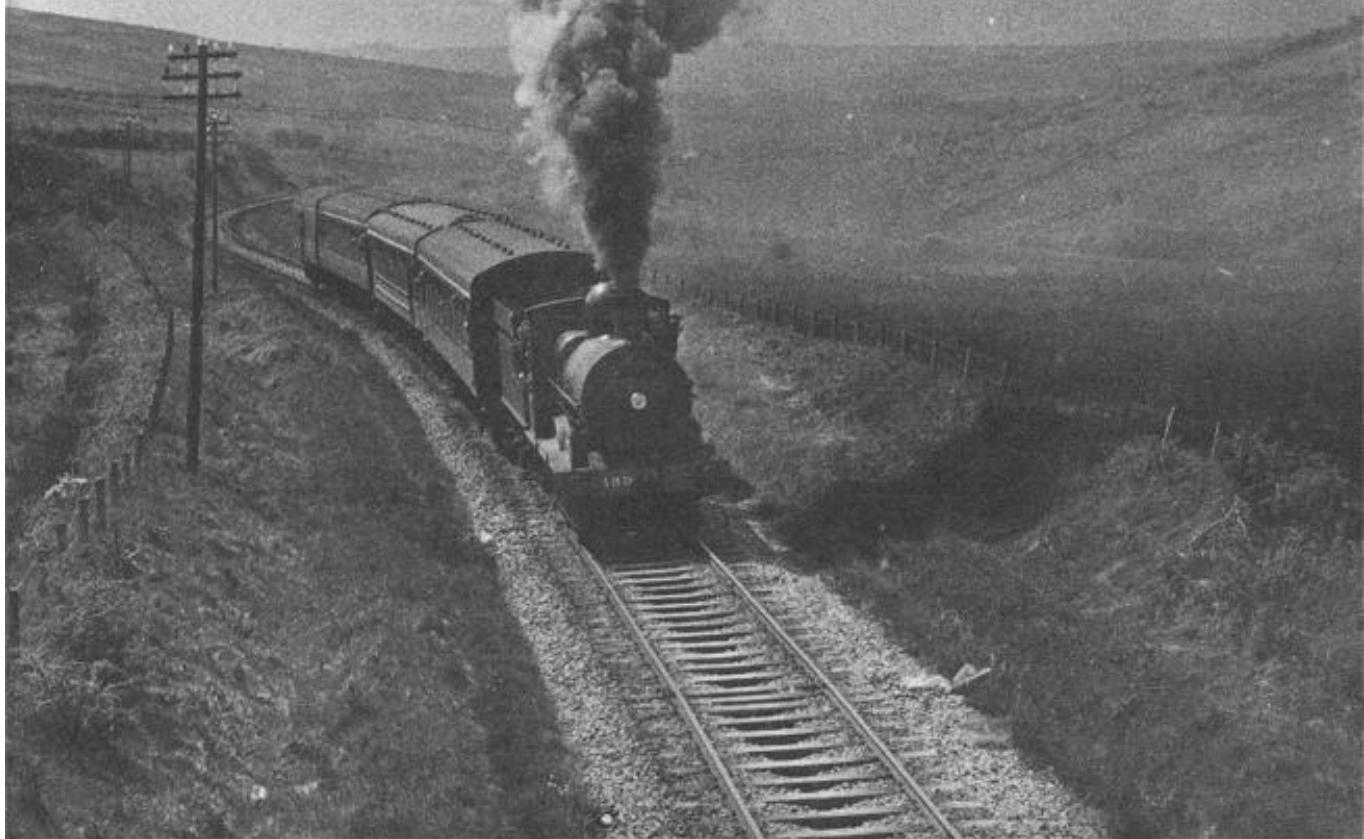


FIVE FOOT THREE



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No.13

Winter 1972

Editor: C.P. Friel

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

Front Cover: No.186 climbing to Barnagh from the west on the "North Kerry" railtour, 4th June 1972. (C.P. Friel)

EDITORIAL

Over the past few years, our Railtour Programme has offered little to the member with limited funds living in the North and it may be well to reflect on the reasons for this.

With the stopping of No.171 after her "Colmcille" turn, the only engine available for rostering was No.186 and as it was felt that the important cross-channel support could be retained by having Dublin-based tours, this engine was shedded at Sallins.

With the arrival of the Jeep, it seemed that she could be made ready for tour work more easily than No.171, and all work was concentrated on her. The building of the new shed extension has enabled our loco work to go ahead in leaps and bounds and we are now in the position of having No.4 and No.171 ready for tour work very soon indeed.

We are determined that we will be in a position to mount a very full tour programme in the North when conditions are more conducive. The short run with No.4 on AGM day will be the first NIR passenger steam for some time; its success may lead to a reappraisal of tours on NIR metals - only time will tell.

Members will no doubt, be interested to know that the BCDR station building at Saintfield has been saved from demolition to make way for a new road. Prompted by the County Down Museum Trust, a newly-formed group who intend to use the premises, the RPSI petitioned the Ministry of Development to rethink its road scheme.

Fresh from the victory, and feeling that enthusiast opinion at last counted for something, we were somewhat amazed to receive the Trust's prospectus, phase four of which envisages an operating steam railway. Our surprise turned to incredulity on reading the Trust's claim to possess the "last active Irish standard gauge steam engines" (sic).

While the making of outlandish claims may be a good way to get publicity, it does little for the (few) railway enthusiasts in the country other than confirm the public's jaundiced view of them. Over the years, we like to think the RPSI has scotched the pimple-faced train spotter image and managed to put a stop to the "all steamed-up puff puff" nonsense of headline writers. We have shown that ours is a serious hobby and rely on concrete achievements to spread our name, not unattainable pipedreams.

NEWS FROM COMMITTEE

J.A. Lockett

The Committee has been concerned about the running of our Sunday Trains and a number of operational changes were made to help tighten up the safety of the operations. To comply with the new operating rules, a number of members have been appointed to the various posts. These are:

Drivers	D.T.R. Henderson, J.A. Lockett, I.C. Pryce, P.A. Scott and W. Steenson.
Firemen	R. Convery.
Shunter/Guards	C.P. Friel, J.A. Friel, A.H.J. Glendinning, R.O. Morton, P. Newell, A.S. Ragg, J. Richardson and J.M. Smyth.

Applications for further appointments to the 'staff' are invited for consideration.

The retubing of No.186 has been thoroughly thrashed out at Committee; it has been decided that the job can best be done at Whitehead by our own members, with professional advice and help when required. Tenders for the supply of tubes have been received and they will be purchased very soon. An appeal was launched amongst the members for the retubing; the response to this so far has been disappointing.

It has been decided to repaint No.171 this winter, following her return to our working stud, in her old GNR blue.

A consortium of members, who adopted the pseudonym 'Cygnet Syndicates', has purchased ex-GSWR twelve-wheel 1st/3rd/brake No.861. This vehicle worked to Whitehead on 7th October following the "Eblana" Railtour, having been moved to Dundalk by goods. In anticipation of further coaching stock acquisitions, it has been decided that a chain link fence should enclose the area between the shed, stables and the platform end. The fence is to be eight foot high, supported by concrete posts and topped with barbed wire. The fence will cost about £250, and this is to be recovered by a levy of £40 on each coach bought and stored.

We understand that a number of valuable and interesting coaches will become available from CIÉ in the near future. The Committee hopes that interested groups of members will form consortia to acquire suitable vehicles, under the direction of the Committee. Full details will be circulated nearer the date, but in the meantime groups could organise themselves and be ready to act when the time comes.

This year's Annual General Meeting will be held at Whitehead on Saturday 25th November. It is hoped to run an AGM special using Jeep No.4 and coach 861 from Whitehead to Belfast (York Road) and back on the afternoon of the AGM. Full details, booking forms, etc., later. Arrangements are being made to provide an evening meal in Whitehead.

Topics under discussion or negotiation include the tenure of Sallins shed, railtour fares and the possibility of running steam on a regular basis in collaboration with other bodies.

Approved expenditure in the period was:

Re-metalling of No.171's boxes	£50
Repairs to No.171's old tender	£15
Fence for Whitehead	£250
Insurance on Sallins shed	£63

LOCOMOTIVE REPORT

P.A. Scott

Work has continued apace with the restoration and repair of our engines. When one road (No.4) into the new (but as yet roofless) shed became available on 13th July, some re-shunting of our stock meant that No.171, minus tender, could at last be moved inside and the driving axleboxes examined. The engine was lifted sufficiently by means of hydraulic jacks for the axleboxes to be removed. Both boxes required re-metalling, and this work was done by Harland & Wolff. No.171's axleboxes differ from the other engines in that the brasses are cast into the boxes and cannot be removed. Ideally the brasses would have been recast, but as this would have been a very expensive job, Harland & Wolff suggested building up a complete white metal surface using a new hard grade of metal. One advantage of this method is that running-in of the bearings should not take so long, although how the white metal will withstand the continual punishment of such highly stressed bearings can only appear with time.

The sponges had been destroyed when the boxes ran hot, and new sponges were obtained from the Armstrong Oiler Company of York, who supplied the originals to the GNR(I). With the repaired boxes and new sponges in place, the engine was finally jacked down in mid-October. All the boiler fittings have been replaced, and the Painting Department has begun a long programme of external restoration. It is intended that the engine will be steam tested shortly, and work will proceed with fitting new gland packing and rectifying the vacuum brake.

The old tender (No.12) from "Sieve Gullion" is in the process of being reconditioned to take up active service again. The reasons for this are twofold: first, there is reason to believe that the big tender (No.31) is causing the engine to ride roughly; and second, the small tender looks very much better. The big tender will be retained in working order, in case required for a railtour with limited stops.

Having spent most of the summer on No.171, the Loco Dept is turning its attention to another large job. The engine involved is the faithful No.186 and the job is the retubing of her boiler and other general repairs. The latter includes replacement of the firehole ring rivets, repairs to the barrel front tubeplate joint, re-tapping of some washout holes and renewal of the firebars. In addition, the retubing will involve removal and replacement of the blastpipe and brick arch - in all a very full winter's work.

No.186 returned to Whitehead on 7th October (or to be strictly correct, early on the morning of Sunday 8th) hauling the recently required coach 861. The engine immediately occupied the left-hand road in the new shed (No.3) which had been completed during the preceding weeks. The first jobs tackled were routine cleaning of the smokebox and ashpan. It is worth digressing to make the point that such straightforward jobs assumed remarkable proportions when the engine was on her travels; usually it involved a number of the loco staff travelling specially to Sallins on a Sunday - the five-hour shift put in by six members at Limerick the night before the North Kerry Tour immediately comes to mind.

Indeed, No.186's eighteen-month sojourn in the South has brought home to the Loco Department just how essential is a running shed with proper facilities. Without this, and without a team of Society personnel prepared to learn and practice the highest standards of locomotive management, the Society would have difficulty carrying on at present and an active future could not be contemplated.

Professional railwaymen both retired and serving who are prepared to give us practical help are worth

their weight in gold, but with the demise of steam from the railways such men are hard to find. Just how much on our own we are with regard to engine maintenance is not fully appreciated by certain of our members; I have heard arguments from people who throw up their hands in horror at the very thought of amateurs so much as touching a steam engine. (I have never heard this argument from a railwayman.) To those members I would say, who is going to maintain the engines in (say) five years time, when it is so difficult to obtain professional help now? The ghosts of the steam fitters of Adelaide and Dundalk may wish No.171 well, but something more practical than this is unfortunately required.

My policy over the last two years has been to build up Whitehead into a well-equipped workshop, where maintenance and light overhaul work can be undertaken expeditiously, and where the knowledge and expertise necessary to maintain locomotives can continue. At all times we have been in consultation with the engineering department of Northern Ireland Railways, with Harland & Wolff and also with railway engineers and tradesmen, sometimes retired, who have special knowledge of our engines.

The 'Teresso 85' oil was used on No.186 during the "Eblana" tour and proved very successful, as also was its use with No.3 during the summer. The same, however, could not be said for the poor coal which led to a lamentable performance by No.186 on the "Eblana".

Good quality locomotive steam coal is not readily available in Éire, and up until now we have arranged to get by using the best and most convenient alternative. The quality varies unpredictably from one load of coal to next, and after the "Eblana" experience, definite attempts will be made to provide a better grade.

Turning to our tank engines now, No.4 is at present being prepared for a short proving run on the Larne line. Most of the work is concerned with small jobs on the steam brake, cylinder glands, smokebox self-cleaning screens and the bogie springs.

The Guinness engine has shown no further trouble with hot boxes and was well able to work the complete Sunday Trains programme without having to call on No.27 which last worked on the Steam Gala day. The Derry engine (LP&HC No.3) has had several tubes and tube stoppers removed in preparation for partial retubing - the tubes for this job came with the loco. All the fittings for this engine are now in store at Whitehead (including Ramsbottom safety valves, which make her unique amongst our engines). The restoration of "R.H. Smyth" is not a priority job although even in her present state she proved popular with our Sunday visitors, if only as a reminder of the amount of work that has already been put into the other engines.

SITE REPORT

A.H.J. Glendinning

Most site work carried out since the last report has been concerned with the installation of a point at the end of the platform road and the laying of the track into shed road No.3. Although this involved us in an entirely new task, we appear to have mastered it successfully - only a few short years ago this job would have been considered far beyond our capabilities but the school of experience is a good teacher. The laying out of sliding chairs, the splicing of sleepers to form crossing timbers, the positioning of check rails and aligning curves are simple enough in 4mm or 7mm scale modelling but it's an entirely different league when dealing with the real thing.

Lack of finance has caused some projects to be shelved for the time being at least. The biggest job which should have been tackled this winter is the provision of a roof for our new shed extension, but the funds available just would not cover this, hence the shed will have to remain roofless and with the temporary doors still in use for a little longer. Smaller projects planned for the winter included the provision of a concrete floor in the new shed and the laying of another point and No.5 shed road.

The arrival of our first coach and the prospect of others in the near future have caused the Committee to

feel that the funds available for the site work would be best spent on a vandal-proof fence which would protect our stock from window-breakers and other attackers. The fence runs from the stables along the hedge to the platform ends - the trackwork, of course, being provided with gates - and then from the opposite side of the lines to a point a little behind the water tower and from there to the side of the old shed. The portion between the new shed and the stables is to be provided with another gate. The fence is eight foot high, supported with concrete posts and topped with barbed wire.



Transverse jacking of "R.H. Smyth" onto the rails at Whitehead with the "Guinness" in attendance on 10th June 1972. (W.S. Boomer)

Other work carried out on the site has included the breaking of a doorway between the old and new sheds and making the doorway secure with a metal-sheeted door. The washing facilities have been further improved using redundant materials, while another plumbing job was carried out on the water tower pumps to cure the once prevalent air locking (not a convenient flaw to attend to during a busy Steam Gala or annual boiler inspection day). One job as yet still on the drawing board is the building of a new weedsprayer from standard water pipe fittings.

During the summer we introduced a Site Foreman who had the important task of seeing to it that the work goes smoothly each day and that the manpower available is put to the best and most productive use. The Foreman's duty is carried out by a different member each month and his work has eased the 'supervisory' task of both the Site Officer and the Loco Maintenance Officer.

Towards the end of the summer, Belfast Harbour Commissioners kindly let us have track and other materials (including tramway pointwork) made redundant at the Harbour.

The area between the platform and the access road has been greatly improved by the works being carried out by the local Council who are converting the space to playing fields - our approaches now give a much better impression to visitors.

A sub-committee is at present doing some long-term planning for the future development of the site. There has been a very welcome influx of new blood on the site work parties and we are hopeful that the position will improve - why not come down and see for yourself some weekend?

PUBLICITY REPORT

John A. Friel

Work in this department of the Society has been directed at two distinct groups, railway enthusiasts, and the general public. Enthusiast-type publicity entails reports on Society progress, advertising railtours and recruiting new members. The material directed at the general public is aimed at spreading the name of the Society and advertising events such as the Steam Gala or the Summer Sunday Train rides.

While we can spend any available funds very quickly on handouts, posters, etc., very often the best publicity is that which we receive free of charge. A good example of this was the space Irish Times correspondent Basil Patterson devoted to our tours this year; a short article before each tour brought a last minute rush of non-member bookings. Other gratis publicity was obtained in radio and television interviews which greatly contributed to the success of our Steam Gala but we must single out the Carrickfergus Advertiser for their kindness in giving us a large, free advertisement just before the Gala.

The "North Kerry" proved a difficult tour to advertise as the starting point was 200 miles from our centre of operations. We were pleased to have two BBC reporters on the train, both of whom have their own programmes on railways on Radio Brighton and Blackburn. Both gave us extensive coverage and the Radio Blackburn reporter returned to cover the Steam Gala.

Before the Gala, we looked into television advertising. However, as four seven-second advertisements (with fifteen words only) would cost £80, we reverted to seven hundred day-glow posters at a cost of £50. This was the only money spent on advertising; radio and television interviews and paper articles did the rest.

When it came to advertising the Sunday Trains, our friends in Esso produced one thousand car stickers free of charge. I would like to express our sincere thanks to Esso for their generous donation.

Regular news reports on the Society are sent to an ever-increasing number of railway magazines and publications (so many, in fact, that it's financially impossible for me to buy all the publications in order to judge the response - for instance it was only a chance purchase at Grosmont that brought the "European Railways" mention of the arrival of "R.H. Smyth" to our notice).

News reports are also supplied to the local press when the occasion presents itself, but one must be careful. We could gain all the publicity we want if we indulged in gimmicks or misleading headlines such as: "RPSI to run steam on GN main line next summer - if they can raise the £16,000 needed". However, a Society such as ours relies on the goodwill of various bodies, not least the railway companies, and we must be responsible in our statements, even if it makes (in newspaper terms) duller reading.

The ways of the popular press are sometimes strange. A Belfast press photographer appeared at our site one Sunday, but after an hour he had taken no photographs and departed. Sure enough, the Monday edition of his paper carried a picture of a suitably undressed young lady on the beach at Whitehead.

Black and white prints of RPSI tours, engines or events of any sort are invaluable for publicity purposes. You can help the Society by sending me prints (preferably half-plate size).

Please keep the recruitment of new members in mind.

The “North Kerry” tour will long be remembered as one of our most successful - especially, I should imagine, by those who ‘braved’ (as it probably seemed to some of them) over 400 miles of road travel to join it.

I always opposed didactic chronicling of railtours in Five Foot Three; suffice it to mention a few ‘highlights’ as they appeared to me: the exceptional care lavished on the engine in Limerick by both CIÉ personnel and our members. (E.L. Ahrons once gave it as his view that the Daoini Beaga [*little people*] had a lot to do with the completion of the Foynes branch - can it be that they are still active in the area?); the confident climb of Barnagh in both directions; the re-introduction (in one case, the FIRST introduction) of steam to so many lines which until recently seemed out of reach; that hairsbreadth run round at Castleisland; the lively snippet of running on the main Kerry Road.

The tour was surprisingly free from the last-minute panic which has brought so many of our tours near to disaster. The “Royal Meath” and the “Sieve Gullion” spring to mind, but there were others. All the vicissitudes were, as it happened, concerned with promotion. Things were at a very low ebb in February when pressure to cancel was strong, and would have prevailed but for the stand made by Bob Edwards. Somehow the tide of fortune seemed to turn after that; British bookings in particular came in encouragingly and were probably responsible for a grant of £60 from Bord Failte.

Then there was the exciting telegram to John Friel from Killarney (originating from the BBC). We followed this up by press releases and gained much welcome publicity in the tour area, whither we sent posters, prospectuses, booking forms and tickets.

Leslie McAllister, now our official representative over there, was slogging away, winning more bookings for us in Britain.

In the circumstances it was decided to play down in the Republic the ultimate provenance of the tour; this placed a heavy burden on Sam Carse. A somewhat similar plan had paid off on our “St. Manntan” tour for which Sam handled about half of the total bookings. Another notable success of his this time was a detailed advance notice in Quidnunc’s column in the Irish Times. An exact reproduction of one of our press releases also appeared (albeit somewhat belatedly) in CIÉ Nuacht. Afterwards the tour was racyly recalled in Mr. B. Patterson’s article in the Irish Times and factually in both Nuacht and the Cork Evening Echo.

It is noteworthy that none of these accounts contained the slightest trace of condescension, or suggestion that the running of steam railtours was immature, anachronistic or eccentric.

Coaching is always a problem. I am always unwilling to overload No.186, and look for the maximum number of passengers per tare ton. So I was dismayed to learn at one stage that we were to have four bogies over Barnagh. I remembered Jim Hehir falling to 5 mph up this bank on No.168 with only a slightly heavier load on a GAA special. Fortunately, in the event, only three bogies could be spared - as I had expected (and suggested) one further bogie (a Craven) off the 10:45 ex Heuston was used to strengthen the train for the Fenit trip.

In case passengers were surprised at the somewhat ragged nature of the tour in the initial stages - the two men to whom I had delegated the responsibility for dealing with accommodation were unable to travel, so that I was distracted by having to cope with a number of last minute bookings and cancellations.

The omission of the Rathkeale stop was due to a misunderstanding but perhaps the improved arrangements at Askeaton atoned for it.

During much of the trip John Friel was busy assessing the reactions of cross-channel passengers. His investigations show that the facilities permitted to us by CIÉ and NIR are likely to ensure undiminished

support for our tours in spite of the re-introduction of steam on British Rail.

Unfortunately, an over-simplified statement to the effect that the tour lost £100 has appeared in the Summer News Sheet. In fact, if fund-raising on the tour and the Bord Failte grant are taken into account, the tour broke even.

Railtours are run in an attempt to recreate the days when you could book to any station in the knowledge that you would be travelling behind steam. Fund-raising is not by any means their primary object. Yet given the commitments which the Society has at present it is extremely undesirable that a tour should run, or APPEAR to run, at a loss.

One obvious money-spinner on a tour is the souvenir brochure which makes a profit of many hundreds of percent, because it is produced by volunteer labour. The "North Kerry" was an obvious case for a brochure. However, late bookings postponed the date of decision on the tour until it was too late to produce a brochure. This deprived us of £20 - £30.

Next time a tour is announced, BOOK for it. If it's cancelled, you'll be reimbursed in full. If you can't go, your money will be refunded up to within a week of the tour. If illness is the reason, you can claim a refund up to the last minute. DON'T WAIT.

The position beyond the "Eblana" is obscure. One rough rule that might be laid down is that: (a) All the light axle load lines are on CIÉ (though the Belfast Central, etc., might be an addition to these in the future). Therefore No.186 should return to Sallins. (b) One would expect No.4, when restored, to be reliable so she could presumably run from Belfast to Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Waterford, Tralee, Sligo, and perhaps Westport and Galway. (c) Till No.171 proves herself, she might go no further than Derry or Dundalk, but could in time be an alternative to No.4. (d) At some stage No.4 might replace No.186 for a while at Sallins to enable the latter to reach Derry and Bangor.

Two engines are out, because of crewing on NIR and cost on CIÉ.

A question mark hangs over Northern tours at the moment.

By the way, I see from a recent CIÉ circular, that there are now NO TRAINS AT ALL between Newcastle West and Abbeyfeale. How wise were those who booked on the "North Kerry" tour!

PAINT SHOP

Craig Robb

I very much welcome this opportunity of reporting on the recent activities in, as well as pleading the cause of, the Paint Department so far as it exists, especially now that the Society's locomotive stud has increased in numbers and because the acquisition of a collection of coaches is at last becoming a practical possibility, with all the problems that entails.

Paint is one of our greatest aids to preservation; not only is it the means whereby our vehicles are revealed in all their majestic beauty to the delight of all, but it also provides our main protection against the ravages of rust and rot. However, unless the paint is applied with sufficient care and the surfaces to which it is applied are correctly prepared, its properties are greatly impaired and both durability and appearance suffer as a result. Great strides have been made in paint technology involving the use of completely new processes and materials such as epoxy resins, polyurethane and chlorinated rubbers.

Unfortunately these modern types of paints require rather critical conditions involving a high degree of cleanliness and the control of air temperature and humidity if they are to cure successfully, and this fact has so far prevented the Society from taking full advantage of their possibilities. It is to be hoped that we shall be able to make use of them, where advantageous, in the future. Manufacturers have been most generous in presenting us with conventional type paints for our engines; for instance a year ago the local firm Messrs. Samuel Courtney Ltd gave us a substantial quantity of coach gloss and undercoat

for No.171, and earlier this year we were given several gallons of black heat resisting paint, as well as paint remover, for use on the Jeep, by Messrs Wailes Dove Bitumastic Ltd of Hebburn, Co. Durham.

These acts of generosity have been indeed greatly appreciated, as such expensive items would otherwise have caused our bank balance great injury. It has recently become apparent that the main loco shed is quite unsuitable for painting, not only because of the accumulation of soot which has been gathering on the roof timbers with successive steamings. The various trade winds which wend their way through the building soon ensure that all upward facing surfaces are covered with a layer of grit and the results of this when mixed with fresh paint can be imagined. This problem has been particularly noticeable with the top of the Jeep's boiler. Excellent progress with the new shed is therefore being watched with much relish by the Paint Department members, because they have been promised the use of one of the roads therein. With the installation of polythene screens and suitable lighting and perhaps provision for heating in cold weather the creation of a very satisfactory Paint Shop is possible in the not too distant future.

During the last winter a start was made on making presentable some of the more horrible parts of the Jeep, but because of her size and the lack of manpower available, the amount of work completed was somewhat limited. To begin with, vast quantities of greasy filth ('glar') were removed from the frames and motion by Stewart Ryan who stuck to his job with extraordinary tenacity, and seemed to gain considerable pleasure into the bargain! The results of his splendid effort certainly speak for themselves. The cab front, boiler and side tank tops and smokebox and chimney were also dealt with, the latter items having previously been repaired by the Loco Dept so that some filling was necessary. What was left of the paint on all these areas was found to be in very poor condition so it was decided that cleaning down to the metal was the only answer. This proved to be a most laborious operation, keeping three or four people busy for seven or eight Saturdays, but was considered worthwhile as quite a smooth finish was achieved. One coat of red oxide and five undercoats were followed by a coat of gloss before work had to be suspended with the onset of the steaming season. The tops of the water tanks were treated with Bitumen paint to combat the fairly extensive corrosion, especially at the rear end, no doubt due to the engine trimming by the stern. Cleaning down the smokebox was also a tedious operation involving removal of some very rough and very hard old paint which almost defied all attempts at shifting it, in fact a power grinder was even called into the fight at times. Several members lent a hand with this job from time to time and their help was much appreciated. Finally, the rough parts round the newly welded chimney and smokebox sides were filled and rubbed down and the whole was given a coat of British Paints Apexior No.3 paint, which seems to last quite well on hot surfaces.

Our main priority during this coming winter will undoubtedly be the restoration of No.171's paintwork as she may be able to participate in tours again next year following the heavy repairs carried out recently. We obviously would not wish her to appear in public in her present sorry state. Her plating seems to have been covered with loose joints which, until recently, threatened to ruin her appearance altogether, but fortunately Peter Scott and his trusty welding torch have since come to the rescue. For example, the splasher were very loose and the cab looser; this naturally broke up much of the filler put in by Harland & Wolff during the overhaul and caused the paint to flake off. One particular source of trouble was the fact that the upper half of the cab was made portable to facilitate the removal of the boiler and firebox, being joined to the lower half by a horizontal bolted seam. This arrangement seems to have been common to all Great Northern tender locos in spite of the tendency for this joint to work loose, resulting in the very unsightly break in the cab side sheeting familiar in many photographs. However, the chances of a boiler renewal are by now rather remote so that the welding of this and all other joints should put an end to this trouble.

Added to all this is the fact that the engine has lain out in all weathers for many months. Much replacement of filler will be necessary before repainting can begin, so there should be no lack of work

in getting this engine respectable once more.

As a matter of interest, we do have a set of GNR(I) coats of arms for the splasher. I understand that restoration of the old tender is contemplated, so it will require painting also.

As well as all this we will have the twelve-wheel coach (recently purchased) to contend with, but it is a somewhat unknown quantity at present and will require a thorough survey before work can begin. Then if there is still some time to spare, there is always the Jeep to keep us occupied.

Unfortunately, by the time the Society acquires vehicles they are usually in a pretty dilapidated state and on account of their size alone the task of restoring them fully is a formidable one, especially when one considers that a full day's work at Whitehead every Saturday for six months only amounts to the equivalent of about five weeks in terms of factory hours. It is therefore absolutely essential that we increase our workforce if any progress is to be made at all, and so this article must be both a progress report and an appeal for volunteers. If you feel that you would like to help with the restoration of engines (or coaches when we get them) please do not hesitate to offer your service - you will be most welcome and you will perhaps learn a new and useful skill. We are all relative beginners when it comes to painting so we may consider it worth while organising a course of practical lectures to be given by a professional painter if the demand justifies this. Painting should also appeal to those members who, like myself, are not particularly mechanically minded; it should be possible to build up a skilled and experienced team capable of producing a really excellent job fairly quickly. It should be remembered, however, that frequently more hours are spent on the less pleasant jobs such as scraping and cleaning than on the actual application of paint, so everyone should be prepared to 'muck in' with every type of job.

The painting season normally lasts from mid-September to mid-May, thus phasing in with the period when engines, etc., are most likely to be at work and so a detailed programme of each winter's work must be drawn up and adhered to as closely as possible - time is never on our side. However, if No.171, No.4 and No.186 and all the other engines as well as coaches are to be restored to the appearance we all want to see, and if we are to enhance our reputation in this respect there is no alternative to an all-out effort by as many members as possible. So please therefore come along any Saturday, preferably in the morning or early afternoon. There will be plenty for you to do and you never know, you might even enjoy it.

Finally, I would like to put on record my appreciation of the help that has been given by various members during last winter, principally Stewart Ryan, Nelson Poots, Paul Newell and Ernie Gilmore. I fervently hope that some of those who lent a hand from time to time will be tempted once again in the coming painting season.

THE ALMIGHTY ENTERPRISE

Willie McDonnell

In the steam days in CIÉ we had in our conditions of service a Clause 14. This provided for Spare Link drivers and firemen, for eight hours, to work anything that might be called in that period. If nothing turned up and you were not advised for a turn of duty for the following day, you held yourself in readiness on Clause 14 at the expiration of the rest period from the termination of the first period of Clause 14.

On a bright June Monday morning, I (then a fireman on the Spare Link at Cork) was waiting orders from 08:00. The rest of the family being away on holiday, I had the house to myself and a day's painting was all nicely planned for the day, knowing there was another fireman (Clause 14) from 10:00 and a further one at 12:00 noon.

Came 11:00 hours and I decided my luck was in. I would have a snack and get on with my paint job as it appeared I could safely assume that the later men on Clause 14 would now be called out for anything

that offered. But no, about halfway through my meal, the doorbell rang and there was the call boy with a note advising me to book on duty at 12:45 and work the 13:15 "Enterprise" to Amiens Street, as the regular fireman had "heeled up" (i.e. gone off ill).

Now I've said before that, as a result of the harrowing tales of desperate trials and tribulations attached to the firing of 800 class locos told to us by the regular passenger link firemen in the messroom and received by us less experienced bodies in awed attention and, mind you, that was just on ordinary everyday passenger bookings - but the "Enterprise", that was fit only for supermen. A novice at the game, such as yours truly, was taking his life in his hands going on a job like that.

Somehow or other I got my case packed (for this was a double home turn, lodging away in Inchicore Dormitory), forgot about painting and made my way with reluctant footsteps to the shed at Glanmire, booked on duty, endeavouring to appear nonchalant, and came face to face with the man-eating 802.

Mounting the footplate, I stowed my case and coat in the 'grub box' locker, checked the supply of oils for the journey, was assured by the men who had prepared the loco that all was in order and, a few minutes later, was joined on the footplate by the late Driver Mossie Teahan who seemed in no way daunted by the presence on his footplate of a lesser being like a Spare Link fireman.

Having warned the cleaners, putting a final touch to Tailte's gleaming exterior, to stand clear, we moved up to the central column and topped up the tank for the run to Limerick Junction, blew for the road and moved slowly, majestically out of the loco yard around the back of the station into the tunnel and then back over the crossover to couple to our seven bogies at No.5 platform.

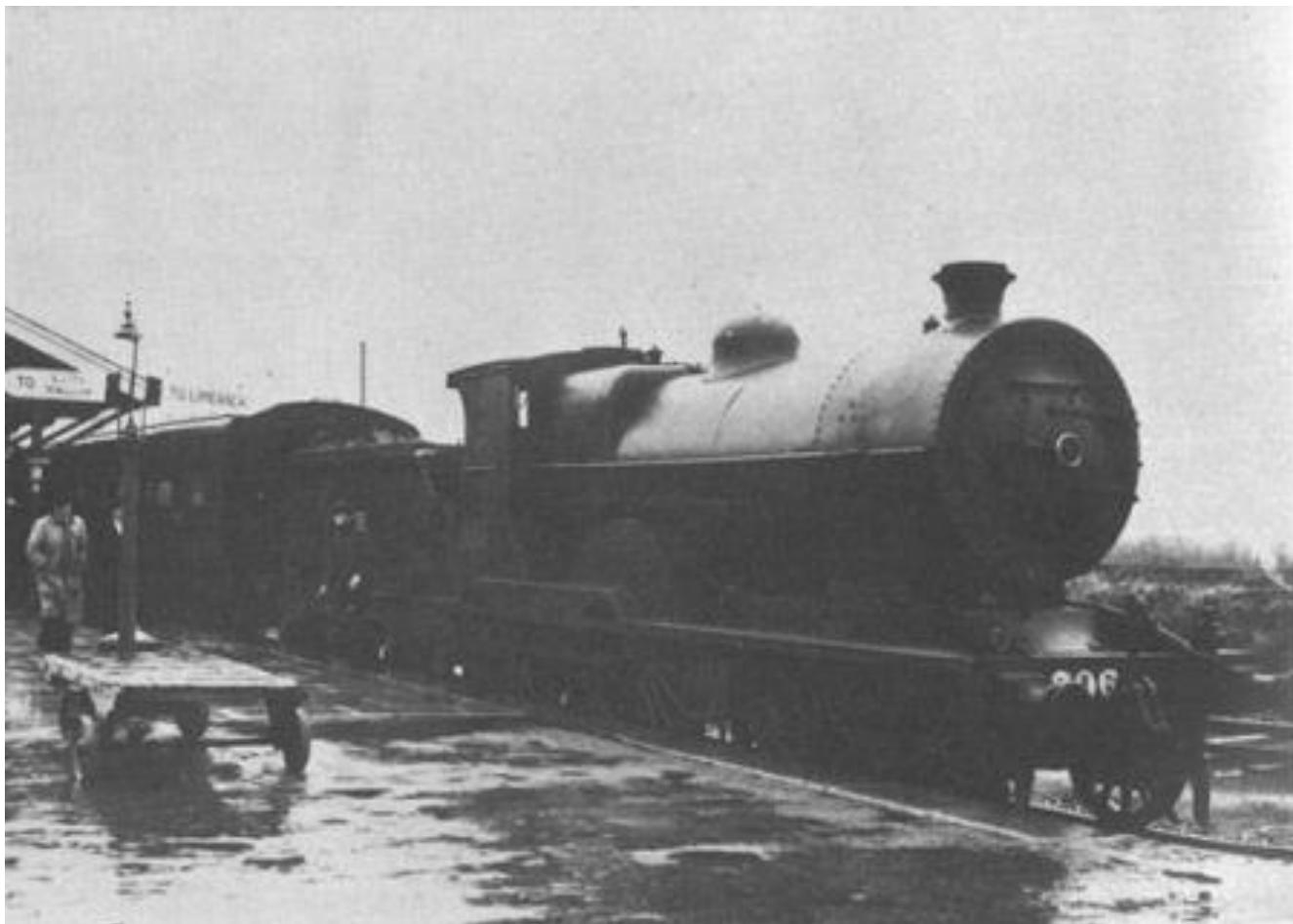
Ten minutes to go. Don't let her blow off at the safety valves. Don't have the boiler too full. Pull yourself together Mac, the noose is round your neck but they haven't sprung the trap yet. Whistles blow on the platform. Yes there's the green flag. In the most confident voice you can produce you say, "Right away mate". A shrill blast of her whistle, a dozen disdainful jets of steam from the cylinder cocks before you close them and 802 is gliding effortlessly away from the platform. Two more sharp toots on the whistle and you are plunged into the dark cavern of Cork Tunnel. Still trying on the nonchalant bit, you reach down and start to pull out the fire picker to close the fire in the time-honoured tradition but, before you can get the picker out, a mild voice from the other side of the cab says, "Don't bother your ass boy, she's all right." Stymied. What does one do now? What would a No.1 Link man do? You can't see the pressure gauge, you can see nothing in the stygian darkness on that footplate (the firedoor is shut tight so that not a splink of light escapes). Only one bright spot, gradually disappearing as the exhaust fills the tunnel. The tunnel seems never ending. You wonder what's happening up there on the steam gauge though the steady beat of the exhaust continues to chant, "Anything you can do, I can do better."

And suddenly you are out of the gloom and into the bright June afternoon. Your eyes are immediately on the steam gauge. God she's back below 200 psi. An instinctive grab for the picker is again forestalled by the calm reiteration from Mossie Teahan. "She's all right boy." Maybe if I fire a round of the box it would give me a chance to see what's happening in the firebox. And you reach for the handle of the fire shovel. But no, this time Mossie advises, "Sit down and take your ease, she's all right." What the hell, I'm only an ornament - not a very attractive one - on this footplate. Try to keep your eyes off the steam gauge. A half-hearted wave to the signalman in Kilbarry Box and 802 thunders by, accelerating on the near level through Kilbarry Yard, and hurls herself at the curving climb up the Lawntees, picks up again over Shaw's bridge and heads for the cutting. Now a fresh horror assails you - the water level has dropped below the top of the glass, dropping almost imperceptibly but inexorably as the sand in an hour glass. And the steam pressure - Oh Lord! 175!

A wave of hate for that calm unconcerned man on the far side. If only he'd look out over the side sheet or go asleep or something. Give me one go with the picker, that's all I ask. But he just sits there like a

sphinx, calm, imperturbable while you have to suffer mental torture. If this is firing an 800, the No.1 men are welcome to it. The humiliation of it. I'm just a blooming statue. Blooming awful.

Then Rathpeacon and the top of the worst of the Cork Bank hoves in view. Ah, he'll surely ease off and pull her up a bit. But the demon over there doesn't seem to notice, just flows ahead and now, with her boiler on an even keel, the water level is down to a half glass. Acceleration is very rapid now. On up through Blarney - and rushing round the curve for Waterloo and a fairly level approach to Ballymartin.



D12 class 4-4-0 No.306 at Limerick Junction on 10:50am Waterford-Limerick train. (Photographer Unknown)

Wham, he's shut off steam, the water almost disappears from the gauge glass. You lunge for the injector to get a drop in the parched boiler. But you never make it. Can't the man say anything but, "She's all right"? And, having said it, he opens up steam again. Yes, even in that very brief respite, she has recovered some pressure and opening the regulator has brought the water back up the glass again, but what's the use, you know you're heading for disaster. He'll burn her, the plugs are bound to go and then it's kingdom come for both of us.

But somehow she holds out and with an exhaust purring like a high-power motor cycle, she sweeps on through Rathduff, round the double curves, the short cutting and you are heading for the Ivy Bridge.

And suddenly sanity returns to Mossie Teahan, and he says, "Stick on your one now," nodding to the injector, and a second later puts on his own and with a single movement slaps the regulator shut. You look on the scene. Is the meniscus just showing at the bottom of the glass or is it a mirage? The pressure is hopeless, a puny 150. A wonder the brake hasn't dropped.

Rocketing down Mallow bank you wait for the crack of doom that will announce the fusible plug's resignation to the inevitable. Seconds tick away and you realise the water is creeping ever so slowly up the gauge glass and the pressure is holding steady.

Down through Mourne Abbey and on for the top of Gould's Hill and the distant for Killarney Junction. It's clear. Mossie shuts off his injector and, in a few seconds, signals to you to shut off yours.

Can't be more than a couple of inches in that glass and, as you thunder across the Blackwater Viaduct, there he's opening the regulator again. He's even wasting more steam by holding that whistle open as you race for Mallow station and whip through.

And then when you feel you're doomed to a death ride with a maniac, Mossie's quiet voice says, "You can close over the fire now boy."

You need no second bidding. The long picker is out and into the firebox in the flicker of an eyelid. Will there be any fire to close? Amazement floods over you and relief puts strength in your arms. There's a good solid fire. She mustn't have burned a pound from Cork. And better still she's sailing around. The time glass has gone into reverse and the pressure is beginning to soar before, panting, you get that red hot picker out of the firebox and back into its pocket along the right hand running plate.

Why the Hell couldn't he let me do that leaving Cork. As if reading your thoughts, Mossie beckons you over and explains, "That fire was made up only half an hour ago, or less, before we got her and it's no use trying to close over a black fire, you'd only ruin it."

Then he instructs you to put on your injector and when it's working to ease back the steam feed until a dribble comes from the waste water pipe and then just open again enough to stop the dribble.

The wintry depression lifts off your mind and June is back again. Pressure has risen to 210 even against the feed of the injector and Mossie says, "Fire away now, do what you like with her." He couldn't have pleased you more if he'd put a £5 note in your hand.

You get to work very carefully and you become so engrossed that you don't notice Mossie easing the regulator and pulling up the reversing wheel. You don't even notice Two Pot House flit by. Before you know it you spot the distant for Buttevant clear and you realise that you have been neglecting to keep an eye on the road.

But very quickly you adjust. Fire a round of the box, keeping the fire well up under the door and being very cagey about what you lash out under the arch. Then look out through the side window for the crossing and to get a lungful of air; and so it goes on. Gradually you realise that this is no evil man-eating monster but an amiable giant. And she's steady as a rock. Queer, you hadn't noticed that before. And that strange resemblance to a motorcycle in the exhaust. The tension is lifting and you begin to feel you weren't such an idiot in joining the Loco Dept after all.

Down through Charleville, up again heading for and through Kilmallock, on for Knocklong and Emly. Fire, look out, brush up the footboards, an odd squirt of water from the hose to keep down the dust (you know from previous experience that Mossie dislikes dust). You are actually feeling happy.

Then Mossie beckons you over again and says, "We'll have the grub in the Junction, the lads will have the tea made." (A quick glance at the watch.) "We'll have a good eleven minutes."

And as we top the Junction bank, the wild gallop becomes a canter, a trot and finally a sedate glide under the bridge, past the South cabin and up almost to the North Cabin where we come to a gentle stop and a smart reverse to the platform.

Up on the tender, back to the tank filler. Whoa as we come level with the column, willing hands pass up the column bag, the support rack clanks up in position, you shout "Right" and a split second you delay to see the end of the bag remains in the filler, then back past two stalwarts already hard at it

filling the bunker, and swing down on the footplate where the driver of the 12:00 passenger ex Cork has taken charge of operations and says, "Get your cup and bahts" (a Cork expression for sandwiches). "Mossie has the can over on the boxes."

You certainly comply and join your mate, sitting on the line of Drivers' safeboxes that, in those times, bordered the wall of the Telegraph Office, and eat your sandwiches and gratefully swallow down a couple of cups of good loco tea.



*J9 class 0-6-0 No.352 leaving Ballybroy on 20th April 1954 on Kildare-Cork goods.
(A. Donaldson)*

Meanwhile the firemen from the 12:00 noon Passenger and the Junction pilot are busy with feeders oiling the three Walshaerts motions of 802. This co-operative action began spontaneously with the introduction of the Dublin-Cork stage of the "Enterprise" and continued till the regretted demise of that link between North and south. It was typical of the brotherhood that existed among locomen in steam days. We might have our internal rows from time to time but a locoman in trouble or in need of help didn't even need to ask for support or assistance, it was there unbidden. The spirit exists today but is not as intense as in those good old steam days.

The usual thing with the "Enterprise" was for the driver ex Cork, or Dublin, to pull up four or five minutes on the schedule to Limerick Junction. There with the seven minutes allowed, he would then have eleven minutes for a bite and a sup, thanks to the co-operation of his fellow footplatemen.

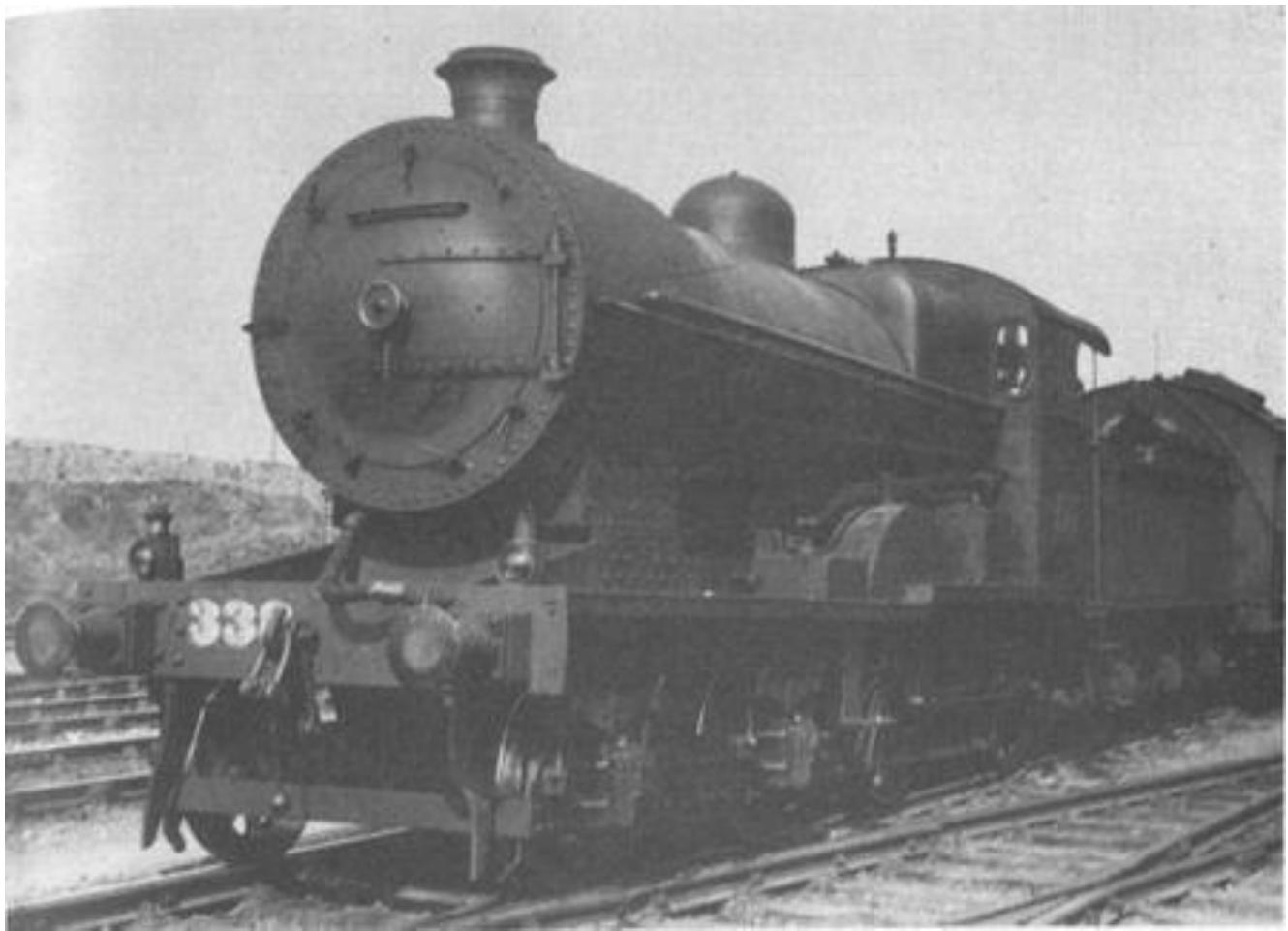
It's funny, you know, as I sat there on that safebox in Limerick Junction, chewing a sandwich and sipping tea, a strange transformation took place in 802. Gone was the malevolent monster that dragged me from home and paintbrush in Cork and in its place stood a beautiful machine, maybe not as lovely as in 1939-1941 when cleaning had been par excellence and the paint work of a hue never after matched in Inchicore's paint shops, but a lovely machine for all that.

We mounted the footplate again, for my part with a lot more confidence. I felt the worst was over, and

indeed it was.

Within seconds Mossie got the green flag and with a piercing blast on the whistle he grasped the regulator and opened steam and we pulled out onto the Up Main heading for Amiens Street. I closed the cylinder cocks (always opened when you were standing for any time at a station) and turned to take stock of the situation. Pressure somewhere around 210 and the water just showing in the top of the gauge glass.

This time Mossie made no comment when I took out the picker and closed the fire. But this time the response to the closing of the fire was not so immediate as it had been after passing Mallow. My heart began to sink again. She was playing me up. There was a moment of indecision while I pondered whether to fire a round of the box and maybe close the fire again. Then I decided to let her take her own time. And for once I was right. By the time we ran over Ballyrobin and galloped for Dundrum, she began to respond and after checking the signals for Dundrum, I turned in and took the shovel and got down to the routine that had brought success on the run from Mallow and soon the injector was humming away like a contented bumble bee and the rhythm of the work settled down to the old pattern.



D3 class 4-4-0 No.338 at Islandbridge c. 1950. (A. Donaldson)

Mossie warned me against losing water at the waste pipe of the injector and I gave a glance down at the polished copper 2½" pipe which protruded slightly from behind the steps on my side of the footplate each time I stuck my head out for a breath of air or to check a signal.

We swept down through Dundrum and Bishopswood gates and in full flight around the gentle left-hand curve through Goold's Cross with the remains of the Cashel Branch trailing off on the right and headed

for Johnny Lochlan's Bank. 802 didn't seem to know there was a bank there at all and we were soon heading down past Thurles Junction and the Beet Sugar Factory and through Thurles station with a wave to the lads on the Pilot there, 306 or 309 as far as I can remember.

We struck a cool patch again after passing Thurles and I began to have doubts again about the behaviour of our gallant steed. Closing over the fire again with the picker, I found the fire had become heavy in the front of the box and kept my firing to the back corners and under the door for a spell and things began to improve. Loughmoe Castle, Templemore, Knockcaha Bank fled by under Tailte's wheels and now before us were the clear signals of Lisduff, the big ballast crusher on the right and a 369 class on a hopper train in the siding and the late Jack (Hacksaw) Hayes beaming at us over the side of the cab, and a lazy line of buckets gliding through the air on the cable from the quarry to the very spruce looking J15 (must be fresh from the shops), with two nondescript bogies and an ancient six wheel brake second in the bay behind the high cabin.

Mossie has taken a furtive glance at his watch and a hefty pull on the regulator as we rush the short sharp climb out of Bally. The murmur of the exhaust changes to some South American rhythm, barking out, "You know your life will begin the very moment you're in Argentina," in tones that could be heard in Rio. But soon we're past the broken bridge and over the top and Mossie eases off to a whisper as we speed down the long side of Bally Bank round the curve and on a slightly increased regulator head for Mountrath. There's a sleeper train with a 354 class loco on the Down line to relieve the somnolent air of the little station. You wave, but the footplate is as deserted as the rest of the station appears to be.

A bit of collar work brings you through Clonkeen and you face the long run into Portlaoise (we still called it Maryboro' then). This run in always typified "So near and yet so far" to me. I always found the distance to that station deceptive to the eye. But soon you're speeding through. There's the Pilot, 338, down below you near the goods store shunting a rake of wagons and she gives a derisive fit of slipping as you pass.

Heavy going again out of Portlaoise and along for Straboe, Killeen, Carn Bridge where you can look over to the right and see the spire of Coolbanagher church up in the wood on the hill and Emo church in the valley below. A string of overbridges and Mossie has shut off and easing the speed to a sedate 40 mph and we glide gently through Portarlington with its towering signal box and broad expanse between the platforms to allow for the middle road.

Picking up again on the long sweeping right hand curve we power away up to Tirkogue cutting and soon we're racing for Monasterevan, with its canal crossing the river on an overbridge on the right as you run into the station, and we're speeding on for Cherryville Junction, through the long tunnel-like bridge, yes we have the signals and are barking up the bank for Kildare, and through the station on the middle road and, after passing, Mossie leaves his seat and looks into the firebox for the first time on the trip and says, "That'll take her home."

From Kildare on, stations and signals appear and pass with increasing frequency, Newbridge, Sallins, Straffan, Hazelhatch, Lucan and Clondalkin.

She's been running shut off now from the approach to Lucan. Mossie checks her speed again as we run down past Inchicore where there is a crowd outside the shed to see the Almighty "Enterprise" go through.

The safety valves have been on the pop on and off over the last ten miles or so but Mossie has advised, "Don't have her too full, we'll have to keep her quiet in Amiens Street."

We go down the Gullet very gently and swing sharply left onto the Loop Line and suddenly you are woken from your reverie as Mossie opens up the regulator and she leaps at the Park Tunnel with a snarling bark. She threatens to slip a few times but resists the temptation and then you are out of the

gloom and passing Cabra, Glasnevin Junction, Drumcondra, Croke Park and the North Strand Junction and steal very quietly into Amiens Street to come to a gentle stop on the ‘Southern Side’.

I uncouple and take one of the headlamps and put it on the tender lamp bracket. Returning to the footplate, I put on the injector and have a look at the fire; is it low enough, is it too high? In a bit of a quandary I look to Mossie. Without a word he gets down off his seat and has a look and, with a slight variation on the theme, says, “You’re all right boy.”

You’re all right! I’m one of the Elect. I’ve not only fired an 800, I’ve fired one of the man eaters on the “Enterprise”! I felt ten foot tall. I didn’t even regret that the paint job was still waiting to be done at home.

And I felt a wave of affection for the man whose calm confidence had brought a rookie fireman through that memorable trip, Mossie Teahan.



“Keeping her quiet in Amiens Street” - B1a class 4-6-0 No.802 “Tailte” at Dublin (Amiens Street) on an Up Enterprise c. 1951. (Photographer Unknown)

Mossie will never read this, for he went to his just reward almost ten years ago. But I’ll bet he’s somewhere around St. Peter to guide and encourage many a locoman through the Pearly Gates.

Men of his calibre taught us not only the value of comradeship and brotherhood, they passed on to us a tradition, a heritage, that will endure as long as railways exist and a locoman controls the wheels that

roll over them.

BETTER THAN COUNTING SHEEP

R.M. Arnold

It is interesting to speculate how many of those who digested the idea of “Carrickfergus Castle” being the most widely travelled of that NCC class may also have realised that in No.4, No.171 and No.186 (and even the Guinness engine and No.27) the RPSI has almost certainly the engine of each class concerned which would fit this description.

The only slight doubt would concern No.186. One would have to decide whether some 240 miles on the GN and NCC are cancelled out to some extent by the fact that for most of her life this engine belonged to Waterford district, so she may have been rather less travelled than some other J15s. For instance, most Limerick engines reached both Sligo and Waterford from time to time and I once observed an Inchicore J15 (196) as far off her beaten track as Longford. Altogether the problem for this class and some other small goods engines becomes so difficult, without observers making reliable notes for a century back, that I think we must confine the matter, for the present, to passenger engines and especially recorded runs, which place the matter beyond all doubt in a manner only surpassed by actual photographs.

Even if No.4 had not had that remarkable Cork and Limerick adventure she must have had some prior claim for her class, though there seems no information about her ever reaching Derry (Foyle Road). I have, however, timed her into Cookstown, Bangor, and Warrenpoint and she had already been called to Dublin during the Tolka bridge incident in December 1954. Other engines of this class which had experience of both Bangor and Warrenpoint lines were 50 and 53, and 1964 saw them both also on the Portadown-Derry route. We can assume (which we can't for the last four tanks at least) that all the moguls covered the entire broad gauge NCC except Dungiven, Draperstown and Ballyclare, where they were not allowed. Some unrecorded wartime coverage of the GNR Cookstown branch might help the mogul problem, but we can make a start with those engines which reached both Dublin and Derry (GN). 91, 93, 94, 97, 99 and 104 fit this category and the fact that 91 and 94 worked also to Bangor more than cancels out 97's Warrenpoint mileage. My new book describes a brief visit by 94 to the Ballyclare branch in an emergency, so it may be a fair assumption that “The Maine” emerges as the most widely travelled mogul.

The BCDR problem is fairly simple because the last standard tank to survive, 17, happens also to have been the engine exchanged for GN 198 in 1920. Although there seems to be no record of what lines she worked (very few probably), this fact and her activities throughout the BCDR and to Larne must clinch the matter. I never observed her, like sisters 12, 21, and 30 as far north as Ballymena. The Baltic, 22, did penetrate that far, but possibly never covered the Donaghadee or main line, for the story that one of this class was tested with a main line goods seems a little improbable.

If we knew which GNR 4-4-2 tank was shedded for a time in Derry it would certainly help to name the most ubiquitous ‘Glover’ tank. This class reached most outposts of the Great Northern, though I have no note of one reaching Newcastle or Bundoran (they were indeed very rare on the Irish North) or the very small branches where they were not permitted in any case. Possibly the engines which worked on the Bray line after 1958, such as 3, and 143, top this class. Other contenders were 66, shedded at Clones in 1956, and 187 which visited Queen's Quay in 1952, also working passenger trains on the NCC main line and Larne line. 142 is also reputed to have worked on the Larne line, between the wars.

The tender version of these tanks, the U class was certainly the most ubiquitous passenger class on the Great Northern. At least three (of the latter versions) visited York Road, 67 (202) travelling via Greenisland and some years later working a mainline NCC passenger special. However 198's BCDR mileage was greater than this, but 197's famous trip to Kilkenny most undoubtedly put her top of the U

class table. We can assume that the whole class reached Dublin, Belfast, Bundoran and Cavan, but Howth, Antrim, Cookstown, and Oldcastle are much less certain, particularly the County Meath terminus where it seems certain the new Us at any rate never penetrated. Possibly too only the old version reached Newcastle, but all ten, except 203 and 204, seem to have travelled the Bangor line. However 203 and 204 have DSE experiences, as did 197 and 199. I once photographed the latter engine on a passenger special on the Ardee branch.

The S Class seem to have been much more widely travelled than the three 1915 engines. Apart altogether from No.171, 174 also visited Waterside, and 170 Larne and Portrush in the 1935 exchange. I was surprised, once, to record 173 near Ballinamallard, as apart from Dundalk-Ballybay locals worked by the Dundalk passenger pilot, they were seldom on the Irish North. I have timed No.171 between Clones and Portadown, and, with about 600 miles, "Sieve Gullion" does seem to have a strong claim to be the most ubiquitous 4-4-0 in Ireland, although 170 is probably unique (certainly for a 4-4-0) in travelling on each of the four main lines out of Dublin. The exchange of 322 and 113 (surely the worst of one class against the best of the other) might provide some opposition here, if we knew more about it, and other interesting transfers occurred at a later period from the MGWR area in 1938, when 538, and possibly, others worked the Ballybroy line from Limerick. At that period 541 was shedded at Mallow and 548 at Thurles.



B4 class 4-6-0T No.466 at Booterstown on 9th February 1956 with 1:07pm Amiens Street-Greystones. By November (the Beet season) No.466 was back on the 'Bandon' main line. (R.M. Arnold)

The GS&WR 4-4-0s seldom left their own territory, though 343 had a short spell with the Claddagh Express, between Galway and Dublin. Probably the Knock specials to Claremorris produced the most foreign mileage for southern engines generally and it is possibly only the smaller 4-4-0s which might rival "Sieve Gullion". For instance all the '60' class must have roamed the entire length of the

mainline in the nineteenth century and in 93, for instance, we have one of this class which I have also timed on Sligo-Limerick trains and too between Limerick and the Junction. If all such details were known the total mileage after the WL&WR had been absorbed into the GS&WR could well have produced a coverage of over 1,000 miles for some active little 4-4-0.

Most of the 'Woolwich' class stayed firmly either Midland or Southern but those which experienced both systems such as 372, 373, 375, and 390 could have exceeded No.171's total without much trouble. These must certainly rank as the most widely travelled big engines. I myself timed 375 to Galway on the Cork main line and the Tralee road, so she must have ranked very high in the list before her fatal plunge into the Suir at Cahir.

Of the railways which eventually made up CIÉ only the smaller concerns such as the 'Bandon' or the DSE made much use of tank engines, so no CIÉ tank engine could compete with the 'Glover' tanks or even the NCC ones. However, there were a few exceptions which saw more of Ireland than their sisters, such as 35, 269, 457, and 466, and it should not be forgotten that 674 and probably others of this class ventured as far south as Gorey. In 1938 850 had a minor spree over a number of GS&WR branches but in any case she had no trouble in being the most ubiquitous Irish 2-6-2 tank, as her only challenge comes from the narrow gauge.

It is almost as interesting remembering individual engines which spent most of their lives wearing away one particular stretch of track; 336 between Mallow and Tralee, for instance, 303 and 304 between Limerick and Waterford and 18 on the Queen's Quay-Castlewellan run. These are examples of engines which could have been, but seldom were, used on other sections of their railway. This could not be said for 99, so inevitable at Amiens Street, and 220 at Cork.

No doubt anyone who considers my facts or interpretations thereon as erroneous will soon put me right. I shall also be grateful to have authenticated data about any further wanderlust amongst our Irish locomotives.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Baronial Lines Of The MGWR

Padraig O'Cumin, Transport Research Associates, £1.20

The number of books published on Irish narrow gauge lines have for long outnumbered those concerned with the standard gauge; the GSWR, DSER and MGWR have suffered particularly (except perhaps in photo albums, though here again the narrow gauge and 'oddities' score heavily). With their new book, Transport Research Associates help redress the balance.

This work deals with the Loughrea and Ballinrobe branches - two generally similar lines but with enough individual character to warrant separate treatment. Although running to only 88 pages, the book is pleasantly written, well presented and illustrated and should be considered well worth the rather high price.

The history of each line is very thoroughly documented, bringing the reader right through from the earliest days, when the lines were worked by a somewhat reluctant Midland, to the closure of the Ballinrobe line and the resurgence of the Loughrea branch. Each line is fully described (complete with track diagrams) while services and stock receive due attention.

It was very gratifying to see so many illustrations; there are nineteen half-tones of which just under half are steam, mostly unpublished before and covering the period from 1905 to the end of steam - full points here for very good work.

CPF

The meal over, we rose and left our little cafe in the West End and stepped out into streets with glistening pavements and gusting wind at the start of the long trek back to the station - finding, too, with a degree of surprise that a certain briskness and vigour had crept back into every stride, surprise because this was something that was missing a short half-hour ago and never noticed.

Of course the welcome rest and recent bout of indulgence at the table might have been the cause - but a glance at the hands on the clock creeping towards five and a train that was due out at twenty-five past was undoubtedly a factor that lent wings to our feet and certainly there would be no time for hanging about on this visit, with no opportunity either of making a detour by the sea front - that delightful habit acquired so long ago in the past that by now was almost a ritual.

No last chance, then, to pause above the Horse Pool for a glimpse of holidaymakers bathing, or along a wind-blown strand with a fine white carpet of sand underfoot and the heady tang of salt spray lacing the air and watch the wild Atlantic breakers that surged in majestic never-ending procession to the shore, to a thundering white-foaming confrontation with the jagged rocks of Claddaghlagan and Aughrus.

How incredibly easy it could be, watching and viewing that ceaseless battle, to be lulled shortly into forgetting the more mundane trivialities of life such as train times and thoughts of home.

Perhaps it was just as well that a detour was impossible. But this was the final visit - the last ever chance, and with the railway gone there would be no other visits - no coming back to this lonely outpost on the gale-lashed Atlantic seaboard.

Somehow there was a terrible finality about that thought and a dull ache of sadness in knowing that we didn't have time for one last look around.

No time, then, for a last look around to see a DUWKC wallowing on the high seas; floundering around in the open somewhere between those outcrops of land engaged in a confrontation of a different kind with the waves.

Those veteran landing craft of the World War II Normandy beaches were without doubt the most pulsating sight anywhere in Ireland - bizarre ponderous hulks of thin metal sheeting braced with spidery angle-iron ribs that loomed up massive and gigantic on the sands but seemed so pitifully frail and vulnerable - a figment of some hallucinatory imagination - when pitted against the might and savage fury of the ocean in a bid by the new owners - Stewarts' Amusements - to furnish Bundoran holidaymakers with their "Thrill of a Lifetime".

No empty catchphrase that. And with no gimmicks attached either. To ride the Atlantic Ocean in a "Stewarts' Duck" was to find thrills and adventure and fear and excitement enough to fill the most hectic lifetime, and all crammed into a single breathtaking journey that from beginning to end required nerves of steel and a cast iron stomach simply to survive.

Small wonder so many chose to opt out - being much more content to watch from the safety of the shore - not a bad thing in itself, really, when they could enjoy to the full the heart-stopping spectacle of the more foolhardy ones on board clinging grimly ashen faced over the sides of a heaving vessel that appeared to be going under for the umpteenth time, only to appear again miraculously a moment later, clawing frantically upwards to the summit of the next mountainous wave.

But of course the excitement was not confined solely to the DUWKCs, and those who preferred their thrills on dry land could forego the rather dubious pleasure, and instead visit Harrison's Amusements and sample "The Dive Bomber" and "The Whip", while Page's Fun Palace was another haven for the fun-seekers, and at the other end of the scale the fishing for miles around was legendary and every other amenity was here too.

But we had no time. Not even to pause by a souvenir stall with balloons flapping in the wind and gaily coloured merchandise piled high on a wooden counter and select a few presents for home - and it was not now against the clock that we hurried, but for a more pressing reason.

A sullen wrack of cloud that was puffed and swollen and ragged at the edges was scudding in from the West, drawing a veil of darkness across the sky, and the wind, too, was beginning to rise; blowing in sudden squalls that brought a chill seeping through. Another downpour looked imminent, and we had no great wish to be caught in the open when it started.

And others, it seemed, were thinking along similar lines - though indeed it was late enough anyway for the busiest round of shopping to be over. But most people appeared to have read the signs and gone scurrying home to the warmth and comfort of fireside chairs, leaving the streets deserted except for a small handful of shopkeepers whose presence, reflected in cold pools of yellow light that spilled here and there from a shop window and splashed and shimmered across the wet pavements seemed only to add to the bleakness of the afternoon.

And we too scurried along - back down the length of main Street and over Bundoran Bridge that spans the Bradoge River, turning right at last into Station Street and coming upon a railway terminus more empty and deserted than the streets we had just left.

No welcoming glow of lamps shone to disperse the gloom of the tiny concourse where every door and window was tightly closed and bolted and where the sudden clatter of footsteps ringing from the paving slabs and reverberating from the walls and roof was a hollow mocking echo that strangely disturbed the silence.

Farther along, no ticket collector manned the barrier, and in the tiny wooden sentry box hut by the barrier gate no uniformed Customs officer lurked concealed and ready to pounce with the cry, "Have you anything to declare?"

It was almost as if nobody cared anymore - as if the burden of waiting through the long hours for something to happen and someone to come had proved too much, so that in the end they had grown weary of waiting and moved in search of better things to do.

Tickets intact, we stepped unmolested through the peeling wrought iron gates and out upon a deserted platform and in a strange and fascinating way the mind, numb with sadness, refused to accept so dismal a scene, and instead began to seek out the memory of brighter days - days when the excursion trains had crowded in from Derry, and from Cavan, and from Clones and Enniskillen, and even at times from as far away as Dublin and Belfast and Cookstown and Monaghan.

Then there had been gleaming black "PP"s in abundance, along with rakes and rakes of carriages of a dull teak that filled every platform and spilled over into every siding. And sometimes a glittering "U" class, sparkling and shimmering in the sunlight, adding vivid and contrasting splashes of blue and vermillion.

Trains arriving, bringing hordes of day-trippers who behaved in the curious way that all day-trippers do of seeming so full of eagerness and glad to be at the end of a long and tedious journey, yet so reluctant to leave the carriages in fear, perhaps, of having left behind some article or other of value.

But at last after checking and double-checking they seemed satisfied that little Seamus was not still under the seat, and that mum had her shopping bag and purse and dad his jacket and wallet and tobacco, and with many a backward glance, as if still not convinced, they stuttered off down the platform and through the barriers and out into the street.

And for the brief span of a lazy afternoon the station slumbered and the platforms remained silent, while across at the shed, their crews nowhere to be seen, the engines sat in the sun and gurgled and simmered contentedly as the long hot day wore on.

But with the coming of evening came the rude awakening as the clang of fire-irons and scrape of shovels and drone of injectors became mingled with the shouts and screams of noisy boisterous children who appeared as if from nowhere and suddenly seemed to be everywhere, running along the platforms and jumping in and out of open carriage doors and clambering unmindfully over carriage seats, small grubby fingers clutching tightly at buckets and spades and sticks of rock and streamers and windmills - all the many and multitude reminders to take home of an all-too-infrequent day by the sea.

And trailing behind came the grown-ups, tired now, but in a contented way, with faces flushed from too long a time in the sun or in some cases, too many 'jars' in the local pubs - standing now in a patient good humoured file by the barrier gate while the Customs Man went through the motions of conducting a search for illicit goods.

That his heart was plainly not up to the task was evident. Or was it the knowledge that a more thorough inspection would be conducted further along the line that made the effort here seem pointless?

Again it may have been a case of "It's all in here, mate!" as my Uncle Willy would delight us by saying, as he passed through patting a rather corpulent stomach. And in most cases it was, and there was little any Customs Man could do about it.

Crowds filtering through, still with the contents of their shopping baskets intact - and on the platform harassed station staff assumed charge and with much shouting of directives and a great deal of arm-waving and gesticulating and rolling of eyes, succeeded in shepherding the right horde on board the right train, herding last-minute arrivals into compartments already overfull and slamming doors and blowing whistles and waving flags and subsiding, finally, into great gusty sighs of relief as a train lurched into movement and began to pull away.

There was not even time to watch it out of sight. Already the platform was filling up again as another rake was propelled into position. And there was a certain grim forbearance in the sighs of resignation and drooping of the shoulders as they turned, and hurried off to repeat the performance once more.

A glimpse of brighter days - something that would always remain fresh in the mind. Hardly strange it should come to the fore at a time like this, in a dark and unfamiliar place where tall grass fleeced in the wind and unkempt weeds grew in profusion in the midst of silent rubble and decay.

Where nothing met the eye save a faded wagon or two and a tattered weathered brake van standing in empty overgrown sidings, and where at the very top of the platform, in stark outline with the blackness of sky, a solitary "U" class sat on a paltry train of 2 bogies and oozed a pall of thick black smoke that was immediately snatched up by the wind and tossed and flurried, and carried, finally, in a drifting haze far across the reaches to the station.

No.199 "Lough Derg" - and for once the spotless paintwork of an Irish North engine was not in evidence. "Lough Derg" had been neglected to the point where scarcely a vestige of blue livery showed through a grimy coating of dust and dirt.

We drew near, in an atmosphere of silence that was broken only by the tinny hum from the blower, and saw a small hunched figure in the cab that was plainly Paddy Martin, looking for all the world a picture of abject misery.

Never mind. We would cheer him with a bit of 'crack'.

"Hullo there Paddy! Give us a good run tonight!"

But it was not the usual cheery Paddy Martin who bit out a reply. "Good run be damned!" he snarled, startled from his reverie and shifting on his seat to impale us with a baleful glare.

"Good run be damned - can yez not see th'state Oi'm in! There'll be no run a'tal tonoight, for Oi've no foire, no steam, AND NO bloody foireman!"

And the flared nostrils and belligerent set of the jaw should have been sufficient warning, even before a disbelieving squint into the gloomy cab interior revealed that with mere minutes to go till departure time the needle on the boiler pressure gauge was glued to the 100 lbs mark, while on the out-side the column of black smoke oozing from the chimney pointed to the sorry state of the fire.

And the fireman? Well, we asked the question, and had to listen in stunned silence to the news that he was lying in some pub in town so completely overcome by an excess of the 'demon drink' that it would need divine intervention to get him to his feet, and nothing short of a miracle to get him on the footplate of a swaying lurching engine, plying a shovel.

Which was all very well, and doubtless 'Authority', when the matter came to light, would nod its solemn head and utter a few disapproving 'tut-tut's and might even in the fullness of time be moved to administer a suitable punishment for the offence.



U class 4-4-0 No.199 "Lough Derg" waiting to leave Bundoran with the 5:25pm to the Junction on the run described in this issue, 24th August 1957. (D.T.R. Henderson)

A comforting thought for the future, no doubt - but what of the present? It did not help matters to realise that Bundoran is no Adelaide or Amiens Street or Dundalk, keeping rows of spare firemen on coat hooks along the shed wall for just such an emergency. Indeed there was simply no one else available, and with the realisation came a bleak rather frightening vision of dossing in the station till Monday morning, waiting in penniless abject misery for the next train home.

So the pendulum had finally swung against us. We had dared to tempt Fate too far, and this was to be our reward. Strange that no panic ensued. Only a feeling of bitter irony and defeat sweeping over us, to come so far in triumph and be faced now with such a disaster standing in a small silent knot on a lonely

platform by the side of a dusty grimy engine, with the black sky above, and the ruffle of the wind in our faces and the cold of the afternoon creeping in.

Standing in a pathetic huddled group, unable to utter a word until at last someone stepped forward and, speaking in a small voice, offered up his services in the cause of getting us home - to which the rest, startled, responded with an amazing degree of enthusiastic clamour - though from the way Paddy sat and simply stared straight through us, it seemed at first as if he hadn't heard the offer.

Then the head was thrown back, with the mouth wide agape, and from the lips a loud guffaw of derision burst forth that must surely have been heard a long way off in the town - though rather than feel offended we could smile with pleasure and note how grand it was to see the little man returning again to a semblance of his more usual self.

"Just who th'hell," he roared, snapping his head back on a more level plane and recovering sufficiently to find his voice, "d'ye think yez are?"

"Why yez haven't an ounce av experience between th'lotav yez an' I doubt very much if any av yez is even capable av puttin' a shovel a' coal on th'foire at home."

"No - th'whole oidea's outav th'question!"

"An' besoides - what th'hell am I goin' t'do? How am I goin' t'git back home? Ah certainly amn't goin' t'spend th'weekend in Bundoran Junction, an' that's a fact!"

"No - th'whole oidea's outav th'question!"

And what could we say to that - except to stand utterly dejected, with shoulders drooping, and gaze up at him with eyes that were filled with hurt and disappointment - a ruse that may or may not have done the trick, but more likely he had every intention of going anyway and was merely putting on a show for our benefit.

"Ah Gaaaad!" he groaned, climbing to his feet, and with faces wreathed in smiles we gathered round to draw up a plan of campaign.

It was agreed we should each take turns between stations, though chivalry, of course, demanded that Sylvia be left out of the reckoning, and it was thought best to excuse the three "eedjits", for a different reason which meant that we were now a couple short and that one or two would have to double back - but that would be no hardship.

We wondered, too, if it would not be better to work in pairs, in view of our inexperience. But Paddy said, "No - I can't do with too many cluttering up the footplate," and so it was settled.

Norman Foster took the shovel for the run to Ballyshannon, and away we went, no more than a minute-and-a half down on time. And the memory of that madcap journey is still somewhat hazy, for I believe that so much was crammed into so short a space of time that the mind was unable in the end to absorb all the details.

But I remember the stop in Ballyshannon, when before the train had come to rest the carriage doors were open and the occupants were on the platform, running for the engine.

And what a shock awaited us when we got there, for the interior of the cab was completely enveloped in a swirling haze of black dust that was lanced by a yellow glare from the fire, and there was more coal under foot, it seemed, than in the tender.

Then a figure loomed up, and a pair of eyes, startlingly white in a face streaked black with coal dust and rivulets of sweat, peered through the gloom and a voice with a cheery Dublin accent spoke and said, "Gaaaaad! Oi t'ink Oi'm just gittin' th'hang av this! Oi'll soon be able t'put soma dis stuff on th'foire!"

And we fell about laughing and left him to it and retired discreetly back to our seats on the train.

It was then, I think, that a message of sorts was wired ahead for at every station afterwards a crowd seemed to have gathered though it was noticed early on that they had come merely to observe and not to join in.

And who could blame them, observing the struggles of our 'fireman' in his efforts to maintain a head of steam. Or indeed maintain any steam at all, for he later confessed that we'd ran the entire distance on a pressure that never exceeded 100 lbs. He had not been able to manage, even once, to raise the needle on the pressure gauge by so much as a millimetre, though he'd worked like a galley slave and nearly, emptied the tender in the attempt.

And if it later became the source of a great deal of harmless fun-poking and merriment, especially when he had grown tired of being the butt of a constant stream of wise cracks and had attempted to wriggle out by declaring that the pressure gauge was probably defective, nevertheless the experience gave every one of us a new and more rewarding conception of the work performed by the 'second man' on the footplate, whose efforts in the past had largely been ignored.

But most startling of all was the fact that we were actually making progress. And not only making progress, but catching up and passing the clock too, for in spite of the conditions - or perhaps because of them - Paddy Martin was driving like a man inspired and clipping time between every station.

And as if this excitement was not enough, suddenly we were skirting the Lough shore and catching tantalising glimpses of Lough Erne through the lineside trees.

In that moment a mantle of hushed expectancy began to settle over the train. The watches were laid aside and forgotten, as in minutes we had our reward when the trees slipped down the embankment and a breath-taking panorama of beauty burst into full view.

The same rain-filled clouds that in Bundoran had served to cast gloom overall, now hung low and sullen above the Lough, but in a way that completely enhanced the rugged beauty of the wooded shores and sprinklings of tiny tree-covered islands dotted everywhere about the water.

And across that water the wind now rushed with an unhindered frenzy, tearing at the branches of the trees and scattering myriad leaves that fled, twisting and fluttering, like tiny green and golden-yellow butterflies.

Everywhere as far as the eye could see was movement and contrasting colour - movement of trees in the wind and the flight of leaves and cloud-wrack drifting across the sky. Grey-black water lapping the shore and farther out, heightening in colour to silver that ruffled and tumbling over into white foam that splashed out for an instant in the greyness before disappearing like swiftly melting snow.

How incredible that scene. Lough Erne could never have looked more bewitching, or more lovely.

And how long a time we stood in silent rapture by the carriage windows gazing out upon it - feeling neither a bitterness nor an anger, but only a dull empty sadness, that anyone should want to condemn a line that ran in the midst of such splendour.

How long a time - until the trees had once more climbed the embankment and still we remained, not wanting to move away. Hoping the trees might clear, if only for a moment, to afford another glimpse. Filled with a deep yearning to go back and see it all over again.

But it was not to be, and at last, and rather sadly, we turned away and picked up our stopwatches to resume timing.

What fickleness the mind can at times display - plummeting in one moment to depths of despondency and soaring the next to mellifluous heights of enjoyment.

How quickly the sadness was gone, as caught up again in the exhilaration of our madcap flight along the branch we forgot Lough Erne and settled down to enjoy what little remained of the running, finding at every station that the clock was slipping further and further behind, so that it came as no surprise to arrive at length in Kesh and discover that we were 5 minutes ahead of time.

Ernie's old hunting ground - and he and Sylvia stepped down alone for a few minutes for a last look around, while the rest sat on in the train, talking quietly and waiting with a surprising degree of patience for the clock to catch up.

It never did, though. We left as we'd arrived - still five minutes before time, and nobody seemed to mind a bit.

But in Irvinestown where a stop of only a minute was booked we could afford to linger a while longer and give Norman the chance to work on a fire that by now had almost burnt itself out.

So we sat there for three minutes, until Paddy, growing impatient and obviously deciding he had steam enough to manage, bundled us back on board and took us away on the last lap of the journey, clipping the schedules yet again with a final burst of running that brought us into the Junction nearly 4 minutes ahead of time. And what more fitting way than that to end our associations with the Bundoran line.

And then nothing remained but goodbyes, and over drinks and sandwiches in the tiny dimly-lit refreshment room, with Norman looking more presentable after a wash in a bucket of water, we gathered in an atmosphere pervaded by paraffin and stale beer to say our farewells and thank the old fellow for all he had done to get us home, and to wish him luck and a not-too-difficult journey back to Bundoran.

Paddy Martin. A great little driver and a wonderful character. A man who did his level best at all times to live up to the reputation bestowed upon him by other, lesser mortals chiefly through the medium of a host of tall stories and highly fanciful yarns.

Perhaps the best story of all about Paddy concerns the time he took himself up to Pettigo to do penance on the island.

This, for the heathen uninitiated, is an annual pilgrimage undertaken by devout Roman Catholics to a tiny island in nearby Lough Derg, known as "Saint Patrick's Purgatory". It is a pilgrimage that entails three days of fasting in the midst of self-inflicted suffering as the devotees shuffle in bare-footed agony across sharp stony ground, praying as they walk - and here was Paddy on the island to do penance and shuffling along deep in prayer with the rest of the crowd when the priest tapped him on the shoulder and hissed in his ear:

"Paddy! Paddy! Y'er supposed t'do penance in yer bare feet!"

And the wonderful, wonderful snarling reply, spat out with every ounce of vehemence and anger the tiny sixty-two inch frame could muster:

"Damn ye, man! Oi AM in me bare feet!"

Yes indeed! One of the truly great characters! And tonight he had written for us one more chapter in the tale of his exploits. But a greater chapter - a chapter in Great Northern history - was drawing to a close, and when the ink had dried and the page been turned, men of the character and calibre of Paddy Martin would no longer be around to add that special degree of richness and colour to the remainder of the story. And there was not even a crumb of comfort to be had from the knowledge that Paddy was one of the very few lucky ones, due to stay on after the closure on a transfer to Amiens Street.

But we told him anyway that we hoped it wouldn't be too long until he was back in traffic again, and we could get behind him again with a stopwatch - but somehow talk like this seemed remote and much too detached from reality.

Too many more important and worthwhile things needed to be said - but time was too short and suddenly the station was filled with the rumbling of the 6:40pm arriving from Enniskillen, and there was no time left at all.

In an awkwardly reluctant way that was as false as the conversation we gulped down the remains of our sandwiches and gathered our belongings, and with a final look around and a last goodbye we left him there with his memories and his bottle of Guinness and went outside to join the train for Omagh.

The engine this time was another "U" class - No.197 "Lough Neagh" - with the load a mere 4 bogies, and at any other time driver Herbie Dean would have been a welcome sight indeed.

But on a line that was noted for curiosities, the 6:40pm was the most curious train of all, and the most loosely timed - with 5 minutes allowed for the mile-and-a-half from Bundoran Junction to Trillick, and 9 from there to Dromore Road - while the allowance of 13 minutes from Dromore Road to Fintona Junction bordered on the time allocated for a goods train, before the most ridiculous part of all, namely a stop in Fintona Junction that lasted all of 9 minutes.



PP class 4-4-0 No.44 pilots U class 4-4-0 No.205 "Down" on 2:10 Enniskillen to Bundoran and Omagh leaving Enniskillen. (D.T.R. Henderson)

Consequently there is little point being over-enthusiastic about the way in which Dean ran his train to slash the schedules and arrive in the Junction 5 minutes before time, leaving us with a wait of 14 minutes on our hands. But as this was the busiest time of day there anyway, we didn't mind in the least.

The train that preceded us from Enniskillen - the 5:30pm goods for Portadown - was just coming back from Fintona as we arrived, hauled by "PP" No.74. This was the second of the two daily steam

workings over the branch - the other being worked by the engine off the early-morning goods from Derry to Enniskillen - and the shunting that followed as 74 remarshalled her train for Omagh held our attention until we caught sight of "Dick" pounding with great snorting breaths round the last fifty or so yards of the curve and into the branch platform.

Poor old Dick contriving as usual to make the last few yards look uphill, though as everyone knew, the branch was reputed to be level.

We wondered, too, how he would fare when the line closed and made him redundant and surplus to requirements. He was hardly the right material for an oxy-acetylene torch, but there was always the danger he might end up as part of someone's Sunday dinner - poor reward indeed for years of sterling service. But perhaps the Company would retire him to a field of lush pasture somewhere beside the Derry Road where he could munch away to his heart's content and watch "Q"s and "S"s and "QL"s pounding up and down all day long. The pity of it was, of course, that we'd never managed to sample his 'running' to find out his max and what sort of loads he could handle.

Then the signals were off for the fourth and last arrival the 7:23pm passenger from Omagh, running in now to fill the tiny station to bursting point - a train of 4 bogies with "PP" No.71. And with so much going on, the 14 minutes seemed to fly past, and it was time for us to go.

And to prove that the previous running was no fluke, Herbie Dean proceeded to slash the 12 minute allowance to Omagh by over three-quarters of a minute, and we rubbed our eyes in wonder and declared that the Irish North had indeed gone mad for our visit.

And the madness wasn't over yet. Not by a long way. And with our train shunted clear we were treated to the spectacle of the goods running in on our heels.

But the rails were still wet and greasy from the rain which had stopped falling only minutes previously and 74 had the enormous load of 34 wagons and 2 brake vans to contend with and was clearly coming in too fast, racing at breakneck speed over the facing points out beyond Omagh South cabin.

And above the rattle and clatter of wheels over rail joints came the dull 'clunk' of brake blocks striking hard against the wheels, and watching we saw with a growing concern that the wheels had locked and that the engine, sliding helplessly over the rails, was completely unable to arrest the momentum of her train.

On she came, out of control and ploughing a path heedlessly through the station, with a white-faced crew on board exchanging stricken glances across the footplate.

On and on - till after what seemed an eternity the wheel began to find a grip of sorts and the slowing-down process could begin - nevertheless she was well past the water column when she came to rest at the end of a skid that must have measured all of 200 yards.

Then and only then could we allow the pent-up breath to explode from our lungs - and no doubt a measure of our concern could be attributed to sub-conscious thoughts of our friend the Station Master and to his reaction at being called from his home, had things not gone so well, only to arrive and find Mr. Magill's Party on the scene of a second major disaster of the day.

Idle speculation, happily enough - and short-lived because the signals were off for the 7pm from Derry and it was time once more to stand with bated breath and listen for the sound of her coming, for this was the return working of the diesel operated 2:20pm from Belfast, and the Weekly Circular might say 'steam substitute' but one could never be certain.

But from a long way off in the distance came the small lonely cry of a whistle, and a great shout of exultation was raised. She was steam!

And from far away through the fading light of evening came a curious hollow rushing sound - a sound

so peculiar to Omagh station - faint at first, but growing in volume with every passing second - a sound like that of water falling over rocks - a sound that heralded the approach of a train from Derry.

Closer now, and again the whistle - sounding this time for the Mountjoy crossing - and in minutes she was sweeping into sight around the curves and romping in past the yards and into the station - a train of 4 bogies headed by "Q" class No.125, with Jack Gilvarry of Adelaide driving.

Eagerly we clambered on board and jostled for the milepost seats - and it was then that Norman produced his brainwave.

What, he told us excitedly, if Gilvarry could be induced to run sufficiently hard to attempt a connection with the 6:25pm express from Dublin. A 'blinding' run down the Derry Road - split up at Portadown - and travel in style to Belfast on two separate trains, what more fitting way to climax the outing than that!

To this day none of us has ever been sure what put the notion into his head. Or more surprisingly, why not a single objection was raised against it, for the difference between the two trains at Portadown, with the Dublin running first, was 26 minutes and Gilvarry, clearly struggling with the tight diesel schedule, was already 22 minutes down on time at Omagh.

Perhaps in a queer sort of way we knew that all the excitement was over - that nothing remained but the long dull haul to Belfast - and perhaps because of this no objection was raised, for at least the idea would serve to keep interest alive a while longer.

The major obstacle, of course, was Gilvarry - certainly not the most responsive of drivers to this sort of thing. But it was Norman's idea, and therefore it was decided that Norman should have the honour of performing the necessary incitations and so we sent him up to the engine, certainly expecting very little more than a gruff refusal and very definitely a tirade of abuse.

But the Dublin charm must have worked wonders, and Norman came back to us grinning like a Cheshire cat and seconds later Gilvarry was racing away from Omagh in cracking style.

Out over Market Branch Junction and down through Garvagh and on to the first stop at Beragh - with frowns and mutterings of disappointment at cutting time but dropping nearly half a minute in the station.

But it was better at Sixmilecross, slipping away on the right side of time. And again at Carrickmore, gaining a little. And after Carrickmore the mountains of Pomeroy, climbed in rousing style in the fast-fading light of evening with soft purple shadows of nightfall creeping over the moors and the barking roar of the engine shattering the stillness and sounding echoes far into the distance as she set her teeth at the bank and went over the top at milepost 26½ at 37 mph and lapsed, then, into silence on the long winding descent to Pomeroy station.

But the effort was not enough, and we failed by almost a minute to keep the diesel timing.

And now the precious goal was fading - slipping from our grasp. Another minute lost at Donaghmore, and disappointment was etching into faces.

We hardly noticed Dungannon looming up in the darkness. Hardly noticed the van doors being flung open and the trucks on noisy iron wheels being clattered across the platform and manoeuvred into position for an exchange of parcels and mail.

Our thoughts were fifteen miles away, in Portadown - and yet how foolish to feel this way. We had never really stood a chance from the beginning.

But somehow such thoughts were no help at all.

Now the van doors slamming shut, and the sound of lock bolts thudding home. And Dungannon was

letting us go. How ironic that we should gain two minutes here when most of the losses incurred so far had been due to slovenly work at the other stations.

No ceremony. Nothing but a sudden creak and strain of couplings and the slow dull 'cluck' of wheels over rail joints and the station gliding sedately past the carriage windows, seen through a drifting haze of steam from the engine that was caught momentarily in the flow of a signal lamp and stained a bright green as we passed.

A gathering of speed on the falling gradient, and of a sudden and startling quickness the night sky was blotted out by the tunnel closing in that sent the strident roar of steel ringing in the narrow confines and reverberating from the walls and roof to deafen the ears.

Faster and faster the speed, and louder the clamour, rising and falling, rising and falling, till the mind cried out a pro-test and the nerves became taut with the harshness of it - until at last when it seemed the senses could endure it no longer a sudden rise in pitch brought the harshness to an end and the sound was gone, falling away behind, and in its place the rushing night air was an eerie silence by comparison as the big high-stepping "Q" flew on with 'racked' regulator down the bank for Trew and Moy.

And of course it didn't matter any more, but again the diesel schedule was too tight, and again we failed to keep it.

On, then, to Annaghmore - and the same thing all over. And how the last lap of all, over the switchback road to Portadown with every landmark obliterated and timing reduced to a counting of wheel beats, so that the first indication that the Junction was looming up was a high-pitched drone of tyres on the tightly-curving approach and the rattle and clatter over the points.

But at least we had a clear road, which was sole consolation till a grind of brakes sounded and brought us to a stand at Milepost 87½ - and we sat in the stillness of the night for 55 seconds that seemed like 55 minutes with the wind rattling the windows, and the lights of Portadown shimmering through the wetness a scant 600 yards away, and never noticed the one thing that was the cause of all our misery.

Then the road was off, beckoning us into Platform 4, and we set off with a lurch and rumble over the Bann bridge and threaded our way in - and it was then that someone noticed the train in the adjacent road.

And the Dublin was in! The Dublin was standing in Platform 3! The Dublin was ready to leave!

In a mad scrambling haste the men who were going on the Dublin gathered their belongings and crowded to the doors, waiting for the train to slow down and leaping off and making for the subway with one ear cocked for a final squeal of brakes that would herald the stopping of watches on the Derry.

And the sound came and we were off diving into the subway and racing down the ramp and careering off walls at the bottom and charging through the tunnel and up the steps to Platform 3 with rasping breath and lungs heaving and legs turning to jelly and hearts thudding like trip hammers.

Up the last few yards and bursting into the open - only to come to a raging cursing fuming breathless halt at the sight of the red tail lamp winking malevolently out of the blackness and the muffled far-off thunder of an exhaust as the Dublin pulled away into the night.

Damm the bloody Dublin! Damn it to hell! Damn the bloody fools with their stupid station and bloody subway and no overbridge! At least with a bridge they might have seen us coming and held the train.

It was a strangely pathetic little group that traced a slow dejected path back through the subway and back up to Platform 4 rejoining the Derry train which set off a few minutes later on the heels of the express. And heaping insults on our broken spirits the Dublin blocked our path almost the whole way into Belfast and ruined what little bit of running remained.

But we were past caring anyway, and only blind obedience to an unwritten law kept us at our posts,

timing.

Ungrateful! Perhaps we were. But the timer lives only for the present, caring little for the past and the future.

The past is something to be relived only at a later date, in convivial company round a blazing fire when the watches are laid aside - and the future is much too uncertain anyway.

It was a tired little band that arrived that night in Belfast and trudged through the barriers to disappear in various directions on the road home - some to their bicycles and others to the city buses.

But tomorrow was another day and every tomorrow yet to come. And the memory of this day would live through them all.

We had gone to the Irish North to pay our last respects - and had ended up more in debt than ever.

Even Sylvia found herself magnificently impressed by it all, and indeed still talks about the outing yet.

How do I know? Ah well, you see. She married Ernie soon afterwards, and steadfastly insisted on his rejoining the ranks again and keeping to the straight and narrow path. And I have never had any doubt in my mind that it was entirely due to his tremendous performance that day with 'Mr. Magill's Party'.

* * * * *

I began this story with what, in book form, would be termed a prologue so I think it is only right and proper that I finish now with an epilogue, though in point of fact the gist of the epilogue did not, as you will see, occur until very much later.

But I have already told of the marriage of Ernie and Sylvia, and what I have not told is that the marriage was blessed quite recently by the birth of a little son who, if reports are anything to go by, is much better looking than his 'da' and will probably turn out to be more intelligent.

But the strangest thing of all was the manner in which the pair arranged for the lad to be born on 24th August, the anniversary of 'Mr. Magill's Party'. And if that isn't carrying it too far...

SHANE'S CASTLE RAILWAY

Lord O'Neill

As we approached the end of the 1972 season, the Editor suggested that a few additional remarks might be of interest, with particular reference to the performance of No.1 since her rebuild - this contribution should, therefore, be read in conjunction with the article in Five Foot Three No.12.

It appeared at the end of the previous article that our problems were over with No.1, but this was not to be. In early June, she was steamed, with a view to testing her in revenue-earning service. When approximately 125 lbs had come up on the gauge, she elected to blow a tube. I was not there at the time, but I understand it went off quite a pop. This prompted closer examination of all tubes. We decided that, although some had a considerable amount of wear left in them, most were 'dodgy' and that it would be wise to replace the lot. They had been renewed in Billy McCormick's time, but this is now ten years ago and I imagine that periods of inactivity were not conducive to long life.

She was returned to traffic in time for the Steam Rally on 14th and 15th July running in turn with No.3. She performed admirably and was capable of hauling twelve fully loaded coaches. Indeed at the end of each day, in order to balance the workings, she hauled the twelve coach train up to Antrim with No.3 in mid-gear on the tail! She has, in fact, proved more satisfactory than I dared to hope in view of earlier performance shortcomings. By mid-July, it had become clear that the Troubles were affecting our takings significantly, I therefore decided to run No.1 exclusively for the rest of the season, as she consumes less coal and was well able to cope with the rather smaller crowds. After all our trials and tribulations, it is very rewarding to see her plying up and down the line accompanied by the clear beat

from her chimney. Incidentally, are engines always female whether their names are male or not? No doubt someone will advise me.

While No.1 was maintaining the service, we took the opportunity of replacing the worn piston valves in No.3. Unfortunately, the bores were found to be very slightly oval, but we decided to achieve the best possible fit without reboring. This has been successful and on a test run, she seemed more powerful and easier on water. She has now been given a coat of varnish and equipped with a chime whistle ready for next season.

Owing to the disappointing results during 1972, we shall not be able to contemplate many improvements during the coming winter. However, I hope that the turntable will be installed in the Antrim 'yard' so that both locos can be turned before next season. In addition I am planning a small shelter on the Antrim platform for the convenience of waiting passengers, plus the installation of lamps in both stations, which was held over from last year.

The 'Stop Press' news is the arrival of the third steam locomotive on the line. Unfortunately, this has no Irish history and constitutes a considerable 'Act of Faith' in the future. It will hardly be needed unless Northern Ireland can produce a return to normal tourism, together with increasing numbers of local visitors. The new engine is an Avonside 0-6-0 side tank, originally supplied to the Eastwall Iron Ore company of Leicester in 1908. She is called "Nancy" (works No.1547) and is not in good order. As there is no urgency to bring her into service, she will be stripped and slowly restored over 2 to 3 years, by which time I hope the traffic will justify her use.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

May I be allowed to reassure any of your members who read Mr. O'Neill's letter in your last issue that Harland & Wolff Limited, as general engineers and manufacturers of marine steam turbines and diesel engines with outputs up to 50,000 hp, are well qualified to undertake overhauls such as that of locomotive "Slieve Gullion". Moreover as builders and repairers of locomotives used in many parts of the world we can claim to have some specialist knowledge in that field.

Can I also add that far from being regarded as "just a job and that's all", the overhaul of "Slieve Gullion" was, because of past associations with Northern Ireland Railways and present associations with many of your members, regarded as something special in our Engine Works, hence our invitation to your members to visit her during overhaul.

Yours, etc.,

Alan Hedgley

Public Affairs Manager, Harland and Wolff Limited

Dear Sir,

Magazine And Tour Running

It was gratifying to find that "Five Foot Three" still contains so much of railway interest. We might, however, have been spared the personalities in "Mr. Magill's Party", though the article did succeed in conveying much of the ethos of railway enthusiasm in happier days, when steam was there for the taking (or should I say timing?) instead of having to be fought for by the laborious (and overcrowded) method of railtours.

There is however serious deficiency in the illustrations. While the Larne Aluminium Company's engine

in Company Service was an excellent choice, two Jeeps and two PPs were hardly sufficient to cover the remaining articles. Let me deal with the illustrations in order:

1. Mr. N. Craig was known as an active enthusiast and photographer in the early years of the Belfast Area IRRS and must have a fine collection of photographs. It was hardly therefore a compliment to him to enlarge one of his negatives to a size which it would not stand, AND force it into quite unacceptable format required by a cover picture.

Why choose No.4 anyway? She has already appeared on our Membership Prospectus, Jeep Appeal and the cover of our 1971 Open Day Brochure. Besides, assuming she proves also to fulfil the function for which she was bought she will be photographed many hundreds of times in the course of a single railtour.

On the other hand, the photo also includes quite a variety of coaching stock, and could with profit have replaced the uninspiring abortion which takes up the upper position inside the rear cover or, better still, the inartistic obscenity which usurps the lower.

2. If Mr. Magill's party were so loaded down with cameras, it seems strange that between them they have not produced a single illustration for the article. Even assuming they had no film in their cameras, etc., the PPs were a much-photographed class. Why then must we accept a poor shot of 12 doing nothing in particular?
3. In the course of his article, Mr. Magill mentioned, besides the A class 0-6-0s, all the GN passenger classes save the Ps and JTs. Why then was a PP chosen for the second illustration and No.46 at that, which had already appeared, complete with that QL chimney? For a Casserley photo, this one has reproduced surprisingly badly - because, I suspect, the photo was not glazed before submission to the printers.
4. I. Pryce's shot of 54 leaving 'the Wud' was, like his (all too short) article, excellent - BUT it had been already published by the Society.

And surely the overall selection would have been improved by, say, a picture of CC1 or even 356? The latter was an unusual member of an already most unusual (looking) class OR why not a Bond na Mona steam engine in the service of An Bord?

It should not be necessary to state that this is NOT a personal attack on the Editor. In fact I remain most grateful for his loyal help in producing Five Foot Three in the past and indeed on some occasions defend his work against unthinking criticism.

It is nevertheless a fact that Five Foot Three had won quite a reputation for interest, choice and variety of its illustrations. If the present magazine sub-committee have seen fit to abandon this position, I for one will not allow the loss to go unchallenged. It will be noticed that I have contributed myself to the illustrations of this issue. This is purely and simply out of personal regard for the Editor and for Bill McDonnell. If a new group have seen fit to take over Five Foot Three completely, it can only be because of disagreement in certain quarters with previous magazine policy. The new sub-committee must be prepared, therefore, to run the magazine without help from the old and meet any criticisms which may arise.

However I am happy to note that one matter has been very well handled - the sandwiching of I. Cantlon's letter between those of Bill Scott and Jack O'Neill should help to check its pernicious ideas. Some points have already been answered in the letters surrounding it; it may not be out of place to tackle the remainder here.

References To Power And Speeds In Five Foot Three (Nos. 1-11)

These have occurred simply because most contributors have been interested in this facet of railway

operation. Articles on locomotive design and management are in a very similar category. It is difficult to see how any study in depth could be made of locomotive lineaments. The connection between train timing and railtour schedules is extremely tenuous; one's timing experience gives a good idea of what may be expected of a given engine; additional time, of course, being allowed since the engines are largely maintained by amateurs, not professionals. No.171's fast times on the Brian Boru were exceptional, but it should be remembered that safeguards were built into the schedules, and in any case nothing that befell her was clearly attributable to fast running. She was, however, expected to haul a train which was too heavy, as it included catering coaches. This practice has been abandoned by the last three Railtour Officers (including myself) in the light of experience. It should be remembered, too, that the hot box only occurred after 1,300 miles (plus some shunting) by which time the engine might have been expected, to be adequately run in.

Running at 30 mph: It is simply impossible on busy lines to fit engines running at 30 mph in with regular trains, while providing the photographic and other amenities which are generally agreed to be de rigueur on our railtours. Also, however excellent the lineside buses, etc., may be, railtour trains are primarily intended to be TRAVELED in (this, believe it or not, is the normal function of passenger trains) and to trundle at this speed on main lines behind an engine such as No.171 is unthinkable. Incidentally, Mr. Cantlon would have enjoyed plenty of slow running on the North Kerry - not because No.186 couldn't do better, but because she was traversing speed restricted routes. I cannot, however, find his name among the bookings of this, or of any tour - even those for which John White recorded the name of every passenger.

Long Distances: (a) All the permutations on the lines around Belfast have been exhausted, except that No.186 has still to reach Derry and Bangor. (b) Two engine tours, which once provided variety, are now out of the question. (c) The cross-channel popularity of our North Kerry tour showed that interesting routes are a draw without No.171 - and most of these involve long distances.

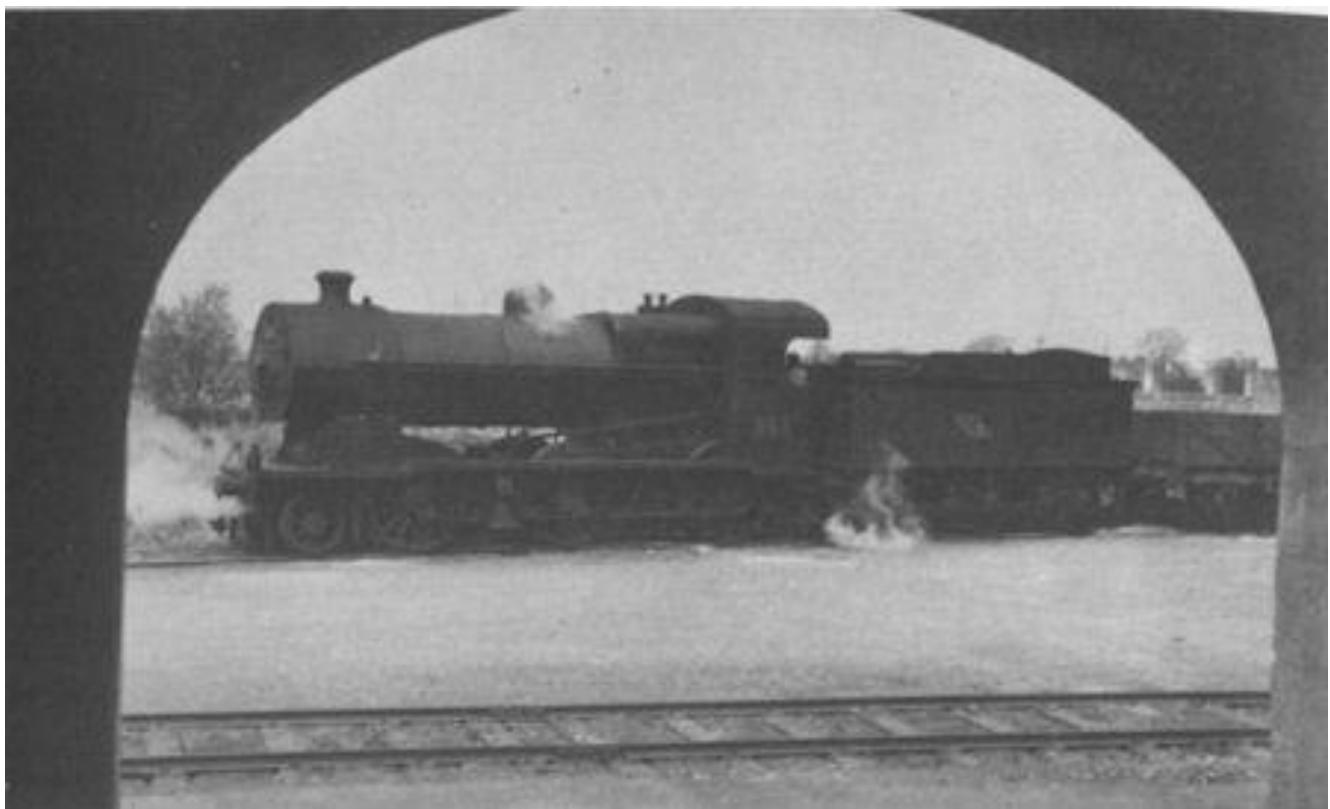
Belfast-Dublin in a day: What do you do then?

- (a) Come back next day? But in this case you have used up a two-day tour on a rather unenterprising trip - and two day tours are not easy to promote. Besides No.186 did take a whole day to get to Dublin in 1971.
- (b) Run a trip from Dublin? Where then does your engine end up? Sallins shed only holds one engine and complicated engine swaps arise.
- (c) Run beyond Dublin and then all the way home the second day? But you have to go far beyond Dublin to make the trip worthwhile. Thus you involve your engine in excessive mileage the second day.

I suggest Mr. Cantlon studies NIR and CIÉ Working Timetables, the railway map of Ireland and the axle loads allowed over the various lines before rushing into print or else find another tree up which to exercise his latrations.

Yours, etc.,

A. Donaldson



K3 class 2-6-0 No.358 shunting Clondulane Goods at Fermoy on 22nd April 1954. (A. Donaldson)