back to the main line, and many took the chance to record her coming over Stand House Crossing on the way.

The highlight of the day was, of course, to be Coolnamona, Bord na Móna's peat factory at the terminus of a short branch from Port Laoighise which was actually relaid on the trackbed of the Kilkenny line. Three possibilities were open here - to go by bus to the ISPS museum at Stradbally and see an ex-BnM loco in steam; to take a trip on Bord na Móna's extensive bog railway behind one of their diesel locomotives, or to photograph No.186 taking water from a standpipe laid on by BnM, and then heading back to turn at Conniberry Junction stopping on the way to open and shut two sets of crossing gates. Owing to further good timekeeping, it was possible to leave Coolnamona a few minutes early on the return journey, and include an extra stop at Portarlington, where extensive trackwork was in progress and the platforms were being raised.

The final photographic stop was at Monasterevan, where No.186 posed the train between the station and the viaduct and then drew forward into the station. The last piece of running provided possibly most enjoyment for timers, for despite two days' hard work, No.186 skipped home in fine style, and did the max of the tour - 54½ on the easy road through Straffan.

The tours had been a triumph for the Society, and perhaps most of all for the gallant and unflagging No.186, and those who worked so long and so hard under the leadership of Peter Scott and Irwin Pryce to prepare the engine for the outing.

Certainly CIÉ could not fail to have been impressed by an early arrival in Dublin to finish it all off.

Whether you enjoyed these tours, or are gnashing your teeth for having missed them, DON'T miss our next two exciting and economical tours - on Saturday 11th September from Dublin to Arklow with runpasts, etc., at Greystones (Bray Head in background), Rathdrum Viaduct and Avondale with a visit to Wicklow Goods station and a stop at Shelton Abbey followed, on return to Dublin, by an evening tour of North Wall lines, including both Liffey Branches.

On Sunday 12th September, Dublin to Belfast via Howth and Dundalk (Barrack Street). Lineside buses will provide new shots in the Dundalk-Goraghwood section.

It is better for yourself - AND the Society - if you travel on both but it IS possible to return to Belfast after the Arklow Tour on Saturday. The Dublin-Belfast tour on Sunday awaits arrival of the 09:30 at Dublin and connects at Portadown (Craigavon West) into the 18:30 Belfast-Dublin train. If there is sufficient demand, a bus connection will be provided from Dundalk into the 18:00 ex Drogheda, which connects with the Dun Laoghaire (Holyhead) Boat Train.

THE MODERN LOCO MAN

[Spare Link](#)

Whenever I find myself with time on my hands I often browse through my collection of railway books and magazines and invariably a copy of Five Foot Three comes to hand. Whilst thumbing issue No.10, I came across an article by Loco Driver Jack O'Neill recalling the glorious days of steam and the various stages through which a recruit to the footplate had to pass. A lad started at 14 or 16 years of age as an engine cleaner and progressed to firing and eventually driving.

But what of the present day recruit? How does CIÉ fill its quota of engine drivers in this day of diesels? Driver O'Neill described how steam drivers were given three days on an A Class loco to familiarise themselves with the basic layout of diesel engine, main generator, auxiliary generator, compressor, exhauster, etc. Three days were spent on a mock up in Inchicore, and this was followed by a short period actually travelling on an engine accompanied by a loco inspector.

This system worked very well with men who knew the feel of a vacuum brake, the roads over which they were working and the mass of rules and regulations which footplatemen are required to know. But after 1964 when all the ex-steam men were promoted to driving on diesels, CIÉ found itself short of footplate staff. After discussions with unions and men, it was decided to recruit men from the traffic

department. This decision was taken after much heart-searching by the company. Could a guard be promoted from the rear to the front of the train successfully? Could a shunter (who had probably spent most of his time abusing drivers) learn to adapt himself to driving and taking the same abuse? CIÉ took the chance that they could and instituted a training programme consisting of two parts.

The first part involves six weeks in the Training School at Inchicore. At the end of this period the 'Trainee' as the recruit is termed, is posted to a depot. The trainee travels on pilot engines in the local yards and learns about the layouts, signals, how many wagons fit in each road and other such useful information. After six months, he is required to sit for an examination, on rules and regulations and on engine knowledge. If he is successful in this examination he is promoted to 'Probationary' driver and may work pilot engines on local jobs. This Probationary period lasts two years and during this time the recruit learns about every type of diesel locomotive employed by CIÉ (15 loco and 3 railcar types). He gets refresher courses on Rules and one month before the 'Final' examination is sent out on the main lines for experience.

The final examination is spread over three days. There are 50 questions on locomotives (fault finding, operation, towing, disposal, etc.) and 50 on Rules and Regulations (every rule and every regulation local and general). When the three days are over, a period of tense apprehension follows during which our probationary awaits the results of the examination. He continues working according to his roster. One day he signs on, the foreman calls him and hands him a small brown envelope. With trembling fingers he opens it and a short typewritten note tells him the good (or bad) news.

He is now a fully qualified driver and can look forward to promotion through the goods, specials and eventually the top passenger links. Throughout this time he will be continually learning roads, locomotives, etc. He will work around every hour of the clock. He will see beautiful summer mornings and harsh winter nights. And most of all he will love every minute of it.

I hope the foregoing has given the lay man an insight into the evolution of the modern loco man. One final word for the record; of all the men recruited since 1964 no one has failed any part of the programme. This is a token to the ability of the instructors in the training centre and all the men concerned.

[Spare Link's well-written article posed a problem - we try to stick to steam in all our articles, but at the same time contributions by professional railwaymen are welcome and the latter consideration won. In case Spare Link's railway service does not go back to steam days, we hope he will be able to collect material from older colleagues and look forward to hearing further from him. Mr O'Neill's article did contain much information about diesel training but this section was curtailed before publication, for the reason stated above. - Ed.]

SITE REPORT

J.A. Lockett

Work on the Site has been fairly intensive this year. The majority of the work has been aimed at preparing for the Open Day on 3rd July, but a few jobs essential to the stabling of the locomotives were carried out.

Shed Road No.1 has had its timbers renewed for the full length of one side. This was a major job which had to be completed in a day to allow the restabling of No.171. The old timbers were found to be completely rotten.

Major earth work has been going on between the stables and the shed. This work involved the laying of a new drain in an attempt to remove the 'swimming pool' beside the shed. The platform road has been extended alongside the shed and the ground between it and the present shed roads cleared and levelled.

In conjunction with this work, a roadway has been built round the stables to the shed, to allow access

by heavy lorries.

The roadway was successfully tried out when we sold over five tons of scrap chairs, track and any other metal objects we could quietly pass off as iron.

Permanent outdoor yard lighting was installed for the night of the boiler inspection and proved very useful. It is hard both to shunt and to protect engines outside in pitch dark. The opportunity of the boiler inspection day was also taken to install a coal bunker and lighting-up-wood bunker at the side of shed road No 2. The coal (ten tons) was delivered in an ordinary open wagon and with the aid of the site tractor about five tons were put on to No.186 and No.27, the rest being shovelled into the bunker.

The boiler inspection brought to light the unsuitability of our accommodation for overnight stay. Thus bunk beds (four in all) have been installed in one of the back rooms. These will be very welcome to those of us who have to spend all night at Whitehead from time to time.

The other back room has been shelved and lighting installed so that it can be used for a loco store.

The permanent way store is being moved out of the shed into the Inglis container which has been positioned just beside shed road No.1. This will give some much-needed space on the maintenance side of the shed.

The platform road point has been ballasted at the bridge and the floods which usually surround the track at that point have been substantially reduced by the digging of short drain.

The weedkiller train (a converted permanent way trolley mentioned in Five Foot Three No.10) has been active and it is hoped to have the weeds under control for the Open Day.

On the rolling stock side, work has progressed rather slowly on the rebuilding of the Brake Van. The two Guinness wagons have been degutted, making two large vans. They have been fitted with side doors on one side and are being painted in preparation for use as a bar and film theatre on Open Day. Most of the wagons have been oiled and missing brasses replaced by wooden blocks. This means we will at last be able to get the brake van out. It has been trapped for a year behind an immovable oil wagon.

A lot of work has been done by a very few people but much more could be done if only we had more workers. The very poor response to our appeal for help at the site was extremely disheartening. The fact that the brake van is not rebuilt yet is due to this lack of labour (either skilled or unskilled).

I hope our appeal for workers on the Open Day on 3rd July will receive more attention.

LOCOMOTIVE REPORT

P.A. Scott

Maintenance work proceeded with the numerous outstanding jobs on No.171 until the boiler tests on 6th March. On this occasion all four engines were in steam at Whitehead, since earlier proposals to test No.186 at Carrickfergus fell through owing to the lack of a suitable water supply. No.186 was brought to Whitehead on Friday 5th and after the boiler tests she hauled No.171 to Carrick, returning light engine. This gave her a short running in trip and left her at Whitehead where some minor jobs could be attended to before the first tour.

No.186 left Whitehead for the Slieve Gullion railtour on 16th April and will not be returning north until September. She is at present stored at Sallins goods shed, but our tenancy there is of doubtful duration and she may be moved elsewhere after June. Our Dublin Representative, Sam Carse, is supervising work on No.186 while in the South. The jobs to be done are of a routine nature, i.e. cleaning as well as clearing out the ashpan and smokebox. Any members willing to lend a hand, either skilled or unskilled, are asked to contact Sam.

No.171 has now been brought back to Whitehead, and work will continue with her for the Open Day.

To date, her big end has been re-metalled, splashes welded and a new brick arch built.

In February it was indicated that NIR might in fact be able to undertake the re-metalling of No.171's axlebox. (This was the reason for the somewhat enigmatic statement that appeared at the end of the report in the Spring News Sheet.) The dismantling of the engine at Whitehead would have been a dangerous operation without suitable lifting gear. Before any definite arrangements were made, the boiler examinations revealed several defects which will have to be attended to before the engine can be re-insured. Two of the large tubes are badly corroded at the firebox end, and may need to be renewed. Ferrules will be required at the smokebox end, and complete re-tubing may not be far distant. The Committee therefore decided that no further money should be spent on this engine until the position regarding the Jeep is clarified. The Jeep appeal has so far raised only a third of the money required, so that were we to purchase one of these machines outright, general Society funds would not cover repairs to No.171 as well.

The policy at present is therefore to assume that either No.53 or No.4 will be available for the 1972 Tour Programme, but if for some reason this is not possible the repairs to No.171 could go ahead. It would of course be most desirable to have No.171 in running order as soon as possible, and the hot box will be repaired at Whitehead if any feasible way of doing this comes to light. One possibility would be to install a wheel-drop, which would enable the driving wheels of an engine to be lowered sufficiently to remove the axleboxes.

In the meantime work will proceed with No.171's lesser jobs, such as welding repairs to the tender and smokebox, fitting of metallic piston rod packing and adjustment of the persistently troublesome vacuum brake.

The boiler inspections revealed the necessity for ferrules at both ends of No.186's boiler tubes, though the repairs were not stated as being so urgent as with No.171. When the engine was steamed at Easter in preparation for the tour to Dublin, water was discovered issuing from the smokebox and this was traced to a leaking tube. A tube stopper, consisting of two plugs connected by a rod, was made and fitted, and a spare one was taken to Dublin in case another tube should blow. The rod for this was cunningly concealed inside the handrail on the Driver's side of the boiler.

During the Tour, the leaking rivets around the firebox door showed up worse than ever, and arrangements are being made to have these either renewed or caulked while the engine is in Dublin. Few mechanical problems arose, the worst being a knock from the motion which could either be a large end or coupling rod bush. It will be attended to when the engine returns to Whitehead.

On the day of the boiler test, steam was noticed coming from the back wrapper plate of No.27's firebox, just above the foundation ring, and when the plate was cleaned up the leak was seen to be in a previously welded repair. The Boiler Inspector gave the go-ahead for this to be re-welded, and the job is at present in progress.

The left side brake cylinder has been dismantled for the removal of the rolling ring and gland rubber, and a small amount of painting has been done to make the engine more presentable on Open Day.

No.3 alone of the four engines passed the boiler tests without comment. Attempts are being made to improve her steam brake by increasing the size of the live steam pipe and fittings.

The lathe mentioned in the Spring News Sheet has now been working for some time and has done turning and drilling work in connection with No.186's tube stoppers, the Guinness engine's brake fittings and No.171's big end brasses and replacement regulator gland.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

I read with much interest Mr W.T. Scott's article on "Outing Organisation". I was dismayed to note his condemnation of Whitehead.

Our site is now the only place where we may carry out routine maintenance and refurbishment upon our locomotive stock. Such repairs frequently require the use of expensive machine tools and other equipment, which must be provided, and the site, in turn, earns a sizeable amount of the money required, through Open Days. This revenue might also be used to subsidise the very tours to which Mr Scott refers.

Railtours in 1970 incurred a total loss of £15; that the loss was as small as this was due to intensive sales efforts on the trains carried out by the Treasurer. The loss does not include the massive loco maintenance bill, largely the result of senselessly tight schedules. One has only to look at what happened on the Colmcille where, having lost a few minutes in watering at Coleraine, there was nowhere else in the schedule to regain time, except in Derry, where, over 45 minutes late, the time was made up at the expense of the loco crews' lunch. The engine was then flogged back to Coleraine for the sake of a run to Portrush.

As everyone now knows, the engine ran a hot box and a big end, not to mention that gland! Perhaps this would have happened anyway, but it might not, had there been sufficient time to check and oil the engine in Derry, and had No.171 not had to regain so much time in her running.

No.171 has never been properly run in after her major overhaul in Harland and Wolff costing nearly £3,000. In the heyday of steam she would have been progressively run in on shunting and ballast duties, followed by local passenger work. During this time she would have been watched and any defects would have been immediately made good before any harm was done. Nowadays it is neither possible nor practical to do this. Therefore these preserved engines will have to be treated, not only with the respect that veterans of their age deserve, but also with a great deal of care and attention. We cannot, like 'the Company', have relief engines and steam fitters littered throughout Ireland.

One shudders to think what would have happened had the Decies run, when No.171 was expected to make Dublin in 2 hr 50 min, and then to reach Waterford via Kilkenny and Rosslare by 8pm, a total running mileage of over 350. The following day called for an easy 55 miles to Limerick Junction which was paid for by running to Dublin (107 Miles) in 2 hr 35 min. One hour fifty was then allowed for the crew to prepare both themselves and the engine to face the 2 hr 55 min schedule to Belfast (112½ miles). What had the Colmcille on this?

As for the once-mooted Sarsfield railtour, with its schedule into Dublin by 10:00, out before 11:00 (having loaded 2½ tons of coal on No.171), into Athenry by 14:45, then back to Portarlington, to Limerick Junction and up to Limerick in the same day, a total of 451 engine miles. The next day called for only 303 engine miles from No.171, but this included a run from Ballybroy to Dublin at an average of 48 mph, and after only an hour in Dublin, during which the engine was to be prepared and coaled, Belfast was to be reached in only 2½ hours!

This sort of callous treatment of our engines is far beyond our financial resources.

I agree with Mr Scott that gone are the days when railtours can make the sort of money needed to run the Society. Therefore we must be prepared to subsidise railtours to a greater extent in order to reduce fares, and to reduce the need to make every tour a high speed rush to complete the crammed programme of events.

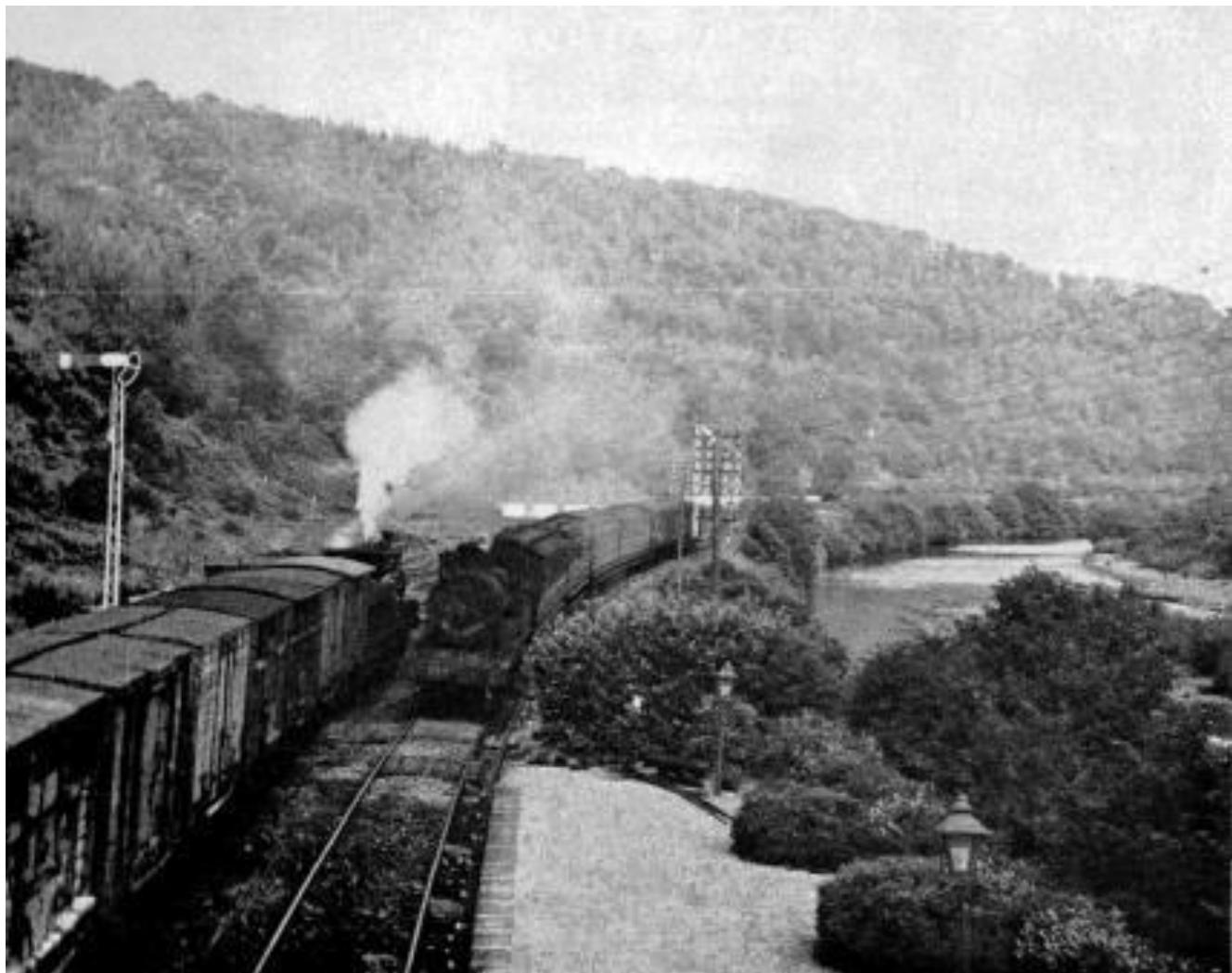
Regarding Whitehead, if Mr Scott had carefully read his yellow circular, he would see that we do not intend to build a "birdcage coach" but rather a 'toastrack' which would provide us with a passenger-carrying vehicle that we can use on Open Days and which can stay at Whitehead, without suffering any major damage from vandalism. It would also use an existing frame which we have at Whitehead.

As for the trees Mr Scott complains about, the intention here is to tidy up the site and make it pleasant to look at, yet easily maintained. It was only intended to plant three trees on the platform, which was to be sown with grass - not indulge in major "reafforestation". As for trees round engine sheds, Mr Scott, what about Sligo, Armagh and Enniskillen, to name but three which spring instantly to mind?

Last year Whitehead Open Day made £280 on a turnover of £400, far more profitable than the best and most successful of our tours, This year we hope to do even better and already (in February) work is going ahead for the Third Open Day. But for this we require constructive physical help from as many members as possible.

Yours, etc,

Johnny Glendinning



***D10 Class 4-4-0 No.314 on 10:00am passenger ex Westland Row (Pearse) crossing J18 Class 0-6-0 No.585 (ex-MGWR No.131 "Atlas") on Up day goods at Woodenbridge on 10th August 1955.
(A. Donaldson)***

Dear Sir,

Mr Scott's views on railtour finance, published in the last issue of Five Foot Three, were interesting but hardly practical. I would certainly agree that, when a tour is almost breaking even, it should be helped from general funds rather than cancelled, and this has in fact been done. The regular subsidising of

tours is an altogether different proposition. The Society desperately needs capital, and this situation is likely to continue for very many years. Even when the Jeep is bought, repaired and housed, there will continue to be a need for large sums of money. Repairs and replacements will be a constant drain on resources, and the purchase and housing of coaching stock is something which, in my opinion, will eventually have to come. The necessary finance has to be procured somehow, and in the absence of a fairy godmother, tours can and should be a major means of raising funds. It is unrealistic to think otherwise.

A little further on Mr Scott refers, in somewhat contemptuous tone, to "such schemes as the reafforestation of Whitehead or the making of bird-cage coaches". This is the first that I, and many other members no doubt, have heard of such proposals. Why have they not been ventilated in *Five Foot Three*? If because of the editorial dislike of publishing future plans which may come to nothing (see page 36 of No.10), why this oblique reference now? Incidentally, the answer to the rhetorical question regarding trees round a steam engine shed, is "I did". There are plenty such on the European main land, though regrettably the same cannot be said for the British Isles.

Finally, I can assure Mr Scott that, though the use of LMS 'Jinties' on passenger trains was not particularly common, it was by no means unknown. Devons Road members of the class worked from Broad Street to the GN line, and from Dalston Junction to Poplar, whilst Upper Bank engines were used on the Swansea St. Thomas to Brynamman service. There may well have been other examples.

Yours, etc,

Lance King

Dear Sir,

I am writing on behalf of the Model Engineers' Society to try and correct some errors and omissions which occurred in the report of the RPSI Open Day, published in the Winter 1970 edition of "*Five Foot Three*".

The passenger-carrying track is the property and indeed was built by one of our members, Walter Whan, who kindly permits the Society to make use of it at our attendances at outside functions, such as the Open Day. No mention was made of these facts in the report, which also gave the impression that only one gauge was available on the track, which in fact is equipped for both 3½ and 5 inch gauge vehicles, the passenger carrying trucks invariably being of the latter gauge, whilst the locomotives can be, and indeed are, of either gauge.

The locomotive which saw service at the Open Day was in fact modelled on a Great Northern (not Ireland) Atlantic and not LNER as stated. The model was designed by the late 'LBSC' who was a very well-known contributor to the "*Model Engineer*" and was himself an ex-Driver on the London, Brighton and South Coast. The locomotive, which LBSC christened "Maisie", was built, driven and owned by Jim Crozier, yet another member of the MES.

Finally, in closing, may I extend a warm invitation, on behalf of the MES to all RPSI members to attend our monthly meetings which are held in the Board room of the Ashby Institute, Stranmillis Road, Belfast at 7:45pm on the first Friday of EVERY month.

Yours sincerely,

R.A. Roberts

Hon Publicity Officer

[We are grateful to the Model Engineers' Society for the loan of their engines and their kind invitation, which we hope many of our members will accept. The report was printed, as received from the Site

Officer, in good faith and I apologise for the errors.

I would, however, point out that one of the corrections is itself an error. Jim Crozier's Atlantic is superheated and therefore IS the LNER and not the GNR version. (Neither the GNR(I) nor any Irish line, of course, ever had Atlantics.) - Ed.J

BOOK REVIEWS

Preserved Locomotives In The British Isles

Edited by Swift, Industrial and Narrow Gauge Railway Societies, 75p

The extent to which preservation has helped to counterbalance the decline of mainline steam is clearly revealed in this book which records the existence of an amazing variety of engines - some of classes long since extinct - on preserved lines, at museums and in industrial and other locations. While it can only be a matter of regret that a combination of lack of facilities and spare parts (and, in England, British Rail's rigid ideological objections) prevents all but a few of them from appearing in their natural environment, those enthusiasts whose steam hunger can be palliated by preservation will find this little book a handy guide to where to find it. Entries are grouped under geographical locations, and tabulated information (which, of course, needs to be supplemented by other works of reference) is included on the locomotives concerned.

What remains of Irish steam is also fully recorded, and kindly reference is made in the Introduction to the RPSI's unique contribution to preservation - our mainline tours.

This workmanlike publication fulfils well its purpose, and few criticisms can be made. Perhaps one could have wished that more of the plentiful, and splendidly reproduced, illustrations had featured now-preserved engines as they were when still in revenue earning service, rather than in their present locations, where the enthusiast can easily take his own photographs. JAC

Railway History In Pictures - Ireland (Volume Two)

A. McCutcheon, David & Charles, £2.75

I, for one, had expected this book to improve on its predecessor and this optimism has been amply justified. Not being a railway enthusiast himself, the author has this time had the opportunity - and good sense - to draw on the experiences of several who were, thereby imparting life and colour to his narrative at many points.

Similarly, with many extra sources to draw on, he has produced a much more interesting set of illustrations, including many rarely or never previously published; two of these we are able to reproduce in this issue.

The task of covering twentieth century Irish railway history within the compass of 99 pages is of course impossible, and the author's historical sense is to be commended for his choice of topics: headings such as Industrial Railways, Tourist Services, Suburban Workings, Special Services, Heyday and Decline go far to epitomise the story.

If the choice of material and photographs is not quite that which a steam enthusiast would have made, at least we of the RPSI know from experience that the real enthusiast for Irish steam is a fairly rare beast, so the publishers cannot be blamed if they have spread their readership net as widely as possible. It is difficult to know how the Public Mind (if any) works - it certainly doesn't care for studies in depth, and I heard of one 'lay' reviewer who singled out as its principal merit the book's variety of rail vehicle illustrations (having flicked over pages 60-69, evidently).

So the 'album' approach is probably justified. The book is, however, much more than that: the introductions to the chapters contain a good deal of original historical and sociological thinking, succinctly expressed.

In the case of the Locomotive Development section, however, the general remarks are rather weak - a pity, since so many books fall down on this very aspect of railway interest. Although odd pieces of locomotive information do appear *passim* throughout the book in captions, it is disappointing to find only nine pages devoted to locomotives compared with, for example, thirteen to architecture. GNR express engine policy, it is true, is quite well covered, but surely such outstanding classes as the NCC Moguls and WTs deserved more than the few lines allocated to them, as did Inchicore's successive attempts to conquer the bank out of Cork. The superheating and modernisation programmes of Inchicore, Dundalk and York Road are also omitted, while there were noteworthy goods designs such as the SG3s of the GNR and the K2s, K3s and K4s of CIÉ which should have been discussed.



D4 Class 4-4-0 No.342 on Mystery Train at Cashel in May 1939. Another illustration from A. McCutcheon's book. (R.N. Clements)

In such an accurate and carefully printed work, some of the captions were surprisingly inadequate: the fastest narrow gauge trains in Ireland (p 23) were in fact the CBPR Crosshaven expresses covering 16 miles in 35 minutes - indeed this railway could well have been mentioned again (it was referred to in Volume 1, but no reason given for its double road) under either Tourist or Local Traffic headings; on page 28 there is no mention of a very interesting engine in the foreground - one of the BCDR compound tanks; the white board in the illustration on page 30 was merely the tailboard (the smokebox wheel was simply a handy place to hang it), mention of this would have obviated the ugly unrailwaylike periphrasis "driving in reverse" if the author wanted to avoid repeating the correct term

“propelling”; while few of those who frequented railways at the time would accept IRA activities as the reason for the demolition of closed lines by the UTA (page 89); and the photograph of 207 on page 97 could not have been taken as late as 1964.

‘Recent Developments’ are well handled but CIÉ’s successful bid for bulk traffics arising out of mineral exploitation in the Twenty-six Counties is probably the most important feature of contemporary railway operation and deserved full treatment and an illustration.



K1a Class 2-6-0 No.397 at Inchicore in June 1949. (A. Donaldson)

The final chapter on Recording and Preservation is most thorough and RPSI members will be well pleased to see the aims and prospects of the Society set out so unerringly.

A special word on the frontispiece: I can’t be too effusive as it appears to be based on a photo of my own, but the artist has produced an exceptionally attractive (and accurate, apart from a slip in the chimney which only a modeller would notice) picture - certainly the best Irish colour print to date. I should hope that the publishers will find it possible to market enlargements of this picture separately and would expect these to be in great demand.

In fine, the purchaser will find many excellently reproduced photographs calling for close study and numerous snippets of fascinating information to fill the gaps in his own railway knowledge. **AD**

STEAM ON THE COUNTY DONEGAL

S.J. Carse

“We have now only nine engines in steam daily, as against eleven last year.” So wrote Mr Forbes to Mr Glover in 1923. This makes interesting reading to those of us who only remember the County Donegal in the days of tour or five engines in steam, or the last few years with one on the Strabane-Letterkenny

section and one on the Stranorlar-Strabane line, Unfortunately I have not been able to trace anybody who recorded any of the running in the days before the first War. It is worth mentioning in particular a performance of the Class 5A 2-6-4Ts. When they were new a train of fifteen coaches (230 tons) was hauled from Derry to Ballyshannon. From Derry to Strabane (28 miles) took sixty minutes, and the 18 miles thence to Donegal town fifty-three minutes, a steady 12 mph being maintained up the six miles from Stranorlar to Derg Bridge, so that the average speed thence to Donegal town would have been about 35 mph.

The loco roster which came into force in January 1923 provided for ten engines, and it is of interest to note that each engine returned to its home shed instead of working against another, as in latter days when all the coaling was done in Derry. It should also be noted that a specific engine was allocated to each crew or pair of crews, and in the case of the three Stranorlar engines which rotated, the crews rotated with their engines.

The following are details of the workings:

Depot	Engine	Class	Trains Worked	M	T	W	T	F	S
Derry	16	3	6:50 Derry - Stranorlar						
			10:00 Stranorlar - Derry						
			2:00 Derry - Strabane						
			3:55 Strabane - Derry (shunt Derry)						
Strabane	10	3	8:20 Strabane - Derry						
			10:10 Derry - Stranorlar						
			2:20 Stranorlar - Strabane						
			18 5 7:55 Strabane - Letterkenny						
			9:20 Letterkenny - Strabane						
			11:10 Strabane - Letterkenny						
			1:15 Letterkenny - Strabane						
			3:15 Strabane - Stranorlar						
Letterkenny	17	5	5:30 Letterkenny - Strabane						
			7:00 Strabane - Letterkenny						
			13 & 15 Class 4, and 3 Class 5A worked as under						
Stranorlar			8:32 Stranorlar - Strabane						
			11:15 Strabane - Derry						
			5:10 Derry - Strabane						
			7:00 Strabane - Stranorlar						
			11:57 Stranorlar - Killybegs						
			3:15 Killybegs - Stranorlar						
			8:37 Stranorlar - Killybegs						
			12:00 Killybegs - Stranorlar						
				15	13	3	15	13	3
				3	3	13	3	3	13
				13	15	15	13	15	15

Ballyshannon	5	2	8:00	Ballyshannon - Donegal
			9:50	Donegal - Ballyshannon
			12:00	Ballyshannon - Donegal
			1:20	Donegal - Ballyshannon
			3:25	Ballyshannon - Donegal
			6:30	Donegal - Ballyshannon
Killybegs	21	5A	7:50	Killybegs - Stranorlar
			10:55	Stranorlar - Strabane (shunt Strabane)
			4:20	Strabane - Killybegs (shunt Killybegs)

When the DRC was formed in 1893, six new locomotives were provided free by the Government. Built by Neilson & Co of Glasgow, they were of the 4-6-0T type, and seem to have been more satisfactory than similar locos on other railways about the time. In fact Mr Forbes opposed the scrapping of any of them when, in 1926, the accountants of the parent companies were suggesting that the County Donegal was over-engined. Mr Forbes wrote: "It is true we have rather more engines and carriages than we normally require, but is this a great disadvantage and what is to be gained by scrapping them?"

In September of 1926 a contractor in Stoke-on-Trent was interested in a three-foot gauge loco and a Class 2 was offered to him for £700, but no further action was taken.

In 1927 Nos. 3, 6 and 7 were stored and some years later permission was given to dismantle them to provide spares for Nos. 4, 8 and 9, one of which worked the Glenties branch while another worked the Ballyshannon branch with the third one spare. Their small coal capacity limited them to a range of 50 to 60 miles and they rode somewhat roughly when travelling backwards. The 1911 issue of the Working Timetable carried the following notice, "It is necessary that engines 4 to 9 inclusive should be turned so as to admit of them running chimney first. It is not necessary to turn other engines."

The Class 3 4-4-4T Nos. 10 and 11 were built in 1900 for working between Strabane and Derry. They were never suitable for working the Joint lines and when actually in use gave a lot of trouble, and had the lowest tractive effort of all except Class 1. No.10 was stationed in Ballyshannon in 1929/30, and there is a report of the same engine breaking an axle near Coolaghey on the S&L in 1924. They were not standard with the other types and after being out of service for a long number of years were scrapped in 1935. By "not standard" apparently Mr Forbes meant that these were Neilson Reid engines whereas all the later classes were by Nasmyth, Wilson.

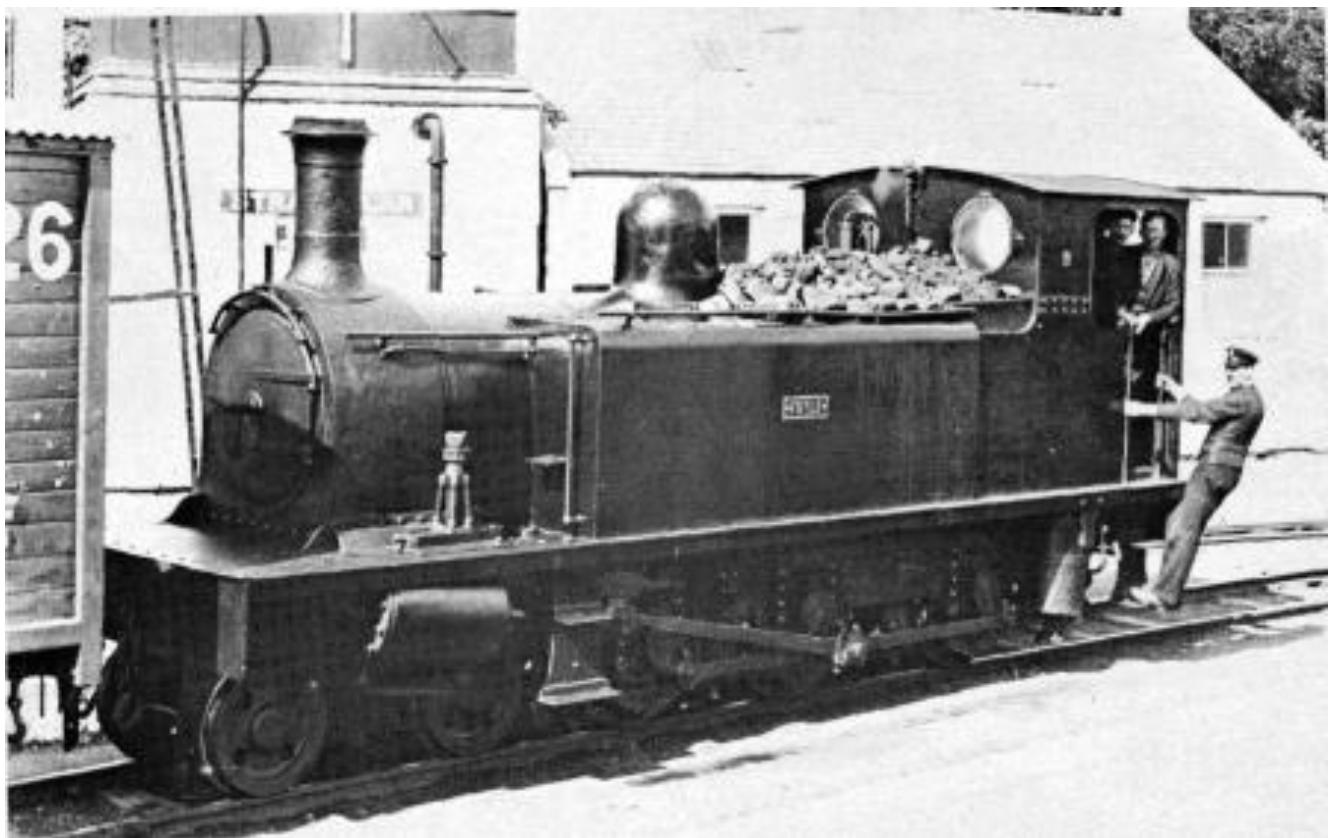
The four 4-6-4T of Class 4 were built in 1904 and as built were not good steamers and were very extravagant on coal, using 45 pounds per mile against 29 per mile for Class 5A. I think it was with one of these that the story is told of a fireman who, lest his driver blame him for the dropping hand of the pressure gauge, would mop his brow, remove his cap and look round for a place to put it, finally hanging it carefully over the said gauge.

In 1908 Mr Livesy said: "These engines were poor steamers in spite of their huge boilers, and the tubespace is overcrowded." Consequently while No.12 was in for overhaul he removed one vertical row on centre line, resulting in a great improvement in steaming. I have no record of this alteration being done to the other three of the class, but all four were superheated as follows: No.12 in 1921, Nos. 13 and 14 in 1922 and No.15 in 1923. The builders, Messrs Nasmyth, Wilson, suggested that an improvement could be made by adding a ton weight to the front end and also reducing the cylinders. They themselves had never wished to fit 15" cylinders to these engines.

In 1919 an attempt was made to sell a Class 4 to the Cork, Blackrock and Passage Railway, and replace it with a new engine of Class 5A. However, the CB&PR declined the offer - rather a pity, a 4-6-4T on

the Cavan and Leitrim would have looked very well. Some time later they offered some of the Class 2, but again the offer was declined. While on the subject of might have beens, in 1952 Hudswell Clarke invited quotations for the purchase of two new 0-6-0 tender locomotives, surplus to the requirements of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company. Had these been purchased the Swilly would no longer have been the only three-foot line in Ireland with tender engines. In 1953 the UTA offered to sell one of the 2-4-2T compounds, No.42 I think, and it was considered that if it were purchased No.9, then requiring an overhaul, could be scrapped. However the addition of a non-standard engine was an argument against the idea and nothing further was done.

Superheating turned the Class 4 into a most powerful engine and they could be found on all types of trains, including heavy coal specials, though, having small wheels (3 ft 9 in diameter) they were not as speedy as the 5A classes. It was a treat to see one of them start a heavy train without a trace of a slip. *[Curiously enough, the highest speed I KNOW OF on the CDR was 38 mph behind a Class 4, timed by R.A. O'Sullivan in 1937 - but unfortunately little or no timing was done on the CDR at that period - perhaps some reader will be able to fill this gap. - Ed.]*



County Donegal Class Two 4-6-0T No.8 "Foyle" shunting at Stranorlar in 1937. (W.T. Scott Collection)

The Class 5 2-6-4T, of which there were five, bore the brunt of the traffic on the Joint Line, and were in every way a good engine, having a rostered load of 400 tons on the level and 150 over Barnesmore. It can be seen therefore that in its latter steam days the CDR had a very homogeneous stock of engines, and of course this made rostering of engines so much less onerous.

No.8, in common with Nos. 1, 2 & 3 of Class 5A had a Caledonian type hooter, This was fitted from No.19 after the Donemana accident. Her boiler was transferred to No.8 in 1938.

On 15th January 1955, a message was received from "a gentleman in Ballindrait" to say that there was

something wrong with the engine of the 3:50 opposite his house, as the train was moving backward and forward. It was duly hauled back to Strabane and the engine (No.5) was found to have a broken piston head.

Although the Class 5 were superheated they had balanced cast iron slide valves and, on account of excessive wear on the steam chest faces, it was necessary for bronze liners to be screwed to the valves. No.4 was altered to saturated, in 1946, but was not satisfactory, being severe on coal and water and was altered back to superheated. I have heard it said that this engine was a bad steamer, and I know that a blastpipe ring, made from a bucket handle, was fitted, closing the top of the blastpipe to $2\frac{13}{16}$ ". The original standard for these engines when superheated was $3\frac{1}{2}$ ".

One morning in July 1956, while she was being got ready for the 7:20am Stranorlar-Donegal goods, No.4's whistle stuck open and it is said she was whistling for almost an hour. There seemed an abundance of steam that day.

No.6 was overhauled in 1958 and had only done 5,744 miles when the line closed. She worked a special goods from Strabane to Letterkenny on 28th December 1959 and, during shunting there, was found to have a broken axle. A spare axle from No.8 was fitted after the closure of the line and the loco was purchased by Dr Cox of America on 2nd March 1961. However, it is still in Stranorlar and now that there is a three-foot gauge line in operation, we are all hoping "Columbkille" will steam again.

The Class 5A, usually known as the "big engines", were mostly found on the Strabane and Letterkenny, where the goods traffic was heavy, the regular train of ten being augmented by an overload special, leaving Strabane at 9:12am for Letterkenny. It was on one of these that No.2 attained the highest speed I ever heard of on the CDR, almost 50 mph round Leck curve (between Glenmaquin and Letterkenny). Unfortunately some of the wagons did not follow and two of them ended up on the County Road, scattering eighty bags of sugar over the wet Donegal countryside. It is with this engine that the late John Kelly, Loco Foreman at Stranorlar held the record of ninety days for a heavy overhaul, the shortest time any engine was ever done on the Donegal.

No.2 was involved in an unusual mishap in Strabane. Leaving the coaling siding the leading guard iron caught and pushed forward the rail ahead of the loco. When the wheels came to where the rail should have been, there was none.

During the summer months, a great variety of Special Trains were run, Sunday School excursions, Orange Demonstrations, in fact anything that required a big train. The best known of these was the "Hills of Donegal" run in conjunction with the GNR from Belfast. The County Donegal train left Strabane at 11:35, Castlefin 11:52, arriving in Donegal at 1:03pm. The run from Castlefin to Donegal was made non-stop and if the train was heavy the electric train staff was often exchanged at the East Cabin in Stranorlar (i.e. the Town Bridge end of the station) so as to get a run at the Barnesmore bank. As the Lough Eske-Stranorlar staff was of the miniature type, I have seen it tied to a stick, to make it easier to grab.

After a lunch stop, the Donegal departure was 2:35, arriving in Ballyshannon at 3:15 where the passengers walked behind a Great Northern official, across the town to the GNR station. The return journey to Belfast, via Bundoran, was by GNR train and the CDR train left Ballyshannon empty at 4:05pm. If it was a fine day, the 1:30 afternoon excursion from Strabane would also be steam and arrived at 4:00pm. The most annoying feature of working on the branch was that the engines, having come chimney first over the bank, were bunker first from Donegal to Ballyshannon, where they were often turned again so as to be chimney first on the main line again.

Another excursion that involved walking was the special from Letterkenny, Convoy or Strabane to Portrush. Passengers walked from Derry (Victoria Road) to Waterside station where the journey was continued on the broad gauge. It may be mentioned that more time was allowed for the walk on the

return journey!

A feature of some of the specials was that they grew as they went along. I travelled on an A.O.H. Special from Strabane to Killybegs which started with two coaches, four were added at Stranorlar and three more at Donegal. This nine bogie train proved too much for No.4, as we stuck near Bruckless after carefully observing the 10 mph slack. For the third attempt, we reversed about half a mile and charged the bank at 31 mph, with success.

I acknowledge with thanks the help given by the IRRS Library for some of the older information, and conclude my story of Donegal steam by mentioning that at one of the crossing gates between Donegal and Stranorlar, it is said that a train was heard whistling for the road, near midnight one dark winter's night. The gate keeper opened the gates, saw the train go through, shut the gates and went back to bed. BUT no train was out that night!!



County Donegal Class Three 4-4-4T No.10 "Sir James" at Donegal on 6th August 1930.
(H.C. Casserley)

But then Donegal was a great place for na daoini beaga [*the little people*].

Appendix One

Class	Original No & Name	1928 No & Name	1937 No & Name
1	1 Alice		
1	2 Blanche		
1	3 Lydia		
2	4 Meenglass		

2	5	Drumboe	
2	6	Inver	
2	7	Finn	
2	8	Foyle	
2	9	Columbkille	
3	10	Sir James	
3	11	Hercules	
4	12	Eske	9 Eske
4	13	Owenea	10 Owenea
4	14	Erne	11 Erne
4	15	Mourne (Reno in Company's books only)	12 Mourne
5	16	Donegal	4 Meenglass
5	17	Glenties	5 Drumboe
5	18	Killybogs	6 Columbkille
5	19	Letterkenny (not renumbered)	
5	20	Raphoe	8 Foyle
5A	21	Ballyshannon	1 Alice
5A	2A	Strabane	2 Blanche
5A	3A	Stranorlar	3 Lydia

NOTES: When 2A and 3A were renumbered, the 'A' was simply removed, leaving the numeral off-centre on the plate. This can be seen on preserved No.2 in the Transport Museum.

Class One. No.1, the last survivor, ended her days working the 4:40pm Stranorlar-Genties and the 6:20pm return. She lay for some time in Strabane, minus her chimney, before scrapping.

Appendix Two

(An extract from a County Donegal Working Timetable)

Tractive Power of engines over the various sections is as under:

Numbers	1, 2 & 3	4, 5, 6 & 8	9, 10, 11 & 12
Units	(3)	(4)	(4)
Type	2-6-4	2-6-4	4-6-4
Class	5A	3	4
Maximum gross tonnage behind engine			
	tons	tons	tons
Strabane to/from Derry	230	230	230
Strabane to Letterkenny	165	145	165

Letterkenny to Strabane	170	150	170
Strabane to/from Stranorlar	450	400	450
Stranorlar to Glenties	205	180	205
Glenties to Stranorlar	180	155	180
Stranorlar to/from Donegal	180	155	180
Donegal to Ballyshannon	185	160	185
Ballyshannon to Donegal	205	180	205
Donegal to Killybegs	150	130	150
Killybegs to Donegal	160	154	160

To arrive at the gross tonnage the following to be taken:

	Loaded	Empty
Carriage or Van	14 tons	11 tons
Wagon	11 tons	4 tons

(Bogie and six wheel wagons equals two ordinary wagons)

The Station staff to be responsible that the gross maximum tonnage does not exceed above. A driver finding that he has over the maximum, or that the engine from some cause is unable to work the loads laid down must decide how many vehicles can be taken, the station staff should be informed in good time to avoid delays. Drivers may use their discretion what additional vehicles can be attached if wagons not fully loaded or if trains are not timed to stop at places on or near inclines, but care must be taken not to over-load the engine. Stationmasters concerned must be advised in advance when a change of engines is to be made affecting the usual tractive power.

Appendix Three

The engine roster just before the closure of Strabane-Derry line was as under, and was worked so that every engine got to Derry for coal.

A	7:45	Strabane/Letterkenny	Turns A and B rotate
	12:35	Letterkenny/Strabane	
	3:50	Strabane/Letterkenny	
B	5:10	Letterkenny/Strabane	
	7:55	Strabane/Derry	
	10:00	Derry/Strabane	
C	9:51	Stranorlar/Donegal	Turns C and B rotate
	11:20	Donegal/Strabane	
	3:10	Strabane/Derry	
	6:30	Derry/Strabane	

D	11:35	Strabane/Derry	
	1:30	Derry/Strabane	
	4:00	Strabane/Stranorlar	
E	If the 9:51 ex Stranorlar was extended to Killybegs, it returned to Stranorlar at 2:40 and an additional engine was steamed to work the 12:40 Stranorlar-Strabane (the 11:20 Donegal-Stranorlar being cancelled).		

DUNDALK SWANSONG

C. Natzio

Personal reminiscence can be tedious, and the writer on railway subjects may do well to cut down on the personalia and get on with what Professor Tuplin calls the “meaningless figures”. Nevertheless, I should explain that when I first saw the Great Northern it was no longer even the GNRB, let alone the GNR(I); for I got to Dublin in October 1958, a couple of weeks after CIÉ and the UTA took over. Still, there cannot at that stage have been much difference - the Working Time Table still showed passenger trains stopping at Narrow Water, and even (surely wrong) one at Dromin Junction. I can now also admit that at that time I had some curious ideas about Ireland in general and the Great Northern in particular. Still, on my first afternoon in the city, a Saturday, I did manage to find Amiens Street, coincidentally at the right time to see 209 leaving on the then 2:30 Down. This was an attractive spectacle to the stranger, and was responsible for a good deal of time spent, not much of it wasted, on the GN main line over the next few years. On the following Monday I was back, with a ticket; it was 209 again and when I discovered the distance to Drogheda I thought it very clever (as indeed it was) of big McKeown of Dundalk to get there in 36 minutes exactly. I was not to know that I should never see 209 in steam again; and you can imagine the ideas I began to have about the average standard of GN performance induced by two more runs in quick succession with 206, which produced times of 34 minutes 42 and 35 minutes 47, by Tommie Conlan and Hughie McCarron respectively.

It is indeed about the work of these men and their Dundalk colleagues that I want to write, during the brief but interesting period between the end of the Great Northern and the influx of the diesel-electrics seven months later.

First, perhaps, we should recall the situation on the GN main line during that winter of 1958/59. The 9:00 Down and balancing 6:10 back had just gone over to BUT working, but even so, half the express service still had to be handled by steam. The 8:15 Up and 2:30 Down and 12:00 Up and 6:25 Down were of course steam trains, and changed engines at Dundalk, but at that period the nominally long-dieselised 7:30 Down/3:00 Up was reliably steam and remained so till mid-December - thanks, I believe, to buffet-car trouble. This was a through train for a Dublin engine, on really tight timings (for the post-war GN) and I regret now that I could never travel on these trains save between Dundalk and Dublin, where timings were easier and the road seldom clear anyway. Of the steam work for which CIÉ was responsible, most fell to the Dundalk top link; they took over the 12:00 Up at Dundalk and went home with the 6:25, and the men for the 2:30 Down came up, I think, on the 8:50 local. The 7:30 went down with Dublin men who worked the 8:15 back from Dundalk, but a Dundalk crew took the former forward to Belfast and brought the train back at 3:00, handing over to colleagues from the same link at their home station. All the men in the link did some sound work, and some did better than that. For the most part they achieved a consistently creditable level, and even allowing for the easy bookings, timekeeping was good.

And what about the engines they had for these duties? 209 was the first, and early, casualty of CIÉ and

206 only lasted about three weeks longer. I saw 207 a few times that autumn, but never got a run with her (a deficiency thoroughly remedied later on) before she retired to Dundalk for an exceedingly protracted overhaul. 85 was in the shops and 84, of course, was already fulfilling a static and menial role. So, by the middle of November, there were no large engines left at the Dublin end of the line, and of the Ss awarded to CIÉ in the carve-up, all were fairly far gone by then. However, all were in traffic - 170, 171, 174 and 191. Necessary relief was forthcoming when 131 emerged from overhaul and started main-line work in November; 132 did not re-enter traffic after shopping until a couple of weeks before the supposed end of steam, at the end of May 1959. 85 became available in March, but even then did less work than the smaller engines. In my experience the heaviest burden fell on 174; of the thirty-nine Down runs during the period in question, she figured in fourteen. The full breakdown was as follows:

Runs ex-Dublin between October 1958 and May 1959 on the 2:30 and 6:25

174	14	206	3
131	7 (once piloting 174)	170	2
85	5	171	1
132	4	209	1
191	3		

174 was also the most consistent performer, with no time bookable against her on any run. In the Up direction I could seldom travel on any steam train except the 3:00 from Belfast, while it lasted, at 4:36 from Dundalk; 191, 171 or later 131 usually turned up on this. 170, 171 and 191 took a decreasing share in main line work, and the former two were both out of traffic by the end of the period under review. 191, perhaps in the worst order, did more work and of course, was not overhauled.

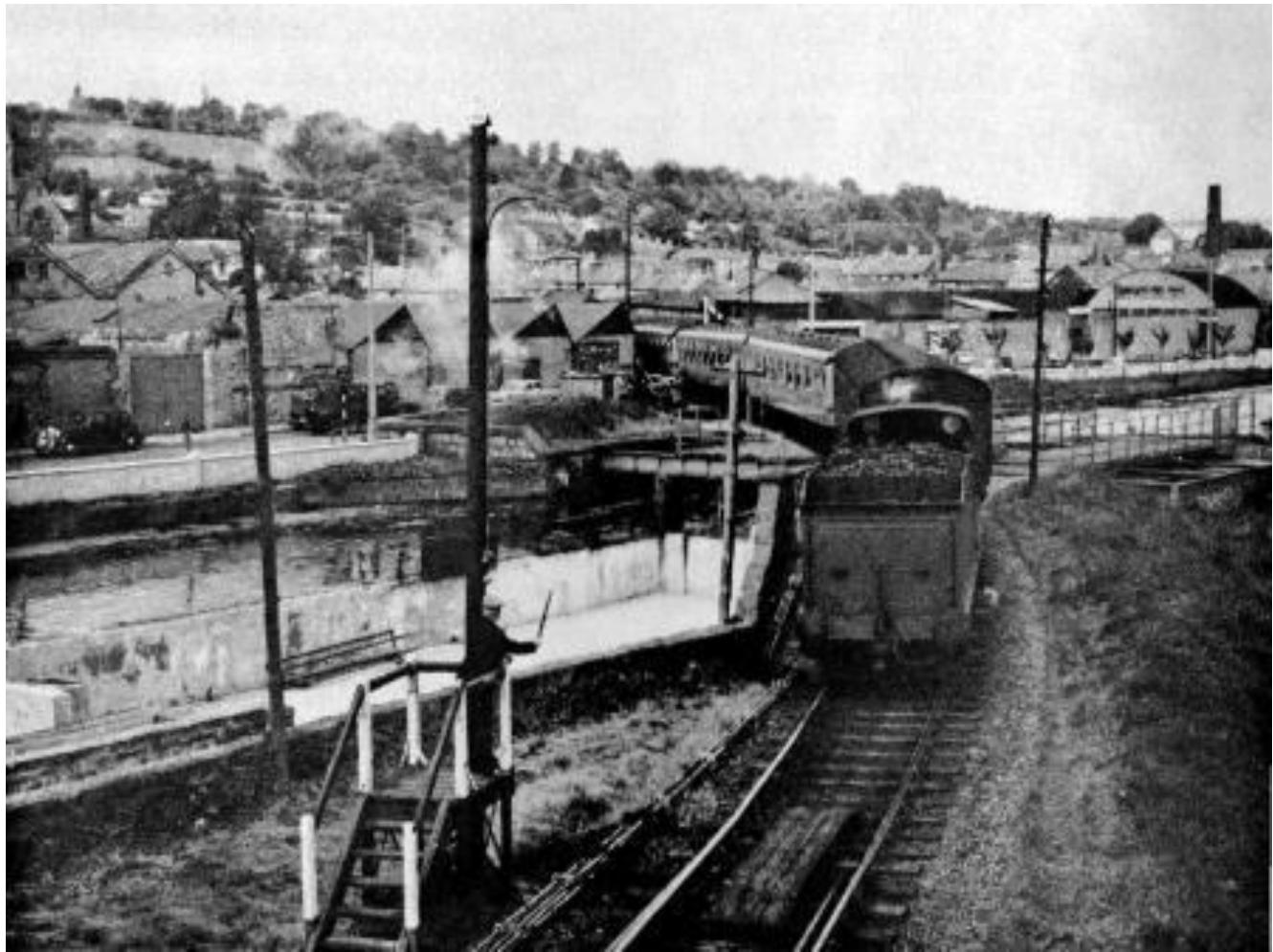
In retrospect, the achievement of these small and weary engines (the S Class pressure was 175 lbs at this period) in maintaining the service at this time was remarkable; I look back on few poor runs, and on the whole the Dundalk men were doing work of a consistent quality I have not enjoyed since. If, admittedly, the 170s seldom produced over 70 mph, even down Dunleer Bank, such speeds were not demanded by the timings, nor often needed for punctuality. The 2:30 then had 68 minutes running time to Dundalk, and the 6:25 70 minutes. But the uphill work was reliably good, and the coming of the Qs livened things up downhill.

In picking runs to tabulate, I have tried to represent as many engines and men as possible, and this has meant omitting numerous worthy efforts. The result does, I think, reflect the general standard reasonably faithfully, and can stand as a record of the work done by the men from a shed which in recent years was rarely in the limelight. Perhaps, though, I have been unfairly generous to 191, whose running generally had something of a struggling quality about it - perhaps only the difference between the S2 and S classes; but as she did not get shopped by CIÉ she has had less attention latterly than the others. The big engines make only a nominal appearance - partly because of their limited activity at that time, partly because their work has been so much more thoroughly recorded elsewhere. Still, the Dundalk men could get good work out of a VS or a Compound, and often did so when they got a chance on 85 and 207 during the following years.

The runs tabulated need little explanation. 206's run was only my second out of Amiens Street, and I hardly think its times, at least between Howth Junction and Skerries, are now likely to be repeated.

South of Drogheda, I have only shown two runs; as a rule, with the certain prospect of signal checks, there was even less of interest in this, apart from an occasional fast start - McKeown on 171 with the midweek load of five and a van once passed Balbriggan in 11 minutes 54 for the 10 miles, not bad as he did not exceed 62.

On the subject of 171, it may perhaps not be generally known that her present partnership with a 4,000 gallon VS tender is not quite a novelty; for a very short time about Christmas 1958, she had 209's tender (later transferred to 191).



S Class 4-4-0 No.170 "Errigal" on Dublin to Warrenpoint excursion at Newry (Dublin Bridge) in June 1960. (A. Donaldson)

Table 1: Dublin-Drogheda

Engine	206	174	191	131
Load	8	8 + van	7 + van	6
Driver	T. Conlan	H. McCarron	H. McCarron	T. Rooney
Date	1-11-1958	15-11-1958	31-1-1959	10-3-1959
Train	2:30pm	2:30pm	2:30pm	2:30pm
Amiens St	0:00 -	0:00 -	0:00 -	0:00 -
East Wall Jct	- -	2:20 -	2:20 -	2:12 -
Killester	5:40 38	5:35 35	5:30 36 pws 30	5:18 37 pws 16
Raheny	7:37 46	7:49 43	8:01 -	8:05 -
Howth Jct	8:53 62	9:12 54	9:35 51	10:36 42

Portmarnock	10:40	68	11:11	60	12:10	25	12:49	59
pws								
Malahide	12:43	65/75	13:34	56/63	16:04	40/53	15:18	55/65
Donabate	14:45	70	15:56	60	18:56	50	17:34	64
Rush	16:55	72/65	18:27	62/55	21:49	56/48	19:51	68/60
MP 16	-	55	21:03	47	24:47	42	22:03	55
Skerries	21:00		23:12	62/60	27:06	59/58	24:00	64/60
Balbriggan	24:31	67/63	26:56	63	30:52	66	27:33	70
Gormanston	26:29	72	29:10	60/64	32:56	64/66	29:29	66/72
Mosney	28:04	69/71	30:56	60	34:36	64	31:00	70
Laytown	29:10	72	32:08	66	35:45	70	32:02	77
MP 30	-	55	34:59	56	38:34	56	34:31	64
							pws	25
Drogheda	34:42	-	37:31	-	41:02	-	37:57	-
					37 net		35 net	

Table 2: Drogheda-Dublin

Engine	85	174	131(pilot) +174	131	132
Load	11	7	12	7 + van	7
Driver	J. Roche	T. Rooney	T. Rooney P. Conlan	T. Rooney	B. Callaghan
Date	28-2-1959	18-3-1959	14-2-1959	14-3-1959	29-5-1959
Train	6:25pm	6:25pm	6:25pm	2:30pm	6:25pm
Drogheda	0:00 -	0:00 -	0:00 -	0:00 -	0:00 -
Kellystown	10:26 40	9:47 42	9:50 43½	9:41 43	9:44 43
Dunleer	15:10 70	14:23 70	14:18 68	14:07 71	14:16 70
Dromin Jct	16:52 65	16:08 64	16:02 63	15:48 66	16:00 65
Castlebellingham	20:02 70	19:22 67	19:16 70	18:53 73	19:09 72 eased
MP 50	- 64/68	22:04 62/66	- 64/68	21:32 60	21:43 65/68
MP52	24:36 55	24:08 56	23:53 53	23:50 45	23:37 58
Dundalk South	26:24 -	25:56 -	25:38 -	26:01 -	25:26 -
Dundalk	28:32 -	27:46 -	27:38 -	27:42 -	26:59 -

Table 3: Dundalk-Drogheda

Engine	171	131
Load	5 + van	5
Driver	McKeown	Kirkwood
Date	27-1-1959	25-11-1958
Train	3:00pm	3:00pm
Dundalk	0:00 -	0:00 -

Dundalk South	2:02	36	2:18	34
MP 52	4:30	40	5:00	39
MP 48½	8:14	62/57	8:51	64/58
Castlebellingham	<u>10:17</u>	-	<u>10:44</u>	-
Dromin Jct	5:27	55	5:37	54/56
Dunleer	<u>8:04</u>	-	<u>8:39</u>	-
Kellystown	7:18	47/64	7:26	48/60
		<u>sigs</u>	-	
Drogheda	14:49	-	15:45	-

Table 4: Drogheda-Dublin

Engine	131		191	
Load	5 + van		6	
Driver	H. McCarron		P. Conlan	
Date	2-12-1958		20-1-1959	
Train	3:00pm		12 noon	
Drogheda	0:00	-	0:00	-
Laytown	7:13	62	7:08	61
Mosney	8:29	57	8:26	55
Gormanston	10:21	62	10:23	57
Balbriggan	12:39	60	12:47	60
Skerries	16:32	57/61	16:56	-
	pws		pws	
MP 16	-	34	19:43	37
Rush	21:46	62	22:16	62
Donabate	24:04	68/63	24:34	67/63
Malahide	26:33	65/58	26:53	64/65
Portmarnock	28:46	61	29:15	61
	sigs			
Howth Jct	30:58	40	31:11	58
Raheny	sigs		32:53	53
Killester	-	-	34:48	50
Amiens St	43:40	-	38:03	-



*Qs Class 4-4-0 No.132 on 12 noon Belfast-Dublin train near Skerries in Spring 1959.
(A. Donaldson)*