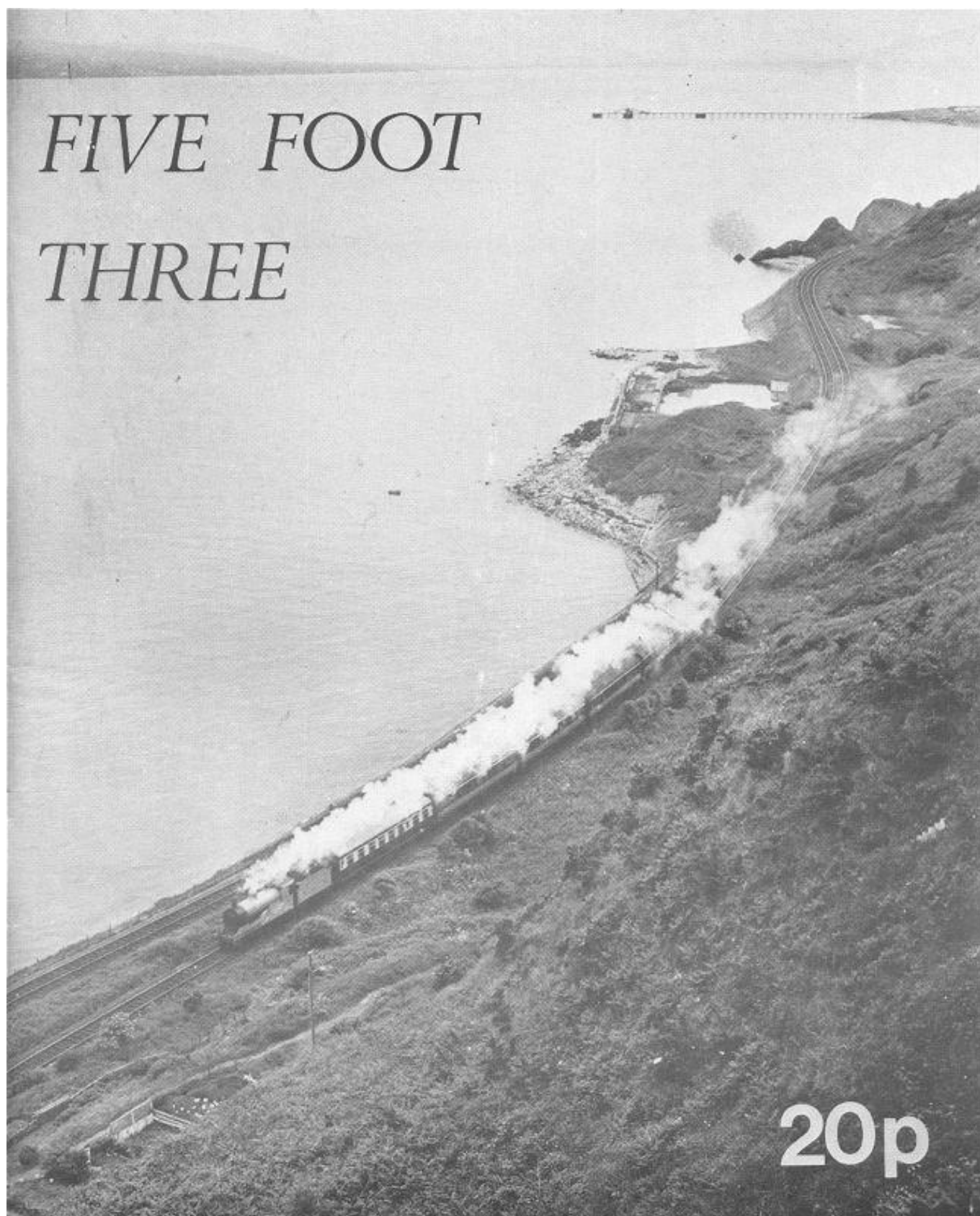


# *FIVE FOOT THREE*



20p

# **FIVE FOOT THREE**

## **No.15**

### **Winter 1973/74**

**Editor: C.P. Friel**

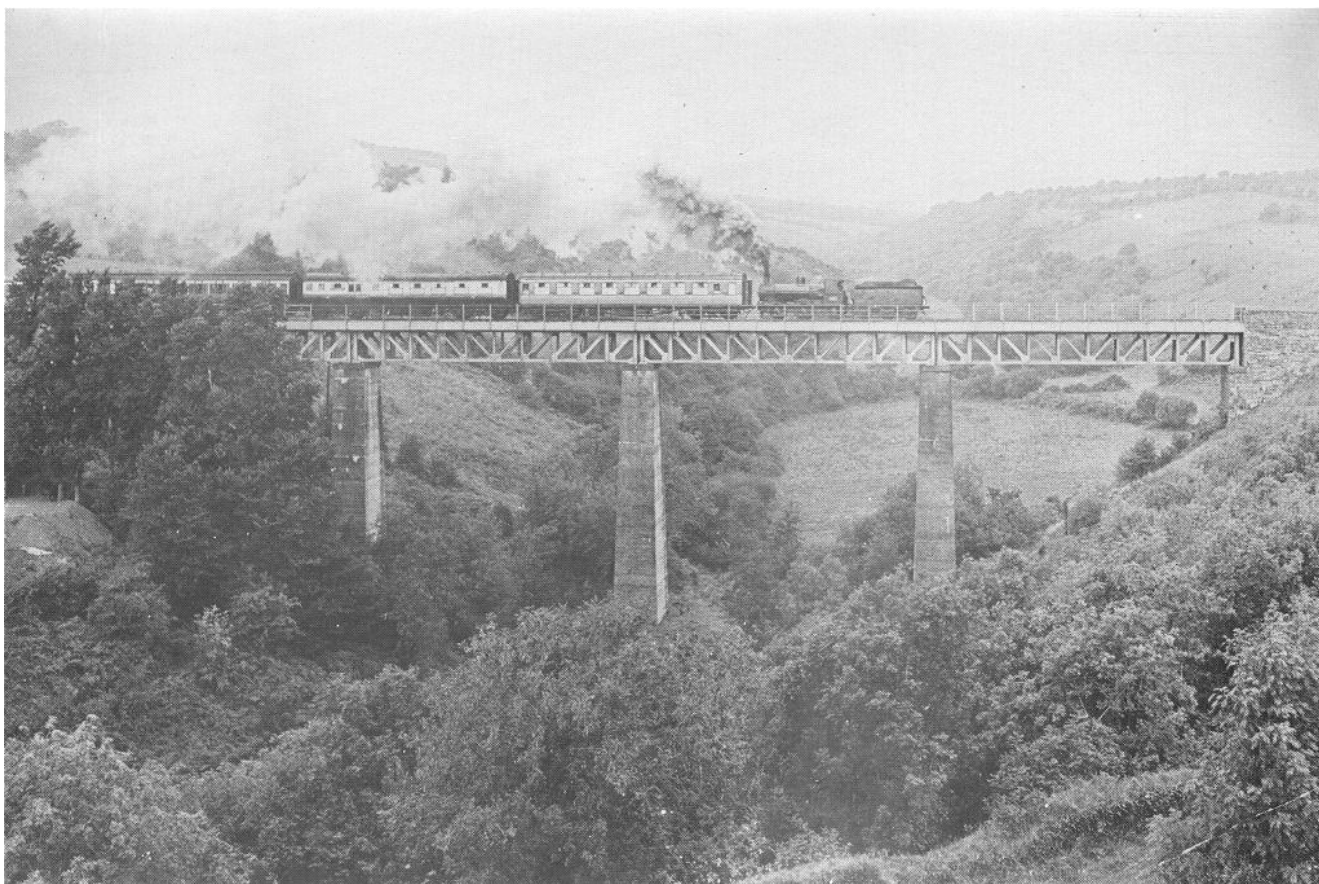
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Opinions expressed by contributors do not necessarily represent those of the Editor or the Council of the Society.

***Front Cover: No.171 "Slieve Gullion" approaches Whitehead Tunnel with the Diner, four Bredins and 861 following the BBC TV filming at Moira on 10<sup>th</sup> June 1973. (C.P. Friel)***



*No.186 on the return from Ballinacourty to Waterford during the “Three Rivers” railtour on Sunday 16<sup>th</sup> September 1973. The train is seen here crossing Ballyvoyle Viaduct, the destruction of which in the Civil War was featured in our “Three Rivers” brochure. (Tim Stephens)*

## EDITORIAL

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As you read through the various reports of the year’s activities in this issue of your magazine, it will become clear just how momentous a year 1973 has been for your Society.

With the Portrush Flyer we can claim to have created the basis of a major tourist attraction in Northern Ireland. Within a few weeks our “Three Rivers” railtour, in an almost opposite corner of the island, marked our return to the big two-engine, two-day railtour and we can now hope (after four years without one) that this sort of major event will resume its annual position in our activities. In fact we have turned out locos for eight mainline runs this year and on top of these there have been many steamings for test purposes, the Steam Gala and Train Rides. In 1973, too, we acquired a complete train of coaches (no less than eight in all) and erected an extensive chain link fence to protect them.

All these activities have thrown more and more work on to the members who go to Whitehead regularly and by the end of the Summer many of these regulars were feeling the strain. Our resources in manpower were really taxed to the very limit in the weeks leading up to the “Three Rivers”.

The main conclusion to be drawn from this year’s activities is that while we can muster up support for all our events, our main stumbling block now is in finding enough Society members willing to do the work.

The Committee’s biggest worry now is that if are to maintain, and only maintain, NOT expand, our present level of activity, we will have to attract more members to work at Whitehead.

Not only are we faced with re-tubing two engines this winter but we now have to lay two sidings and see to the maintenance of a rake of carriages.

An unfortunate result of the sheer pressure of work at Whitehead is that those working there are often simply too busy to stop and chat to every newcomer who turns up. As a result these newcomers often readily assume that they are not welcome. Nothing could be further from the truth - those who work regularly at Whitehead would be only too glad to see new people relieving them of some of the pressure.

It would be very much appreciated if members would let us know their views on their magazine. Several have expressed preference for more coverage of Society activities while others would like to see the prototype coverage increased.

Your magazine, to a fairly large extent, writes itself - if you have an interesting, well written article on any topic of Irish steam or any matter you think your fellow members might enjoy, then why not submit it? We would be grateful if some of our potential authors could turn their attentions to companies other than the NCC and GNR, both of whom have been scoring well in recent issues. If you haven't the information in your own notebooks, why not have a chat with some railwaymen near you and you'll soon have enough? If you can turn up pictures too then so much the better.

Good writing.

## **NEWS FROM COMMITTEE**

**J.A. Lockett**

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It was with sadness that the Committee accepted the resignation of Johnny Glendinning from the position of Site Officer - he was one of the longest serving and hardest working members of Committee. However, he felt it was time that he gave way to someone else due to pressure of work, though we look forward to having the benefit of his knowledge and continued hard work in the future.

The Committee would like to welcome Paul Newell to the post of Site Officer which he has kindly agreed to fill until the AGM.

A sub-committee was set up to investigate the size and nature of the future Committee and their recommendations have already been circulated with the AGM notice. Basically they recommended the dropping of two posts and replacing them with a Carriage & Wagon Superintendent and a London Agent (previously a co-opted post). In addition they felt that we should set up new positions, under the general term Posts of Special Responsibility, to take over the running of some departments of the Society's work. These people, though having no voting powers in Committee, would have the opportunity of attending meetings as and when the need arose. The new posts would include Area Representatives, Membership Secretary, Whitehead Events Organiser, a Plant Maintenance Squad (consisting of an electrician, plumber, etc.), a Catering Organiser and someone to look after Counter Sales. These recommendations will come up before the Annual General Meeting.

On the tour front, the Committee pondered long on the running of the "Three Rivers", but this time not because of lack of money but because of anxiety about the engines. No.4 blew a tube on the final Flyer and with the likelihood of others blowing without warning, it was decided that No.171 should accompany No.186 on the tour.

The events on the tour front are detailed elsewhere in this issue. Hopefully No.171 and No.4 will both receive new tubes over the coming winter - No.171 should be serviceable again by April, with No.4 ready in May or June, depending on the availability of tubes.

With costs of maintenance ever in our minds, it has been decided to allow £50 per engine per day when costing tours. This means that coal, oil, crews and maintenance costs are all now included in fare pricings.

The Flyer season of four trains ended with a total profit of £500, making it a very successful first season.

Our sister organisation, the Irish Steam Preservation Society, who concentrate on steam road vehicles, early farm machinery and a short narrow gauge line at Stradbally, Co. Laois, have given us a long term loan on the former Irish Shell & BP Ltd Planet diesel shunting locomotive. She was delivered to Whitehead by road low-loader from Dublin and has already done some shunting. It is hoped that she will reduce shunting costs, particularly for the smaller movements. She will be particularly useful in making up the likes of the Flyer trains without the expense of lighting up an engine specially.

Still on the power front, our attention has been drawn to the continued survival of one of the Orenstein & Koppel AG (Berlin) 0-4-0 tanks at the Irish Sugar Company's works at Thurles.

The possibility of obtaining a further eight coaches in the coming months will depend on the response to our Coach Appeal which will be circulated shortly. The Committee is continuing its close scrutiny of available and desirable stock.

It has been decided to scrap one of the open wagons on the Site as the vehicle is of little use - it has a broken frame and is minus the buffers at one end.

The Committee has agreed to register the Society for Value Added Tax purposes - this tax may have to be paid on our membership subscriptions.

Our friends, Arthur Guinness, Son & Co Ltd, have donated £200 towards the completion of the new shed roof and their generosity has led us to investigate the publication of a newsletter aimed at publicising our progress to industry.

Appointments:

Firemen R.C. Edwards, R.O. Morton and P. Newell.

Steamraisers C.P. Friel.

Shunter/Guards W.S. Boomer and A. Edgar.

Expenditure:

Transport of Planet Diesel £50

The Committee would very much like to see more members lending a hand with the work at Whitehead and would like to encourage members to come forward for duty as train crews - there's lots of scope for everyone, so please do give it a try.

## **LOCOMOTIVE REPORT**

**P.A. Scott**

Most of our members - especially those who travelled on the "Three Rivers" railtour or who intended to go to Derry on 18<sup>th</sup> August - will be aware that all has not been well concerning our engines in recent months. Although we have had our fair share of locomotive defects and problems over the years, the actual failure of an engine is unprecedented.

Lest anyone should get the impression that this state of affairs is now to be normal it would perhaps be as well to explain the background to some of the problems mentioned and perhaps disabuse any reader of such an unfortunate notion.

It is fair to say that the majority of our difficulties over the late summer have been caused directly or indirectly by the boiler tubes. No.171's tubes have been giving trouble ever since she returned to traffic earlier this year and when the locomotive roster for August and September was drawn up it was decided to limit her workings to one Portrush Flyer only before stopping her for a re-tubing. It was assumed that No.4's tubes were in good condition and the possibility of trouble with them was never

considered.

The first indication of what was to come occurred just before the first Flyer when No.4 burst a tube while working on the Sunday Train Rides (a useful and economic way of testing engines during the summer). From then on the position deteriorated rapidly with a fresh batch of leaking tubes on every occasion that the engine was used. It soon became clear that we were faced with having to complete the summer's commitments using engines of questionable reliability.

In order to continue under these circumstances, it was possible only to repair tubes as they began to leak and then hope for the best. In the event, No.171 failed while raising steam on 18<sup>th</sup> August and No.4 had to be substituted. The eventual late running on this date and the cancellation of the Portrush-Derry section was caused not by the failure (No.4 was in steam dead on time) but by the derailment of the 4,000 gallon tender during shunting which became necessary due to the switch of engine. A week later, on 25<sup>th</sup> August, No.4 failed near the end of the return run of the last Flyer and assistance was only required between Belfast and Whitehead. The tube which caused the failure had, ironically, shown no previous sign of leaking.

Perhaps it would be worth making a note at this stage on the subject of tube failures, especially for those who may not be too familiar with the inside of a locomotive boiler. The tubes, of which there are usually about 120, are made of steel  $\frac{1}{8}$ " thick by  $1\frac{3}{4}$ " diameter and extend from the firebox to smokebox tubeplates, into which they are expanded. The hot gases from the firebox pass through the tubes to the smokebox, giving up their heat via the tubes to the surrounding water. During its life a tube is subject to the corrosive effects of the boiler water on the outside, acids formed from dampness and soot on the inside and wear due to the passage of abrasive particles along with the smoke. Eventually, whichever effect is dominant causes the tube to waste away to nothing at some point whereupon it starts to leak. In the case of No.171 the tubes are badly worn at both ends and at the firebox end are so thin that many have started to leak just inside the firebox tubeplate. No.4's tubes, on the other hand, have plenty of material at the ends and are leaking due to 'pitting' along their length.

When one of No.4's old tubes is tapped with a hammer to remove the scale coating, localised thin patches are revealed, some of which have become holes  $\frac{1}{4}$ " across. It is presumably these which burst suddenly due to the collapse of the scale coating, causing the catastrophic and unpredictable failure peculiar to No.4. The reason for the difference between the two engines is one which I would like to have explained, if some corrosion expert would oblige.

In either case, a leaking tube is easily repaired by replacement or, as a temporary expedient, by plugging. The simplest method is to drive a tapered steel plug into each end, a moderate blow with a hammer being sufficient to hold the plug against boiler pressure. Alternatively, the plugs can be secured by a rod running through the tube and nutted at each end - this method was employed for No.186 when more time was available and has the advantage that the plugs are easier to remove afterwards.

It should be emphasised that although a leaking tube is quite capable of stopping an engine, there is very little danger of explosion or injury due to the nature of the flaw.

On top of the problems with No.4 and No.171, No.186 was giving trouble under steam test. One of the  $5\frac{1}{4}$ " diameter tubes was found to be leaking and a replacement had to be ordered and fitted at short notice. This trouble was not unexpected; two of the large tubes had already been replaced due to their poor condition and, had money been available, all twelve large tubes would have been treated likewise.

As well as the problems with worn out tubes, a series of minor mishaps occurred at the same time. It had been known for some time that No.4's piston rings would require renewal, but this work was not considered urgent and was postponed due to the late running of No.186's boiler work. As it turned out this was an unfortunate decision since No.4 broke the right hand rings while working the 18<sup>th</sup> August

Flyer. Repairs were put in hand right away so that the engine should be available for the final Flyer a week later. The repair itself was fairly straightforward but had to be fitted in at the same time as tube repairs and the preparation of No.186 for steam test.



*The tube which caused No.4's failure - showing scale coatings chipped away to show some of the holes. The hole on the right is approximately ¼ inch across. (C.P. Friel)*

Due to the unpredictable nature of No.4's tubes (no amount of judicious plugging could stave off disaster as inspection of the tube ends gave no indication of the pitting down the length of the tube) it was decided to substitute No.171 for the "Three Rivers" tour. In order to ease the load on the engine in anticipation of trouble with tubes, both No.171 and No.186 were despatched to Dublin some three days before the actual tour with No.186 being hauled out of steam. Certain people expressed amazement that No.186 was hauled 'dead' for such a long distance, no doubt having heard instances of damage to cylinders resulting from such treatment. It is our policy not to haul 'dead' engines at all if it can be avoided, but it should be understood that in matters like this we rely very much on the advice of the railway companies.

In the event the trouble experienced with No.186 was a hot big end which resulted from a badly seated oiling button and would probably have occurred in any case. The big end was re-metalled and fitted by CIÉ to whom our thanks are due for accommodating us at short notice. No.186 proceeded to give her most outstanding performance to date, capably shouldering the workings rostered for No.171 despite continuing trouble with the big end and a side rod bush.

The most serious incident of the "Three Rivers" tour was the damage which occurred to No.171's cylinder cover at Waterford on the Sunday morning. Basically, No.171 was rendered useless when one of the cylinder covers was partly blown off first thing on the Sunday - to go into more detail might entail apportioning blame which would be a fruitless exercise - suffice it to say that we hope the incident will never be repeated. The engine is now in Whitehead again - having worked north on Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> October and just avoided being delayed by a telephoned bomb hoax on the Northern main line. Ironically she arrived in Whitehead with only two leaking tubes to note in the Defects Book.

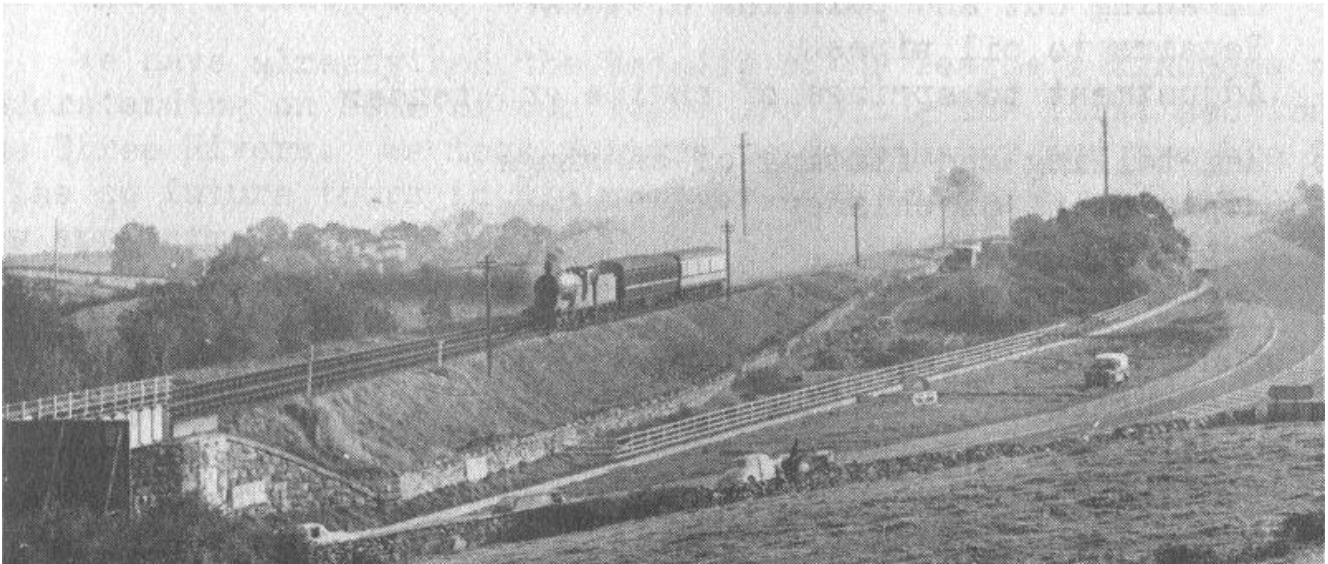
Most of the foregoing can be attributed to one of two causes - worn out tubes and an excess of pure bad luck. It was extreme ill fortune that No.4's tubes should play up at the same time as No.171's, that the tender became derailed when it did, and that No.4's piston rings did not postpone their discreditable activities until after the summer, when they were already scheduled for renewal. Hopefully next year will see a redress of the balance.

One immediate consequence of the above is an extremely full repair book. The layout of the more



outstanding work for the winter can be summarised as follows:

- No.4    Dismantling and overhaul of boiler fittings  
         Retubing and associated work  
         Minor boiler, smokebox and ashpan repairs  
         Hydraulic testing, steam testing and reassembly  
         Renewal of piston rings and valve rings  
         Repairs to valve gear die blocks
- No.171   Dismantling of boiler fittings and steam pipes  
         Retubing and associated work  
         Overhaul of boiler fittings  
         Minor boiler repairs  
         Hydraulic and steam testing and reassembly  
         Repairs to smokebox and chimney  
         Setting of valves  
         Cleaning out and painting of tank  
         Repairs to oil pipes  
         Adjustment to springs of engine and tender
- No.186   Remetalling and fitting of bearings  
         Replacement of chimney  
         Setting of valves  
         Replacement of firehole ring rivets



***Heading For Home: Repaired No.171 with North Atlantic brake 472 and 4012 crosses the Dundalk-Newry road at Father Murphy's on 27<sup>th</sup> October 1973. (R.C. Edwards)***

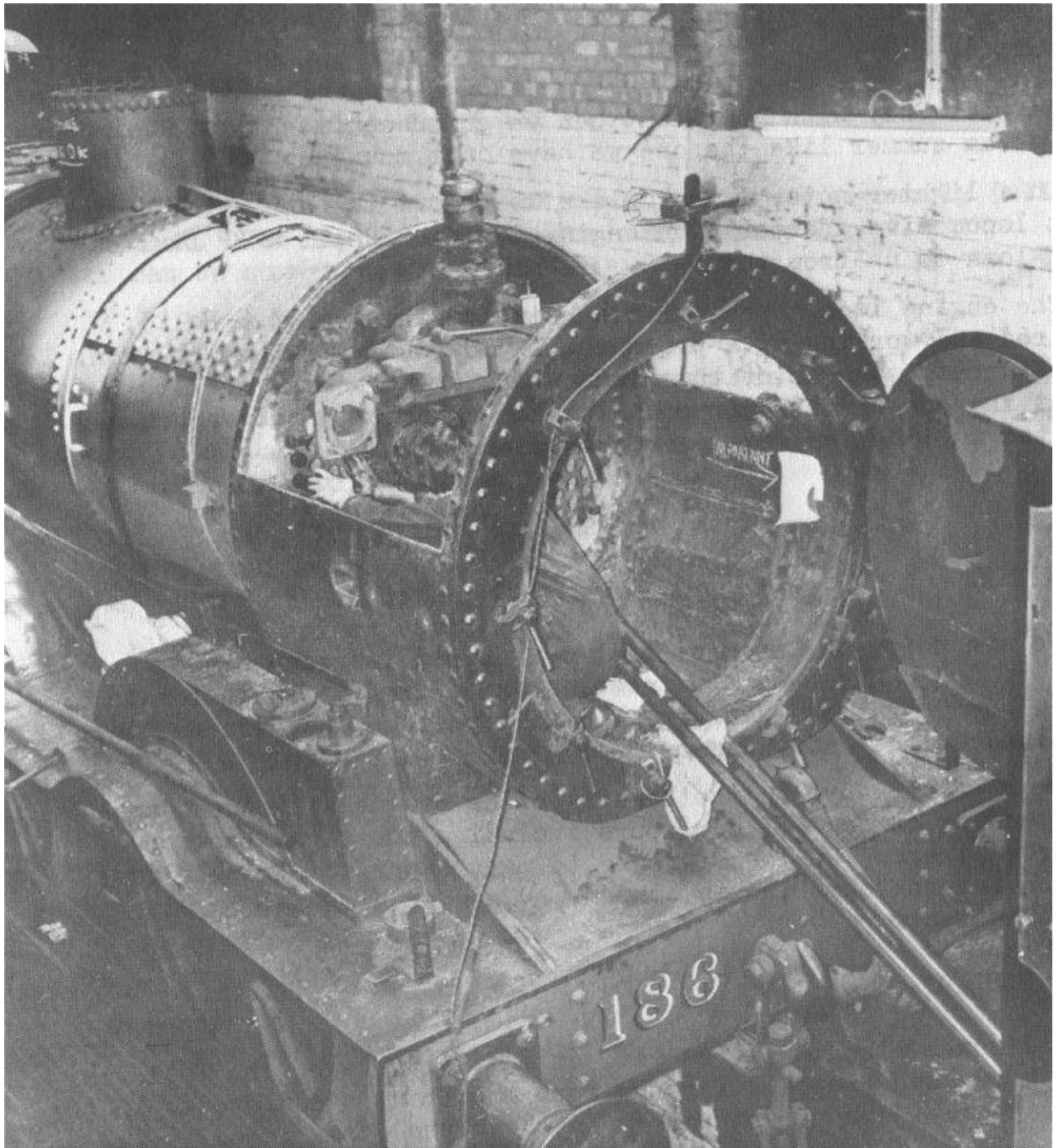
The brunt of the work, of course, lies in the retubing of the two main line engines. Experiences with No.186 show that this work is very unpredictable; it is straightforward if all goes well but snags are to be expected. Unfortunately these are apt to show up only during the hydraulic test, which in the case of No.4 will occur late in the year. At the earliest No.4 can be expected in traffic by early May - this is because of the very long delivery on tubes.

The cost of retubing will be in the region of £800.

This represents the material for the small tubes only and does not cover any large tubes which may



need replacement or any unforeseen work arising from the hydraulic test. In order to finance the work, I would ask you to contribute towards the cost of the retubing if at all possible and support our fund-raising efforts to bring us through a period of very tight financial commitment. Only with your help can we go on confidently to another heavy steam season like the one we have just mounted.



*This is how No.186 looked for some weeks in the early summer - boiler cladding and asbestos lagging removed, dome cover off, top of the smokebox shell cut away, all the old tubes out, the chimney perched on the roof of the Guinness. The first of the new tubes are seen about to be entered in the front tubeplate. Clearly seen are the superheater header and the snifting valve. No wonder visitors raised their eyebrows when told No.186 was to work on the "Three Rivers" tour, then only months away! (C.P. Friel)*

On a lighter note, I would like to record the arrival of our latest locomotive, formerly belonging to Irish Shell & BP Limited, and on loan to us from the ISPS.

The engine is a three-cylinder simple Hibberd 0-4-0 No.23, oil fired and working at a pressure of 500 pounds per square inch. Please see elsewhere in this issue for further details. At present the engine is equipped with air brakes only but vacuum may be fitted in time for next year's tour season.

## **DATES FOR 1974**

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Although planning is, as yet, at an early stage, the following dates have been proposed for the more important steam events in the coming year. Mark up your diary and keep the dates free.

**25<sup>th</sup> May** - Tour on the Northern main line to work No.186 south.

**29<sup>th</sup> June** - Steam Gala at Whitehead.

**20<sup>th</sup> July, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> and 31<sup>st</sup> August** - Portrush Flyer season.

**28<sup>th</sup>/29<sup>th</sup> September** - Two day, two-engine tour to Limerick via the Junction, back via Nenagh.

In addition running in trips of a local nature can be expected. Members will, of course, be circulated with details of all these events.

## **SITE & CARRIAGE NOTES**

**Paul Newell**

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Recent work by the Site gang has been concentrated on lifting track at the old Magheramorne Cement Works which was kindly presented to us following negotiations by Lord O'Neill. So far two points and a quantity of track (both rail and sleepers) have been recovered for use at Whitehead in connection with our new carriage sidings.

Readers will remember that we purchased a large quantity of track materials from NIR earlier this year and we hope to lay two sidings accommodating up to eight bogies in the near future.

Anyone who witnessed (or even took part in) the shunting necessary for making up any main line train will appreciate that the extra siding space is very urgently required. So far we haven't actually been unable to carry out the necessary movements, but someday we'll just not be able to move.

On the coach front, 861 has been repainted in crimson panelled out in off-white, using Locomotive Publishing Company photographs for reference. During the summer Johnny Glendinning, Ken Pullin and Sullivan Boomer restored the gas lighting (working in close co-operation with our friends in Calor/Kosangas). The Diner, 552, is having an extensive refit - at the moment the saloon portion is stripped so that rot can be dealt with and a new ceiling and walls put in. The roof is to be re-felted. We hope to restore the curtains on the windows and replace the modern lighting with older fittings from Diner 554.

The Directors' Saloon is also to be refitted internally including the renewal of the lighting and wiring. 4012 was badly vandalised before purchase and will need a very extensive refit. The Bredins are generally in pretty good shape but will require repainting in the spring.

Because of all this work we are desperately in need of more help at Whitehead - at the moment the same faithful few are doing every job that comes up. Your help could be priceless. If you're worried about the fuel shortage, please contact me and we'll do our best to arrange a lift.

Remember, if you wish to see No.4 or No.171 with an eight bogie Portrush Flyer next summer then please come to Whitehead now and help out - otherwise we will be in serious difficulties.

It has been a very full year in every department of the Society and those of us connected with publicity can claim to be satisfied with five television appearances, a radio interview and many newspaper articles. Most of the newspaper coverage was due to the work of Robin Morton and I must express my thanks to him for all his help.

A major step forward was the sponsorship of the Steam Gala by the East Antrim Times - they produced 750 posters and gave us large advertisements in both the Belfast Telegraph and East Antrim Times all to a value of several hundred pounds. At the Gala the Times organised a Spot the Ball contest which was won by the ubiquitous I.C. Pryce.

For the Flyer, we aimed at getting large pre-booked parties from clubs, Sunday Schools and offices. Our Flyer brochure was distributed widely (e.g. to 400 ministers in Belfast) but it's hard to expect people to be persuaded by simply reading a brochure and indeed most of our bookings were won as a result of a personal contact with members.

We are very keen to keep up the publicity work during the winter and to this end Johnny Lockett and I have put together a broadly-based talk on the Society with the general aim of attracting people to next year's Flyers. We have already given the talk to the Belfast Centre of the National Trust and are anxious to contact any interested group, whether social clubs, church bodies, other societies or clubs.

The easiest publicity job of the year was provided by the tour programme where small advertisements in the magazines produced full trains. The "Three Rivers" tour aroused enormous local interest with Jack O'Neill at the Waterford end spreading the Society's name far and wide to very good effect.

The most unsatisfactory trend of the year has been the apparent lack of interest of the English enthusiast magazines in printing news of our activities - one magazine in a special Irish article managed to go particularly haywire. One would have thought that the Flyer was the biggest breakthrough in British preservation circles this year and we were certainly very disappointed at the very scant coverage we received in comparison to much less worthy projects.

It would appear that live steam on a proper main line is no longer of any interest to Editors who seem to prefer an endless procession of rusting hulks on low loaders.

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**LONDON NEWS****Leslie McAllister**

I have always seen my job of London Representative as encompassing publicity and party travel organisation as well as straight representing. This year Lance King asked me to take over his fund-raising activities here and then the London Area was faced with the job of raising £100 to cover the cost of Lance's stock. Lance, very reasonably, agreed to accept payment as we raised the funds.

Our first effort was at Tysley where we raised £35 and gained much useful publicity for the "Three Rivers". The sales team, however, will remember the event more for the soaking we got on the first day and the hospitality of Tony Brown and his wife who saved us hotel bills.

Chronologically speaking, the next activity was taking bookings for the "Three Rivers" and organising the London party. With the London Rep. deciding to get married during the period Tim Morton (Best Man and essential right hand man) found himself doing much of the work. Our party for the tour numbered 26 which was almost double the figure for last year and we all enjoyed the weekend immensely (but then who wouldn't enjoy our tours?).

A week later we were off to Didcot for two days of hard selling which produced a three figure dividend. Lance had, meanwhile, continued to add to his stock and we hadn't quite caught up. However a further day at Tysley did the trick and at present we are in the black to the tune of £25 and have £70

tied up in stock at cost price.

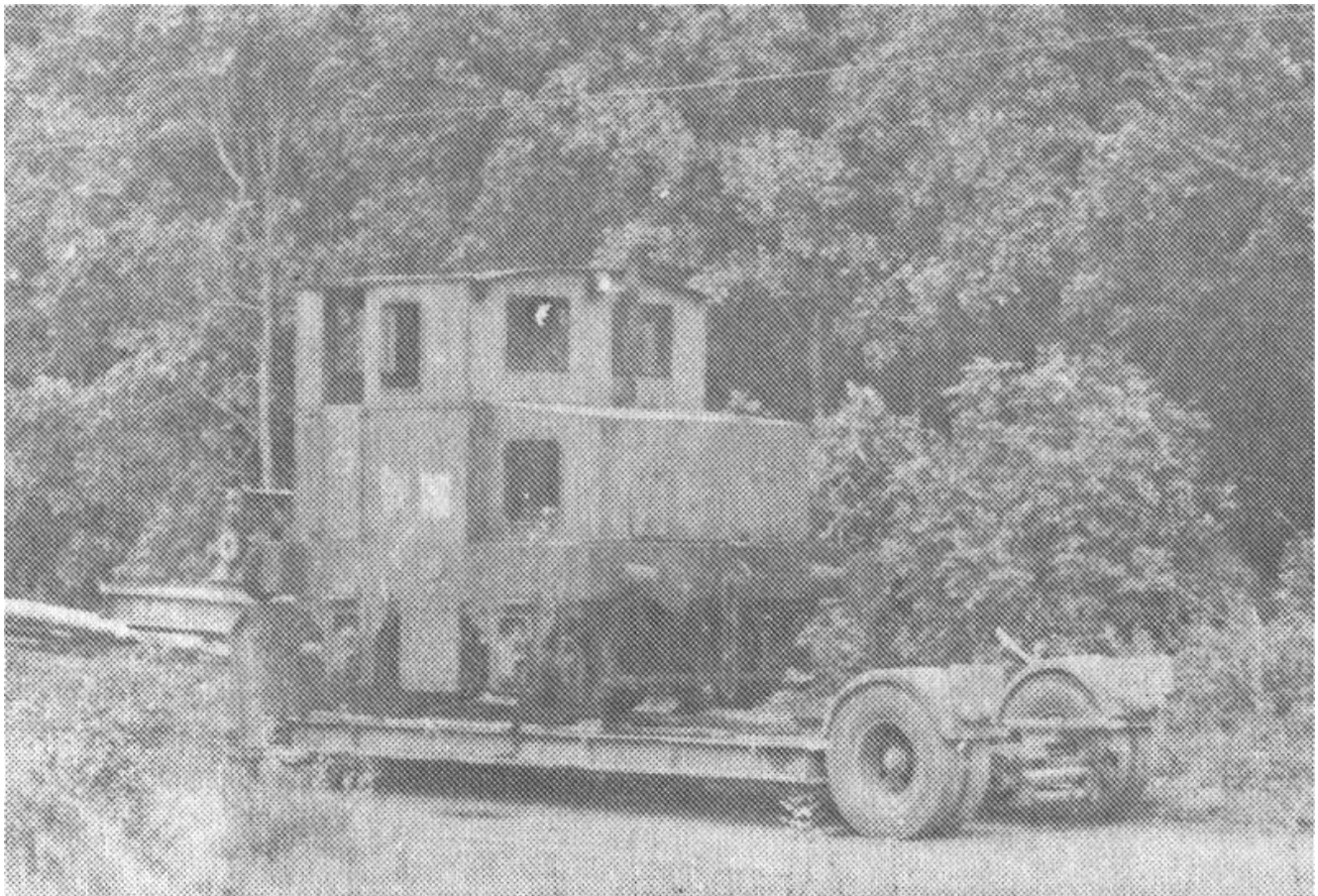
This agreeable position has been made possible by the work of just four members. Next year we want to attend more Open Days but we will need more assistance. So, please, if any of our members on this side of the Irish Sea are able to help in any way I would ask them to contact me. In addition, with Tim's help, I have given three talks on Irish Railways and the work of the Society while four more have been arranged. If any member can arrange a 'date' with their local group, please let me know. The publicity to be gained is priceless.

Finally, my thanks to Lance King who, despite 'retirement', is as active as ever, to Robin Linsley who worked tirelessly at Open Days and to Tim Morton who worked hard at everything the Area did this year.

## **PLANET**

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Members will be doubt be a little disturbed to find an infernal combustion engine invading our pages, but this engine is rather special. She is the ex-Irish Shell & BP Limited Planet shunter which is on loan to us from the Irish Steam Preservation Society.



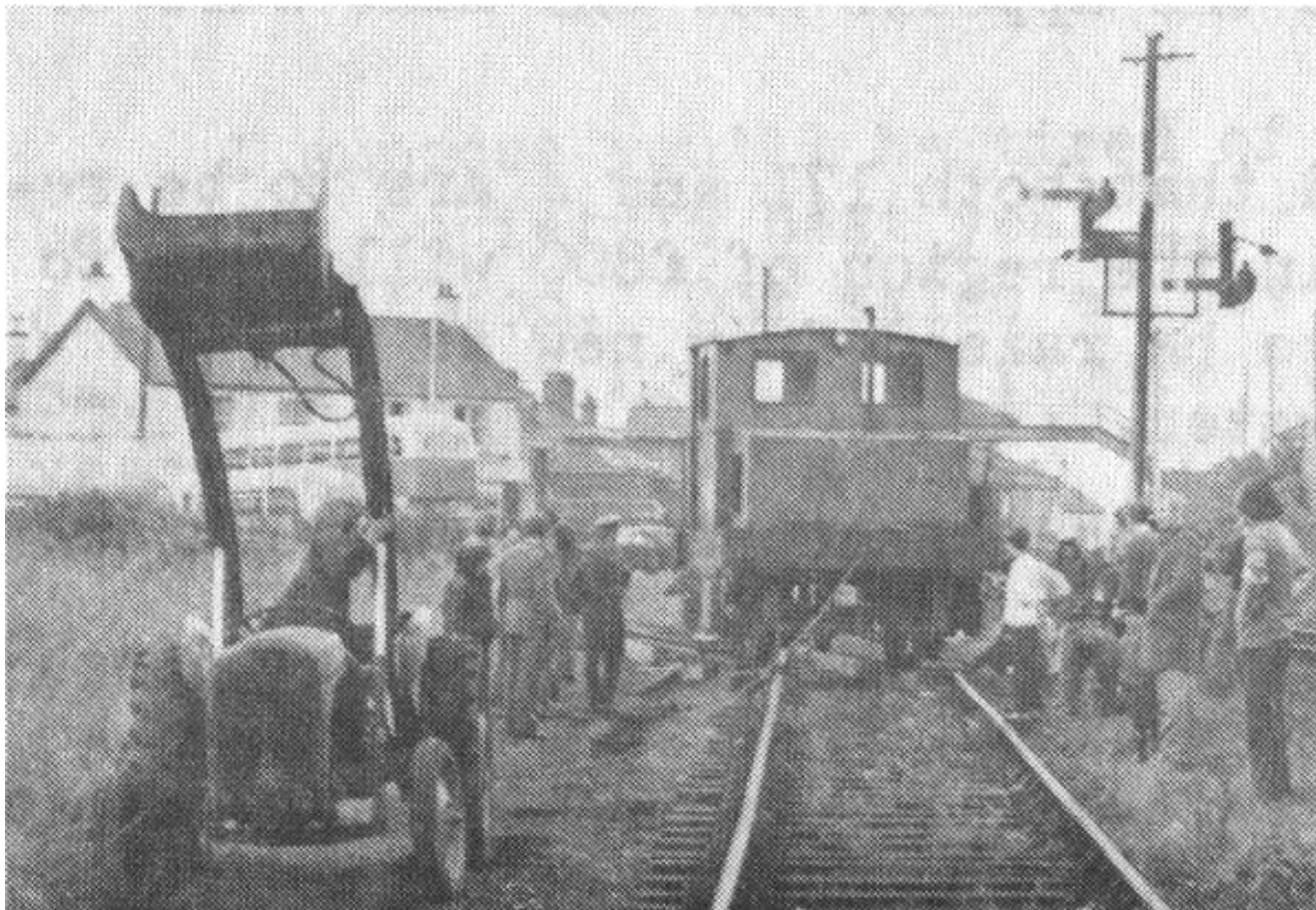
***The Planet locomotive on the road low-loader at the Border on the Dundalk-Newry road where she spent the weekend waiting for the Customs post to re-open. (C.P. Friel)***

She is unusual on a number of counts - she is almost the last example of a private-owner standard-gauge engine in Ireland, she is certainly the only 5'3" engine produced by J.C. Hibberd & Co Ltd of London and her minute size must make her the smallest standard-gauge engine in this country - ever.

Officially she is numbered 23 in Shell's British Isles numbering system but she carries no number. She

was built in 1951 (Works Number 3509) and is powered by a three-cylinder Dorman 3D1 engine developing 79 horse power. Transmission is via a three-speed gearbox to both axles by means of chain drive (her wheel arrangement is '4w'). She has a wheelbase of only 5'8" and a length over buffers of 14'1" and weighs 11 tons.

She is fully operational and has successfully made some heavy lifts involving our 'rubbish' rake of wagons and railcar, etc.



*The Planet locomotive being re-railed at Whitehead on 13<sup>th</sup> October using a bridge of rails from ground level, thereby avoiding a tedious jacking job. (C.P. Friel)*

## **TREASURER'S NOTES**

**John Richardson**

The Hon. Treasurer would like to thank those members who helped in selling tickets for the Autumn Draw. The proceeds were in excess of £500 - a really worthwhile effort.

We are grateful to Messrs Lizars for their kind donation of a pair of binoculars towards the Draw prizes. It is hoped that members will show their gratitude by patronising this firm which has helped us so often in the past.

In future, we would like to hear from those members who prefer not to receive ballot tickets. We keep a list of those who indicate this preference and it saves us both the inconvenience. We would point out that most of these members send valuable contributions in lieu of ticket sales.

Finally, to any member who wrote to the Treasurer within the period of 14<sup>th</sup>/16<sup>th</sup> November and has not received a reply, would they please write again - a mail van was hijacked in Carrickfergus on the 16<sup>th</sup> and some items of post are thought to have been lost.

I suppose you'll be tired of people telling you that this has been the Society's best year ever and I'm afraid it's true in my department too. Our sales effort for 1973 is well over £1,500 and may well reach £2,000 - a figure thought outlandish a few short years ago.

We have sold more of every line this year and I must apologise to those members who ordered by post and had to wait for their orders. The sheer turnover this year left us short of stock on several occasions during the year.

The Coach Appeal earlier this year was well supported by many members and the generous donations of a few members in particular provided us with entire vehicles in one fell swoop. Alas, fate is playing the same trick on us as she did when the engines were going. Suddenly the market is flooded with really choice stock and our funds are nowhere ready to take the pickings available. Several of us, I know, have personal regrets that some engines went unnoticed (who now wouldn't give his all for a UG or 301?). Don't let us have the same regrets in the years to come when all the best stock is gone. Support the appeals now and make sure of acquiring the best.

You will no doubt have read that both No.171 and No.4 are to be retubed this winter and anything in the region of £800 will have to be paid off and this will have to be raised from new as we have only just kept our heads above water.

Please continue with your staunch support as we approach our tenth birthday.

In closing I would like to thank all those who laboured tirelessly on the sales team this year. I trust that in the coming year we will have a few new faces in the ranks - we can always use your help.

Why not give us a hand and make 1974 an even better year?

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## **BOOK REVIEWS**

### **NCC Saga - The LMS In Northern Ireland**

**R.M Arnold, David & Charles, £5.75**

#### **Supplement To The NCC Saga**

**R.M. Arnold, RPSI, 70p**

A good starting point for an appraisal of "NCC Saga" might be the author's own aphorism, for it is indeed a book about when, how and why the trains have run over the system during the last thirty years or so, and thus stands almost unique in recent railway literature as a chronological survey of a railway in terms of locomotive performance and operational practice. 'Operation' is, I think, the key word of the whole book - those who want the conventional history quarried from company minute books will have to seek it elsewhere, for the author says in his preface that he has never wanted "overmuch to probe into railway matters so ancient that no one alive has any personal experience of them."

Chapters One and Two take the reader on a tour of the system at the close of World War II, and here the tone of the whole book is set. The ethos as well as the geography of the NCC is clearly conveyed here and chapter two, "The Branch Lines", provides a mine of information about how the Derry Central and the smaller, and long since closed, offshoots were worked. Not only so, but frequent references to the personalities involved in the running of them will delight anyone interested in the countryside and its characters.

The third chapter is about the pre-Derby locomotive heritage, and provides a very necessary background to a book which is perforce concerned mainly with the two most modern NCC classes. The information here should be read in conjunction with pages two to eleven of the 'Supplement' where



tables and photographs of the older engines, their mechanical details and reboiling and rebuilding dates are provided. Here the reader will find much to interest him, not least the very small grate areas relative to cylinder sizes of the earlier classes; but in general the author avoids any detailed treatment of the development and design problems of the older engines.

Chapters four to nine, the core of the book, must have presented considerable problems to an author with the task of recording the day to day life of twenty-two years. The amount of factual information to be conveyed precludes any simplified arrangement into themes (although indeed a chapter on coaches would have been welcome) and Mr Arnold has thus produced a very meaty chronology of NCC operation year by year from 1949 to the present day. From it can be traced a complete record of the difficulties of running (and in the later years maintaining in running order) a fleet of steam engines, as well as a good deal of information about the trains they worked, the men who drove and fired them and the excellent performances they put up.

The earlier years, dominated by the moguls and characterised by performances with heavy loads which are excellent by any standard, are recalled with particular affection. "Halcyon Days", a most aptly entitled chapter, is an almost idyllic evocation of the last days of steam domination of the system, but the other side of the coin turns itself up, and the last days of the moguls tell a tale of rough riding, broken springs, cracked frames and even cracked cylinders. Perhaps the excesses of pre-war short cut-off working were making themselves felt as standards of maintenance declined with the onset of dieselisation.

Mr Arnold's enthusiasm for mogul performance is almost equalled by his admiration of the work done by the Jeeps, particularly after 1966, when heavy repairs had ceased and only the stone train contract gave them an extra, rather jaded, lease of life. Some of the best runs in the log tables belong to this twilight period, when the drivers and firemen (some comparatively inexperienced) did a miraculous job in coaxing good running from run down engines. In commemorating them the author rightly stresses that these years, filled with difficulties unknown to the pre-war generation, have an interest of their own.

But there is a sympathetic account of the UTA's earlier difficulties, and the point is made that in 1958, when the NCC was almost the last Irish main line to be dieselised, the job had hardly been done before the GNRB was dissolved, and the UTA took over half a main line operated by a large number of non-standard steam locomotives, as well as an alternative route to Derry, already in process of running down. They had a mandate to run this concern while the government pondered (for six years as it turned out) whether to modernise or close down, and the years from 1958 to 1961, although for rather different reasons, make depressing reading about the NCC too. In contrast the 1962-65 period is much brighter while the last, stone train, days are full of spirited running.

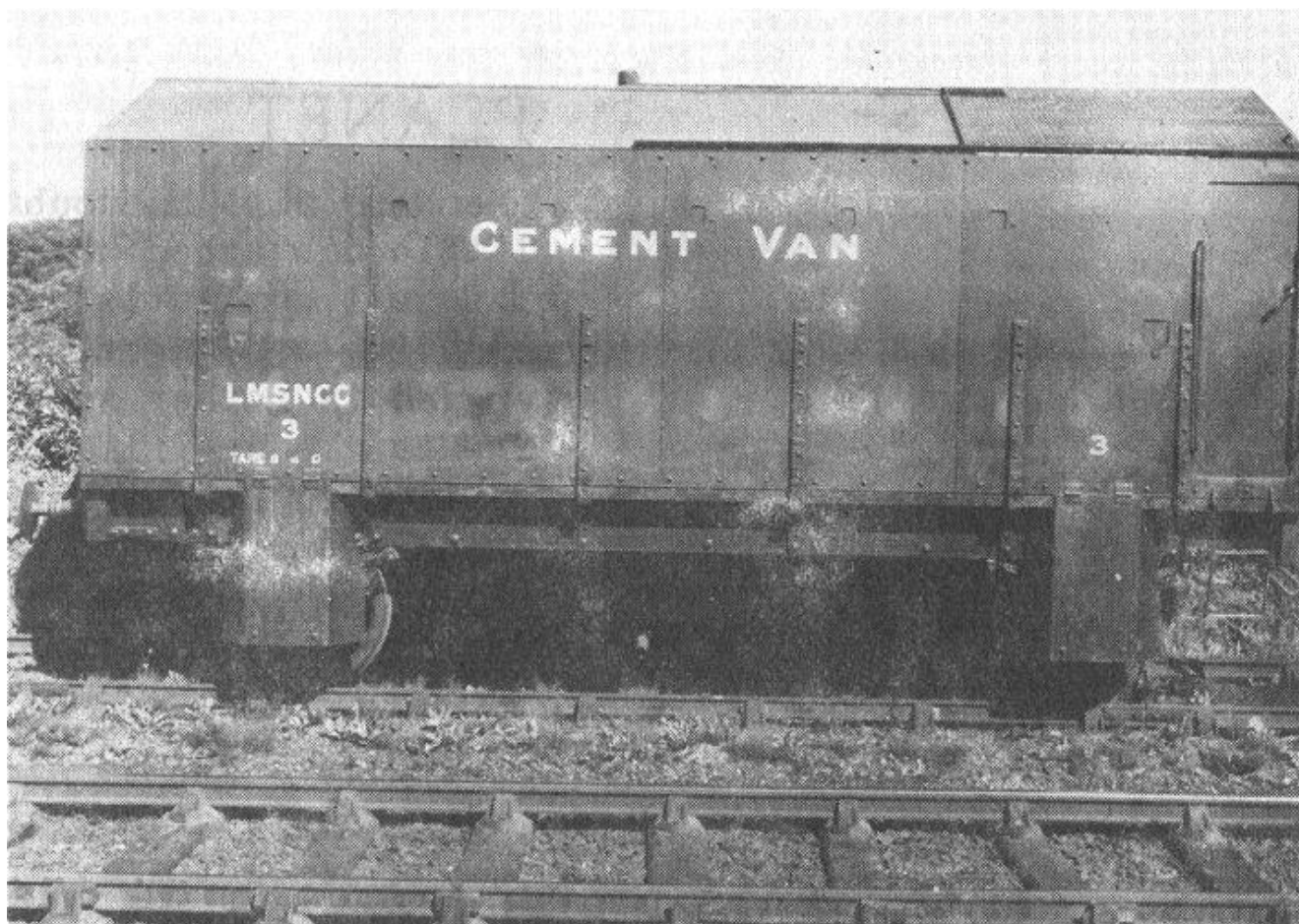
The Supplement is of course part of the book, for it expands many points only briefly touched on in the main text, tabulates the runs quoted and illustrates many of the earlier engines. A formidable pair of lists gives details of almost everything that happened to the locomotive stock from 1922 to 1972, and rolling stock fans will find that similarly exhaustive tables do the same for every coach since 1936. The last page of the Supplement carries an essay on the public timetable for 1909 and other examples of operation are provided by a photostat of part of the summer 1938 working timetable, details of engine and crew rosters for the winter of 1952 timetable and the summer 1955 coach workings. The core of the Supplement is naturally the fifteen pages of log tables. Even non-timers could, I think induce a state of excitement by considering some details from a very fast main line; Mr Arnold quotes for example eleven maximum speeds of 80 or over on the descent into Antrim - and with eleven different engines too. But the real test is hill-climbing and it is instructive to take the sixteen miles between Kellswater and Doagh to see how many even time runs appear. Out of fourteen non-stop runs through Antrim twelve covered the section in 16½ minutes or less, often with substantial loads, and the honours are



evenly divided between moguls and jeeps. Anyone looking for his favourite engine will probably find it - each of the moguls and tanks appears at least twice and there are several examples of the running of 2-4-0s, 4-4-0s and BCDR and GNR engines on 'foreign' metals. Those still in doubt about the author's favourites could ponder the fact that Nos. 3, 4, 91 and 104 are quoted six times each.

The illustrations in both Saga and Supplement are varied and interesting and the author commendably uses most of his photographs to illustrate an interesting station, piece of rolling stock or example of operation as well as the engine itself. Least satisfactory in this respect are the photos which purport to show coaches - usually not enough of the vehicle is shown - but on the other hand few would want to sacrifice any of the photos to include official broadsides of coaches.

These volumes, together with "Steam Over Belfast Lough", give a comprehensive survey of the NCC, its engines, employees and atmosphere. Anyone who has any interest in railways will find them entertaining and instructive and will certainly find they will repay several re-readings. **JAC**



*What is it? Only two clues: (1) the date was 1941; (2) the place was Antrim. The solution is at the end of the magazine text, but try to work it out first.*

**PADDY GANNON**

**A.C. Robb**

The sudden death of our great friend Chief Traffic Inspector Paddy Cannon, just over a year ago, came as a great shock to all who knew him. His loss is still felt by railwaymen and enthusiasts alike and we publish now a tribute by Craig Robb, our first Tour Organiser.

I still find it hard to think that Paddy Gannon is no longer amongst us - when I heard of his death I thought there must surely have been some mistake, for to think of Paddy no longer being around to

guide and advise on our operations on CIÉ was impossible to grasp.

I first came in touch with Paddy when we were planning our first deep incursion into CIÉ, the “Slieve Cualann” tour to Wicklow. I was deeply impressed by his immediate and enthusiastic grasp of what we wanted to do and this was coupled with a gentle firmness in pointing out just what we would be able to fit in. He seemed to have memorised the complete timetable and had a very clear picture of the layout, traffic possibilities and difficulties of every station and siding in the country. No problem was insoluble where Paddy was concerned - his active involvement was paramount in planning any trip for he made sure that our plans were sound and practical. Indeed before one tour he spent an hour on the phone with me and re-planned the whole thing there and then.

Out on the road Paddy was always in complete command of any situation. He had the rare genius of understanding everyone’s problems, be they enginemen, station staff, signalmen or enthusiasts. We gained immense confidence in the knowledge that we could have no better mentor than Paddy and our confidence was increased by the certainty that Paddy was known and respected by every railwayman we came in contact with.

Whether things went well or not, I never saw him annoyed or upset. Many members will remember how the antics of No.4 must have taxed him during the “Brian Boru” and yet even when No.4 came off the second time, Paddy was still able to ask us what we wanted to do. That we got so much from that tour was entirely due to Paddy’s unfailing enthusiasm and ability at a time when he could easily have packed us off to Dublin behind a diesel.

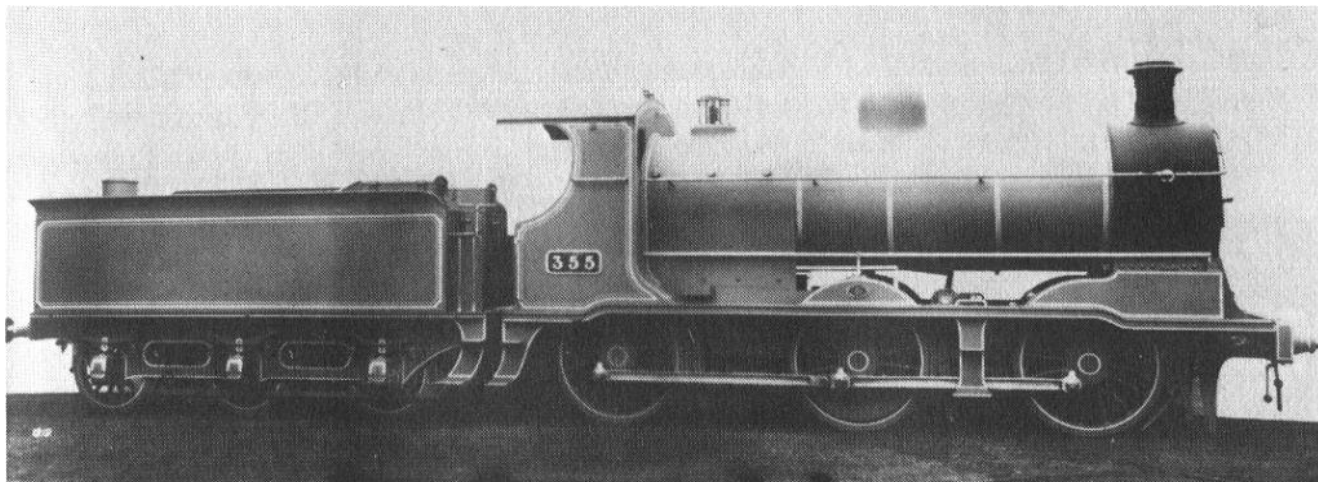
To my mind Paddy could best be summarised as one who represented all that is best in the modern Irish railwayman.

To his wife and family we extend our deepest sympathy.

## PHOTO SOURCES

C.P. Friel

We have been very fortunate in recent months in being granted permission to publish material copyrighted by various firms. We have made use of material from Real Photographs Limited in previous publications and feel we should mention here the catalogue numbers of the prints used in the “Three Rivers” brochure. They were: loco 58 at Macmine Junction is photo R8009; No.186 at Waterford is X541; 304 approaching Waterford is X807 and 336 at Abbey Junction is X764. The Real Photographs’ Irish lists are X1 and X3 for standard gauge subjects and X2 for narrow gauge items.



*Great Southern and Western No.355 as built by North British in 1905. (Real Photographs 87045)*

Real Photographs are also marketing prints from the Locomotive Publishing Company's collection, now the property of the Ian Allan organisation. The Irish list here is LPC9 and covers both standard and narrow gauge. This collection is of especial interest to modellers as it contains many builder's and official photographs not previously available.

It should go without saying, of course, that both collections contain much of interest not only to the locomotive devotee but also to those interested in stations, coaches, buildings and traffic.

The accompanying print is from the Locomotive Publishing Company's and shows Great Southern and Western No.355 as built by North British in 1903 (15943). Later, of course, the engines in this class became K3 moguls when rebuilt with a leading pony wheel, a Q superheated boiler and a Southern cab. For the benefit of those wishing to obtain a print, the catalogue number is 87043.

## **OUTING ROUND-UP**

**A.S. Ragg**

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The tour programme this year turned out to be the most successful for some time - we had trains out on the main line on eight occasions and four of these were "Portrush Flyer" trains. The Flyer was undoubtedly the most ambitious project yet under-taken and that the venture was such a success reflects great credit on the Society.

The Flyer marked our entry into the public market and made a contribution, even if only a small one, to the tourist business of the Province while at the same time giving a pleasurable day's outing to 1,500 people. We carried parties, both large and small, from Church bodies, youth clubs, Civil Service departments, industrial works' parties as well as a host of individuals and families.

The preparation of the trains entailed many long hours of dedicated work by the members, particularly in the maintenance of the engines and stock. On the loco side things went fairly satisfactorily though the trouble with No.4's tubes and piston rings were things we could well have done without.

Our one operational blow was the failure involving the unfortunate No.171 and the confusion was compounded by the derailment of the large tender while No.4 was preparing to leave. All this meant that the planned trip to Derry with No.171 was not feasible and the run to Derry with No.4 was put beyond question when the tender came off.

We felt very disappointed that morning but we were pleased, and grateful, to find that our passengers had all waited patiently at York Road and were sympathetic and under-standing about our troubles. We had only one complaint; one man grouched bitterly at having to wait and then turned and left!

In the following item in this issue is an assessment of performances, etc., by R.M. Arnold and I will leave that facet of the Flyer in his capable hands.

What of the future? Certainly the Flyers will be repeated though we feel inclined to run them during July and August at fortnightly intervals.

Before mentioning the three railtours proper run during the season, I would like to mention another 'first' - the provision of a special train for BBC television. It is all very well having a train available but quite another to actually be asked to provide one and thus, one hopes, be put 'on the map' for the future. It is interesting to recall that No.186 was involved, in a half-hearted fashion, with a much earlier film project. During the winter of 1967/8 we were approached through CIÉ by Ardmore Studios to provide an engine for the filming of "Around the World in Eighty Days". No.186 at that time hadn't run on a Society train and was in sore need of much overhaul work before being fit for duty. With the help of an advance payment by the film company No.186 was put into York Road shops and some work was carried out before the project fell through. No.186 emerged later of course and began her active career on the "Dalriada" Railtour in May 1968.

We were much better prepared for this second filming project for not only were we able to provide an engine at the drop of a hat (or cheque) but we could provide the coaches too.

The timing of the filming, for the programme “Power to Move” shown in September, was very fortuitous for it coincided with the collection of no less than five bogies from Lisburn. We did three runs for the cameras and No.171 behaved perfectly throughout and 861 looked a peach at the rear of the train.

Our traditional railtours began on 28<sup>th</sup> April with the “King Fergus” (mentioned in the last magazine) and continued on 12<sup>th</sup> May with the “Massereene” from York Road to Great Victoria Street and back. No.171 put up some fair timings on those sections where the opportunity is allowed and with the new shop in 861 we were able to provide our passengers with a comprehensive service of souvenirs, books and refreshments.

Following the Flyers, however, our refreshment service had expanded in leaps and bounds from a tea and coffee service to a complete meals and drinks service - all provided by our members and their wives and friends.



*No.4, having just arrived at Portrush with one of this year's Flyers. (C.P. Friel)*

The final days of the Flyer and the prospect of the already-financially assured “Three Rivers” tour turned into a nightmare. While working the last Flyer No.4 suffered a burst tube and was ignominiously towed from York Road back to Whitehead by diesel railcars. That night there was talk of abandoning the tour for we felt we should “do it right” rather than let it go off at half cock with No.186 on her own. After a few days of considered thought we decided to replace No.4 with No.171 and run the tour as planned. The decision to sacrifice the Friday night run to Dublin with the empty stock was not taken lightly, but we did not want to timetable No.171 for four days' consecutive work.

However after several panics (final repair work on No.186, coaling problems, whether No.171 would be allowed on the Kilkenny road after all) we finally got the show on the road with No.171 and No.186 hauling 861 and 552 to Dublin on the 12<sup>th</sup> September.

For the start from Dublin we had two CIÉ bogies as well as our own two coaches and No.186 made a very sprightly run to Arklow, bettering her own timings on the “St. Manntan”. At Arklow we took on another coach to relieve the crush after the stiff Glenealy bank. The Saturday was indeed a memorable day, highlighted by the passage along Wexford quays, two steam engines on Rosslare Pier and the stop beside the magnificent Barrow Viaduct.

The Sunday began with problems, for No.171 blew off one cylinder cover and had to be stopped. How fortunate we were to be able to call on No.186 to take over so quickly and carry out the whole day’s proceedings single handed. The day’s events were re-planned on the way back from Ballinacourty - we would cross the Down Dublin train at Mullinavat, stop at Thomastown for the viaduct, retain the Lavistown lineside buses and arrive in Connolly as close as possible to the original schedule and keep our connections at Dun Laoghaire and Dublin. We would then run to No.186 on to Belfast in No.171’s path hauling 861 and 552.

We achieved most of what we had hoped to do and the photographers at Lavistown had a bonus. Just as No.186 approached from Kildare she was crossed by the diesel hauling the crippled No.171 in from Waterford.

Taken overall the tour was extremely successful - we were particularly pleased that so many of our cross-channel friends decided to make the trip; about 110 of the 250 participants were from across the Irish Sea. The efforts of our London Representative and his team were certainly invaluable; this was the first tour when bookings had to be refused because of lack of seating.

While recording my thanks to Leslie McAllister and his team, I should mention too the immense help given by our Dublin Representative, Sam Carse who maintained the closest touch with CIÉ as well as handling bookings and enquiries. The active members at Whitehead all worked to create a successful tour programme - I and my aide, Michael Henderson, appreciate all the help and advice we were given during the year.

Finally we must all extend our best thanks to both NIR and CIÉ for all their co-operation in the planning and running of our trains.

Next year? At the time of writing we have only the embryos of ideas. No.186 will have to be worked back to Sallins and that could be worked into a tour - perhaps in March or April. The Burma Road has often been mooted and it is under investigation. Then of course we have the Flyer trains end finally there is a proposal for a high class charter train where quality rather than quantity would be the keynote.

To all who helped make 1973 so successful, many thanks indeed.

Here’s to 1974.

## **FLYER RECAP**

**R.M. Arnold**

The Society has achieved much this year especially as regards steam tours and it would be easy to fill ten pages about the Portrush trains and another ten on the “Three Rivers”. However, I will confine myself to a personal view of the Flyer.

Quite a few members, even not so admirably sited as myself, managed to travel every mile of the 640 traversed by No.4. In those miles we were given an opportunity unique in the seventies to compare the performances of the engine with the days when she had all the facilities of official railway maintenance

at easy call.

For brevity I have set out the information in tabular form below. The sections I have chosen are simply dictated by what was permitted by the various stops and slacks - the data should make clear that on each Saturday there was something of interest. You will see that the best time for each section is underlined.

It is of interest and possibly surprising that Alan Robinson was the only one of the Flyer's four drivers not to score a 'best time' in one of the selected sections. However he did have the responsibility of tackling the uncertainty of the inaugural trip when both engine and coaches were rather an unknown quantity. As nearly as possible Alan achieved a timekeeping run throughout with quite a substantial load.

Personally I think it was Percy Mitchell's sprint through Glarryford on the second Flyer that I enjoyed most.

Indeed I have been able to turn up a WORSE time over this section, at some time in the past, with every one of the thirty three engines of this breed, except three - surely a signal reflection on the crews and the Society's maintenance squad.

The mention of crews reminds me that the passengers had every reason to thank the NIR firemen every bit as much as the drivers. With the energy of Frank Dunlop at their back throughout, Aubry Ryans fired on the first train and George Gaw on the third while Barney McCrory appeared on the other two. Regular travellers on the NCC will associate all three with good runs during that period, which at that time seemed final.

The heavy responsibility for providing motive power lay mainly with Peter Scott and then, in his absence for the last run, with Irwin Pryce. In fact up to the point when Peter went off for a well-deserved holiday No.4 had not given too much trouble and in any case it had been planned to use No.171 for the third trip, which included Derry and it was the 4-4-0 which was receiving the attention of the mechanical folk during the preceding week. Everything seemed set for a smooth conclusion to the trips.

However three hours after being lit up at 2am, one of No.171's tube ends in the firebox began to leak badly and No.4 was hurriedly lit up, coaled and prepared. The question of whether she would have sufficient coal to take her to Derry was still very much undecided though the ever-keen Frank Dunlop helped see to it that the bunk was built up well.

It is probably the best known incident of the whole project that in the shunt necessary to rid the badly placed No.4 of the rake of rather useless junk blocking her passage from the shed the VS tender was derailed at the NIR trap point north of Whitehead station. For a time Larne line traffic had to use the Down platform only.

However in admirably quick time, which drew words of praise from the Regional Manager himself, the big blue tender was on the road again and the line clear for No.4 to work five bogies to York Road and then Portrush. Within seconds of the ominous clunk as the tender came off, the area round the shed was a hive of activity as cars and trailers were loaded with jacks, packing blocks, crow bars and chains. The skills learned with the railing of the Derry engine, "R.H. Smyth", over a year earlier were put to good use.

The derailment settled the issue of whether the tank engine could do the 230 mile round trip to Derry for there was now insufficient time. That evening No.4 returned to Whitehead with piston rings broken on the right side, a valve spindle gland blowing and a tube leaking badly in the firebox.

Irwin had just one week to deal with these troubles and it is fortunate for the Society that he, like Peter in the preceding weeks, could devote his full time to the repair jobs. Mr MacAfee and Rab McDonald

of NIR and Derek Henderson in their different ways gave valuable help. The gland job had to be left until such time as the valve could be dismantled but it was hoped that a concentrated effort on the rings and considerable work on the tubes would get No.4 through the last Saturday.

In the event all was ready in time for the final run and things went well on the Down trip but Inspector Frank Dunlop (who put in some hard work on each occasion) reported poor steaming leaving Portrush with the fire not burning properly at the front. Despite this the running was good after Ballymena, and Antrim was left with a full boiler of water. However a tube burst near Muckamore and a stop at Doagh to deal with an open door almost prevented No.4 getting away for the last stretch to Belfast. On arrival there the engine had only 80 pounds pressure and there was nothing for it but to haul the engine and train out to Whitehead with diesel units while water poured from the smokebox. Nevertheless, if one excepts the Derry 'extra', this very ambitious project was carried through as a remarkable and unique breakthrough for a preservation society.

Financially, I would say that NIR came out of it very well indeed for these days. The Society had a much smaller profit and even it was only possible because every train was well supported. It is a somewhat disturbing thought that if the passengers had not been so patient on 18<sup>th</sup> August and gone home, the Society would have lost money on the project. However the catering staff, mainly John Richardson and Bob Edwards, deserve a warm mention here and what a useful purchase 552 has been - indeed the CIÉ Bredins proved themselves both comfortable and practical. The Diner provided not only financial reward but a most useful public relations act too for the passengers, both young and old, were grateful for refreshment facilities unusual on present-day Portrush trains.

Taking into account that many of the aspects of the project involved a new line of planning and thinking for the Society, there were very few complaints about Tony Ragg's arrangements. The three which reached me seemed rather preposterous in the circumstances - they concerned the route involved, the quality of the carriages and the position of seat reservation notices.

The Society operating folk were worried lest the upset No.4 caused that last night should have repercussions - they should be comforted to know that delays on the Larne line are not the sole prerogative of the RPSI. As recently as 6<sup>th</sup> December a three piece MPD set failed at Kilroot and had to be propelled by the 17:55, another three-piece MPD. Whitehead was reached 52 minutes late and the boat train, as a result, reached Larne Harbour some 25 minutes after the boat departure time.

Judged in that light, the Society did very well and I am sure that all who experienced the Flyer, be they members or the Society or not, will hope that it will run again in 1974.

#### DOWN RUNS

Date	Driver	Load	Monkstown - Doagh	Templepatrick - Dunadry	Antrim - Ballymena	Posts 35-39	Posts 54-60	Coleraine - Portrush
25.8.59	P Magill	8	8'34	<u>1'41</u>	<u>14'19</u>	<u>5'04</u>	6'07	
20.7.63	W Steenson	8	9'40	1'43		*7'38	<u>5'55</u>	
28.7.66	S Nelson	6+v	8'37	1'52	16'48	5'32	7'26	
5.7.68	W Lamont	5	8'36	2'02	16'41			
5.4.69	R Graham	5	<u>7'08</u>	2'02	14'34			
28.7.73	A Robinson	8	9'27	1'54	16'23	6'39	6'18	11'48
4.8.73	P Mitchell	8	8'12	2'12	15'44	5'43	7'01	13'10
18.8.73	R Graham	5	7'23	1'47	15'14	5'14	6'56	<u>11'34</u>
25.8.73	T H Ramsey	6	10'10	2'01	15'27	6'56	6'18	12'10

\* sigs



### UP RUNS

Date	Driver	Load	Portrush - University	Posts 60-56	Posts 52-48	Killagan - MP 39	Posts 32-23	Muckamore - Templepatrick
5.8.61	J Heffron	8		5'10	<u>6'13</u>	5'12	9'50	<u>3'57</u>
14.7.69	J D Kitchen	9		* 6'13	6'30	5'04	9'35	4'54
28.7.73	A Robinson	8	11'00	6'10	6'38	4'55	9'10	4'24
4.8.73	P Mitchell	8	13'10	5'09	6'46	<u>4'21</u>	9'25	4'27
18.8.73	R Graham	5	<u>10'09</u>	<u>4'37</u>	6'27	4'43	9'26	4'40
25.8.73	T H Ramsey	6	14'41	6'06	7'24	5'18	<u>9'06</u>	4'54

\* pw

## COACHING REVIEW

R.C. Edwards

It may appear strange to some that it only after nine years existence that our Society has turned its attention to the acquisition of coaches and started to build up a fleet of vehicles.

Very simply the main reason for this rather odd position is the lack of finance - whether for the purchase of stock or for the safe storage of same. It certainly isn't true that we have suddenly found large sums of money, rather the recent spate of coach buying has been the result of the gradual development of Whitehead as a depot, the short supply of steam bogies on NIR and the expansion of our own operations into the excursion field.

For some years before 1972 neither railway company were selling off any really suitable stock and indeed we had our eye on our first coach, GSWR 861, for some time before purchase was possible.

She had been in daily use on the Inchicore Works train and had already been condemned some ten years earlier as being non-standard. Fortunately some enlightened CIÉ official saved her and put her to work on the Inchicore train. Then in August 1972 she found herself on the way to Mullingar scrap yard again and only for the help of Mr J. Leonard, Manager of CIÉ's Purchasing Department, she would have been cut up. Following several frantic phone calls to CIÉ, a group of members raised the necessary £120 and 861's future was assured.

A month or so after 861's despatch north (see Five Foot Three No.14) Mr Leonard introduced us to Mr P. Lannigan in the Programming Department who revealed that CIÉ were about to dispose of some thirty carriages in the near future.

Negotiations were started, a price of £180 per coach was agreed and in May 1973 a party of members travelled to Dublin to inspect the six best Bredins on offer. Mr Lannigan was most helpful with details of recent overhauls, etc. The four best vehicles were selected and sent to Dundalk where our Dublin members carried out sundry cleaning and repair jobs.

In the meantime we were looking for the hard cash to pay for all this and we approached our ever faithful members with an appeal. We are all indebted to those who subscribed, particularly Lord O'Neill and Col. W. Gillespie who each presented us with a complete vehicle.

At the same time we were investigating the possibility of acquiring a dining car and were informed that we had a choice of five from CIÉ which were then still in service but due for withdrawal when the new air-braked trains went into operation. With a seemingly wide choice of interesting vehicles before us, we weren't dismayed to find that NIR scrapped two diners in quick succession - in any case they had each suffered hot boxes all round and indeed in some cases the axle had appeared through the top of the box because of running without brasses.

Then, in May, disaster struck when CIÉ told us that while a diner would cost £200 we would have to pay a further £2,000 for converting the bogies back to standard. The vehicles had recently been equipped with B4 bogies which CIÉ were not prepared to part with and we would have to extensively rebuild the frame to accommodate standard bogies. This effectively cut diner possibilities to two NIR vehicles.

Following a conversation with Mr W.A.G. MacAfee, Chief Mechanical Engineer of NIR we learned that diner 552 was up for sale and a quick dash to Great Victoria Street confirmed a much-vandalised 552 sitting in the scrap road of the carriage yard. We then made formal application to Mr H. Waring, Managing Director of NIR and it is to him that we owe our thanks as he was able to secure the vehicle for us and release it to us the very next day so that it could be despatched to Lisburn to join the Bredins which had been worked down from Dundalk by goods. On the following Sunday, after working the BBC TV train at Moira, all our new stock was worked to Whitehead by No.171.

During the summer we have been looking around for a source of funds separate from the pockets of our members. The Northern Ireland Tourist Board recommended us to get in touch with the Ulster Tourist Development Association. It so happened that the first UTDA member we met (at a civic reception in Bangor) was none other than Myles Humphreys, Chairman of NIR. We were introduced to Mr A. McNeilly, Chairman of the Association. Mr Humphreys advised us that the Directors' Saloon No.50 was coming up for scrap and Mr McNeilly recommended us to formally apply to the UTDA who would consider purchasing the Saloon at its next meeting.

We were delighted when the Association went ahead and bought the vehicle which is now stored at Whitehead. Members will know that the Saloon is to be carpeted by the Ulster Carpet Mills of Portadown and a suitable formal handing over ceremony is being planned for when the vehicle is restored to its former splendour.

I am happy to report that the Ulster Tourist Development Association has indicated that it will purchase vehicles from NIR in the future and present them to us.

Perhaps I should mention that the Association is a voluntary body composed of individuals and firms whose main interest is in tourism. With our running of the Flyer we are now in the tourism business too and have become full members of the Association.

Our latest acquisition is a very battered GSWR second No.4012 which worked to Whitehead with No.171 on 27<sup>th</sup> October. She was spotted in Newbrook Siding during a 'coach hunt' and arrived in 'kit form' - her restoration will be a long term affair but we are fortunate in having most of the material required and she may appear in traffic fairly quickly. 4012 was bought by a group of four of the regulars at Whitehead.

One of our members has indicated that he is prepared to purchase a Bredin Brake Third (either 1902 or 1903) which is still in service. Acquisitions from NIR are likely to include GNR all first 561, NCC third 358, 276 and 340, the North Atlantic Brake 472 and GNR K15 584, subject of course to the usual criteria of condition, price, etc.

This choice may seem a little strange at first but we have had to try to marry the twin objectives of historical and practical stock neither of which should require the expenditure of large sums of (unavailable) money and yet arrive at a train (or trains) acceptable to the Railway Companies. It is for these reasons that we are aiming at having two sets - one of fairly modern high capacity stock suitable for the likes of the Flyer and the other of vintage stock more appealing to enthusiasts and (we hope) film makers.

You can see from the above just how complex and fluid the whole coach-acquisition scheme is. We are fortunate in having, as always, the closest co-operation and assistance from the Railway Companies

both in the matter of future possibilities and obtaining the necessary spares.

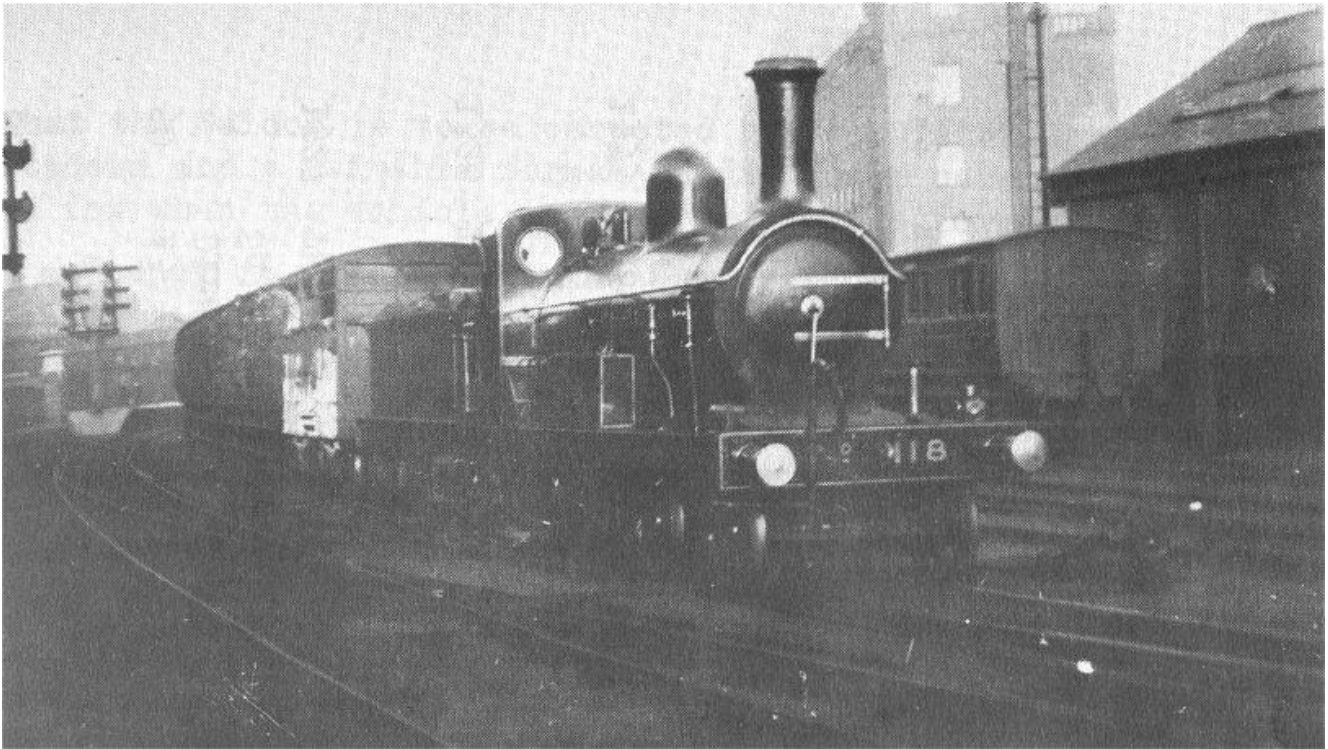
In the meantime there is much work to be done and any help from members or friends of the Society will be most welcome and indeed vital. We hope to recognise the importance of our stock by having a Carriage Superintendent on our new Committee.

#### RPSI COACHING STOCK - 1<sup>st</sup> December 1973

No.	Class / Type	Date	Seats	Weight	Length	Width	Company	Remarks
50	Directors' Saloon (A3)	1911	22	29.5t	48'	9'6"	GNR(I)	Bogie, 2 compts, toilet. Ulster Tourist Development Association.
552	B6 Diner	1938	30	32.5t	58'	9'6"	GNR(I)	Bogie, gas firing, electric lights. Formerly 88, all first. Worked in BUT railcars. Members' donations.
861	1 <sup>st</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> /Bk	1906	12/40	36t	66'	8'6"	GSWR	12w, 7 compt, gas lights, toilets, clerestory roof, formerly 484A. Shop fitted. Cygnet Syndicates.
1327	Third	1935	56	30t	59'	9'	GSR	Bogie, 7 compt, toilets, steel panelling. Designer Bredin. Roller bearings. Col. Gillespie.
1328	Third	1935	56	30t	59'	9'	GSR	Bogie, 7 compt, toilets, steel panelling. Designer Bredin. Lord O'Neill.
1333	Suburban Third	1936	76	28t	59'	9'3"	GSR	Bogie, open, steel panelling. Designer Bredin. Members' donations.
1335	Third	1937	56	30t	59'	9'6"	GSR	Bogie, 7 compt, toilets, steel panelling. Designer Bredin. Members'
4012	Second	1914	56	33.5t	57'	9'2"	GSWR	Bogie, 7 compt, toilets, wooden body, formerly 1985s. Group of members per R.C. Edwards.

The information in the above table is given in good faith but cannot be guaranteed. Where possible published sources have been used and it would be appreciated if members could comment or correct the text where possible. Please contact the Editor.

Coach 1327 was not used on the third Flyer and 1328 was not used on BBC-TV train, otherwise all stock, save 50, was used throughout the summer. Lengths are body lengths.



*No.118 "Rose" leaves Belfast with the first train mentioned in the "From J To J" article. (Ken Nunn Collection)*

17 September 1909	J class	118	4:25pm Belfast to Antrim
17 September 1935	SG2	183	6:34pm Lisburn to Antrim
17 September 1941	T2	62	3:35pm Belfast to Antrim
23 September 1942	T2	66	3:35pm Belfast to Antrim
20 September 1944	P	89	3:30pm Belfast to Antrim
9 September 1946	PG	103	5:40pm Belfast to Antrim
20 September 1947	T2	4	3:30pm Belfast to Antrim
14 September 1948	T2	64	6:25pm Belfast to Antrim
21 September 1949	T2	115	6:25pm Belfast to Antrim
15 September 1951	SG2	181	5:43pm Belfast to Antrim
19 September 1952	Qs	133	5:43pm Belfast to Antrim
12 September 1953	SG2	180	5:43pm Belfast to Antrim
17 September 1955	WT	4	1:10pm Belfast to Antrim
17 September 1956	SG	175	5:43pm Belfast to Antrim
19 September 1959	T1	187	1:10pm Belfast to Antrim
10 September 1960	UG	47	1:10pm Belfast to Antrim *
7 October 1972	J15	186	RPSI Special **

\* Last day of passenger working on the branch

\*\* Special consisted of No.186 and coach 861 on its first working

## **LIFE ON AMBULANCE TRAINS**

**S.W. Joyner**

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Let me make it clear from the outset that this article will be anecdotal and historical rather than technical as the writer hardly knew the difference between a Walschaert's gear and a pet pipe.

In October 1940 No.15 Ambulance Train, a unit of between forty and fifty men and three training sisters, left Netley Hospital on the Solent for a destination unknown - at least to the rank and file. Rumour had it that we were going to Iceland and it seemed to us, after some months in the Army, that it was just the sort of place they would pick for an ambulance train. However, on this occasion, we were doing them an injustice and we eventually arrived at Whitehead.

As the Larne-Belfast boat train slowed into Whitehead we saw the red crosses on the ambulance train in the siding that now houses the Society. The ambulance train was a beauty but we found that No.14 Ambulance Train Unit were already in possession of the train, having arrived just before we did. Our own train, according to gossip, was still on 4 foot 8½! Both units were housed in billets in the town and we shared the train for training purposes.

There were, to the best of my memory, ten ward cars, converted passenger stock with double doors let into the middle of each side to receive stretchers and each coach could take up to forty patients - though we did practice packing in up to fifty just in case the need ever arose. Saloon coaches, for the walking wounded, could be added as required. There was a treatment coach which included a dressing theatre which could be used for emergency operations, a pharmacy and medical store which also housed the sergeant pharmacist and a utility room which could be used as an isolation ward or a padded cell - in fact it was more often used for poker! The kitchen car could provide meals for four hundred and it was manned by two sets of cooks, one for the staff and the other for the patients, diets, etc. The Officers' coach had three bedrooms, a mess and the unit office. The other coach was where the boys lived - it had central double doors like the ward cars but there were beds stacked three high and hinged to the wall instead of the normal stretchers. These occupied three corners of the coach while the fourth corner had tables and forms instead of bunks and was our sitting room.

As the accommodation only held about a third of us at a time, we had a saloon coach which we used as a dining car and recreation room. Most of the interior of the train was painted white with polished linoleum on the floors, typical of a hospital but not very practical for a train.

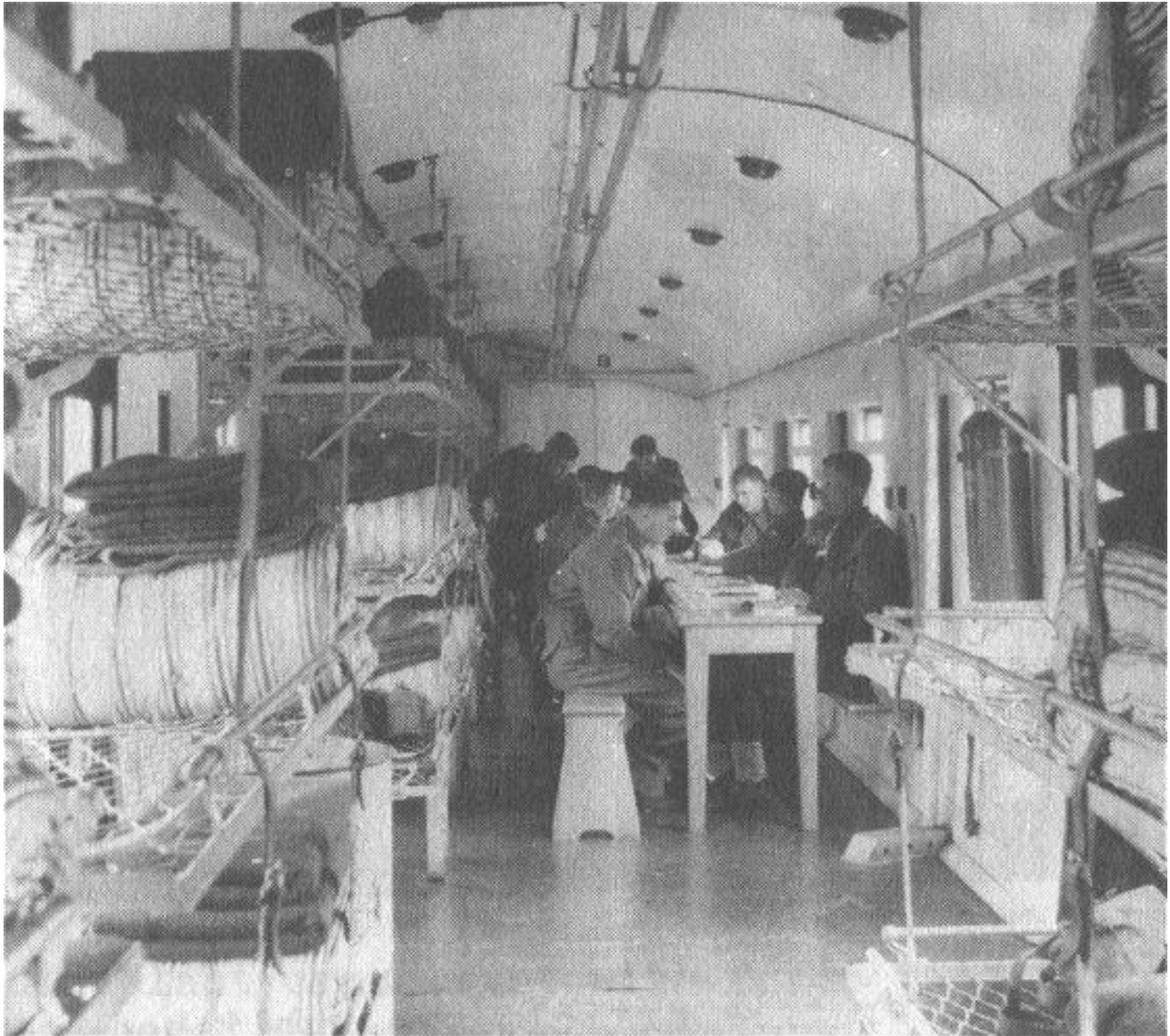
Most of the nursing staff were well used to handling stretchers and once the technique of loading them, complete with volunteer patients of course, had been perfected the train did not figure much in our daily duties except that we had to do guard duty. This we performed armed with specially scrubbed pick handles. We used to explain the scrubbed white clubs by saying that while it was fine for us to shatter a skull or two it would not do at all for the Medical Corps to inflict an infection - even on the enemy.

Sometimes we combined with the local civilian first aid units. We would plant casualties with cards tied to their chests stating the nature of their supposed injury. The first aid teams would then write on the back of the card what treatment they had given and then bring them back to the train. It was our job then to load them, and the Medical Orderlies would assess the treatment.

During one such session, two bearers were seen staggering along the platform in the company of two elderly ladies who were holding the patient's hands. As they got nearer we realised that the bearers were laughing so much (although manfully trying to suppress it) that they could hardly walk. It turned out that the patient was supposed to be suffering from heavy scalp bleeding and the old ladies had dealt with it by applying a tourniquet round the patient's neck! They were at pains to explain that they had

released it every fifteen minutes as the training manual advised.

The people of Whitehead were extremely good to us; their hospitality and friendliness made it a home from home and we were sorry when we had to leave and take up duty in our own train which was now ready and stationed at Broomhedge. This train was almost a carbon copy of the Whitehead train but we had no billets and had to live on the train.



***The personnel coach on Ambulance Train 14 in Whitehead in September 1941. (Imperial War Museum)***

It was soon clear that there was neither room to live in comfort nor useful occupation for all of the unit at Broomhedge so we were loaned out to various general hospitals, mainly Musgrave Park and Belfast City.

The Whitehead train was never put to its intended purpose but our train did one run when we went to Londonderry to collect casualties from the Bismark action and bring them back to Belfast.

As we left Broomhedge, in the early evening, we were told that we would have an early start next day so we were to turn in at once. We were in various stages of undress and at least two were in the

altogether when we stopped in Lisburn. The platform, as fate would have it, was crowded and the people rushed to the lighted windows of our coach to see what the train with the red crosses was like. You should have seen us dive for the cover of the blankets and heard the yells of the women. Even so, one of the boys from the comfort of his bed made a date that later led to a wedding.

We got our train safely loaded in Derry and left during the mid-morning for Belfast, serving lunch on the way. The cooks had offered a choice of vegetables and my ward mate was to ask each one which he preferred. Some of the patients were Norwegian and could not understand so he put a little of each on a plate and asked by sign language. After he had asked one man on a bottom stretcher, he poked his pal in the bunk above and said, "No wonder we're losing this bloody war - they've even got deaf mutes in the Army!"



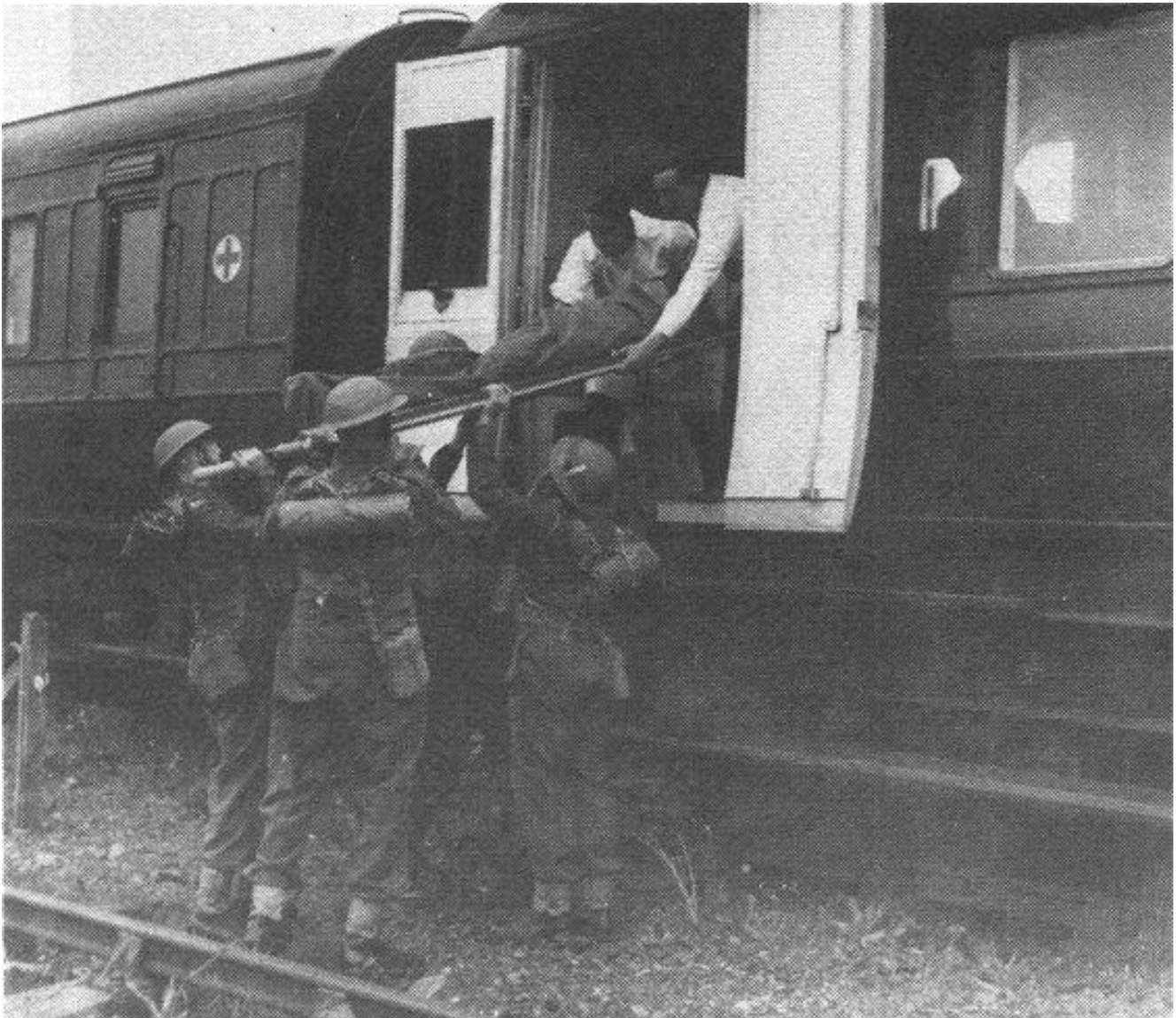
*A ward coach on Ambulance Train 14 during an exercise in Whitehead in September 1941. (Imperial War Museum)*

The patients were unloaded (detrained in official jargonese) in the yards at Adelaide and taken to Musgrave Park and other Belfast hospitals. After this one run the train was manned by a skeleton staff while the rest of us were employed elsewhere. I enjoyed this period as I was looking after a billet in Whitehead with another fellow and we had a great time.

We left the train behind when we moved to Wales to man a small hospital at Abergeley. From there we



went to Southend and then to an invasion holding camp at Eastleigh. We crossed the channel surprisingly early in the invasion rush and then hung about in France, for not only did we have no train but we had no tracks to run them on. However after the fall of Caen the Royal Engineers made us a train from captured cattle trucks in which the sliding doors had to be kept open. As soon as the front line began to move we were in action but movement was by no means rapid. The only locos we had were captured ones and they had been flogged to death - it took two to move us. Even so we never travelled more than a few miles without a lengthy stop for a blow up.



***Loading a 'casualty' onto Ambulance Train 14 near the water column at Whitehead in September 1941. (Imperial War Museum)***

The surest way to get the train on the move was to light a fire at the trackside and start to brew tea; invariably just as the water began to boil there would be a blatter of buffers and away we would go. Sometimes we took a chance and stayed with the tea for the train never exceeded ten miles per hour. This was just as well as our only means of communication was to jump off and run alongside until you reached the M.O., the water supply, the elsan toilet or whatever.

On one occasion the smallest chap in our unit was sitting on the elsan when he looked and saw two

German paratroopers, armed to the teeth, climbing down from the rack. They promptly proffered their machine guns to him. Having a little German, he asked them to wait while he adjusted his dress.

We arrived in Amiens on 25<sup>th</sup> September 1944 and transferred at once to our proper train. Although it was a vast improvement on the makeshift train it was nothing compared to the Irish trains. It was made up of fourteen converted express freight vans which were completely lightless except for the double doors. The standard of the engines gradually improved as more were captured and then we had W.D. engines crewed by the Royal Engineers. None of the engines had steam to spare for heating so another vehicle was fitted up with a diesel generator and it made life more comfortable.

Our first run in the new train was to Brussels to evacuate a Prisoner of War hospital. After an interminable forty-two hour journey we loaded two hundred stretcher cases and forty-nine walking wounded plus a large contingent of very irregular Belgian soldiers to do guard duty. The run back to Amiens took nineteen hours and our toughest job was to keep the guards from shooting the Germans if they made the slightest move. They did loose off three rounds but apart from holes in the roof and a shattered window they did no damage except to our nerves.

From then until 2<sup>nd</sup> June 1945 we made thirty-nine more loaded runs and carried 7,325 patients. Our work was made more difficult by the length of time it took to make the shortest trip for our priority was minimal when compared to trains carrying troops, fuel, ammunition or stores.

In June 1945 we left the train at Ostend and moved to Coq sur Mer in Belgium where we disbanded. Apart from a few postings, the entire unit was together for five and a half years - I can't think of a better way to spend a war.

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

---

Dear Sir,

I want to congratulate you on the way the various articles in Five Foot Three are presented - I enjoy them all, it makes me feel young again.

I must also thank you for that photo of engine 192. The photograph was taken in 1915 by Andy Johnston, an Inspector in the Signal Department - he took pictures of engines all over the GN. Driver R. Fletcher had a second photo taken of the engine by itself.

That round plate near the top of the smokebox behind the chimney was where the thermostatic tube, from the Thermometer Gauge in the driver's side of the cab, entered the smokebox. It had nothing to do with the superheater tube damper on the right side of the smokebox. The tube was broken by a fallen tree branch and cost £25 to replace.

Finally, you may like to know that over the past fifty-five years many employees of the GNR have unsuccessfully tried to have their 50p per week pension increased.

I retired in June 1962 and now after eleven years the pension has been increased to 88p. There must be someone I should thank for this remarkable achievement!

Yours, etc.,

*Barney McGirr*

Dear Sir,

No doubt you will have a flood of letters pointing out that there was never, so far as I can remember, a Northern 0-6-0 No.63 "Londonderry" - there was of course No.65 "Derry". Again the batch of PPs referred to as being four in number were actually five, the missing engine being 50 "Donard" which

had the distinction of being accorded a double page colour illustration in the "Railway and Travel Monthly" (later absorbed into the Railway Magazine).

Yours, etc.,

*Cecil N. Smith*

Dear Sir,

As a member of the Society I look forward to reading our excellent magazine "Five Foot Three" but am continually irritated by the attitude of many contributors, and particularly that of the book reviewer, in regarding steam engines as the only aspect of Irish railways worth mentioning.

Your book reviewer seems to think that the only thing a railway history should contain is information about steam locomotives, while the main point of the book, viz. why the line was decided upon and how it was built, is ignored. One normally buys a railway history book to learn precisely that, its history. However I do not deny for one moment that the subject of locomotives is an important one, on the contrary, it is a necessary and colourful part of any railway history, but equally if not more important are the Board meetings and the like. If it hadn't been for them there would have been no railway in the first place to run engines on.

Other important facets of railways too frequently neglected are signalling and architecture. It is as possible to recognise a company by the style of architecture used in stations as it is to identify them by their engines. So please let's have more of this vein in future.

Yours, etc.,

*Paul Forte*

Dear Sir,

I have just read of the acquisition of Bredin-designed coaches by the Society. This is a commendable thing but what prompts me to write is that many 1900-1910 vintage coaches are still in existence as CIE departmental vehicles (e.g. 363A built 1907 is at Glanmire). These will be gone a lot sooner than stock of the post-1930 era.

Those on the "Three Rivers" may have noticed six-wheelers at Waterford and Rosslare and apart from their being impractical because of speed restrictions, surely they are worthy of preservation. I think we should aim to preserve the oldest stock so as to be able to have stock reasonably compatible with No.171 and No.186.

To whoever purchased the Bredin coaches please do not treat this as a snub on your actions but, on the contrary, I laud your commendable actions in giving the Society a new challenge.

Yours, etc.,

*Peter Bowen-Walsh*

Dear Sir,

I quite by chance was given a copy of the Transport Salaried Staff journal for September and was quite interested to read of your acquisition of a WT engine - a very laudable achievement which I hope future generations will acknowledge.

I worked as a cleaner and fireman on the NCC from the early days of the war until 1951 when I

emigrated to Rhodesia.

I have many pleasant and not so pleasant memories of my young days spent in the old narrow gauge shed at Larne lighting up narrow gauge engines 43 and 111 and, I think, 42. With the war on, blackout was the rule but it didn't mean much in Larne as there was only one light and that was a single gas mantle; altogether the old shed had a ghostly atmosphere not helped by the other cleaners often coming over in the small hours and playing pranks such as shutting off the gas main!

The narrow gauge engines had a habit of sweating when being lit up, particularly after a wash-out and I had many a struggle to raise steam to get the blower working so that the loco would be ready for the early morning crew for their run to Ballyclare Paper Mill. I often fired on these locos and spent a great deal of time chasing cows off the track and sitting on the front bogie plate directing sand from a makeshift sand box onto the rail in an attempt to stop the continuous slipping.

I remember one night, it must have been about 1944, when we were waiting for a train to arrive from Ballyclare and someone said there must have been an accident and we walked up the line to investigate. Sure enough, the train had jumped the rails and several wagons were in the Inver River. Luckily no one was hurt.

I also spent several years firing on the broad gauge and spent many a pleasant moment on the WT engines, only we always referred to them as Jeeps. We had 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Larne shed and I will always remember them as very fast and comfortable engines which were especially comfortable on a cold winter's night when one could close the side doors and windows when running alongside Larne and Belfast Loughs and shut out the icy wind.

When I arrived here in Rhodesia I found in some ways a similarity in the railways here and at home, and in many ways the differences are vast. I am now a Driver Special Grade which entitles me to drive anything from the last of our steam locos right up to our biggest diesels which can haul, unaided, loads of up to 2,000 metric tonnes.

Our system here is 3'6" gauge and a centralised system of train control (operated by electrically controlled panels about 200 miles apart) controls our main line from Umtali to Victoria Falls, a distance of 770 miles. We also work the line between Bulawayo and Mafeking, about 500 miles, through Botswana. This was the longest steam section in the world with a round trip of 1,000 miles with one engine, one of our 15<sup>th</sup> class four cylinder Garrets, 4-6-4+4-6-4. The accent here is on power rather than speed but these Garrets are capable of sixty. The railways here relied heavily on Garrets as our roads are difficult with altitudes from 1,500 to 5,500 feet.

Our biggest class was probably the 20<sup>th</sup> class, capable of hauling 2,000 tonnes and weighing over 252 tons in working order. They have mechanical stokers; they have to have with 64 square feet of grate area. These engines are a magnificent sight when tackling a heavy grade with a full load and throttle wide open, gobbling up their coal supply at a fantastic rate.

Diesels are making steady inroads into the last steam hauled sections here, for while we have ample coal of good quality and fairly cheap, we have a water shortage, particularly after a disastrous drought last year.

Some way or other I used to think of steam engines as individuals and I must confess that, although I've driven them for nine years, I've never been tempted to do this with diesels. I hope you don't mind my writing but that Jeep picture brought back many old memories.

Yours, etc.,

*Paddy Shields*

## WHAT IS IT?

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Well, did you know the vehicle pictured in the Photograph Section?

It is an “Armoured Rail Trolley” manned by men of the 8<sup>th</sup> Railway Construction and Operating Company, Royal Engineers, who were based at Whitehead. The photographs were taken during an exercise at Antrim in September 1941.



*The interior of the Armoured Rail Trolley during an exercise at Antrim in September 1941.*

The vehicle was propelled by a Leyland engine driving on both axles and the driver kept a look-out by means of a periscope. The forward portion of the roof could be slid back for light and ventilation, the aperture being protected by a wire mesh.

The vehicle is numbered '3' - does anyone know if there were more than one of these weird machines in action? Further information would be appreciated.

Once again the pictures are published by kind permission of the Imperial War Museum, Lambeth Road, London, SE1 6HZ, who can supply a further four views.



*The Armoured Rail Trolley and troops in 'action' during an exercise at Antrim in September 1941.*