

FIVE FOOT THREE



Number 20

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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.4 comes under the station building of Belfast's new Central Station and arrives at Platform 4 during the "Belfast Central" railtour on 22nd May 1976. This was the first steam-hauled train at the new Station. (C.P. Friel)

TOURS FOR 1977

Cu na Mara railtour

Sat/Sun 11th/12th June 1977

Saturday 2-6-4T No.4: Dublin Heuston - Limerick Junction Loop - Limerick.

0-6-0 No.186: Limerick - Ennis - Claremorris - Galway.

Sunday: Galway - Athlone - Mullingar - Dublin Connolly - Belfast Central.

Portrush Flyer

Saturdays 30th July, 13th August & 27th August 1977

Whitehead - Belfast York Road - Portrush & back.

Boyne Valley Railtour

Saturday 24th September 1977

4-4-0 No.171: Bangor - Belfast Central - Drogheda - Navan - Drogheda - Lisburn - Belfast York Road - Whitehead.

0-6-0 No.186 Dublin Connolly - Drogheda - Navan - Kingscourt & back.

Combined train: Drogheda - Kingscourt & back.



The scene at Cork during our June railtour showing, left to right, preserved locomotives GS&WR saturated J15 0-6-0 No.184 built at Inchicore 1880, DSER K2 2-6-0 No.15 (461) built by Beyer Peacock in 1922, and our own GS&WR superheated J15 0-6-0 No.186 built by Sharp Stewart in 1979. No.186 is of course a regular engine on our tours and the others should appear there someday also. (C.P. Friel)

EDITORIAL

1. It is highly satisfactory to be able to record in 1977, the arrival in Society hands of two more steam engines - and all the more so because they are the last two 'unaccounted for' mainline steam locomotives left in Ireland. They are, of course, the CIÉ locomotives Nos. 184 and 461. Both have been presented to the Society on a long-term loan basis. This means the exciting prospect of increasing the RPSI 'stud' of active mainline steam engines from just three to five, with our overall steam stock rising from six to eight.

Sincere gratitude must be expressed to the CIÉ Board for its decision, which can be taken as a measure of the Board's confidence in the Society's competence and ability.

It might, incidentally, seem to some that the engines' survival so long beyond their active days on CIÉ is almost miraculous. On this score it is right to mention that it was our sister body, the Irish Railway Record Society, which was active in 1968 in persuading CIÉ of the virtue of preserving the engines. Clearly, after being laid up for so many years, both engines are in far from perfect mechanical condition.

But eventually the dreams will be realised. We can now think in terms of seeing No.184 and No.186 double-heading an RPSI special, or of seeing No.461 at the head of the "Portrush Flyer". This breakthrough underlines the excellent relations we enjoy with both CIÉ and NIR. It is a co-operation

which has given the RPSI the brightest potential of any preservation body in the British Isles as regards mainline steam tours.

Now, with the arrival of No.184 and No.461, new horizons are opening to us. Let's make the most of it.

2. Just as journalism has its expert China-watchers, so too can be found a group of RPSI Committee watchers who scrutinise the personnel developments and who have been known to express concern or dismay at various personnel changes. In the past the bias of members of Committee towards pro-Whiteheaders, non-locomen, post-1965 enthusiasts or even married men has caused some mutterings in cups.

In recent years it has not been the selection of personnel which should have caused disquiet but rather the lack of choice, though while the posts remained filled little was done to ensure any continuance of that position. The shortage of willing bodies to take on Committee work has not yet led to any diminution of our overall performance but the present apparently casual abandonment of the vital fundraising post of Commercial Officer does not auger well. One other, and so far unapprised, recent development is bound to have an opposite and such more positive effect.

The arrival of a second Dublin-based member on the Committee is welcome on many counts. In the past our Publications have suffered because insufficient time or effort could be spared in that direction but with the change in personnel not only will this defect be remedied but more of an all-Ireland aspect will be brought to our publications, some relief to the hard-pressed Whitehead-oriented workers and will perhaps, bring more GSWR or MGWR based articles to the fore. Railwaymen in the south seem to have little of the jaundiced outlook on steam which one finds so often in the north, but both have many reminiscences of the steam era. It can now, perhaps, be hoped that some of their information will find a more direct route to the pages of Five Foot Three.

LONDON NEWS

Leslie McAllister

We had a stand at seven venues this year, eight days of selling. Two stands were at Enthusiast Bazaars, hence indoors and no hassle. The big turn-up (literally, for the books) was the success of our sales efforts on diesel-hauled 'track bashes'. You'll not see us trying to sell books on those dirty steam trains again!

As usual we attended specialist 'Open Days'. The one at Eastleigh, without a steam engine in sight, was a phenomenal success, with a record £300 (and tuppence) income! Little wonder, though, as I arrived with the Avenger well overloaded, while Lance King and Robin Linsley brought about £350 worth of new stock. We put out 250 (!) different titles and filled my wallet to overflowing with fivers! After that, everything was an anticlimax.

Then there was Didcot - what can I say good about that awful place? To get your stall set up, you first load it into one barrow, propel it carefully through the station subway, unload it, carry the lot up a flight of stairs and then load it onto an ancient (doubtless genuine broad-gauge) barrow. Then comes the easy bit, you shove this unwilling vehicle for about a quarter of a mile, over tracks and all, to your sales pitch! Little wonder Robin remarked that Victorian convicts wouldn't have been made to do the like! By the way the 'stock' is about forty Rank Xerox boxes full of books; I leave you to calculate the weight! After this, it's up with the stand. This is the best bit of it as the stand looks different every time. Robin tried to spoil the fun by producing a plan. However, he gave it to me and I, never wishing to spoil anyone's fun, 'lost' it. Two dusty days later we take the stand down again and struggle back out again. The good thing about Didcot is that it is a reasonably rewarding pitch and it's certainly much nicer watching (even!) GWR locos chuffing up and down than staring at blue boxes on wheels. But I'm not doing it again except I have at least four helpers each day.

Finally we experimentally set up shop at the Reading Model Railway Exhibition. This was moderately

successful and gained some useful publicity thanks to Charlie Friel's excellent giant prints of our tours and Suzette's excellent sign-writing - no one could have missed us. This was a unique occasion in that the whole team arrived by rail instead of car (I was doing a clever double act with Suzette who brought the Avenger to Reading for me and then used the return half of my Awayday - don't tell BR!). I had brought the stand and stock up the day before, of course.

Our other main activity, running the British parties to connect with the big tour, was very disappointing, with the London party only managing ten people and the Crewe party cancelled (we had fifty last year). Part of this was because BR was offering a competitive Weekend Return and partly because British tours are improving while ours, in the eyes of many of our 'regulars', are slipping in standard. I expect this trend to continue until more people decide to give the Society some of their time. When giving talks (another continuing pleasant activity) I am always struck by the number of people who remark good fortune - fine engines and rolling stock, plenty of track to travel on and the much appreciated co-operation of both NIR and CIÉ. It is about time we asserted our right to such fortune!

What did the Society get out of this year's work? Well, we managed to donate £200 to the Society with a further hundred retained for stock-building (the stock on hands is worth another couple of hundred). This compares well with last year's £120 and the previous year's £160.

Finally, the thanks and the pleas. Thanks go to Lance and Robin (and his son Jonathan) previously mentioned and to Hilary Trickett, Colin Miell, Les Dench, and Bob Cook (non-member and official photographer). Particular thanks to Suzette who loans me her car, produces four-course packed meals and allows me to continue doing it despite the doctor's warning. To those British members not named, a plea for help. Even if you could only assist us once a year it would help and it's good fun when the team's at full strength and not hard labour after all. Honest!

PUBLICITY REPORT

Robin Morton

"What you chaps really need," said the Belfast man down with his kids at the train rides this summer, "is a wee bit of publicity."

Nothing like that sort of comment to cut you down to size and make you appreciate just what a massive field publicity is. But undaunted, the publicity machine ground on in 1976, churning out more than 200 copies of press releases on about 30 different topics. Although many of the press releases have been ignored, some have flourished. And thankfully, media interest in Society events continued to increase in 1976.

The end of another year, and I'm still no nearer the answer to that question often posed by anxious media men: "Tell me, just what is the fascination of the steam engine?" But as long as they keep asking, that's the important thing. The main task is getting the broadcasting stations and newspapers to cover the event in the first place.

The May tour to Bangor was an ideal topic. News angles abounded: the first steam to Bangor for 11 years, the first steam train ever at Belfast Central and Botanic, No.4's first visit to Bangor since the early 1950s and so on. There was excellent coverage in the local papers, but most pleasing of all was a full length whole page feature on the Society and the tour which appeared afterwards in the Belfast Telegraph. This was the sort of intelligent article we'd been after for years, and it was well worth inviting feature writer Ivan Little along. The article helped the publicity push for the "Portrush Flyer". This caused the publicity department's main expenditure of the year - a £25 advertisement in the Telegraph. The rest of the coverage was achieved simply by press releases being published in the news columns.

Similar expenditure on an advert in one of the British magazines would probably have boosted bookings for the Cork tour. In view of the rather scanty treatment given by the magazines to press

releases in advance of the tour, it would have been cash spent well. Undoubtedly, publicity for the two-day tour has to be principally aimed at the British market. But the Dublin district responded to the "Slaney" tour in April, and city papers gave useful advance publicity to tours. Gregg Ryan, himself a journalist based in the Republic, has given vital help in this matter throughout the year. The "Slaney" tour also gave rise to the most extended television coverage so far of Society activities. RTÉ sent a reporter and camera team on the train for the day, and produced a worthwhile 30-minute feature programme which was shown at Easter in the Republic. Attracted by seeing this, and the "Slaney" tour in action, a Dublin-based film studio sent a cameraman on the empty carriages section of the Cork tour to get shots for a film for cinema release - "A Portrait of the Artist as A Young Man". As well as being financially rewarding for us, the Society should appear in the film credits.

On the domestic front, inclusion of the steam train rides at Whitehead in the "Back Carrick 76" celebrations resulted in a useful boost. The car stickers which cost about £10 were also a major factor in making the season the best ever. Coming events columns in the local newspapers contained plugs for the train rides and the "Portrush Flyer". The Society also featured strongly in NI Tourist Board publications. The inauguration of Ulster's new commercial radio station Downtown was a bonus - coverage has included a couple of telephone interviews about up and coming RPSI events in their bulletins. A constant supply of good quality pictures, mainly from Charlie Friel's hard-pressed darkroom, has been invaluable. Magazines, newspapers and those annual guides to preservation bodies have been bombarded with the pictures, and it was particularly pleasing to see a full page spread of three of the pictures in the October Railway Magazine. July's Railway World, in an article on CIÉ, included a nice tribute to the Society. This followed an extremely opportune front cover colour picture of No.171 on the 1975 Sligo tour which appeared in June.

The annual guides to preservation activities in the British Isles found the RPSI's unique position with unlimited mainline running potential hard to classify. Unfortunately, in a couple of instances, it meant we ranked lower than groups promoting rather hopeless schemes, I trust we will get better showings in 1977. Running the Belfast area meetings now seems to be firmly, if rather incongruously, lodged under the Publicity Officer's wing. The pattern of six meetings during the winter at St. Jude's Church Hall in Sunnyside Street has met with a very rewarding response, attendances being usually well over the 100 mark. There is no shortage of suitable material for the meetings. We tend to steer clear of continental films because of restricted interest, but the Great Northern's appeal seems to be undying. Films, more than talks, seem to be favoured by the audiences, although possibly the highlight of the spring programme was a lively question and answer session with guest speaker Mr Roy Beattie, the NIR chief executive! I'm grateful to David Humphries who has agreed to help out in the planning and organisation of meetings, and to St. Jude's Church for their co-operation in lending the hall.

The bread and butter of publicity work this year has been the compiling and writing of the news-sheets. I never fail to be amazed at just how much is going on within the Society when we come to catch up on two month's events. Hopefully the news-sheets do serve a purpose in keeping members more in touch and they do seem to be carefully read. Throughout the year, William Coates has been an essential assistant in publicity. He has helped write news-sheets press releases and letters, and efficiently covered for me during holidays and when I was on a month-long course in England.

OPENING OF BELFAST CENTRAL

Two important events in Irish railway history happened since the last issue of Five Foot Three. In the south CIÉ received their eighteen new General Motors locomotives, and in Belfast NIR's Belfast Central station was officially opened by the Lord Mayor on Monday 26th April last year. Railway happenings preceding this latter event were summarised in handbills distributed by NIR and are briefly recorded here.

On Saturday 10th April, Queen's Quay station closed after the last train from Bangor and on the following day there were no trains on the Bangor line to facilitate the change over to the new Central station. From Monday 12th April, all Bangor Trains operated from the new station and a Citybus link service was in operation.

Saturday 24th April saw the closure of Great Victoria Street after the departure of the last train, and to facilitate the changeover no trains operated on the Portadown line on Sunday 25th April.

The Society, too, got in on the exciting developments preceding the opening, members accompanied by the sales caravan distributed leaflets and publicised the Society at Bangor station on 3rd April and at Great Victoria Street on its final day of operation.

To commemorate the opening of the new Belfast Central Station we are publishing (albeit some months late) a special feature (see below) on the history of the Belfast Central Railway with many photographs of steam on the old line.

LOCOMOTIVE REPORT

P. Scott

No.3BG: The following work will be undertaken on No.3BG as time permits: retubing, repairs to rear buffers and drawgear and re-metalling of the right crosshead.

No.3 "R.H. Smyth": General overhaul and replacement of fittings continues. Originally work on this engine proceeded on a standby basis but now a definite date for completion has been set for summer 1977. Sheet-metal work to the saddle tank was completed in October and the tank was lifted into place using the loading shovel. The engine was placed at the platform, thus giving the loading shovel the added extra height for the lift.

Once the saddle tank was in place work proceeded with the replacement of the injectors, clack valves and associated pipework. Most of the boiler fittings are now in place. Steam testing will be carried out once the badly corroded chimney is fitted with a metal liner and put back in place. The ashpan has been rebuilt and fitted. The metal surfaces of this engine are badly corroded especially the cab interior and a 'needle scaler' is being used to prepare the surfaces for painting.

No.4: The last report on No.4 stressed the rundown condition of this engine and mentioned that heavy overhaul was planned. Because more urgent work was required on No.171 and because of the present cramped conditions it was not possible to have the engine lifted to replace the driving wheels. Nevertheless the replacement wheel sets have had their tyre profiles corrected by NIR at York Road and the bolts securing the cylinders to the frames are being replaced. Certain overhaul work on boiler fittings is also planned this winter.

No.23: The diesel locomotive's chief defect at present is poor batteries. After any period out of use the batteries must be charged by the coach battery charger so that the engine will start. Although this state of affairs is annoying it is probably preferable to paying out about £100 for a new set of batteries.

No.27 "Lough Erne": This locomotive requires a heavy mechanical overhaul and boiler repairs which will most likely necessitate the removal of the boiler from the frames. It is not possible to undertake this work until funds, manpower and the proposed improved facilities are available at Whitehead.

No.171 "Slieve Gullion": After adjustments were made to the valve rings No.171 ran considerably better and burned less coal than previously. It was indeed unfortunate that after this improvement that the engine finished the Cork tour with a suspected hot box on one of the driving axles. It will be remembered that trouble with the axle boxes became apparent as soon as the engine entered the Society's service and was remedied temporarily by re-metalling the bearings. This was done as the cheapest and quickest way of getting the engine back into traffic again as recasting of the original bronze bearing surface would have been a costly process. The engine has now been jacked off the

wheels so that the boxes can be removed, and more satisfactory methods of repair are being examined.

No.186: The remainder of the 5¼” diameter boiler tubes are being replaced using tubes from No.171. While the ends of these tubes suffered most wear the centre portions are sound enough for reuse. The ends are, of course, removed to suit the shorter boiler of No.186. Certain wasted stay nuts are also being replaced on the boiler and when this work is completed a hydraulic test will be carried out. In order to facilitate the retubing work, the tube expanding machine was removed from its frame and reduced to its essential components before being taken to Mullingar. Thanks to the generosity of our member Mr. H. Frazer in providing the necessary capital, the train steam heating apparatus is being restored. The tender steam pipe and cock have already been repaired and replaced and No.186 should be able to steam heat her train during the coming season.

Plant: Three items of plant have recently been acquired. The needle scaler has already been mentioned in connection with loco No.3. It is not unlike a pneumatic chisel except that the chisel is replaced by a set of needles. These are very effective in removing scale from uneven surfaces. Our best thanks are due to Messrs Modern Tool and Equipment Co. for providing this tool at reduced cost. A universal milling machine has also been acquired and will be used for producing flat surfaces, slots, keyways, etc. - work which is very difficult or impossible in the lathe. This machine has not yet been installed.

It is hoped to extend our capabilities at Whitehead to the casting of brake blocks, fire bars and other items presently involving the Society in considerable expenditure. A small iron furnace has been provided and several members have attended a course on foundry technology at the Belfast College Of Technology to assist with the work.

SITE REPORT

N. Hamilton

Very little track work has been carried out at Whitehead this summer due to the busy operating season and the work being undertaken by Enterprise Ulster. Only essential track work and maintenance was undertaken.

Prior to the Flyer season the relocation of the track gates was completed. This involved the widening of both gates which previously spanned Nos. 1 and 2 shed roads and the carriage sidings. One of these new gates formed the entrance to No.1 carriage siding which held the Flyer rake. This simplified the shunting before and after each Flyer; where previously it was necessary to take down and re-erect a length of chain-link fencing. The other gate placed forward of its original position completes an extension of the ‘compound’ and increases slightly the available storage space.

During the spring, Enterprise Ulster excavated the northern part of the site. Almost 8,000 cubic metres of earth are being removed to level the ground with that of the shed floor. This space will eventually be used for carriage sidings, thus allowing the shed roads to be free of rolling stock. At present the excavations are not completed pending the repositioning of a number of power line poles. All this area will be enclosed by a perimeter fence when completed.

Enterprise Ulster has also begun work on the three inspection pits in the new shed. To allow work to begin the shed floor and front had to be removed and the track lifted. This caused the loss of three coach lengths of storage space and the storage area for No.4. This problem was eventually solved when four coaches were not required during the running season and were moved to Cullybackey, but their return in September caused further problems.

A concerted effort during one weekend extended yet again carriage siding No.1, this time into the ‘new’ territory behind the water tower, and a temporary fence was erected out of old boiler tubes! All our coaches are now back inside the fenced compound.

Our new coal bunker was in use for the first time this summer. Built by Enterprise Ulster, this robust

structure of reinforced concrete has a base 8 metres by 4. The back wall is 1¾ metres high and the side walls fall to approximately one metre at the front edge of the bunker. Considerable coal storage space is now available and also parking space for the loading shovel!

This winter work will be geared to provide further storage space. Additional track will be required. This will require a lot of track laying and I hope everyone will help even if only for one weekend or one Saturday or Sunday at Whitehead.

DEVELOPMENT AT WHITEHEAD

N. Hamilton

Over the ten years that the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland has been based at Whitehead, many changes have taken place on the site. Early days of activity saw the relaying of first the shed road and then the platform siding together with the first new turnout since the original trackwork was abandoned and partly lifted by the Ulster Transport Authority. The renovation of the engine shed by re-roofing and the connection of the electricity supply at that time was a major achievement for the Society, especially as the funds available were limited. Later the shed extension which involved the Society with its first major building attempt, was to accommodate the increase in the number of engines, but alas it was never completed due to the lack of money. As the Society's activities expanded, together with the withdrawal of steam from NIR, the need for more extensive and sophisticated facilities became necessary. These included coaling and watering arrangements and machine tools such as the lathe and drilling machine.

A major alteration in site layout followed the realisation that the Society would have to purchase its own rolling stock by the modernisation programme of NIR and the introduction of air braking as standard. Number one carriage siding was laid with its associated earthworks. Since then, the number of coaches has risen, each coach having been purchased for a particular purpose, even though many at present are not in running condition. Thus, one can see that while developments may not have been haphazard they were certainly spreading in all directions!

It was therefore decided that an overall plan for the site was essential and that all work should be directed to fit in with this. The plan attempted to include all facilities likely to be required in the foreseeable future. It soon had been christened a '2001' plan. A committee was formed to work out the details of the plan and many meetings involving hours of discussion and argument have taken place.

In the plan, the total area of the site was utilised in order that the facilities could be accommodated, no consideration being given to such present fixtures as power lines or telegraph poles. The reasoning behind this was that in an ultimate plan such fixtures could be moved if the means were present, no financial or physical restrictions existing - if only it was true!

It would be impossible in a brief account like this to list all the requirements and possibilities that were considered when drawing up the '2001' plan. However, included in them were requirements such as road access to the carriage work shop, main shed and machine shop. Siting of the heavy overhaul area (sheer-leg) close to the machine shop was also desirable. A study of the track formation will reveal run round facilities for at least an average train length and a long test track that would normally be free of rolling stock. The two carriage sidings are of sufficient length to accommodate the projected future numbers of coaches.

Now that we had a plan formulated the Committee was asked to consider and approve it. The general opinion was certainly favourable but many possibly thought somewhat pipedream in nature! However we have now at least some guidelines to work to and have sorted out generally our requirements.

The Society in its efforts to gain help either financially or physical, approached during the latter half of 1974 a relatively newly formed Government sponsored body called Enterprise Ulster. This body provides both employment and training for workers in building skills that would possibly help them

eventually to gain employment elsewhere. Many of their workers are drawn from ‘troubled’ areas of high unemployment and their excellent work schemes have provided public amenities, playing fields and tourist facilities throughout the province. In all the schemes, the actual labour content to material ratio is generally over 50%.

When Enterprise Ulster were tentatively approached, the idea was that help might be received for laying additional track and the building of the foundations for the engine shed extension. Many other items were however mentioned for possible consideration.

February of the following year produced the reply to our request. A substantial number of the items that were submitted had received favourable technical assessment and Board approval. However, work could not begin for some time as it would have to be included in a new programme of work. All this was exciting news but all that could be done was to wait and hope that it would not be long before something materialised. Unfortunately as time passed, it seemed that the project would probably not get off the ground.

When the ‘2001’ plan had been completed in January 1976, a meeting was arranged again with Enterprise Ulster to assess whether the items agreed to by their Board could be incorporated into the plan. This meeting turned out to be a most exciting two hours of discussion. The master plan was studied in detail and seemed to create quite an impression with all concerned. It came as a surprise however to hear that work was to start within 3 weeks!

To allow work to begin quickly on the site it was decided that the platform would be a suitable project. Work here consisted of digging out between the platform walls and infilling with aggregate, the final surfacing being bitmac. Any breaches in the original corbelled brickwork at the rear edge of the platform would be replaced. To give variety in the type of work and training, a single row of flagstones along the “working” edge of the platform was agreed. Incorporated in the platform is a four inch conduit running down the middle to take care of any future electric cables or water pipes. Some may question the wisdom of starting work on the platform which to some may seem low in priority. However, at that time, the site was not ready to have a work force start with so little prior notice as work was in progress on a turnout and shunting movements were required in the months ahead. There was also the possibility of an early tour on the new Belfast Central system and thus the platform was a suitable place where work would not disrupt our activities. Anyhow, the success of several open days and the Sunday train rides has made the platform a valuable asset, requiring improvement.

Those who are familiar with Whitehead will realise that to use any of the Northern region of the site as proposed would have required extensive excavations. These were estimated in the order of 8,000 cubic metres of earth! Enterprise Ulster agreed to carry out this work, as until it was completed, no other work in the area was possible. Arrangements were made to dump the spoil locally.

At present, Enterprise Ulster have completed a coal bunker made in reinforced concrete and work is in progress on constructing three inspection pits in the new shed. Later, it is hoped, the shed will be completed. The platform area is nearing completion and a large proportion of the excavation work has been carried out together with stoning of the area.

I hope to be able to report in more detail of further projects on the site when negotiations are finished. Needless to say, we have benefited greatly from Enterprise Ulster’s presence and hope that their continued good help will produce an excellent headquarters for the Society.

LOCOMOTIVE RUNNING

John Friel

1975 could have been described as the year that featured No.171, with her appearances on the two-day railtour, two one-day railtours and one “Portrush Flyer”. By similar reckoning, 1976 should be described as the year of No.4. As well as handling all four “Portrush Flyer” trains, No.4 hauled our two

northern one-day railtours, incredibly the first one-day tours she has been on since entering RPSI service in 1972. She earned the distinction of being the first RPSI engine to reach Bangor and she finally worked a railtour, as opposed to a Flyer, on the NCC mainline.

Both the "Belfast Central" railtour in May and the "Festival" railtour in September involved No.4 working through to Bangor. For the "Festival" railtour, she worked the train to Bangor on the Friday, and then ran light engine to Belfast to stable for the night in Central Service Depot (formerly Queen's Quay). Working through to Bangor presented no great problems from the loco running point of view. The RPSI should count itself very lucky that water facilities at Lisburn have been retained on Up and Down platforms. Lisburn is strategically placed for locos operating between Whitehead and Dublin to take water, and is ideally placed on the journey from Whitehead through Central to Bangor for the same purpose. I would like to record our thanks to Mr. Flavell, stationmaster at Lisburn for his co-operation with us regarding use of the water facilities,

Estimating coal consumption is easy in the case of a tour like the "Belfast Central" which involved a straightforward run from Whitehead to Bangor and return with relatively little waiting around. The problem is to know how much to allow for a long lie over with the fire being kept in, as occurred on the Friday night before the "Festival" railtour. After 190 train miles, 24 light engine miles and a 9 hour lie over, No.4 reached Derry with extremely little coal left. On such occasions, I always feel glad of having coach 562 with two tons of coal in bags on the train. At a pre-tour conference with Frank Dunlop, NIR locomotive inspector, it was decided to send three tons of coal in bags to Derry in a brown van before the tour. This was marshalled into the centre road at Waterside, so that as soon as we arrived, we started hauling bags directly from the van up over the top of No.4's bunk with the Whitehead built crane. The three tons were loaded in approximately 20 minutes by eight members.

When it comes to arrangements like this, Frank is always invaluable in advising the best course of action and is foreseeing problems that anyone not involved in the day to day running of the railway would never think of. On the day of a tour or of a Flyer, he is always on hand to see that arrangements are carried out and that things keep moving.

The new timings for the "Portrush Flyer" in 1976 were ideal from the running point of view. The outward journey was slightly later than previously, but the big change was the earlier departure time from Portrush at 17:30 instead of 19:50. Five hours in Portrush were adequate for servicing the loco and coaches, and arrival back at Whitehead at 20:20 meant that shunting could be finished by 22:30.

The main improvement in operating the Flyer at Whitehead was the fact that the long carriage siding was available in which six coaches could be kept coupled, reducing shunting accordingly. The 17th July Flyer was only six coaches, but the last three were fully loaded to eight. No.4 had hauled ten coach trains in 1976, but it was decided that there was no point in pushing the engine to the limit on a regular basis.

As in previous years, No.4 was cleaned out, coaled and examined the day after each Flyer. Coaling is now a very efficient operation at Whitehead since Enterprise Ulster finished the new coal bunker. It was the first concrete result (literally) of their work there and it was finished in time for the start of the running season. Much coal was lost in the past because it had to be dumped on the ground and large lumps of earth would often appear in the middle of coal on engines out on the road. The new bunker gives us a good surface to store coal on and the back wall is reinforced making it easy for the loading shovel to get a full load of coal (approximately half a ton each time).

The amount of space for storing locos was reduced because the new shed had to be cleared to allow E.U. to start work. RPSI drivers discovered the delights of draining and filling No.4's boxes without the benefit of a pit. Provision was made on the day after each Flyer for shunting No.4 into the old shed for inspection. With siding space at a minimum, No.171 could not be left anywhere out of the way. So

a regular sight was that of the Guinness loco shunting No.171 and No.4 up the steep gradient to the old shed. Suffice to say that most drivers needed a couple of goes at it.

The only addition to the rostered duties at Whitehead during this year's Flyer season was cleaning No.4 on the Sunday between Flyers. Her motion rods were burnished and a vast amount of Brasso and car polish were applied to the loco. The result was a shining loco on each Flyer, of which I was especially glad because of the excellent weather on each of the four Saturdays. In fact, our locos were cleaned for all our outings this year, but the "Belfast Central" railtour was unfortunate. Prior to the tour, the engine was cleaned all right, but the lighting up was accompanied by constant drizzle. When daylight came soot from the chimney had been washed down and deposited all over the loco.

Apart from appointing myself and Paul Newell as drivers, the main change in the operating staff was the appointment of three new steam raisers, bringing the total to six. The idea behind this move was to make use of every possible opportunity for crew training. With a pool of six steam raisers it was possible to have a steam raiser act as third man on a loco every time there was one in steam.

The Steam Train Rides train operated at Whitehead every Sunday from 4th July to 12th September, consisting of the Guinness loco and ex NCC North Atlantic Brake coach No.472. On the last day of train rides, No.171 was used, being in steam for test purposes and crewed by top link crew of driver Pryce and driver Convery acting as firemen.

The Guinness loco has been somewhat eclipsed as Whitehead shunting loco, since diesel No.23 arrived in 1973. However the Guinness loco was in steam in October to perform one task that No.23 would not be strong enough for, separating No.171 from her tender. This operation involved using No.4 as a buffer so that the Guinness could apply more than gentle pressure to No.171. No.23's main drawback in shunting is lack of braking power which is evident if a dead steam loco is hauled out of the shed. Against this, No.23 has shunted several long rakes of coaches in and out of the long carriage siding.

We are lucky not to have more mishaps while getting trains together at Whitehead such as happened on the night before the "Belfast Central" railtour. No.23 stalled shortly after shunting began and it was discovered that the starter had broken. The only way of restarting the diesel was to get the tractor to tow the loco along the platform road. Once restarted, Paul Newell completed over two hours of shunting without stalling again.

The 1976 railtour season started in April with a one-day tour from Dublin to Wexford and back hauled by No.186. Our oldest loco steamed and ran as well as ever, and made light work of the Rathdrum bank in both directions. A major role in organising and operating the tour was played by our ever growing band of active Dublin members. Perhaps the most significant and pleasing development of 1976 was the increased participation of Dublin members, led by Paddy O'Brien, in working on No.186 in Mullingar. Life, for me, was infinitely easier in running the tours to Wexford and Cork. For both tours, Paddy and co. handled the coaling of No.186 in less than ideal circumstances as well as cleaning and generally preparing the loco. Just as important, they secured the engine after each tour and cleaned the tubes, smokebox and ashpan. Prior to the Wexford outing, they gave the boiler and tender thorough washouts.

No.186 ran light engine from Mullingar to Dublin on the morning of the tour to Wexford and back to Mullingar that night, confining all the locomotive's movements to one day. In comparison to this, the two-day "Seandun" railtour to Cork and back in June was, for those involved in operating it, a five-day railtour, from 19:00 on the Wednesday before (when shunting at Whitehead began) through to 17:00 on the Monday after (when No.171 finally came to rest inside the shed at Whitehead).

The "Seandun" railtour survey in February established the up-to-date position regarding watering points and turntables along the route. Nine tons of coal to Dublin and nine tons to Cork were dispatched by CIÉ goods train from Adelaide ten days before the tour. Around 18:00 on Wednesday 9th

June, members started to gather at Whitehead. An English enthusiast enquired at what time would the train leave next morning, "09:20" came the answer, "provided the diesel starts." The diesel did start, and by 18:00 on Thursday 10th, the tour train of No.171 and six coaches had reached Dublin Connolly. With the demise of Connolly shed, RPSI locos are now stored in Fairview on such occasions, with the coaches left at Pearse Station. The staff at Fairview were extremely helpful and every facility was made available to us in servicing No.171.



*General maintenance and replacement of the large boiler tubes was undertaken on No.186 on shed location in the south by our Dublin Area members and friends under the direction of Locomotive Officer, P. Scott, and P.N. O'Brien, with the assistance of other members from Whitehead.
(David Carse)*

While No.171 spent Friday 11th out of steam at Fairview, No.186 was spending the entire day travelling to Cork via Dublin. She brought coach 583 (which had been at Mullingar for painting) through to Pearse to be added to the tour train.

Saturday 12th started with a fine run by No.171 from Dublin Heuston to Limerick Junction. The engine was superbly handled by the Inchicore crew, and the work on the piston rings made a significant improvement in the running. That the loco was using steam more efficiently was shown in her coal consumption figures. In 1975, No.171 had been running 30-35 miles per ton of coal. On the Cork outing, this had improved to 40-45 miles per ton (compared with 50 miles per ton with No.4).

At Limerick Junction, I made a severe error in judgement in not insisting that No.171's fire be cleaned. There had been no hint of clinkering, and the loco had been running well, but we soon learned that the effect of the long stop had been to start clinker forming. Just short of the summit before the five-mile bank down into Mallow, we ground to a halt with steam pressure no longer able to hold the brake off. Eventually, we made it to Mallow, and found that at least the clinker had formed across the firebars and not down between them (as occurred on the disastrous 1974 "Portrush Flyer"). Once the fire was cleaned, we were under way again and no chances were taken with fire cleaning for the rest of the weekend.

Coaling No.171 and No.186 at Cork, as at Fairview, was done with the aid of a forklift truck, and at both places the operation was carried out very efficiently. At Cork, a CIÉ man kept the fires on in both locos overnight, and with the close proximity of No.184 and No.461, Glanmire Road had all the appearances of a steam shed for a short while. Coach 562 was also left at the shed, and her workshop came in useful for a few jobs on No.171 early on the Sunday morning.



Steam, smoke and confusion at Cork as No.186 and No.171 prepare to work the “Seandun” tour train up through Cork tunnel on 13th June 1976. (C.P. Friel)

The Sunday journey from Cork to Belfast involved servicing No.171 at Limerick Junction and Dublin. Between fire cleaning, oiling, watering and shovelling coal down, we had no less than seven members assisting the CIÉ crew at Limerick Junction. At Dublin, we had two hours to turn No.171 and clean her fire at Connolly shed and proceed to Fairview for water (where there is a high pressure hydrant) and coal. No.186 arrived at Fairview, en route to Mullingar, while No.171 was being coaled. I would like to express our gratitude to all the CIÉ drivers who crewed our locos over the weekend, and especially to Inspector Commerford for his efforts on No.171 on the Cork road.

While No.186 made it home by midnight, No.171 did not reach her final destination at Central Services Depot until 01:30 on Monday 14th. The loco and train spent the night up the headshunt parallel to the Bangor line, making a sight for commuters by road and rail from Bangor on the Monday morning. No.171 was turned on the new table at CSD on the Monday morning and she set off for Whitehead in the block of the 11:30 to Dublin.

On tours away from Whitehead, we always have some of our own operating staff in attendance during preparation and disposal of locos, as well as during the tour itself, to help with oiling, etc. As well as helping the railwaymen, our own staff get the chance to learn about locos from the experienced railway

drivers. For a tour like the Cork one, a roster for our own staff is drawn up. On the Cork tour, our staff were on duty from 05:30 at Fairview through to 23:30 at Cork, and continuously from 06:30 at Cork on the Sunday until 17:00 at Whitehead on the Monday.

By Monday evening, our five-day railtour was over, with members of the operating staff in various states of collapse and No.171, unfortunately with a warm driving wheel axlebox, but with no other serious defects.

The table below shows No.4 on top for mileage in 1976. No.186's high light engine mileage is due to her journeys to and from Cork.

	Train Miles	LE Miles
No.4	1,084	24
No.171	738	
No.186	282	537

Finally, there is still room for anyone who wants to join the operating staff at Whitehead as a trainee shunter/guard. Anyone interested should contact me at Whitehead.

BELFAST CENTRAL RAILWAY (1864-1965)

Denis Grimshaw

The problem first arose in 1848, the year in which the number of Belfast railway termini was increased from one to three. The Ulster Railway opened its station at Glengall Place (later Great Victoria Street) on 12th August 1839, but it was not until 11th April 1848 that the lines from York Road station (of the Belfast & Ballymena Railway) to Carrickfergus, Ballymena and Randalstown were opened, followed quickly by the Belfast & Holywood Railway's route from Queen's Quay on 2nd August of the same year. By this time, the Ulster's line had been extended as far as Armagh.

Not only did the three lines terminate in three separate stations in Belfast, but none of these was adjacent to the main part of the docks. Serious proposals to alleviate the situation began to appear from 1860, when the directors of the Ulster Railway opened negotiations with the City Council and the Harbour Commissioners to construct a street tramway from Great Victoria Street goods station to a goods depot near the Queen's Bridge, via Donegall Square South.

By 1863, there were three separate proposals 'on the go'. In addition to the UR scheme, the 'Antrim & Down Counties Junction Railway' involved a system of railways and tramways connecting the three existing lines with each other, and with the markets. The third scheme, sponsored by a Mr. William Coddington, was for a 'Belfast Central Railway', connecting the Ulster and the Co. Down and Holywood Railways by a bridge over the River Lagan and a tramway connection along the quays to York Road. A central station was to be built, fronting on Victoria Street between High Street and Waring Street.

It should be remembered that in those days the 'Centre' of Belfast was the High Street-Victoria Street area, a distinction which has only passed to the City Hall-Donegall Place area in relatively recent years. The Ulster's station at Glengall Place was not particularly convenient to the city centre in the 1860s.

In July 1864 it was to be the third of these schemes which received Parliamentary Authority. At this stage the proposed connection to York Road was to have been by a tunnel under Corporation Street from the Central Station, but in 1865 this was amended to a quay tramway to be constructed by the Belfast Harbour Commissioners.

Joseph Thornton, who had financial connections with the London finance company which provided much of the capital, was appointed contractor, and started work in May 1865 on the section between the Ormeau Road and Maysfields. By the following spring a temporary siding had been laid at Ballymacarrett for the delivery of sand and stone by rail from Knock and Dundonald for the construction of the embankments and bridges at the Co. Down end of the line.



Belfast Central Railway in single track days. UG 0-6-0 No.82 (UTA No.47) heads a Bangor excursion from Lurgan towards the Donegall Road bridge in May 1962. (I.C. Pryce)

In 1867 the proposed location of Central Station was moved to the site of the Corporation's Pork Market, which occupied the rectangle now bounded by Oxford Street, Chichester Street, Victoria Street and Townhall Street.

1869 saw a great flurry of activity, with the Ormeau to Ulster Junction earthworks starting in April, a temporary viaduct over the Lagan completed in May, track being laid from Ballymacarrett Junction towards Maysfields in June, and the section from East Bridge Street Junction to a temporary passenger terminus at Queen's Bridge (now the site of Oxford Street Bus Station) started in September.

Plans were being prepared for yet another version of the York Road link - a single-track street tramway along a new street to be built by the company in a straight line from its proposed 'Pork Market' station to York Road, being diagonal to York Street and Corporation Street. A station for Belfast & Northern Counties Railway (as the Belfast & Ballymena Railway had become in 1860) passengers would be built near Waring Street, and carriages for through passengers only would be hauled by horses along the remaining 360 yards of street tramway to Central Station.

By June of 1870 the Ballymacarrett Junction to Maysfields section was almost complete, and the contractor was using an ex-Londonderry & Lough Swilly Railway (5'3" gauge) 0-6-0T for ballasting.

In the same year, almost incredibly, the site for Central Station was changed yet again, this time moving slightly north to the south-east corner of Victoria Street and Ann Street. This would have improved the alignment of the triangular junction first suggested in 1863, leading to a second bridge over the Lagan, to permit direct running from the BH&BR and B&CDR to Central Station. A second triangular junction was also proposed at Ulster Junction to permit BCR trains to reach Great Victoria Street without reversal.

One of the main reasons for these frequent changes of plan was the perilous financial position of the London-based BCR Company. Each change of plan was designed to save expense, or to try to improve the usefulness of the railway, and thus attract additional capital.



Oil train hauled by RT 0-6-4T No.23 approaches Ballymacarrett Junction on the falling grade from the Lagan viaduct. (Kelland Collection)

These problems had come to a head in 1868, when a new contractor, Telford McNeill, was appointed by a reconstituted BCR board, Thornton having gone bankrupt. Hence the abnormal activity in 1869.

The closing months of 1870 saw the line virtually complete, including a connection to the Harbour Tramway which the BHC had finished. No progress had been made, however, with the Central Station or the proposed goods station at Maysfields. Negotiations were in progress with the Ulster Railway about the form of the connection to that Company's system at 'Ulster Junction'. A reverse double junction was suggested, with headshunts (incorporating a passenger station) on the south-east side of the UR on the Adelaide side of the Donegall Road bridge. Trains from Great Victoria Street would run directly into this station where the engine would run round before departure on to the BCR.

There then followed several years of protracted negotiations with the other mainline railways over the layout of junctions, and the extent and cost of running powers, with the Central Railway lying

moribund in the meantime. It was not until late in 1875 that the Belfast Central Railway opened to traffic.

As built, the double-track line started from the BCR station in the headshunt at Ulster Junction (Central Junction after 1876, when the Ulster Railway became the Great Northern Railway) and rounded an 11-chain right-hand curve into a cutting. Dropping down at an average gradient of around 1:300 (although as steep as 1:80 in places) the line was crossed by an overbridge, later converted to a footbridge, at Abingdon Street, before passing under the Donegall Road by a twin-arch bridge, and under the Lisburn and University Roads by a 300-yard long tunnel, on a 15-chain left-hand curve. Between the tunnel and the next overbridge at Botanic Avenue, 'Botanic Road' (later 'Windsor') station was built, nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ mile from Central Junction. The line continued along a right-hand curve, still in cutting, to the next station at Ormeau, just over a mile from Central Junction.



Ex LMS NCC V Class 0-6-0 No.13 passes the site of the Belfast Central Railway's Central Station (now Oxford Street Ulsterbus depot) with a transfer train from Maysfields to York Road on 30th May 1963. (I.C. Pryce)

Continuing leftwards under a two-arch bridge carrying the Ormeau Road - at the lowest point on the line - the railway rose to the surface on the west bank of the River Lagan, behind the Gas Works. The River Blackstaff was crossed before the location of Maysfields signalbox, marshalling yard and cattle depot. East Bridge Street crossed the railway on a long viaduct with six iron spans over the tracks (including sidings), flanked by a number of masonry approach arches.

At East Bridge Street Junction ($1\frac{3}{4}$ miles), the main line swung left to terminate at Queen's Bridge passenger station (2 miles). From here, a single-track tunnel, steeply graded, sharply curved, and with tight clearances, led to the Harbour Tramway, at Donegall Quay Junction.

From East Bridge Street Junction, initially on a 7-chain radius right-hand curve, the 'branch' rose

steeply at 1:61, over the single-track Lagan viaduct, (known, with good reason, to generations of engine-men as “the shaky bridge”), a steel lattice structure, with one span over Laganbank Road, and seven over the river. The line, now on an embankment with a further curve of 9 chains to the right, crossed Laganview Street and Memel Street by masonry arches, and then Bridge End by a steel lattice bridge. From here, the line dropped down 1:90, crossing Middlepath Street by another masonry arch, to join the B&CDR at Ballymacarrett Junction, almost 3 miles from Central Junction.

In recent years, the East Bridge Street Junction-Ballymacarrett Junction section was single-track, but there is evidence that double-track was originally resumed at the north end of the Lagan viaduct. The three arch bridges, and the abutments of Bridge End bridge were all built for double track, as were the embankments and the length of continuous retaining wall between Bridge End and Middlepath Street. Marks on the top of the original abutments at Bridge End suggested that the main girders had been moved closer together at some stage, and the cross-girders shortened, to allow the bridge to carry greater loads.



Ex SLNCR tank “Lough Erne” passes East Bridge Junction cabin with a coal train from the Co. Down quays for Adelaide locomotive shed. (I.C. Pryce)

The line was signalled, at least in GNR days, from boxes at Central Junction, Maysfields, East Bridge Street Junction and Ballymacarrett Junction.

The passenger services provided by the BCR consisted of some 18 trains in each direction per day, with a journey time of 10 minutes from Queen’s Bridge to Central Junction, with stops at Ormeau and Botanic Road. After reversal at Central Junction, the trains continued to Great Victoria Street. For a while, services were also operated over the Lagan to Queen’s Quay.

To operate these services, the BCR had two passenger coaches and five locomotives. Two 0-6-0 saddle tanks came from Black Hawthorn in 1868 and 1874. These had 14” x 20” cylinders, 3’6” driving

wheels, and were scrapped by the GNR in 1894/5. Beyer Peacock supplied a 2-4-0T in 1878, with 14" x 20" cylinders and 5'2" driving wheels. This loco lasted until 1898. The most successful engine was a Beyer Peacock 4-4-0T built in 1878. This had a boiler pressure of 165 psi, 16" x 20" cylinders and 5'0" driving wheels. It weighed 42 ton 6 cwt and had a tractive effort of 11,968 lbs. This engine lasted, as GNR(I) Class BP No.195, until as late as 1950, latterly as Dundalk pilot.

A Sharp Stewart 0-4-2, built in 1878, was obtained second-hand from the Newry & Armagh Railway, but resold in 1886 to the B&NCR.

The passenger services were never really successful, due largely to the street tramway system which was being greatly expanded at the same time, and which offered a much more frequent service.

The Belfast Central Railway was bought by the Great Northern Railway (Ireland) in 1885, and the passenger service withdrawn on 30th November of that year, after a life of only ten years, the four passenger stations being closed. The layout of the junction at Central Junction was reversed to permit direct running of goods trains from the Lisburn direction on to the Central Railway. The B&NCR had also contributed £1,600 per year for running powers, although these rarely appear to have been exercised.



U class 4-4-0 No.196 "Lough Gill" passes under the University Road bridge and past the site of the first Botanic station with a Lurgan to Bangor excursion on 9th June 1956. (A. Donaldson)

The line settled down to become a valuable link for goods traffic, especially as the tunnel connection to the Harbour Tramways had been opened in 1879. The GNR later built a large marshalling yard, mineral depot and cattle depot at Maysfields. Coal traffic from dockside sidings at Queen's Quay and Albert Quay was taken over the line, as was all traffic from the GNR to the docks, and the transfer of wagons between the three mainline railways. Access to Queen's Island and the coal sidings at Queen's Quay was obtained from headshunt sidings built by the GNR on the north side of the Bangor line at Ballymacarrett Junction, leading to street tramways in the Harbour Estate.

Occasional passenger specials continued to operate, however, as through trains between the mainline

railway systems. Although not on the BCR proper, a short-lived passenger service was started on summer Saturdays in 1904 from the newly-opened Midland Railway's Heysham steamer berth at Donegall Quay, to York Road and Larne.

Meanwhile, however, other proposals continued to emanate. In 1892, a 'Belfast City Central Station and Railways Bill' was presented to Parliament. This envisaged a connecting line from the GNR goods yard at Grosvenor Road to a central passenger station between Smithfield and Royal Avenue, (the station would have been just behind the Grand Central Hotel, which was built to serve the proposed station). The line would have continued thence to York Road, which, together with Great Victoria Street, would have been closed. The scheme fell through, however.



U class 4-4-0 No.196 "Lough Gill", running as UTA No.64 with a large tender, approaches the GN main line at Belfast Central Junction with a through Bangor to Dublin train in the early summer of 1959. (A. Donaldson)

The GNR built four 0-6-4T locos, class RT Nos. 22, 23, 166 and 167 specially for the line. Their restricted height, needed for the Queen's Bridge tunnel, gave them a squat but massive appearance, which belied their actual dimensions and low axle weight. This low axle weight was important, as in post-war years, the condition (and original light construction) of the Lagan Viaduct and Bridge End bridge precluded axle-loadings of over 15 tons, even with speed restrictions of 10 mph on these structures. In the 1960s the only remaining locos allowed over the Lagan were GNR U class 4-4-0s, UG 0-6-0s, RT 0-6-4Ts and the ex-Sligo, Leitrim & Northern Counties Railway, 0-6-4Ts which had become UTA Nos. 26 and 27. In earlier years, P (5'6"), P(6'6") class 4-4-0s, and A and PG class 0-6-0s would have been allowed over the line. In pre-war days, Co. Down 4-4-2Ts worked coal trains from Queen's Quay to Maysfields, and passenger specials as far as Balmoral (for special events at the King's Hall) and Lisburn. In July 1931, the LMS(NCC) ran a Portrush to Bangor special, via Antrim, Lisburn and the Belfast Central - it would be interesting to know the motive power over the BCR for this train.

In recent times (1958-65) most passenger specials from Lisburn, Antrim, Portadown, Newry or Dungannon to Bangor were hauled throughout by ex-GN U or UG class locos, the maximum load

being taken was 8 bogies. Specials from Bangor to Dublin were generally U or UG hauled to Adelaide, where a VS or Compound 4-4-0 or NCC Mogul would take over, but on some occasions, as in July 1962, U-class 4-4-0s would work right through from Bangor to Dublin, and on at least one occasion in 1964, a UG worked the train throughout, a journey of 126 miles behind an 0-6-0.

When several NCC Moguls and Jeeps were sent to Queen's Quay in the late 1940s and early 1950s, the former on route to Harland & Wolff's for overhaul, the latter for service on the Bangor line, they were hauled 'dead', with their boilers drained, behind a string of wagons, over the Lagan viaduct to minimise weight and eliminate 'hammer-blow', and avoid their weight and that of the 'train' engine from coming on the same bridge span simultaneously. Some of the Moguls, however, were taken over by floating crane, direct from Albert Quay to Queen's Island. Another exception to the axle-load restriction, was the permitting in the early 1960s of CIÉ B class General Motors diesels over the line, with their 16¾ ton axle loading, but no hammer-blow.

With an overall restriction of 25 mph, and 10 mph over the Lagan and Bridge End, there was no scope for any spirited running over the Central, but the sharp curves and steep gradients could make locomotive work hard enough. Fortunately the heaviest goods traffic was in the Up direction (towards Central Junction), whilst the steepest gradient was in the Down direction over the Lagan viaduct. Coal trains had a hard climb from Ballymacarrett Junction to Bridge End though, as they had loaded trains en route from the docks to Adelaide or Grosvenor Road.



One of the only two known occasions when a PP class worked to Bangor. Here No.44 comes off the Lagan Bridge with a Bangor-Lurgan return excursion on 31st May 1958. (A. Donaldson)

The first ominous change came in May 1962, when prompted by construction work in connection with the new Queen Elizabeth road bridge over the Lagan, the tunnel leading to the Harbour Tramway was closed, as was the line from East Bridge Street Junction to Donegall Quay Junction. The station buildings at the former Queen's Bridge station had lasted until 1960, when Oxford Street Bus Station was built on the site. At the same time, the line from Central Junction to Maysfields was reduced to single track, the former Down line being lifted. Shortly afterwards, with the closure of Maysfields as a

traffic depot, the signal boxes at Maysfields and East Bridge Street Junction were closed, the single-line section becoming Central Junction-Ballymacarrett Junction.

With the end of the BCR in sight, an enthusiasts' special, organised by the RBAI Railway Society, operated on 10th October 1964, running from York Road via Antrim, Lisburn and the BCR to Bangor, thence to Queen's Quay - the last steam passenger train to visit that station, The loco was ex-GNR U class No.202 (UTA No.67). All subsequent passenger trains over the BCR were UG-hauled.

The last passenger train of all was run at the instigation of the newly-formed RPSI, jointly with the Belfast Area of the IRRS. It had been the practice in July of each year for the UTA to run a public special from Portadown or Lisburn to Bangor on Wednesday afternoons, returning in the early evenings. The last such working had been planned for 21st July, but on the guarantee of a minimum number of passengers, the UTA agreed to extend the 'season' by another week. On 28th July 1965, the RPSI/IRRS party travelled by the 6:20pm service train from Queen's Quay to Bangor, and thence to Lisburn, via the Belfast Central behind UG No.49 (GN No.149), this being the last train as the line officially closed on 31st July 1965. The last actual working occurred a fortnight later, on 12th August 1965, when UG No.48 (GN No.146) cleared a number of ballast wagons from Queen's Quay, and propelled back over the BCR. A few days later, the masonry arch bridge over Middlepath Street was demolished to allow that street to be widened. The signal boxes at Central and Ballymacarrett Junctions were closed soon afterwards, and the story of the Belfast Central Railway had finished for good - or so it seemed!



Ex GNR UG class 0-6-0 No.78 (UTA 45) crosses the Lagan Viaduct with a Lisburn-Bangor excursion in 1963. (A. Donaldson)

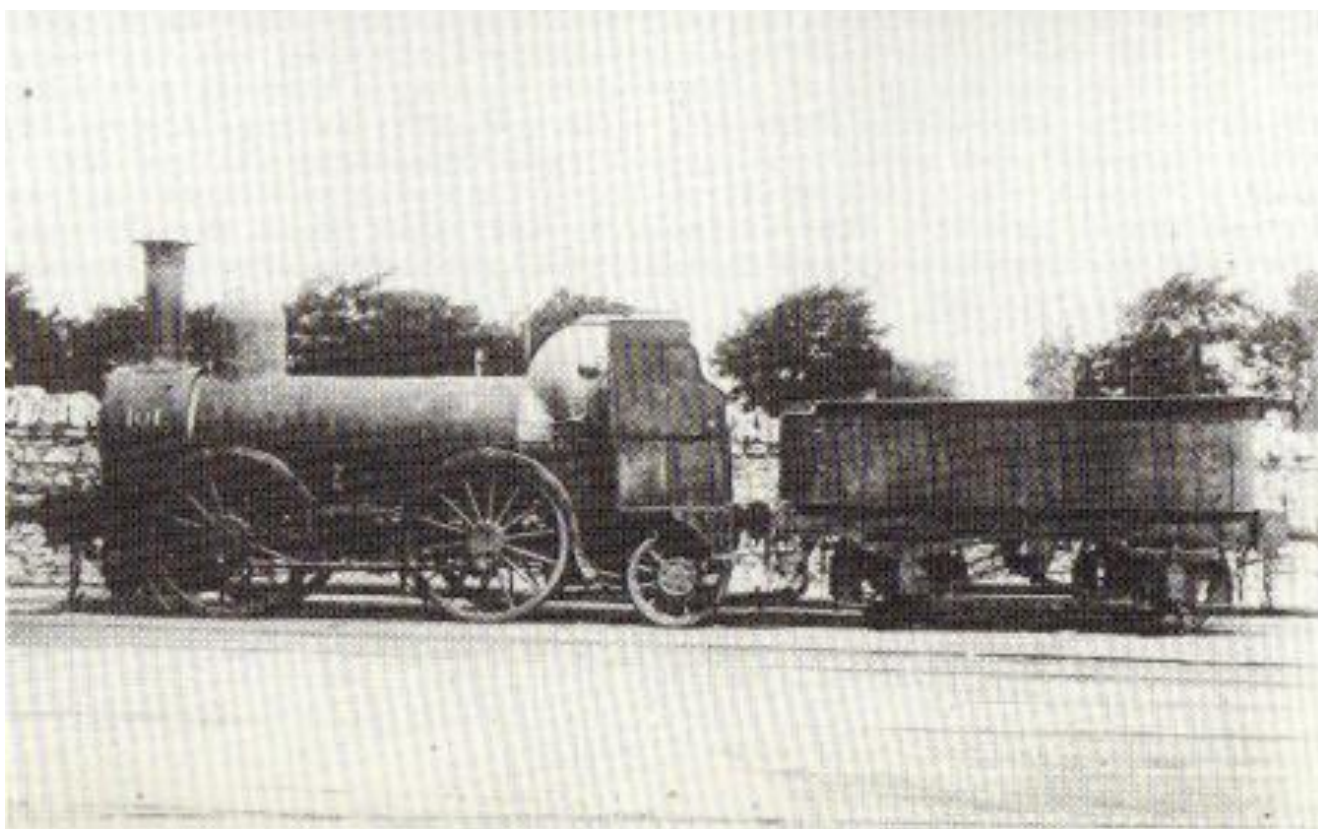
EARLY IRISH LOCOMOTIVES (1834-60)

Norman Johnston

One may well ask, "What is an article on early Irish locomotives doing in Five Foot Three?" I know that some of our readers take the view that there is no point in talking about engines which no one can remember, but I have personally never understood this viewpoint, and I know many other people share my fascination for these early veterans.

In point of fact there may be some people alive who remember the NCC doubled-framed 2-4-0s Nos. 12-15 which were scrapped in 1924. They were built as early as 1856, and others of a similar design but later construction, lasted to 1933. So the past is not so distant. And then of course we have the preserved Bury single on display in Kent Station Cork, a permanent tribute to the early locomotive builders.

But let us first set the atmosphere. Try for a moment to imagine the Ulster Railway shed in Belfast at 8:30am on a cold frosty morning in January 1859. Most of the carriages in the station would be ancient four-wheelers, only some fortunate first and second class passengers having the benefits of 'luxurious' six-wheeled travel. Two very old engines lie out of use in the siding by the ashpit. They are "Fury" and "Etna", both originally broad gauge engines, and to be scrapped later in the year. In contrast, a beautiful new double-framed single No.18 "Rose" is waiting to take out the morning train to Armagh. 0-4-2 No.14 "Callan" is shunting the top yard, and two other sharp singles "Cyclops" and "Jupiter" are in steam just outside the shed, their drivers busy oiling. Just visible inside the shed are several other double-framed singles, and a spanking new 0-4-2 goods engine No.16 "Bann".



Bury 0-4-2 No.101 of the GSWR taken in 1880 when the engine was withdrawn. (The Locomotive Publishing Co.)

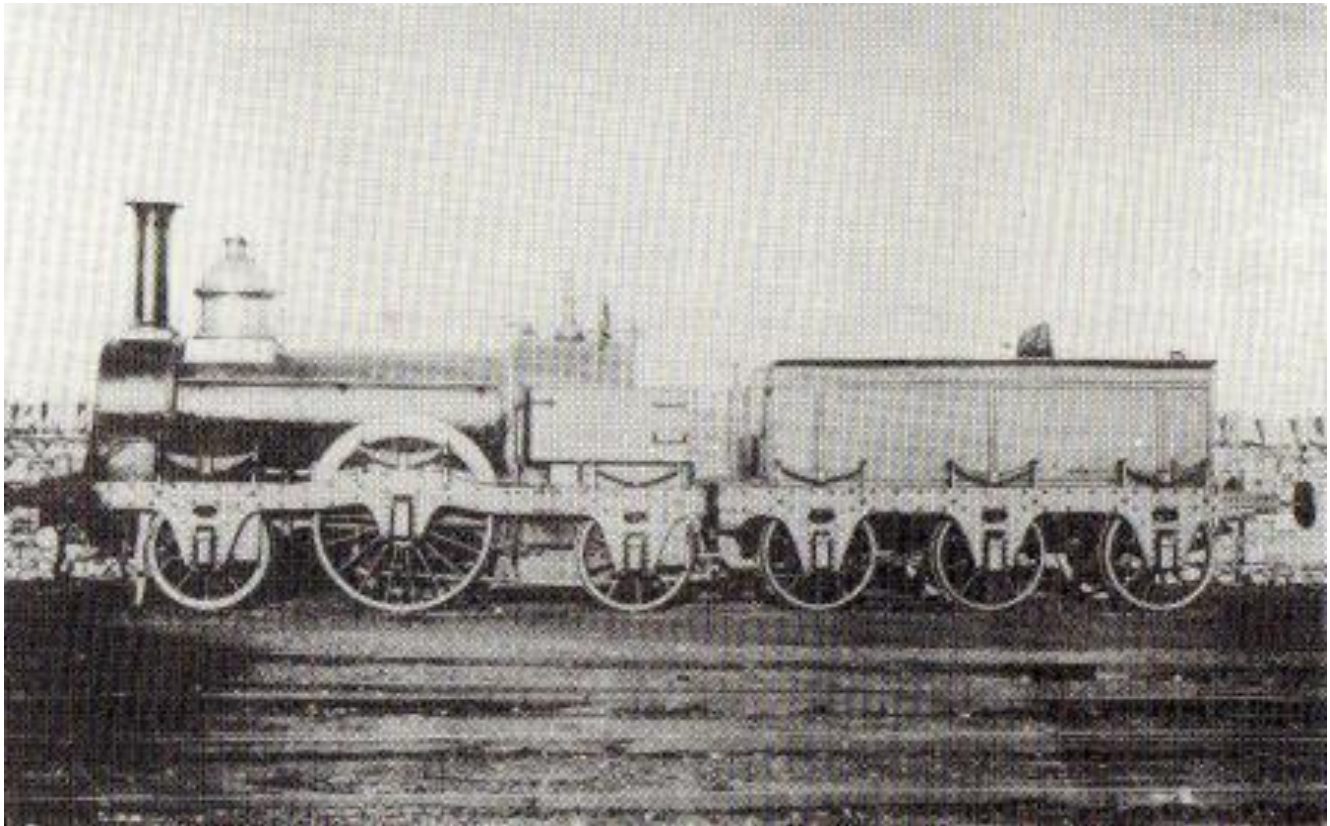
A purely imaginary scene, but one to set the pulses racing, don't you agree? Now, my main aim in this article is to talk a bit about the three illustrations reproduced in the picture section. But first I want to mention a few important facts about the 1834-60 era. By 1860 there were twenty-one Irish railway companies operating their own locomotive fleets, and between them they had some 330 engines. The largest fleet was the Great Southern and Western which had 84 locomotives. In the twenty-six years since the opening of the Dublin and Kingston Railway approximately 363 individual locomotives had seen service on Irish lines. This figure excludes contractors' locomotives.

Practically all Irish Locomotives before 1860 were six-wheeled, with the exception of three eight-

wheelers, and twenty-four engines with only four wheels. The eight-wheelers were the first three engines built for the Waterford and Kilkenny Railway in 1848 to the unusual 4-2-2T wheel arrangement. They had a completely rigid wheelbase and are thought to be the first side tanks in Ireland. Of the twenty-four small engines mentioned, nine were the original engines built for the Dublin and Kingston Railway in 1834-6, and the remainder were the light engines designed by Adams for branch line working in 1849-53. Two were extremely interesting, for they were not only the first of the type, but had the unusual 0-2-2 wheel arrangement (made famous by its use on Stephenson's "Rocket" in 1829). Built in 1849, they were the first engines on the Cork and Bandon Railway. The remainder of the light Adams engines were shared between the Londonderry and Enniskillen, and Londonderry and Coleraine companies, and were 2-2-0T.

As already indicated, these locomotives were exceptions to the rule, and generally speaking most Irish engines built before 1860 were of conventional layout and appearance, being one of four wheel arrangements: 2-2-2, 2-4-0, 0-4-2, or 0-6-0. Furthermore most had inside cylinders, although there were examples of engines having them outside. The only unusual six wheel engine was the original GSWR pay carriage "Sprite" of 1857, which was an 0-2-4.

My illustrations have been chosen therefore to illustrate conventional practice, rather than the oddities, and the first is that of Bury 0-4-2 No.101 of the GSWR. The photograph was taken in 1880 when the engine was withdrawn, but nevertheless this is the earliest Irish locomotive of which a picture is available, for 101 was built in 1845.



GSWR No.19 of 1848 is completely typical of Sharp singles built between 1848 and 1850 for railways all over the British Isles. (The Locomotive Publishing Co.)

The locomotive building firm of Bury, Curtis and Kennedy had only a short lived influence on the Irish railway scene, as they went into liquidation in 1850, but between 1845 and 1848 they produced 46 locomotives for Ireland. Most of these were their standard singles, but eleven were 0-4-2 goods engines

of various dimensions, similar to the one illustrated.

The photograph shows all the typical Bury features; wheels with inside springs, bar frames, haystack firebox, and flared chimney. In fact, almost every detail, down to the position of the springs on the frameplate of the four-wheeled tender, is in stark contrast to the practice of the rival firm Sharp brothers. Many of these differences are superficial, such as the chimney, but the main difference in Bury construction, and peculiar to it, is the bar frame idea, which combined lightness and strength with very easy access to the motion of the locomotive.

It took me many years to locate a photograph of a Sharp single, other than those of rebuilt examples, but I am glad to be able to reproduce a photograph of an Irish example. In the 1840s most railways bought their locomotives from outside firms. In England the Stephensons had a natural dominance, and it is peculiar that they sold few engines in Ireland, but their chief rivals were the firm of Sharp Brothers or Sharp Roberts, who had the advantage of being based in Manchester on the west coast, and so nearer for Irish deliveries than Stephensons who were at Newcastle on Tyne.

In Ireland Sharps were the big rivals to Bury, despite the attempts of firms like William Fairbairn of Manchester and Grendons of Drogheda to outbid both. Their practice in engine design was totally different to that of their Liverpool rivals Bury. Instead of bar frames, the Sharp engine is fitted with outside sandwich frames, and all six wheels have outside bearings, with springs above the footplate. The footplate, following the frame contour, curves gracefully over the driving wheels. These are 5'6" diameter, and the inside cylinders are 15" x 20". The boiler has a raised firebox, but this is round-topped in contrast to the Bury design. In the late 1840s the pressure was about 80 lbs. Note the complete absence of cab, and the shape of the six-wheeled tender, for its basic design was used on Irish railways until the 1890s.

The example reproduced here is by coincidence also a GSWR locomotive - No.19 of 1848, and is completely typical of Sharp singles built between 1848 and 1850 for railways all over the British Isles. It is one of my greatest regrets that not a simple example remains in existence today of this famous type, although thankfully we do have one Sharp Stewart engine preserved, our own beloved No.186!

The design underwent three basic changes. Firstly, the early engines built for the Ulster Railway and Dublin and Drogheda Railway in 1839-44 were smaller in cylinder and boiler power. Cylinders increased gradually from 12" x 18" to 14" x 18", and pressure was around 60 lbs. Frame construction, etc., was similar to later examples. Secondly, there were the 1846-50 engines described above. In them pressure went up to 80-90 lbs, and cylinders to 15" x 20". The third change came in the 1850s when improved boilers raised the pressure to 120 lbs, but cylinders remained 15" x 20". From 1856 onwards the design evolved naturally to the 2-4-0 wheel arrangement, and many earlier engines were so rebuilt. In this form it became the standard passenger type on the UR and BNCR, surviving to as late as 1933 on the latter.

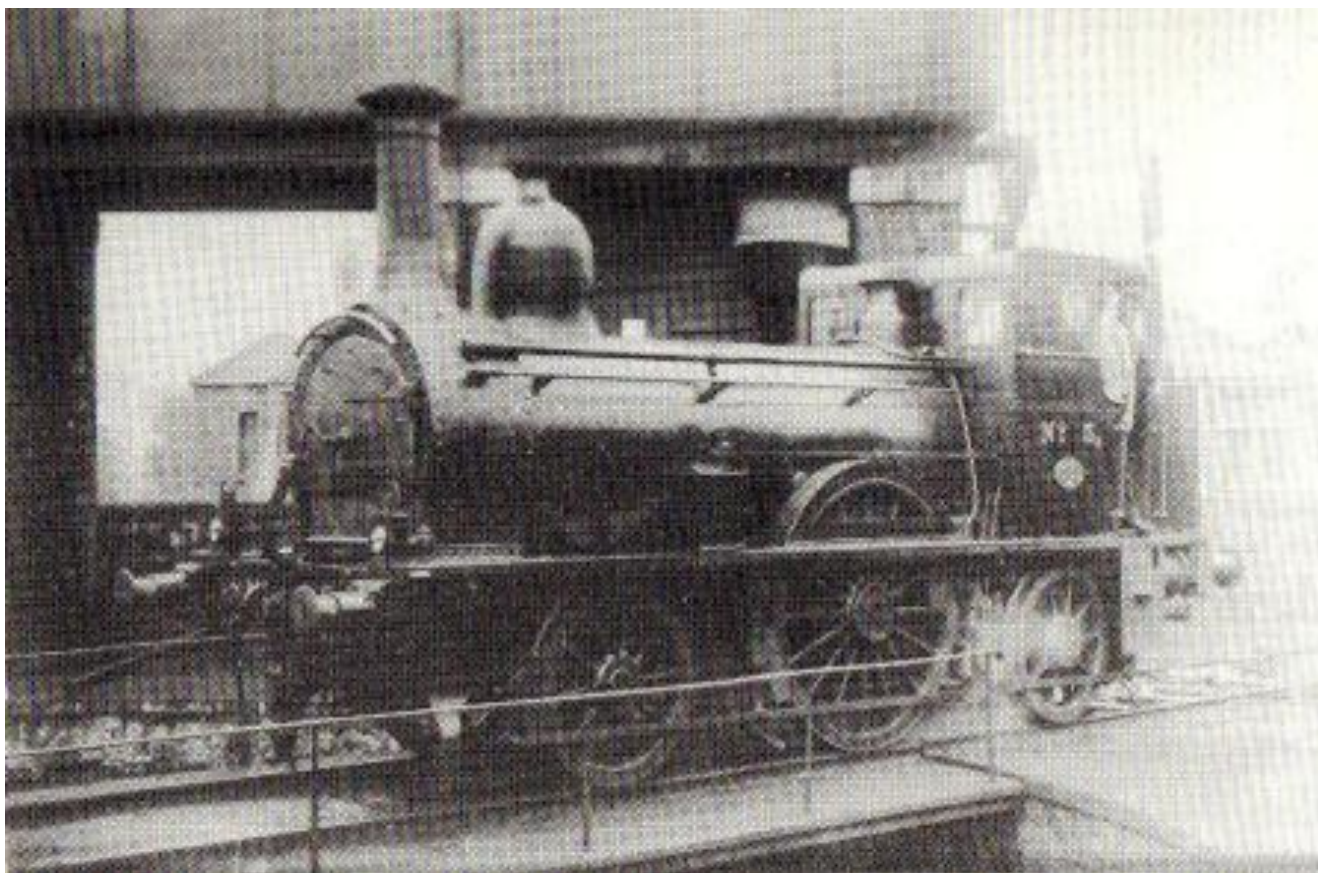
My last illustration is of a Fairbairn 2-2-2WT. This engine was built in 1854 for the Dublin and Wicklow Railway. I have included it as being typical of early tank engines for it has well tanks between the frames rather than side or saddle tanks. It also illustrates a third variant in frame design - inside plate frames. The Manchester firm of William Fairbairn and Son built their first engines for Ireland in 1847, for the Midland Great Western Railway. It is hard to point to a type typical of Fairbairn practice, for they tended to build small numbers of any one design, but my attention has always been drawn to their 2-2-2WTs.

Essentially these were another essay on the light engine theme so popular in the early 1850s, and already mentioned in connection with the two Londonderry companies. They were first introduced to Ireland by the BCDR in 1850, and altogether fourteen Fairbairn well tanks were built, running on the BNCR, the MGWR, the D&WR and the Waterford and Tramore, in addition to the BCDR ones

mentioned. I hasten to add that they varied greatly in dimensions but usually had 5'0" driving wheels, and a very large dome with safety valve, mounted right behind the chimney. One of the Waterford and Tramore engines lasted until 1935 and was the last single in Ireland.

The very basic design of tank engine shown here, with inside frames and cylinders and six wheels, was copied by other firms in the 1850s, by such as Sharp Stewart, Vulcan and Neilson, and was the main stay of Irish suburban traffic until the introduction of 2-4-2Ts and 4-4-0Ts in the 1880s.

Of necessity this article has been limited in scope, and is by no means an attempt to give comprehensive cover to every aspect of my title. There has been no space to describe any of the early products of Inchicore or of Beyer Peacock. Goods engines alone would be a study in themselves. I take this opportunity to apologise for any inaccuracies caused by ignorance of technical matters or lack of information. I conclude with a table of Irish railway companies operating locomotives in 1860, which I hope may be of interest to readers.



No.5, a Fairbairn 2-2-2WT built in 1854 for the Dublin and Wicklow Railway. (The Locomotive Publishing Co.)

Number Of Locomotives Placed In Service By Irish Railways 1834 - 1860

		First Locomotive	Total Engines*	In Service 1860
1	Ballymena, Coleraine and Portrush Junction	1855	7	7
2	Belfast and Ballymena	1847	19	19
3	Belfast and Co. Down	1848	11	10

4	Cork and Bandon	1849	6	6
5	Cork, Blackrock and Passage	1850	3	3
6	Cork and Youghal	1859	5	5
7	Dublin and Belfast Junction	1848	17	17
8	Dublin and Drogheda	1843	26	20
9	Dublin and Kingstown	1834	18	9
10	Dublin and Wicklow	1853	16	16
11	Dundalk and Enniskillen	1848	12	12
12	Great Southern & Western	1845	84	84
13	Londonderry and Coleraine	1846	8	7
14	Londonderry and Enniskillen	1846	12	12
15	Midland Great Western	1846	54	48
16	Newry and Armagh	1854	2	3
17	Newry, Warrenpoint and Rostrevor	1848	6	3
18	Ulster Railway	1839	22	18
19	Waterford and Kilkenny	1848	9	7
20	Waterford and Limerick	1347	21	21
21	Waterford and Tramore	1853	5	3
			363	330

The difference between the two columns is due to the withdrawal, sale or purchase second-hand of some locomotives.

* Excludes contractors' locomotives, unless sold to a railway company.

TIMING THE PORTRUSH FLYER 1976

Joe Cassells

This year's Flyer had a new path, following (and sometimes checked by) the 8:50 ex Larne into Belfast, where our arrival found the station almost empty after the departure of the 9:45 Portrush and the 9:50 boat train. With a sensible eight-bogie maximum load there was never any sign of the struggling of last year, and from Belfast to Antrim the three eight-coach trains covered the section in 30'5", 30'48" and 31'00", from which a further 2 minutes could be subtracted to cover the PWS on the Lough shore and the usual signal check outside Antrim, where the gates are now left closed until the train arrives in the station. A net 28 minutes or so is by no means bad for this load, and three climbs of the bank in the mid-twenties without the benefit of a charge out through Whitehouse speaks well of No.4's steaming capability. Almost unnoticed on the third Flyer was the way Rab Graham took No.4 up the last 1/326-758 between Ballyclare Junction and Kingsbog cabin; the pass to pass time of 1'35" was really excellent. A composition of the best sectional times of the three runs adds to 29'12", representing an 'eight-bogie' level of work equalled last in the 1974 season with George Houston's net 27 minute time over this section.

To the best of my knowledge the last sub 15 minute time from Antrim to Ballymena with a substantial load was in July 1969 with No.50, nine NCC bogies (probably equal to our eight-coach train) and driver J. Kitchen. Firing to him on that occasion was the same Willie Graham who fired three of the four Flyers this year. Still, this year's best time of 15'19" was good standard stuff; vigorous acceleration to 50 at Cookstown Junction brief min of 48 and then a good sharp max of 63 at post 29.

The Ballymena-Coleraine section has so many obstacles to good running that it is hard to expect much in the way of excitement these days. Officially we were booked to cross the 10:55 ex Portrush at Dunloy and the 10:45 ex Derry at Ballymoney, but in fact we had, this year, stops at Cullybackey and Dunloy, checks at Killagan and Ballyboyland gates and a PWS at Glarryford (thankfully not all on the same run!). It was, however, pleasant to blast away on the last Flyer to 42 at post 36 and then spin along in the high fifties to Dunloy. The final unchecked section from Ballymoney to Portrush provided some very good working. More than once we reached 60 after Macfin, and even a brief 59 max before. Equally good was a pass to pass time of 5'13" from Coleraine to Portstewart. Coming home, the greatest surprise turned out to be the sprightly work from Portrush to Ballymena - non stopping, but invariably checked at Calf Lane gates outside Coleraine. Every timer has grim memories of summer Portrush specials trundling over this section, but there was very little trundling by the Flyer, which generally managed to stop at the Down platform water column in under 54 minutes, (best time 52'10"). There was the renewed excitement too of a 60 before Ballymoney and again before shutting off for the Dunminning slack, and some good uphill work to Ballyboyland Quarry, with a best min of 42 this year on one of the eight-bogie trains. Two splendid runs over the Ballymena-Antrim section managed to break 14 minutes (again taking recorders back to pre-1969 standard with heavy trains) and each held 60 over the Cookstown Junction hump after a sprightly gallop through Kellswater.



No.4 storms out of York Road with the "Portrush Flyer" on 31st July 1976. (C.P. Friel)

Strict NCC timekeeping was thus guaranteed by Antrim, and it required no wet shirts from the fireman to arrive at York Road dead on time. In Belfast the best operation of the day could be seen: to off-load several hundred passengers in around the 4-minute mark, and have a train from Portrush heading out for Larne 17 minutes after arriving from Antrim is no mean feat, especially in 1976!

Among timers there is a general feeling that this has been the best season yet for the Flyer; the train load testing but not burdensome for the engine, the crews enthusiastic and the atmosphere terrific.

Frank Dunlop, Davie McDonald, Alan Robinson, Rab and Willie Graham and Geordie Gaw all deserve our best thanks for a first class month of performance. And about No.4, by now surely the holder of nearly all the Jeep records since her last big overhaul in 1965, what more can possibly be said?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

A change in editor gives one the opportunity to take stock. I hope you will allow me a little space to place on record my appreciation of all that Charlie Friel has done for the Society in his various guises in charge of publications.

An editor gets small thanks anyway, and if he also does the typing he cannot even blame the odd mistake on the printer. Round about issue seven the then Editor commented that publication would continue just so long as Charlie could keep typing. So he did, right through all the FFTs to date, plus tour brochures, circular letters and, his piece de resistance, "A Decade Of Steam". That last, if nothing else, should earn him his place in the annals of the RPSI, and indeed there has been much else.

Yours faithfully,

Robert H. Barr

Kendal

[I am sure that each and every member will concur with the sentiments expressed in this letter from our English member in thanking Charlie Friel for his great work on our magazine over the years. He has been an invaluable help to yours truly with this issue. We look forward to publishing his photographs in future issues. - Ed.]

BOOK REVIEWS

Great Southern & Western Railway

K.A. Murray & D.B. McNeill, Irish Railway Record Society, 206 pages 66 illustrations, ISBN 0-904078-05-1, £4.50

This long awaited volume is now in our hands; it is odd how the more important lines have waited at the end of the publishing siding while small and lesser known companies have been the subject of great works!

The GSWR was a large railway and started off in 1846 with an ambitious programme which it succeeded in carrying out; as such it was a long-lived company and traded under its original title until the 1924 amalgamation. None the less, the GSWR was a powerful concern with muscle and took over many ailing lines, the most important of which was the WLWR in 1901.

Our eminent authors have wisely given precedence to the parent company, leaving the minor details of the WCIR, WLWR, etc., to another volume. Your reviewer rather enjoyed the picture histories of the various branch lines, although the section on the Southern Railway which ran from Thurles to Clonmel was a little short on facts - this is not surprising as when amalgamation came in 1925 an owner for the line could not be found! The myth of Charleville Junction lives on in this book, it was not possible to run onto the branch from the Dublin direction.

The rolling stock section deals with the operating stock of the Inchicore company. The locomotive chapter is of great interest to one not well versed in such matters and is complimented by a fine table in the appendices; it is here however that there is a particular criticism in that there is no mention of running numbers, especially as there is room for this information; it is here also that the tantalising

mention is made in a footnote about the 1864 renumbering!

The photographic section is quite well balanced, everything cannot be illustrated. The line illustrations are standard and are not that interesting - also, why waste pages on two large maps with similar content? Notwithstanding the odd crib above, this handbound book is very good value for the money and is recommended to serious readers. **HR**



A D19 Class 4-4-0 at Ennis with a Limerick - Tuam train. (Real Photographs Ltd)

GS&WR Carriage Diagrams

Herbert Richards & Brendan Pender, Transport Research Associates, 115 sheets, plastic ring binder, ISBN 901552-02-X, £3.15

This volume is a welcome new development in Irish Railway literature. Firstly because it deals with the almost neglected field of coaching stock and secondly because it provides a much needed source of scale diagrams for the modeller.

This book covers not only all the bogie and six-wheeled stock but also wagon stock included in the coaching series such as horse boxes, fish vans, mortuary and hearse wagons.

The drawings represent the entire coaching stock of the GSWR as it was in 1924 and includes vehicles of the absorbed companies like the WL&WR. Many of these were of course altered in various uses since 1924 but the authors very wisely did not attempt to catalogue these.

The drawings seem to be prepared fairly closely from the original official diagrams of the railway company; for every class of coach, side and end elevations and interior plans are given, together with principal dimensions, weight and seating capacity, building and withdrawal dates. It should be remembered that the drawings are diagrams and much detail is accordingly omitted. A numerical list of coaches is given as is a list of departmental vehicles. This is particularly interesting as many of these vehicles are still in existence. I was, for example, able to identify one vehicle which I had seen in Cork

as a former six-wheeled tri-composite withdrawn from normal service as long ago as 1947.

I would be extremely surprised if a work of this nature contained no errors. I have come across some. I am fairly certain that at no time was the guard's look-out in 861 as it is depicted in the drawing. The departmental list seems to have gone particularly awry viz: 540A should be 935 not 835; 381 is probably 897 not 879; 463A is 836 not 863 (a pity as the twelve-wheeled brakes of the "Portrush Flyer" would be quite something. I would like to make that I hope are some constructive criticisms. The most serious fault is that the drawings are slightly over-scale. The factor is very small and probably attributable to gremlins somewhere in the printing process but it does make a 50' coach 51'3" long.

They are not as well defined as ideally desired - again probably due to the printing process and I suspect that a more accurate process would greatly increase the price.

A further drawback is the fact that only one side of the coach is depicted leaving the modeller of side corridor vehicles with problems. This difficulty is probably inherited from the official diagrams. On the subject of details, I believe it would have been fairly easy to provide detail drawings of various fittings as an appendix, possibly to some larger scale. Bogies tend to exist in several standard types and such items as gangway ends, battery boxes, gas cylinders, etc., are fairly standard (there are, of course, exceptions). The omission of these and other body items such as ventilators and steps would make it difficult to model any of these vehicles from the drawings alone.

None of these considerations will apply to the reader who buys the book purely out of interest in the GSWR coaching stock with no intention of modelling. Such a person may, however, find the presentation of departmental stock rather inconvenient - to relate a number to a drawing involves the use of both indexes, and for finding numbers perhaps departmental stock would be better interspersed in the main text along with building and withdrawal dates, etc.

Despite these drawbacks the book contains a mine of information and is a must for anyone interested in Irish coaching stock. It is to be hoped that this book is the first in a new trend and that other companies will be similarly treated, hopefully with at least some of the faults rectified. It is somewhat ironic that it is stated that coaching stock is neglected in favour of locomotives. A similar volume of GSWR locomotives would be most welcome. A further development would be a collection of photographs of the coaches depicted which would show much of the omitted detail. AA

The Golden Years Of The Great Northern Railway (Part 1)

R.M. Arnold, Blackstaff Press, £3.95.

Neither as man nor writer can 'Mac' Arnold need any introduction to readers of Five Foot Three, but it may be said at once that this is his best book yet. To someone not sharing his interest in it there was too much of his stopwatch in his previous volumes, but this time he hardly looks at his watch at all - not, of course, from any lack of interest in it, but because he has so many other things to tell us about.

The period covered is 1918 to 1941; the lines, basically, those worked from Belfast, Portadown, Derry, and Enniskillen, but the main line south of Portadown and Portadown-Cavan are held over for the second part.

This is the railway as seen from the ground. Anyone higher in rank than a shed foreman or a stationmaster is hardly mentioned at all, but the men who did the work - both loco and traffic - are here. Knowing many of the men in his books, I never cease to marvel at Mac's gift for summing up a man's character or appearance in one or two telling adjectives. Here again, hundreds of men (and a few women) are brought to life in a way that makes us feel we knew them all. We meet the carriage cleaner Annie Reed "happily chewing Aniseed balls" as she took a break in a first class carriage; and who could "that splendid confident big man" be but Harry Waterhouse? Operation on all the chosen lines is described in full detail, men, engines, carriages, roads and stations; but humour has always been a

feature of railway working (maybe it was this that enabled men to survive the hardships of earlier days) and the mass of facts which could be tedious in the hands of other writers are enlivened by a smile or a laugh every few lines.

Most railway books (and it is a hard thing to avoid) waste much space repeating what has been published previously, but on this Mr Arnold has taken a very strong line. He has assumed that his readers will be familiar with the historical background, etc., and in both text and illustrations has confined himself firmly to what has not been published before. One exception to this is the locomotive list in the appendix, but it is the first time that a GNR carriage list has ever been published; I hope that when Part 2 has been published, it will be possible to supplement this by a table of the different carriage types, here referred to by their classification without full details, other than an explanation of the letter element. Here and there, one would like still more information. What, for instance, was the story behind the conversion of so many six-wheelers to "plane trucks" in 1918?

It is very appropriate that this book should be published in Belfast rather than by a cross-channel firm. Apart from some slight confusion in some of the tables, the litho-printing is excellent, though a few illustrations are too dark. The rather small reproduction of the gradient profiles and the station plans is understandable in the present economic situation.

This review is probably hardly necessary, for I have no doubt that most readers of it will have acquired their copy of the book long before it appears. To any who have not, I can only say, "Do so at once."

RNC

Twenty-Five Years Gone

R.J.A. Pue, Belfast & County Down Railway Museum Trust, 76 pages, ISBN 0-905196-00-7, £1.20

The present popularity of picture books should ensure good sales for this nostalgic reappraisal of the Belfast & County Down Railway. The reproduction of the fifty-two photographs is disappointing but the pictures are well chosen, and many are here published for the first time. The text reproduces six previously published articles on the County Down Railway, supplemented by notes on the Bangor Boats, the Ards Tourist Trophy Races, the Ballymacarrett accident of 1945, the Ulster Transport Authority, and the reasons for the closures of 1950. There are several discrepancies between the original articles and the notes.

The book concentrates on the County Down main line and the closed branches, and largely neglects the Bangor Branch, the only section of the line still open. A surprising omission from the bibliography is Praeger's Guide To County Down, published by the B&CDR in 1898. There are track diagrams of eight stations though not of Belfast, gradient profiles of most of the system, and a map. The photographs and the lists of stations should bring back memories for anyone who knew the County Down Railway. Definitely a journey into the past rather than a text for the transport historian. **JJL**

"LOUGH GILL" PRESENTED

RPSI member, Rev. Canon Nicholson has kindly presented the Society with the nameplate from SLNCR "Lough Gill" together with a framed picture of the locomotive. Both will be put on display at Whitehead.