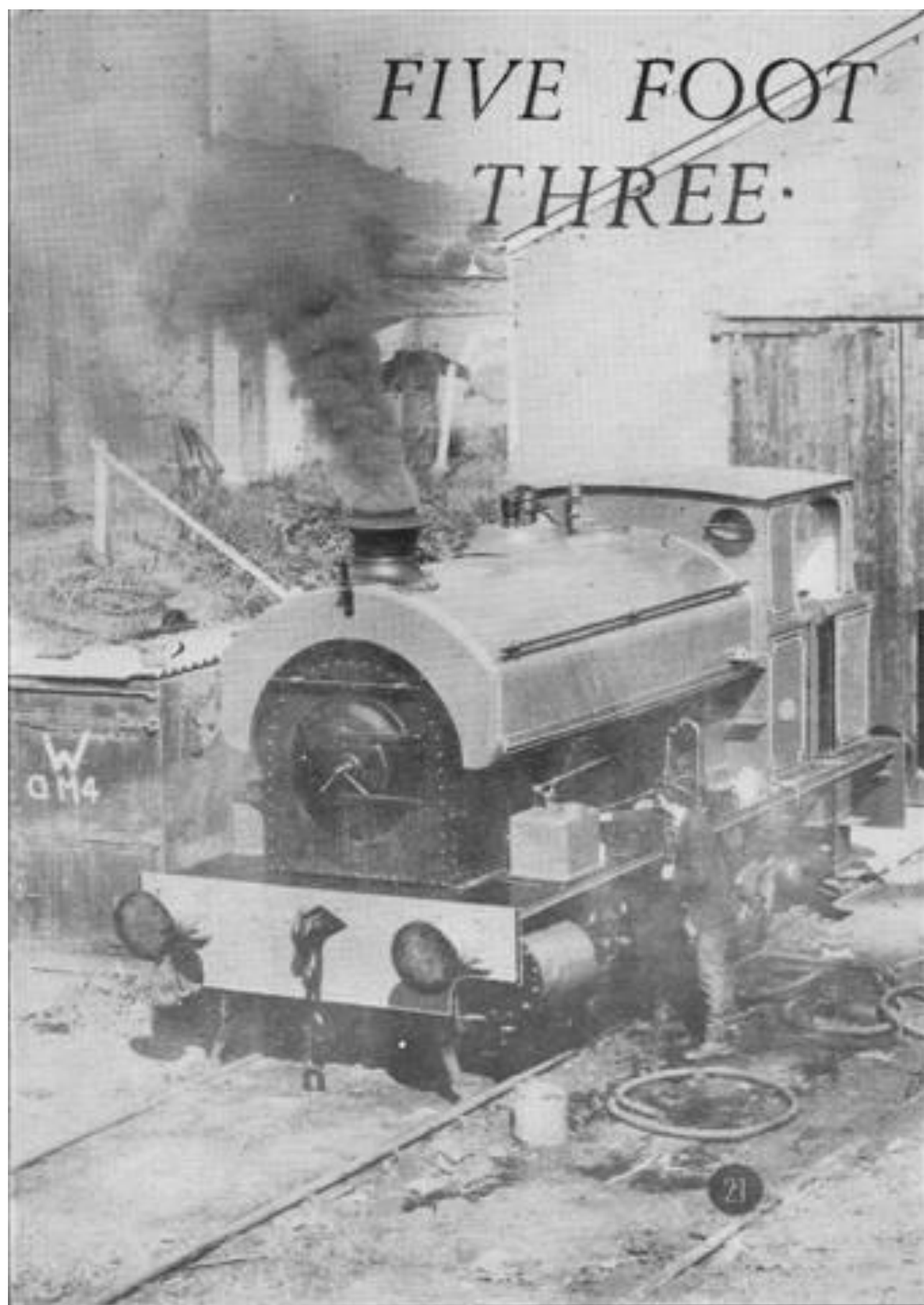


FIVE FOOT THREE.



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No.

Winter 1977/8

Editor: Tim Moriarty

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

Front Cover Photograph: 0-6-0ST "R.H. Smyth" stands outside the shed at Whitehead and receives attention from Irwin Pryce who with the other Whitehead workers was responsible for its return to steam last June. (C.P. Friel)

EDITORIAL - 1

The return of the Londonderry Port and Harbour Commissioners' engine, "R.H. Smyth", to steam for the Sunday Train Rides last summer marks another milepost in the history and progress of this society. It is all the more welcome when one considers the dearth of voluntary labour at Whitehead - the subject of our second leader this issue.

Although the newly restored locomotive presented to the Society for a nominal sum a few years ago by Mr L.H. Campbell is of limited capabilities, it proves, once again, all things being equal, that this society has proved its position in operating and maintaining a number of steam locomotives and special trains in this province and indeed throughout the whole of Ireland.

Whitehead has set good example in this matter soon to be followed by the Mullingar Depot with the restoration of No.184. When No.184, or No.461 for that matter, steams out of the shed at Mullingar we will have gone a step further towards consolidating the position of this society in this island. Unlike

Whitehead, Mullingar is not at present wanting in skilled or enthusiastic support for its work - a situation one hopes will long remain with us.

It is, of course, true that credit for the restoration of the 'Derry Engine' must go primarily to the workers at Whitehead. They are the 'serious railway enthusiasts' who have put in the many hours of tedious work over a lengthy period. They have ensured that the sights and sounds of steam railway operation which fascinate so many will continue to give enjoyment for years to come. They have assured the Society and its admirers of many more years of steam operation. It is an achievement of which they should feel justly proud.



EDITORIAL - 2

The shortage of members who are either willing or able to become actively involved in the Society's work has been the subject of comment in this magazine and other RPSI communications before, but we make no apology for returning to it yet again. For an organisation with membership exceeding 500, it is sad to reflect that practically everything which we have achieved has been the result of the dedication and effort of about fifty members. Of course, there are many members who have valid reasons for their inability to actively assist us, but what can be said of the many familiar faces who are able to turn up regularly for every tour or special occasion but who are miraculously "busy" for all the weekends between? Even two afternoons or evenings per year would be welcome assistance. Jobs are available for all levels of skill in our several work squads.

Don't misunderstand this plea ... those of us now working for the Society are doing so because we enjoy it and most of us intend to do so for as long as we are able. It is more than patience can stand,

however, to consider the projects which have had to be shelved for no reason other than lack of manpower. We are also aware that the demands of homes and jobs reduce our ranks from time to time and a broad foundation to our workforce is necessary to accommodate these changes.

For those of you who live within easy reach of our locomotives and coaches the message is clear, we have enough work to occupy the next decade! For those who would prefer to work at something else, have you considered helping with sales, or a postal dispatch session, or spending an hour during a railtour helping with catering? Whether you are a one-time 'regular' who has lapsed from active involvement or an armchair bound greenhorn, we can find a job to suit your ability. And we need you now as much as ever before.

NEWS FROM COMMITTEE

The Committee remained one man short throughout the year, as no one could be found to fill the vital post of Commercial Officer. This threw extra work onto the rest of the Committee, with John Richardson, Treasurer, bearing most of the burden. Fund raising is a crucial facet of the Society's operation and it is hoped the situation will be remedied for 1978.

Most of the 1977 sales commitments were honoured, but some events at which the Society is usually represented had to go by the board. Postal sales were for a time handled by John Skelton but they went back to John Richardson because of insurance difficulties. However, as they were proving one of the less productive fund raising outlets, postal sales were shelved in mid spring. Notable fund raising events included the Shane's Castle Railway traction engine rally, the bring and buy auction at Whitehead and the postal auction.

Failure to find a Commercial Officer was symptomatic of the Society's manpower shortage, which continued to concern the Committee. The lack of any contests at the Annual General Meeting was also an unhealthy sign.

Because of the shortage of active volunteers, particularly at Whitehead, we had to tailor our railtour activities accordingly. The Committee also decided a pruning would be in order so that nothing might hinder the splendid progress being made at our headquarters by Enterprise Ulster, the government training scheme body. Thus the usual May one-day Northern Ireland tour was cut and the number of Portrush Flyers reduced from four to three.

The new shed will for the first time provide covered accommodation at Whitehead for coach restoration work. One of the three roads is earmarked for coach work. Although the coach and wagon department would have preferred its own purpose built coach shed, this would have been beyond the Society's means and the proposed arrangements seemed to the Committee to be an appropriate compromise. Among the new faces who have appeared at Whitehead recently, it was particularly gratifying for the Committee to see a four man squad who have taken on the restoration of BUT brake coach number 114N.

The benefits of having Enterprise Ulster at Whitehead became increasingly apparent. The facelift included the surfacing of the platform and this was particularly advantageous for the operation of the Sunday afternoon steam train rides at Whitehead in July and August.

Now a well established tourist attraction, the train rides are a useful form of publicity and fund raising. On average, about 250-300 passenger tickets were sold each Sunday. Afternoon teas were provided in the diner and the sales caravan was in operation. For two weeks the train rides were incorporated as part of the Back Carrick festival and this boosted attendances.

The 1977 train rides season was noteworthy for the return to traffic after 20 years inactivity of No.3, the former Londonderry Port and Harbour Commissioners 0-6-0ST.

Amenities for the Whitehead workers were improved with the arrival of a dormitory coach. The vehicle was paid for by a syndicate of regulars, all of whom have been allocated compartments. Whitehead moved into the telecommunication age with the installation of a payphone. As well as being a necessary form of communication, the phone would be an essential in any emergency. In addition, a direct line phone was installed between the shed and the NIR signal cabin at Whitehead station.



No.3BG "Guinness" at work on Whitehead train rides with ex-North Atlantic Express brake 472. The 'new' sales caravan is on the Excursion platform. (C.P. Friel)

The boundaries of the RPSI Whitehead empire were extended with the acquisition of the 'stables', which are now housing the carriage and wagon department stores. Rental is £85 per annum. The stables will be included in the overall lease for the Whitehead site which we have been drawing up with Carrickfergus Council. Inevitably, this has been a slow business, but we hope shortly to sign a 15 or 25 year lease.

The Society's legal adviser successfully negotiated rates exemption for the site. A significant breakthrough, this saves the Society £100 per year. It also means that we are now acknowledged as having charitable status by banking, tax and rating authorities. Unfortunately there is no register of charities as such in Northern Ireland. But the Society is now as near to being a 'charity' as makes no difference. Insurance costs have been steadily creeping up, despite our insurance adviser Derek Young's meticulous work in this field. It is worthwhile noting that the Society is now committed to payments of about £1,000 a year in this field, what with the engines, site, sales stock and public liability. The limit of indemnity on the public liability policy was increased from £500,000 to £1million - a sum which takes account of recent High Court settlements. A simplified version of the RPSI indemnity form for members who work at Whitehead and Mullingar was drawn up. The Committee still urges members involved in this field to take out personal liability policies.

Mullingar, the Society's southern base, has increased its locomotive fleet to three - numbers 184, 186 and 461. The Committee has been greatly encouraged to see Paddy O'Brien's flock flourishing at

Mullingar. The one day tour with No.186 from Mullingar to Galway brought home the size of the potential market in the area.

During the year the Society was approached by CIÉ on behalf of a film company which was interested in shooting a film in Ireland. The company expressed an interest in using No.186 for some of the shots for “The Great Train Robbery”, a story of a bullion snatch in the south of England in the 1850s. The engine would have to be slightly modified to make it look more period and negotiations are in progress. Filming would probably be in Spring 1978 if they are successfully concluded.

On average the Committee has met once a month and twice the meetings have had to be spread over two nights to fit all the business in. Meetings are held on Tuesday nights in rotation at committee members’ houses in the Belfast area. An agenda of more than 40 items has not been unusual. Photocopying the minutes and circulating them in advance has saved time at the meetings. The total membership dropped by 50 from 1976 to 1977, not such a serious fall off as had been feared. The precise total was 488 with 25 Life members. 100 of the 1976 members failed to renew but we picked up 50 new members.

With postage and printing costs increasing all the time, and with the Society’s present overheads, virtually none of the £4 subscription can be counted as ‘profit’. Covenanting has proved a simple but effective way of making the subscription of more benefit to the Society without taking money out of the members’ pocket.

Some complaints have been received about a delay in posting out membership cards to new members. Now, instead of waiting for the next available circular in order to save postage costs, Membership Secretary, Laurence Morrison, will be sending out the new cards within a matter of days.

An innovation in this field was the “Welcome Aboard” circular which now goes to all new members when they join. Circulars have gone out about once every two months, the timetable being dictated by the dates of the tours. A willing team of ‘stuffers’ has been busily working away in the background performing the tedious task of folding the circulars and inserting them in the envelopes. A new batch of Society notepaper with a slightly changed masthead was printed. The system of ordering materials and goods for the Society was streamlined by Purchasing Officer, Paul Newell. All orders over the £25 mark are now catalogued and given an order number. Committee members are still allowed to spend up to £25 on purchases without reference to the Committee.

Lavens Steele has been attending the meetings in Belfast of the Ulster Tourist Development Association on behalf of the Society.

Two NIR coaches for which the Society had its name down for have passed officially into our hands. They are 550, a diner, and 274, a side corridor.

Printing of the magazine, Five Foot Three, has switched to Dublin with the handing over of the editorship from Charles Friel to Tim Moriarty. Two issues were produced.

The summer Steam Brochure was again printed in Belfast. Printing costs are paid by advertising revenue and then the magazines are handed over to the Society free of charge for fund raising sales. Co-operation involving the Society and kindred bodies included the following:

- Shane’s Castle Railway allowed the Society to operate a sales stall in the summer.
- The North West of Ireland Railway Society held a series of meetings at one of which the Society provided a speaker.
- The Irish Railway Record Society permitted the Society’s Dublin area meetings to take place in its headquarters.
- The Isle of Man Steam Railway Supporters Association came to Whitehead to sell souvenirs on

two of the steam train ride Sundays.

- The Ulster Model Railway Club ran a quiz in which the Society took part.
- The Irish Transport Trust brought a party on one of the No.171 running-in trips as part of a “mystery tour”.

The Society continues to benefit from the advice and help of the British based Association of Railway Preservation Societies of which we are a full member. The RPSI also belongs to the Transport Trust.

Social events consisted of the soiree in Carrickfergus in January and a social evening, also in Carrickfergus, in March. Clearly there is much scope for expansion in this field, one which could be valuable for fund raising. But again it's a matter of getting someone to take it on.

Belfast area meetings continued to attract large attendances during the winter. St Jude's Hall in the Ormeau area has proved an ideal meeting place and attendance usually hit the 70 to 80 mark.

The Committee has continued efforts to broaden the Society's back with the appointments of members to a number of posts of special responsibility. Those appointed included: Laurence Morrison, Membership Secretary; Mary Friel, Catering Officer; Charles Friel, Official Photographer; John Friel, Safety Officer; Derek Young, Insurance Adviser; David Humphries, Belfast Area Assistant and Railtour Hotels Co-ordinator; John McGuigan, Whitehead Clerk of Works; William Coates, Whitehead Plant Maintenance; Evan Connolly, Portrush Flyer Officer; Michael Henderson, Joint Sunday Steamings Co-ordinator; Lavens Steele, Ulster Tourist Development Association Representative; Paddy O'Brien, Mullingar Superintendent; Gregg Ryan, Southern Railtour Sales; Nigel Greeves, Train Rides Gala Organiser; Tony Ragg, Coach & Wagon Storeman.

RAILTOUR REPORT

Denis Grimshaw

A lot of steam has passed through the regulator since the last railtour report appeared in Five Foot Three.

Taking over from Tony Ragg in November 1975, just after the Ardee tour, left a high standard of tour organisation and operation to be maintained and I would like to record my appreciation to Tony for establishing such a background, from which I could continue.

Operations in 1976 began with the Slaney Railtour from Dublin to Wexford on 10th April, using loco No.186 and CIÉ stock. A straightforward tour, but a new venture in establishing one day steam tours on CIÉ, additional to the annual two day tour.

The Belfast Central Railway re-opened on 26th April and a little over three weeks later, on 22nd May, its first steam train for 12 years appeared, when No.4 worked the Belfast Central Railtour from Whitehead to Bangor and back, visiting Queen's Quay Station en route.

Another important station was visited by an RPSI tour for the first time on 12th June, when No.171 headed the Seandun Railtour out of Dublin Heuston for Cork, Youghal and Cobh. No.186 assisted on the more southerly sections of this tour, particularly the Youghal branch. On the Sunday morning, both locos twice double-headed the tour out of Cork, providing quite a spectacle on the steep gradients.

Another successful Portrush Flyer season followed, with all four trains being worked by No.4. Bookings were disappointingly low for the first Flyer, on which we lost a fair amount of money, but the next three were fully booked. The overall package was still profitable, but much less so than in previous years.

On 25th September the Festival Railtour visited Derry with the train being worked through from Bangor by No.4. This tour was, in fact, the first ever through passenger train from Belfast Central to Londonderry.

Turning now to the 1977 Tour Season, activities began on 30th April when No.186 took the Claddagh Railtour from Mullingar to Galway and back, using CIÉ coaches. This venture again broke new ground being our Dublin area's answer to the Portrush Flyer - a day trip to the seaside, aimed largely at the general public, rather than railway enthusiasts. It is heartening to report that the train was booked out and we hope to repeat the trip in 1978. The tour was timed to connect at Mullingar with service trains from and to Dublin, but as the coaches were being specially worked through from Dublin and back, a CIÉ diesel electric locomotive was waiting at Mullingar on our return, to take the coaches back. As the connecting service train was very late due to a freight train derailment earlier, our Dublin passengers continued to their destination on the tour train, diesel hauled. This simple incident has accidentally set a whole new precedent - diesel haulage of RPSI tours over part of their route. Mixed feelings have been expressed on this principle and the thoughts of more of our members would be welcomed. On the one hand, part diesel haulage can be economical and time saving, enabling tours to get to the starting point of an interesting section quickly and allowing more time to be spent on such sections. On the other hand, one of our selling points (relative to British tours, for example) has always been steam haulage throughout and we would not welcome ever being compulsorily limited to steam haulage on certain routes only, as is the case in Britain and on the Continent.



The Claddagh rail tour of 30th April 1977 saw No.186 working from Mullingar to Galway with a rake of CIÉ bogies. Here the train passes Woodlawn en route to Galway. (C.P. Friel)

The Cu na Mara Railtour left Dublin Heuston on 11th June, for Limerick, this time behind No 4. Departure was nearly two hours late, due entirely to the late arrival at Dun Laoghaire of mv "St. Columba", from Holyhead, conveying over one third of our 270 passengers. Had we left without them, they could not have caught up with the tour until Athenry and would have missed virtually the whole of the Saturday's trip. No.186 took over at Limerick and ran via Ennis, Gort and Athenry to Galway, arriving at 19:00. At Galway the Society was accorded a civic reception organised by Western

Regional Tourism Organisation. The principal speakers were the Lord Mayor of Galway who welcomed us to the city and our patron, Lord O'Neill, who replied on behalf of the Society. No 4 ran light from Limerick via Thurles, Portarlinton and Athlone and reached Galway at 23:00. Sunday's operation was No.186 taking the train from Galway via Athenry and Tuam to Claremorris and back to Athenry. Here No.4 was attached as pilot and double-headed the tour up the bank to Woodlawn, at which point No.186 was detached. No.4 then put up some outstanding loco performance on the Midland main line back to Dublin, reached via the Newcomen Junction-Connolly curve, before returning the tour train to Belfast.

We only operated three Portrush Flyers in 1977, as there were only three suitable dates which avoided conflict with other competing events, a lesson learnt from the 1976 season. Accordingly, a much better financial picture resulted, with (in theory) all trains booked out. In fact, quite a lot of seats bought by large parties were not resold to their own members and on two dates we were able to accept last minute passengers. The revenue thus raised was deducted from the accounts of the party bookings, to promote 'public relations' and encourage future bookings.

The Boyne Valley Railtour on 24th September established another new idea - two simultaneous railtours combining for part of their route. The combined trains carried over 400 passengers, the largest number ever on an Irish railtour (Portrush Flyers excepted). Another innovation was the dispatch of RPSI coaches from Whitehead to Dublin in advance, conveyed by service trains (passenger and freight) so that our own coaches were used on both parts of the tour. The operation of this tour was unfortunately beset with several difficulties, which resulted in late running and caused the cancellation of three photo stops and a run past. However, we got to Tara Mines and to Kingscourt and back and achieved all we set out to achieve, apart from the photo stops mentioned. We were delayed by some 15 minutes by the late running of the 08:00 Up Enterprise, which in turn prevented the shunting operations at Drogheda being completed before the arrival of the 11:00 Down Enterprise. To clear the platforms for service trains, the tour train had to be shunted clear, which eventually resulted in departure for Navan nearly an hour late.

The un-manning of several further level crossings and their operation by the train crew, in addition to those allowed for when the tour was planned, caused further delay en route. Finally, alterations to a loading bank and lorry turntable at Kingscourt prevented No.186 from running round the train as planned and extensive shunting had to be adopted, involving splitting the train to get No.186 to the Navan end of the train. The weather was unfortunately very dull and wet, which helped neither photography nor No.186's adhesion on banks.

Despite these problems we got there and back with steam and our passengers appeared to greatly enjoy the tour. A notable breakthrough was achieved with special permission being obtained from the Railway Inspection Officer of the Department of Transport and Power of the Irish Republic for the visit of the tour to the new Tara Mines branch at Nevinstown, the first passenger train to do so.

Additionally, two running-in proving trips were operated in 1977, both for No.171's benefit. On 2nd July, Whitehead-Antrim and back was the route, with part of the Greenisland back line included as a bonus. On 3rd September, No.171 visited Derry with a train from Whitehead.

A highly gratifying feature of the 1977 tour programme has been the number of passengers carried. Every railtour and Flyer was completely booked out, with potential passengers having to be turned away in a couple of cases. The total profit will go a long way towards the cost of the roof for the new shed at Whitehead.

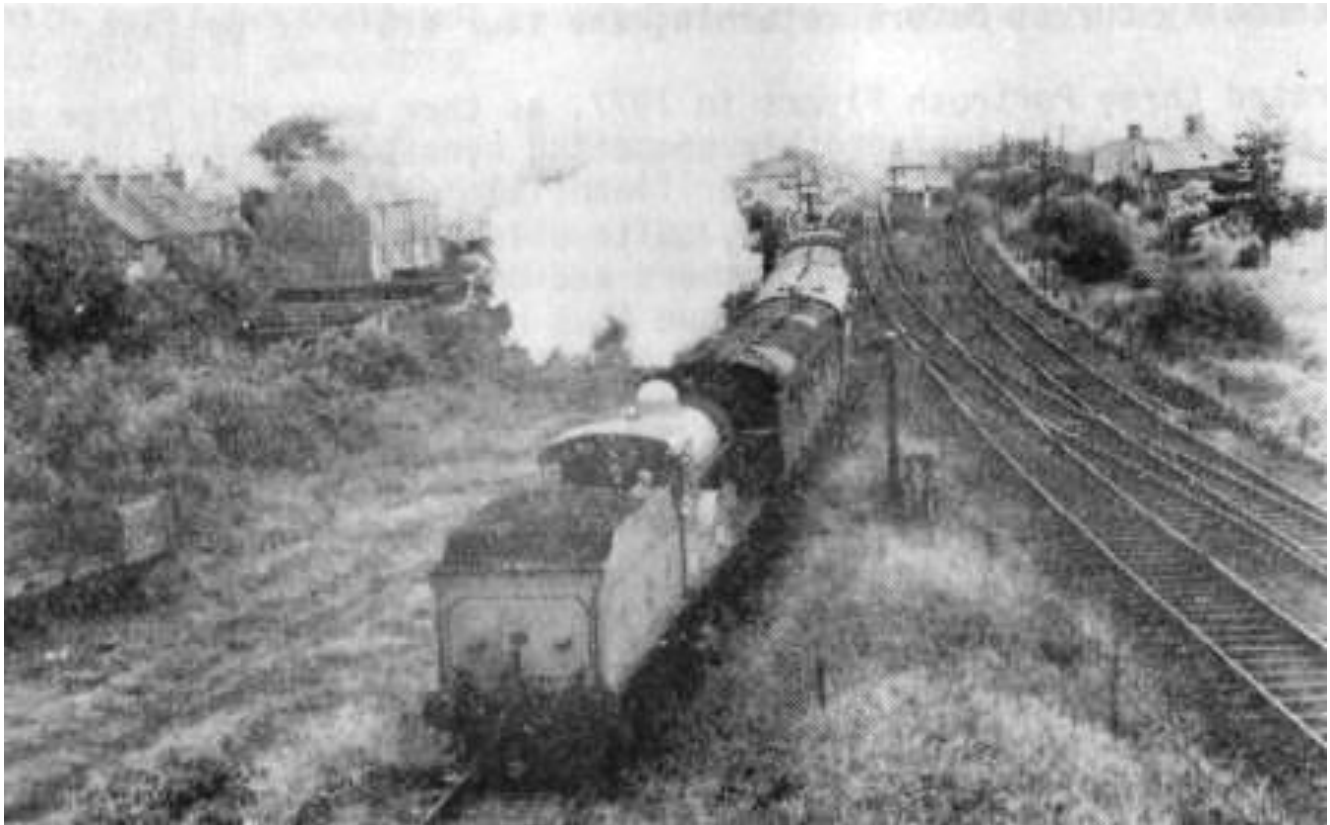
But what of 1978?

At the moment the venue for the two day tour looks like being either the South Kerry line (Mallow-Killarney-Tralee) or the South Wexford line (Waterford-Rosslare) and the New Ross branch. In either

case the date will be 10th & 11th June.

The venues for the Northern tours are less certain, however. The lack of turntables makes the use of No.171 difficult and No.4 has already covered most of the possible itineraries. One line likely to be visited, however, is Whitehead-Larne Harbour, which our tours have not covered since 1975 and where No.4 has not run since coming into RPSI ownership.

Finally, I would like to thank our Dublin agent, Sam Carse, for his help in organising tours on CIÉ and in handling all bookings for the Dublin area and Leslie McAllister, for his valuable assistance in cross channel travel arrangements and British bookings for the two day tours.



During No.171's running-in trip on 2nd July 1977, the opportunity was taken to run the train up the 'back line' at Greenisland and No.171 is seen here veering away from the Larne Line, taking the line that originally joined the NCC main line at Monkstown. (C.P. Friel)

LONDON NEWS

Leslie McAllister

In this report I might well describe myself as 'an itinerant bookseller' - much of my RPSI activities involved travelling around the country with the car laden down with half a ton of books plus the display stand!

Although the end result (funds) is no different from last year, it has been a more successful year. This has only been possible because we have taken EVERY opportunity to sell, even when the profit was small for the effort expended. No one seemed to have any money this year and hence sales were down thirty percent on the same 'dates' last year. Happily things are looking up and the takings at the Didcot Open Day were the best ever for that event. I say more successful than last year because the closing book stock was much greater than the opening stock. We now regularly put out a stock of say 200 titles and hold substantial reserves of many titles. We have also discovered several new sources of stock and have been acting as agent to the parent body for the acquisition of some of its stock. As usual we

ranged far and wide in the course of our selling. This year's venues included The Bluebell Railway and the Bristol Suburban Railway Society at Bitton (three days there!). Ashford Works was the only BR venue but two rail tours also provided useful revenue. Didcot provided the best income and I must say that the Great Western Society Open days in September were very well organised and good value to the public who, regrettably did not give the event the support it deserved. As well as specialist enthusiastic sales we also attended a bus rally at the Hillingdon Show in June. The annual activity of selling the two day steam tour to prospective participants and then organising their transport to Ireland followed last year's trend. A record 100 participants booked through me but party bookings were again almost non-existent and only a small London party travelled. This group suffered inconvenience through the late arrival of the Mail Boat at Dun Laoghaire and as a result the tour was over two hours late departing from Dublin.

My best thanks are due to Julian Durore who led the group cheerfully through all its trials. Next year alternative transport may well be considered from Britain for the tour's supporters. I must add, however, that everyone I spoke to was delighted with the tour, possibly our best ever. The Society owes a considerable debt to Denis Grimshaw, the Locomotive and Carriage men and to the regular helpers on our diner so ably managed by Mary Friel.

As usual, I have given a few talks about the Society to other enthusiasts and my thanks are due particularly to Charlie Friel for the continuing loan of his excellent slides - next thanks to my numerous assistants. Top of the list as always is Lance King, who buys much of my stock. Robin Linsley easily headed the list of sellers, among whom were Hilary Trickett, Colin Miell, Peter Montgomery, Bob Cook and Dave Watts (the latter two are non members).

Finally, a plea for further assistance. As we are thinking of expanding our 'empire' I would be pleased to hear from any members who would be prepared to assist with sales in the North West or North East. As always, further assistance in Southern England would be appreciated.

PUBLICITY REPORT

William Coates

At the end of another busy season of railtours, Sunday train rides and Portrush Flyers, the annual question arises - how effective was our publicity? Perhaps it is fortunate for all publicity officers that theirs is a somewhat unmeasurable job, the results being often surprising and always unpredictable. Nevertheless, press releases and interviews have their effect, although different publications each require their own unique method of approach to ensure best results.

The range of topics which require publicity is also diverse. At one extreme, there are the monthly area meetings, which can be handled by routine notification to newspapers and broadcasting stations. During the past year Ulster Television has started a nightly news and events review, "Bedtime", which has used most of our announcements and presented them in a clear and sometimes entertaining manner. The longer established 'events' sections of other broadcasting stations and newspapers have also continued to present our activities with their usual efficiency.

At the other end of the scale there is the long and detailed campaign, such as preceded the "Cu na Mara" railtour. Even six months before the tour, advertising space was booked in a national magazine for an announcement of preliminary details. We reckoned that it was necessary to announce our plans while our potential customers were still planning their summer travels and indeed our advertisement produced a healthy stream of enquiries. This was reflected, in due course, in the pattern of bookings. The early spring was also the season for information to be supplied to the many directories and guide books which describe the multiplicity of preservation schemes and tourist railways now competing for public attention. We have emphasised our big selling points - main line operation and a wide choice of routes, although many editors still find us hard to classify in view of the unusual status which these

same points give us.

We were involved in our first broadcast of the year quite early, when a radio interview preceded the Whitehead relic auction. As usual we made sure that the tours for the coming season got a mention as well! Two months later, Robin Morton was a guest on Candy Devine's show on Downtown Radio - later again, I was interviewed about the Flyers by a BBC reporter one rainy afternoon in Portrush.

Neither have we been absent from the printed media. Feature articles about the society have appeared in several publications, including the Aer Lingus in-flight magazine "Cara", Enterprise Ulster's house newspaper and the East Antrim Times, one of whose reporters travelled incognito on a Portrush Flyer. I'm pleased to say that he enjoyed it.

Gregg Ryan has put in much sterling work on the same front, with major articles in the Evening Press, the Drogheda Independent and the Irish Press.

It also falls on the Publicity Officer's plate to organise special facilities for film crews. We were accompanied on the "Cu na Mara" railtour by a film unit from RTÉ, who were preparing for a television series on architecture. One programme in the series, which will be broadcast during the winter, will be largely devoted to railway architecture. Some members have wondered, no doubt, what became of the vast 16mm footage shot by the ubiquitous little photographer who accompanied us on the "Shandon" railtour in 1976. His efforts have become part of City Film Corporation's "Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man". The film was shown in Dublin with suitable credits to the Society.

Mercifully, there are a few members who are willing to assist me with the Society's publicity. Gregg Ryan has effectively covered all newspaper publicity south of the border, besides the numerous other tasks which he has taken on. Charlie Friel, enjoying his 'retirement' after many years on the Committee, seems to be as busy as ever and has supplied the bulk of the photographs which have been used in publicity material. Sammy Somerville has recently been helping with general publicity matters, particularly, the news sheets. Thanks also to various personnel in both Tourist Boards who have always provided help when it was required.

Not everyone is able to get directly involved in publicity work, but there are several ways in which members can help. Although we always keep an open eye for new opportunities, we are always glad to hear of a new outlet for publicity information or literature. If you know of any suitable publications which could use information about the Society, get in touch. Similarly, we do not get to see the results of all our output, particularly items which appear in local papers. Our collection of clippings provides useful indicators for future requirements and, occasionally, for correction of inaccurate statements. We can also use good quality black and white prints for circulation to newspapers and magazines, you know what they say - worth a thousand words? Don't leave it all for Charlie Friel to do - think of us next time that you are printing.

Most of our work is issued with no guarantee of eventual use, so it is pleasing to remember that we produce at least some things for which we retain overall control. Our annual brochure is one such item and with the help of Chris Carnaghan of Carnaghan Gildea and Co it has maintained its high standard. The news sheets are another of our products and five of these have been prepared during the year. There have been surprisingly few complaints about the headlines and readers will note that there are plenty more of these in store, of the same standard as those already used. This year has also called for the production of a new membership leaflet, supplies of which are now available.

FURTHER DEVELOPMENT AT WHITEHEAD

Neil Hamilton

The surfacing of the platform with tarmac took place in April after many months of work by Enterprise Ulster on the platform walls. Problems arose with the corbelled brickwork while they were filling between the walls with crushed rock. It was when most of the filling had been completed that the walls

started to crack and portions of the platform edge started to move outwards, obstructing the running road. The rear wall, in particular, began to list alarmingly at the bridge end of the platform. After a detailed inspection and much discussion of the problem it was agreed that major portions of the walls including the complete rear wall would have to be re-built using concrete block and more substantial foundations than the original ones. Additional problems occurred when several sections of the new duct running the length of the platform were found to be blocked due to the duct wall fracturing. Eventually, however, all these problems were overcome and the finished platform, with fencing and removable bollards is most pleasing to the eye.

Since the last report, several major changes in track formation have taken place. With the completion of the three new pits for the shed, Enterprise Ulster's attention was turned to track laying, a more than unusual form of work for them, quickly mastered and carried out with enthusiasm.

The first section of track laid extended the present No.1 carriage siding (yes, yet again!) into the newly prepared ground, at the rear of the site. This new section is part of the 2001 plan. Much work was required of the RPSI track gang to move the end of the existing siding over when joining in with the new EU section, a task made more difficult as the track was set on earth (or mud depending on the weather). This was unavoidable at the time as a small work force had to lay and fence off track quickly for additional storage space, a recurring problem over the past number of years.

The next section laid was a parallel siding to form what will be No.3 carriage siding with accommodation for five coaches. Together the two new sidings used all of the recently purchased 900 foot rail and it was then suggested that EU might start constructing a turnout to connect them. Good progress was made initially with the switch end of the turnout, however, difficulties were encountered not surprisingly when the crossing was being assembled, when it was discovered that certain parts of it were missing! This was the second of the Greenisland turnouts acquired last year. Credit must go to Johnny Glendinning and Ken Pullin of the Carriage and Wagon Department, who both put in a lot of time and hard work in setting out the crossing using an assortment of odd crossing chairs.

As work on the turnout proceeded, EU also started to erect the new perimeter fence. This is 2.8 metres high, of chain link netting supported on steel uprights. The Society is most fortunate that this work is being undertaken by EU due to its obvious importance and its costly nature.

The most urgent part of this fence was that portion extending from a new entrance gate at the southern end of the stables, around the back area to our existing 'temporary' fence on the NIR embankment. Without this section the new sidings could not have been used as the coaches would have been in danger of possible vandalism. Enterprise Ulster made a concerted effort to have this part of the fence ready for a pre-arranged date. This enabled the RPSI gang in one weekend to bring the new sidings into use, by re-positioning the entrance gates at the 'stables', (now the Carriage and Wagon store) and then shunting the entire fleet of movable rolling stock into their new positions.

In the near future work will start on re-building the 'new' shed walls. The old walls, built by the Society in 1971, were demolished earlier in the year, to assist EU in the construction of the shed pits.

Some structural features of the old walls also made re-building desirable! it should be remembered that in the original plans, when the Society was building the shed, pits were not envisaged as the cost and work involved would have been prohibitive.

The new shed will be approximately 10 feet longer than before and will allow a coach to be stored in one of the roads. As a separate carriage work shop is not at present possible, this additional length was considered necessary to allow urgent carriage maintenance to be carried out under cover. Concrete blocks will again be used to build the walls and the side wall will have a series of piers to carry the roof trusses.

The pits are approximately 4 metres long, 1.25 metres deep, having sides built of engineering brick and concrete floors. Drainage is provided and provision for electricity and water.

On the permanent way front, another period of excavation will begin when EU prepare the ground for the new No.1 carriage siding. The present Nos. 1 and 2 sidings will then become Nos. 2 and 3 respectively. For the new No.1 siding a further large order of rail is required and will be laid by the EU work force. Before excavations can begin, however, a number of high tension electricity power line poles must be moved. NIE has agreed to remove several poles at present on the site. Already plans for the alterations are at an advanced stage and work should be starting soon.

Not long after the '2001' plan had been finalised adverse ground conditions found during the first earthworks necessitated its revision. Large areas of ground were found to be bog. Many years ago a river crossed the site, but due to changes in the drainage of the surrounding countryside, the river no longer exists. EU informed the '2001' committee that most of the area had very little load carrying capacity for building and that the proposed carriage shed, etc., would need to be reconsidered. The '2001' committee were, therefore, called back to the drawing board! Most of the area is now designated for carriage storage.

Support for the permanent way has been achieved by covering the soft ground with fibre matting. This was laid over the area after new storm water drains had been laid, covered with 50mm crushed stone and is thus prevented from sinking into the deeper layers of bog. Track can now be laid in the normal manner.

As with every other concern, Enterprise Ulster has been affected by financial restrictions imposed upon it during the economic recession. Many items originally on the list for technical assessment had, therefore, to be shelved. However, the present projects have been altered slightly and when completed will result in a vast improvement in the facilities at Whitehead. If work proceeds as planned, Enterprise Ulster should have completed their work as this issue appears. The most urgent work involving the Society will then be to complete the locomotive shed. This entails roofing and providing doors. At present, estimates are being obtained for this work and it can be expected that a substantial amount of money will be required. Undoubtedly, this will result in an appeal to the members and hopefully a good response will result.

Another item urgently required is the wheel drop. This is necessary to allow work to proceed on locomotives' wheels and boxes, etc. The wheel drop will be situated on an extension to the No.1 shed road. This will go through a door at the back of the shed and then into the new area at the rear. Obviously the back mess room will have to be demolished and at the moment alternative forms of accommodation are being investigated.

As usual, the winter will see a lot of changes taking place on the site and I shall endeavour to keep the members informed through the news sheets. However, all members are welcome to come down and see for themselves. Bring your welly boots and old clothes and you can join in too; its great fun - really!

LOCOMOTIVE MAINTENANCE

Peter Scott

No.3BG: The only work carried out recently was repairs to the rear coupling. The engine is in need of retubing and, following return to traffic of the "Derry" engine, is being kept for use in reserve only. The Guinness engine is unfortunate in being the only one of our locomotives with tubes of 2" diameter thus prohibiting the re-use of tubes from one of the longer boilers.

No.3 "R.H. Smyth": Following completion of repairs and re-painting, the engine was put into traffic and worked the Sunday Train Rides from mid-July onwards. When first steam tested the regulator valve was blowing badly. The regulator differs from the normal type being housed in a valve chest in the smoke box instead of the dome. Facing up of the valve could only be done by hand - a lengthy and

tedious job. The blow through was reduced considerably but not entirely eliminated. On the first occasions of use of this engine it was found that the right trailing axle box ran hot. On examination nothing was found amiss - the bearing was coated with anti-scuffing compound and replaced. On the next two Sundays the overheating disappeared.

No.4: During last winter the only major work tackled was the replacement of fitted bolts securing the cylinder stocks to the frames. There are 24 bolts per cylinder all of which were worn loose allowing movement between the cylinder block and the frames. The right-hand side of the engine was the worst and was tackled first. The job proved so lengthy that the completion of the left-hand side had to be postponed. The job itself involved burning off the nuts and removing the old bolts, reaming out the holes using a power reamer from inside the frames and making new high tensile bolts to an exact drive fit for each hole. As usual, No.4 ran uneventfully, except for the sticking open of a clack valve during the Galway tour, which was annoying rather than serious.

It is intended that the overhaul work on No.4 postponed from last year will now proceed during this winter. The major jobs can be listed as follows: springs to be repaired and set up as required, new bolts fitted to sand boxes, new bolts fitted to left cylinder, sheet metal repairs to bunker, steam heating apparatus overhauled, steam brake overhauled, fusible plugs replaced, crown stay nuts replaced as required, rocking grate mechanism repaired.

Depending upon availability of the proposed wheel drop, further work will be undertaken namely: re-metal axle boxes as required, fit new bolts to keep plates, replace spring hanger pins. The fitting of the new driving wheels is not an essential job and will be done only if time is available. It would, of course, be logical to fit the new wheels when the present set are dropped for attention to the boxes. However, the axle boxes big ends and coupling rod bearings would in this case have to be fitted to the new wheels and a considerable amount of work is involved.

No.23: The diesel now has its hard promised set of new batteries supplied at an acceptable price by Messrs Batyre of Belfast. Their help in this matter is much appreciated.

No.27 “Lough Erne”: Together with a general mechanical overhaul, this locomotive requires repairs to the foundation ring, which in turn will need the boiler lifted out of the frames. The Society will be in a better position to undertake such work whenever the proposed sheer legs are operational.

No.171 “Slieve Gullion”: The major work undertaken during last winter was machining, re-metalling and fitting of the driving and trailing axle boxes. This was necessary because the white metal surface of both driving boxes had spread giving too much play in the bearing and also blocking the oil feed holes. When dismantled it was found that similar play existed in the trailing boxes.

The Great Northern type of axle box consists of a steel axle box casting into which the bronze bearing or ‘crown’ is cast. Wear in the bearing is corrected at each overhaul of the engine by machining the correct profile further into the crown. After this has been done a number of times the crown becomes too thin and must be re-cast. It was found that the driving crowns were close to their scrapping size and would not stand further machining whereas the trailing crowns had sufficient metal still remaining. Because of the high cost of re-casting a crown, it was decided to restore the worn surfaces of the driving boxes by electric welding. Although by no means certain that this course of action would be successful, it was felt worth trying since the saving in cost would be very considerable.

When the axle boxes were being re-metalled, the opportunity was taken to build up the outer faces of each brass to reduce excessive sideways play. Upon completion of the work, the engine was given as much running in as could reasonably be arranged, followed by a trial run Whitehead to Londonderry and back with four coaches. At first it appeared that the new bearings were settling down well, but as time went on it was found that the right driving box persistently carried more heat than the others. This state of affairs was all the more annoying because in every other respect the engine is now running very

satisfactorily. During the rail tour to Kingscourt, the box continued to carry heat and is now facing us with a dilemma - whether to carry on running in the hope that the box will run itself in, or press our dwindling work force into the considerable job of lifting the engine again and refitting the offending bearing. The latter course will be less unattractive if the wheel drop becomes available, since the amount of work involved would be reduced considerably.

No.184: Along with No.461, J15 Class No.184 was recently acquired by the Society from CIÉ. The engine (which differs from No.186 in having the original '101 Class' saturated boiler and small tender) is at present stored at Mullingar. The engine appears to be in reasonable condition but the following defects are apparent: re-tubing required, front tube plate wasted, tyres hollow, big ends, crossheads and side rods needing attention, brake gear to be overhauled, tender plates replaced.

The engine is at present not essential for the Society's operations and is probably more of historical than practical interest. Restoration will proceed as manpower and funds become available and other work permits.

No.186: During the winter replacement of the remaining 5¼" diameter tubes was completed, together with renewal of long stay nuts and a fusible plug. After this work, the boiler was hydraulically tested. When steam tested, it was found that the superheater header joints were blowing badly, the trouble was traced to excessive wasting of the spherical ends of the elements. To rectify, it was necessary to re-profile the ends using a specially made tool. As well as the boiler repairs, a new ashpan was made and fitted and the steam heating restored. It is proposed that certain wasted firebox rivets be replaced during the coming winter.

No.461: This second recently acquired engine is also stored at Mullingar. Since coming out of active service in 1962, No.461 was in use for a period as a stationery boiler at Inchicore Works. The condition of the engine is consequently poor with numerous parts missing or in need of extensive repairs. There are, however, no serious defects apparent which would make overhaul prohibitively expensive. The more serious defects can be summarised as follows: superheater elements missing (replacement will be very expensive!), 1¾" tubes to be replaced, blast pipe missing, main steam pipes missing, crown and long stay nuts to be replaced, leading boxes very hot during movements from Cork for storage, journals badly scored, tender stretcher plates corroded. From the above it will be apparent that No.461 will require much money and effort to restore to working order and can only be considered at present as a long term project.

Plant

Hydraulic Test Pump: An electric pump was built using the pump from a refrigerator with the cylinder head re-designed. It was used successfully to test the boiler of No.186.

Expanders: To re-tube No.186 a set of expanders had to be made for expanding the smokebox ends of the tubes. This was necessary because we were using tubes from No.171 with a wall thickness less than that of new tubes.

Milling Machine: This machine is now in operation, although sited temporarily beside No.1 shed road. Tools and adaptors have been made.

Loading Shovel: The tractor suffered its first serious failure when a bearing seized in the gearbox causing it to remain permanently in first gear. At the time of writing (October) the engine and gearbox have been removed for repair and replacement. Work originally carried out by this machine has now been undertaken by a similar machine originally obtained for spare parts but then overhauled.

Wheel Drop: The main plant development proposed for this winter is the construction of the wheel drop, the site for which is now available at the back of the shed. The purpose of the wheel drop is to allow wheels to be removed from an engine without lifting it. It will be invaluable for expediting

repairs to hot boxes and will enable the wheels to be completely removed from any large engine for general overhaul. Briefly, the wheel drop consists of a pit large enough to drop a 6'7" wheelset and slide it to one side. Lifting of this wheelset from under the engine and from the pit will be effected by an overhead gantry.

Crane: A small mobile crane is being constructed to assist with lifting locomotive parts during overhaul work.



GNR PP 44 on Belfast-Portadown local at Drumbane. (Drew Donaldson)

LOCOMOTIVE RUNNING

John Friel

Steam activities generally were curtailed during the first half of 1977 due to the work of Enterprise Ulster at Whitehead. This is reflected by the fact that there wasn't an engine in steam at Whitehead from 9th October 1976, when the Guinness engine was used to separate No.171 from her tender, until 28th May 1977 when Nos. 3BG and 4 were steam tested. However, there was plenty of steam activity after this date - most notably the return to service of ex-Londonderry Port and Harbour Commissioners No.3 "R.H. Smyth".

Sunday 19th June was the day when "R.H. Smyth" was steamed for the first time under RPSI ownership. Carefully sandwiched between locos 3BG and 4, she was moved carefully up and down the platform by the diesel loco. Then "R.H. Smyth" herself moved the cavalcade up and down, with men standing by on all the brakes. This first steam test was encouraging, revealing amongst other things that the engine has a very effective steam brake. However, a major defect became apparent as soon as steam

pressure started to rise and this was severe blowing-through of steam in the regulator. Thus, whilst stopped, with the drain cocks open, steam was continuously blowing out of the cocks, making working on the loco a very noisy experience.



No.186 on Barnagh Bank. (Irwin Pryce)

At first, it seemed that the regulator job would be so major a one as to put the loco out of service for the summer. After two repair attempts, however, the loco was tested again on 12th July and the problem had been cured. The date was not deliberately chosen, but it turned out to be quite a momentous day for the Society. Enterprise Ulster had just completed fencing off the back triangle of land behind the shed on which they had already laid two new sidings. No.3BG was in steam to shunt the coaches into these and finally relieve the siding space in front of the shed. No.3 (ex-LP&HC) got steam up around 13:00 and for a while piloted No.3BG during the shunt. Finally “R.H. Smyth” took over the shunt and finished it.

No.3 was first used on the Sunday Train Rides on 24th July during which she developed a hot box which threatened to put her out of service again. However, it was successfully dealt with on the next Saturday and the engine worked the rest of the train rides season. Ironically, exactly one year after No.3BG, “R.H. Smyth” was in steam to again separate No.171 from her tender. For the record, No.3BG was in action for the train rides on Sundays 3rd and 10th July with No.4 in steam for 17th July.

A valuable source of information for this article is the signing on book used by the operating staff at Whitehead and it shows how busy things were from the start of June onwards. On 3rd June No.3BG and No.4 were in steam for the annual boiler inspector’s examination and No.4 was in steam again on 6th

June to shunt the coaches for the Cu na Mara railtour. Because the tour train was due to depart at 06:00 on 8th June (Thursday), No.4 was lit up the day before at 15:00 and the fire was kept in overnight.

On the Sunday after the tour (19th June) No.171 appeared with re-metalled axleboxes and had her first steam test - on that day too "R.H. Smyth" was first steamed, as already mentioned. The next Saturday (25th June) No.171 was in steam for the Open Day at Whitehead and on the following Tuesday she had a light engine running-in trip to Larne Harbour and back. This was a prelude to a running-in trip with four bogies to Antrim and back on 2nd July while the next day saw the Guinness handle the first of the year's train rides duties. On the following Tuesday (7th July, Jubilee Day!) the Derry engine had her official boiler test. I hope the reader now has some idea of how hectic things can be at Whitehead.

Turning now to rail tours, the first was the Claddagh on 30th April which struck many of us as a miniature Portrush Flyer. No.186 took five CIÉ bogies from her base at Mullingar to Galway and back, with a four and a half hour lie-over in Galway. No.186's restored steam heating was very effective and she assaulted the Woodlawn bank in fine style. Although water was made available at Athenry if needed, No.186 ran the forty eight miles from Athlone to Galway non stop, the longest non stop section she has ever run on an RPSI tour to my knowledge.

The work that was done on No.186 during the preceding winter and her successful running on this tour, the Cu na Mara and the Boyne Valley tours reflect the highest credit on the Mullingar workforce.

The Cu na Mara rail tour on 11th and 12th June followed the established pattern of sending the tour train to Dublin on the Thursday before the tour. On the Saturday morning, No.4 worked the train from Pearse to Heuston from where the tour was to start. We had, however, to wait for two hours for the Holyhead boat to arrive and during this delay, demands arose for the steam heating to be turned on - it is hard to believe it now, but it actually was that cold in June. No.4's running to Limerick Junction was a highlight of the tour and her running in every section of the tour was matched by the richness of the CIÉ locomen's praise for the locomotive.

A major problem in planning the Cu na Mara railtour was the absence of turning facilities in Limerick. Thus, No.4 was a natural choice as the main line engine. After arrival in Limerick, she ran bunk first light engine back to Portarlinton and then chimney first to Galway via Athlone. No.186 ran light engine on Friday 9th from Mullingar to Athenry and then turned before running the sixty miles from Athenry to Limerick tender-first; this was the only way of ensuring that she worked the main tour chimney first back to Athenry on the Saturday.

Both No.4 and No.186 were coaled at Limerick and Galway and both had their fires kept in overnight in Galway. The Sunday of the tour passed off as successfully as the Saturday with No.186 ending up in Mullingar and No.4 plus train in Central Service Depot, Belfast (formerly Queen's Quay); No.4 finished off the tour proceedings with a lively run back to Whitehead on the Monday, repeatedly catching up on the 11:30 Up Enterprise which she followed to Lisburn.

No.4 worked the three Portrush Flyer trains on 23rd July, 6th August and 20th August. The operation of the Flyer is now very much a routine operation as detailed in my last report in the magazine. Shunting before and after the Flyer is as simple as it could possibly be. The complete train is left made up the night before in the carriage siding and No.4 merely pulls the train out and sets it at the platform. The only additional duty in the evening is pulling out the train rides engine out of the shed for the Sunday.

No.171's only booked appearance of the year was the Boyne Valley railtour on 29th September. However, the running-in of her re-metalled axleboxes was the cause of a much higher mileage than her one railtour. The light engine trip to Larne Harbour and the run to Antrim with four bogies have already been mentioned. This amount of running is only a fraction of the amount that a loco in actual railway service would have had with re-metalled axleboxes. Such a loco would have had weeks of shunting, ballast and goods train workings and eventually local passenger turns before being entrusted

with an express passenger train. One of the drawbacks of our Society's activities is that it is not possible to give our locos that much running-in.

When No.171 returned from the Antrim trip one axlebox was still carrying heat and it was obvious that further running was needed. Accordingly a trip to Derry was arranged for 3rd September, this being the only way of giving the loco a long chimney first run.

No.171 returned from the Derry run with the axlebox still carrying heat and this was the story all through the Boyne Valley Railtour. The box will need to be attended to this winter, but it wasn't serious enough to detract from No.171's otherwise excellent performance all through the railtour.

The tour started on the Friday with No.171 taking the tour train to Bangor and returning light engine to Central Service Depot to spend the night. On the Saturday, the NIR crew worked No.171 with five bogies through to Drogheda, where the Belfast and Dublin portions of the train were combined. No.186 had departed very early light engine from Mullingar for Dublin and worked the three-bogie Dublin portion of the train to Drogheda.

While No.186 ran tender first, light engine to Navan, No.171 was turned before bringing the eight coach train to Navan. After visiting Tara Mines, No.186 set off tender-first with six full coaches for Kingscourt, while No.171 brought the diner and workshop coach 562 back to Drogheda where she was coaled and serviced. The complexities of re-combining the train at Navan and splitting it again at Drogheda were successfully carried out and No.186 set off for Dublin while No.171 set off in the opposite direction.

The Belfast train lay over at Queen's Quay until the Monday morning, by which time the three Dublin coaches had reached Central. No.171 brought her five bogies from Queen's Quay to Central and combined the trains. Perhaps the most pleasing part of the whole tour was No.171's lively running with the eight coaches, chimney first to Antrim and tender-first to York Road.

I cannot conclude this report without an honourable mention for the most lowly member of the RPSI loco fleet, diesel No.23. Every steam activity at Whitehead must be inaugurated by the diesel shunting coaches and pulling locos out of the shed. Since we started using the diesel, her batteries have been in poor condition. Frequently, they were unable to start the engine without receiving a boost from the mobile battery charger which was constructed for the benefit of coach batteries. This battery charger was the diesel's lifeline during the summer and it was a tremendous relief to be able to install a set of new batteries near the end of the operating season.

The 1977 loco mileage figures show No.4 on top again, with No.186, as usual, with a high light engine mileage. We ran eight main line outings, operated steam passenger trains on thirteen separate days and light engines on a further two days - not a bad record in a year which started with us deliberately taking things easy.

Loco	Train Miles	Light Engine Miles	Totals
4	1,071	187	1,258
171	606	42	648
184	356	273	629
Total	2,033	502	2,535

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING - REPORT

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held at the Teachers Centre, Queens University, Belfast on Friday 6th December. About forty members attended and the outgoing Committee was

returned unopposed, the position of Commercial Officer again remaining unfilled. The verbal gymnastics of the Secretary's Report provided entertainment in what was otherwise a serious meeting. Locomotive Officer, Peter Scott, was close to tears when he told members of the serious labour shortage at Whitehead. The Publications Officer came under fire with an appeal for more material for the "serious railway enthusiast" and an abhorrence of the diesel photographs published in our last tour brochure. The Secretary's Report, Statement of Accounts, etc., will be circulated to all members in due course.

BELFAST CENTRAL RAILWAY HEYDAY

Fred Graham

Though the Belfast Central nowadays means Bangor-Portadown railcars and suchlike, in the 'proper' days its staple diet was freight - all sorts of it, coal for Adelaide, cattle from the small fields of the West, sand from Coalisland, linen from Sion Mills and perishable loads for the cross-channel steamers. Add to that the variety of passenger specials from Bangor to Dublin or excursions from the Northern to the County Down and add to that again the spice of changing motive power, the range of workings and the changes wrought by the War and I think you will agree that the Central was something different; it was certainly a most unusual and interesting piece of railway.

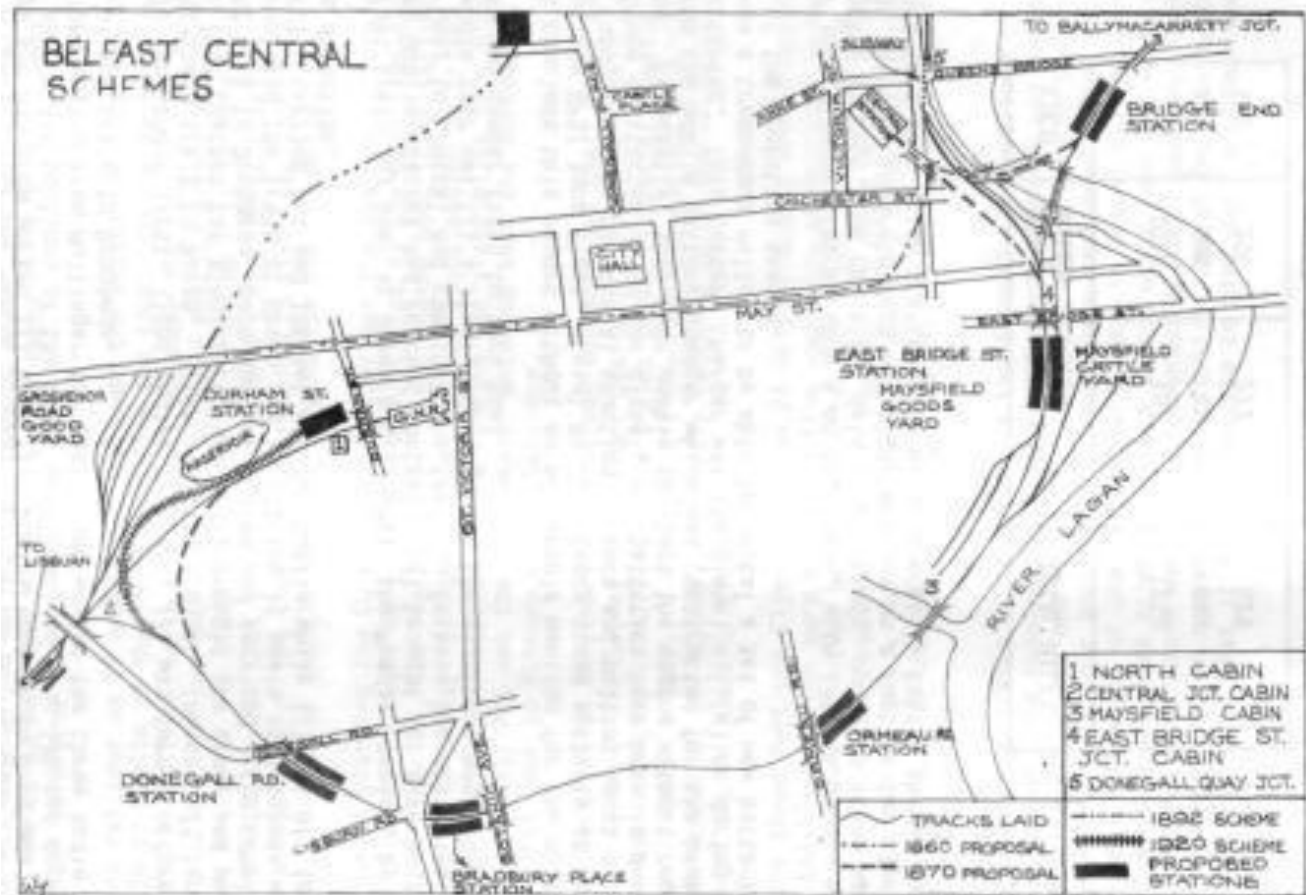
It was all a very far cry from the present 'ultra-modern' split-level glass and concrete edifices with suburban trams and only four proper mainline trains - and all of them usurping the title "Enterprise". No, back in the thirties things were different - and it was all steam. The Central in those days had several roles to play and some of these have already been alluded to but if we take as a general guideline the working of the cattle and the coal trains you will, I hope, be introduced to the Central.

The cattle came from almost all over the Great Northern and just about every day there was at least one fair special. With most of the fairs, though, being held monthly it took the lineside observer quite some time to recognise any pattern and the pattern was upset whenever two specials were run together or the traffic was served by a stopping passenger train, or again, when a relief had to be run to take the traffic. The Enniskillen Shipper, that now almost mythical train, was the mainstay of much of the shipping traffic. She left Enniskillen at 10:55 and ran via Clones and Portadown, running in non-stop from there in 1 hour 10 to arrive at 15:55. To connect into the Shipper other minor connections or separate special workings were operated, for instance one was run as required from Newtownbutler to Clones, but some fairs, such as Killyleagh or Monaghan, were important enough to warrant a separate train about an hour later. The Monaghan working was an interesting one for, while the necessary wagons were assembled off ordinary goods workings, the engine was worked to from Belfast to Monaghan as pilot on the 9:20 passenger train; the loco was usually a C class 0-6-0, a D was used a few times but tended to run hot. The reference to C and D are not class letters but power classifications.

The fair specials were worked at quite a pace and there was no notion of Central Junction blocking an incoming fair special. The traffic was valuable and one got the impression that everyone on the GNR knew it - and cared. It sometimes happened that a fair special would lose time here and there along the way and often, in an attempt to speed things up, two specials would be combined at Portadown and worked forward as one train. Such was the rush at Portadown to save minutes that the shorter train was coupled in front of the longer train's engine - and sometimes the longer train would already have a pilot engine! The path laid down in the working book was fairly generous but often it meant much hard pulling if Central Junction was to be reached on time, and often the stock specials passed onto the Central with blue smoke wafting around the wagon axleboxes. Much of the cattle traffic was for export 'on the hoof' to England and Scotland though there was a considerable number slaughtered in Belfast's nearby abattoir for home consumption. It was the job of the local agents and stationmasters to wire Maysfields as soon as stock had left them, with details of route and numbers of animals - Navan, Cavan, Belturbet, Maysfields, Enniskillen and Tynan were to wire similar information in regard to

stock off 'foreign' lines. We should not give the impression that cattle was the only traffic, though it was the most lucrative.

The Enniskillen Shipper mentioned earlier was more properly called the "Enniskillen Shipping Goods" and this and other specials and the regular trains into Maysfields carried all sorts of stock for shipping to England. There was linen and yarns, raw timber, all sorts of agricultural products ranging from butter and mushrooms to potatoes and corn and processed foods of all sorts. Of course, it goes without saying that most of the traffic into Belfast arrived at Grosvenor Road goods yard and only the shipping traffic or cattle for local slaughter or building sand or interchange traffic that was routed direct to Maysfields. Before 1932 all goods trains arrived into the large marshalling yard at Adelaide and from there trains were made up for working down the third line to Grosvenor Road and Maysfields.



There was some traffic for the cross-channel boats which came in on passenger trains and they, in the first instance, arrived at Great Victoria Street. Many perishable items came in this way - salmon and eels, mushrooms, small consignments of fruit or flowers (notably roses) and these added to the ordinary parcel traffic. Many passenger trains came in with their van space bulging with hampers and packing cases, heavily roped tea chests or fish-shaped bundles of straw. Some trains had passenger vans, either four or six wheeled, tacked on the tail and through the day the passenger pilot engine was kept busy shunting these vans into the "Spion" sidings behind number 5 platform. Here a rake of vans was sorted out for eventual working round to the cross-channel steamers and the loads were arranged for the most convenient working on the Quays. Most of the important trains brought in shipping items - perhaps the most notable was the 12:30 ex Derry which was usually made up of four bogies and four of the twenty-ton bogie P vans, two of which were loaded in Derry and the other two were loaded en route. So it was that at four o'clock each afternoon one of the Maysfields pilots, usually a 0-6-4 tank, would arrive

down the third line to the Spion sidings to finally sort out the shipping vans. After the arrival of the afternoon Clones (about 17:10) the tank would propel its train out past the pond and up the third line towards Central Junction. While on the move, it would be overtaken by the 17:22 to Banbridge and as soon as the latter was clear of the section, the road was made right across the main line to the Up road and the Maysfields engine pushed her train briskly through the crossovers, came to rest just beyond the Donegall Road bridge and was then signalled onto the Central line. All this had to be done without blocking the departure of the 17:35 to Warrenpoint. In those days the Quays was a busy place and the vans were prepared in the order of their unloading. Working downstream from the Queen's Bridge, the boats were for Greenock, Ardrossan, Glasgow, Heysham, Ayr and Liverpool, then there was traffic for Lawther's Boats to Manchester and Liverpool, the Belfast Steamship Company's cargo boats and the cargo vessels of the Bristol and Clyde Company. Should any urgent shipping traffic arrive at Great Victoria Street after the departure of the 'four o'clock shunt' it was taken down to the boats by road in vans belonging to Wordies.

It is probably the best-known feature of the Central that it was worked under the Permissive Block System. In GNR days the line from Central Junction to East Bridge Junction was regarded as two shunting lines and brake vans were not essential though a tail board or lamp was always carried on the last vehicle. This arrangement gave the operations great freedom and the cabin instruments allowed for up to six trains in the section at any one time. The system was used on the Central and on the third line between Adelaide and Belfast North Cabin and on the fifth line between Adelaide and Balmoral. You can probably gauge from the map that long lengths of line were worked on something akin to the Portpatrick and Girvan's policy of "we all ken where yin anither are". Propelling of more than one train in the section was not allowed and the system was dropped altogether when passenger trains were involved; they were worked under full Absolute Block Regulations. The same applied to trains of oil cars.

Not shown on the map, due to lack of space, is the extensive network of lines on the County Down side of the Lagan which fed much traffic into the Central. These sidings, the property of the GNR and regularly visited by the spray train, were collectively known as the "South Quays" though better known to railwaymen as the "Low Docks". To get to the Low Docks from Maysfields, trains crossed all of the County Down's lines at Ballymacarrett and ran into a headshunt before reversing in the general direction of the BCDR terminus but taking a line to the north of the yard which emerged onto Sydenham Road. From there trains could work either to the coal quays or to the oil depots. The coal quay was that part of the quays between Abercorn Basin and the BCDR passenger terminus, lying on the opposite bank to the Liverpool passenger steamer. Coal is still unloaded on this stretch of river and all the loco coal for the Northern Division of the Northern was landed here. The boats arrived regularly and for two days beforehand a large number of open wagons was assembled at Adelaide and Maysfields from all over the system. The unloading usually took a couple of days and involved several rakes of wagons - the job of working them between the quays and Adelaide kept a Maysfields pilot engine fully occupied and many railwaymen earned some valuable overtime unloading the coal; indeed Geordie McShane of Moira was found dead in a coal wagon one Sunday morning during the War. The coal was weighed in at Adelaide but not all of it was for the company's use for some of it went to private importers in places like Lurgan or Enniskillen, Dungannon or Banbridge. The GNR kept three months supply of loco coal stock piled at Adelaide but the men claimed that lying out in all weathers took the good out of the coal. The coal trains were the subject of some attention from the residents along the Central for they were usually slow moving but Harry Waterhouse enjoyed the reputation of driving the trains too fast for even the most nimble of would be coal pinchers.

The other traffic from the Low Docks was oil. This came from three companies, Anglo American, British Petroleum and Shell-Mex. Their depots were situated on Connswater Road, itself built on reclaimed tidal mud flats and working to the sidings involved working the full length of Sydenham

Road and in the case of Shell-Mex, the full length of Connswater Road as well. At the depots of the two first named companies, the engine was not allowed to enter but in the Shell-Mex yard the loco had limited access.

We have already mentioned that the oil trains were worked under Absolute Block Regulations and this brings us on to the passenger workings which also required Absolute Block. It probably goes without saying that from the withdrawal of regular services over the Central in 1965 until the advent of the NIR venture, there were no timetable passenger trains over the Central. The occasional passenger workings were mostly in summer and took the form of either organised excursions - Sunday Schools, Orange Lodges and religious gatherings - or public "advertised excursions" from Bangor to Dublin. Details of the latter came readily to hand and bear some examination. They were usually worked by a U class 4-4-0 coupled to a 3,500 gallon tender. The load was normally six or seven bogies of corridor stock including a tea car. The empty train was propelled from Great Victoria Street to Central Junction and then ran to Bangor. The special left Bangor at 8:40 and at 8:55 left Holywood for its non-stop run to Dundalk in 1 hour 38, overtaking the 8am Up goods at Goragewood. After no more than the standard seven minute water stop at Dundalk, another non-stop run finished the journey in 65 minutes (at 11:45). The return departure time of 7:45 will probably come as a surprise to many who are used to seeing our railways put up their feet at tea time. The return timings were similar to those of the Up journey and involved overtaking a goods at Dundalk but included a customs stop at Goragewood. Leaving the Wood and passing Central in 51 minutes (and causing the 8:30 ex Newcastle to be held at Knockmore) the train ran non-stop to Holywood and stops were made too at Helen's Bay and Carnalea as required. Bangor was reached at 10:50 and the empty coaches left ten minutes later to reach Great Victoria Street at 11:40.

Other specials originating on the BCDR often involved BCDR engines running over GNR metals as far as Lisburn and there was a time when BCDR locos and coaches ran empty to Armagh or Dungannon to pick up a load of excursionists. BCDR engines were no strangers in Maysfields, of course, for they often came in with livestock wagons or other interchange traffic. During the War and thereafter they became quite common on specials - an Easter Monday excursion from Adelaide to Donaghadee was worked throughout by County Down No.11. During the War traffic on the Central increased enormously and specials of all sorts (both freight and passenger) were run in all directions. Troop movements became quite a feature of working and finding a convenient path often led to a build-up of goods movements. The Northern's UG class of 0-6-0 engines were popular for working over BCDR metals and they often disappeared for days at a time. Freight of all sorts built up to unheard of levels and these were aggravated by the dispersal of stocks away from Belfast. Not much information is available, unfortunately, as the workings were, after all, part of national security and meant to be more or less secret. It can only be regretted that the GNR didn't see fit to record their War effort in published form, as the NCC did.

Before turning to some of the engines and men who worked the Central, one other NCC mention must intrude here. In 1933, when the first four Derby built moguls of class W were being delivered, they came via the Central. The locos arrived in kit form and were unloaded on the County Down side of the Lagan. At the rate of one set of parts at a time every other Sunday, they were worked by special goods train to Antrim. The trains were manned by Central men as far as Adelaide where they were relieved by main line men.

The men who worked the Central were, for the most part, drivers and firemen who for reasons of age or other personal circumstances preferred not to undertake main line work or spend nights away from home or be subjected to the rough and tumble of timetables and train working. Mention has already been made of Harry Waterhouse, a former main line man who, after an operation, found Central work much more to his liking. Other regular Central drivers included Andy Lyttle, Sammy McCready, Bob

Thompson and Joe McDonald; the latter is probably best remembered for ‘dunting’ the Adelaide coal chute with LQG 160. Other characters included Andy Tweedie, a shunter at Adelaide who did guard on the coal trains and when he was called away with the breakdown train his place was taken by Jimmy Hagan. Percy Carson was one of the best known Central Junction signalmen and he could identify drivers on approaching cattle specials from the way they whistled for the road. For instance, although there was a code of whistles laid down, Driver Kelly always whistled one long and one short after Tate’s Avenue bridge.

Finally, it remains only to take a look at some of the engines that worked on the Central but before we do that and get down to individual engines, let’s lay out a few general guidelines.

From Central Junction to East Bridge Street Junction any engine could, in theory, run except the Compounds and VSs though sometime later the Compounds did come down to Maysfields to work specials forward to Dublin and much later on members of the VS class were scrapped here. The Lagan Viaduct (the Shaky Bridge of much GNR folklore and the subject of much ridicule from railwaymen) prevented anything with an axle load in excess of 15.2 tons from crossing the river; this prohibited engines of the Q, S and T family groups and variations.

The engines in the genus of class A, B, C, E, JT, P and U could cross together with, of course, the class RT.

Double-heading across the Shaky bridge was not allowed and indeed there can have been very few GNR men who would have dreamt of such a rash move. One story has it that the bridge was involved in some altercation with the Lagan Canal coal boat “Khalabar” (the hero of many local ballads) but the bridge’s vibrations probably owe their origins more to the short piles on which it was built. The RT engines were built specially for shunting the Central, Adelaide and Grosvenor goods yards and the four of them were often augmented by engines of many other classes. They were 0-6-4 tanks numbered 22 and 23, 166 and 167. The first pair entered traffic in the autumn of 1908 and for the first few years were painted in lined green livery. The second pair of engines were working by November 1911 and from then on RTs were always to be seen on the Central. They were fitted with Ramsbottom safety valves so as not to scare the horses on the docks - when about to blow off these valves made a sort of fizzing and humming sound which gradually built up in noise level and thereby obviated the sudden and thunderous roar of pop valves. Some drivers claimed you lost less steam blowing off with a Ramsbottom. At first the locos had normal buffers but these were soon enlarged by having large circular plates bolted to the buffer heads to help avoid buffer locking on the sometimes tight curves.

Locos 166 and 167 were rebuilt in September and June 1939 respectively with riveted smoke boxes. At the division of the spoils following the death of the GNR, 22 had just been scrapped and the three survivors fell to the UTA who renumbered 166 and 167 as 24 and 25, though retaining GNR on the tank sides. 23 and 25 lasted until 1961 and 24 until 1963.

The RTs, being purpose built for the job, were light enough to work across the Lagan and were low enough to work through the Queen’s Bridge subway which severely limited the engines capable of working through from Maysfields to the steamer berths on Donegall Quay. It was through this subway that all of the shipping traffic mentioned earlier had to pass; it presented many difficulties and called for the fitting of low chimneys on engines required to work the quays and for many years prevented several species of passenger van from being used for shipping work. Despite being liable to flooding, the subway was deepened in the late fifties and the AL class engines were then allowed through. Then in 1963 the subway was deepened again and this time the Sligo tanks, NCC engines, large passenger vans and, most important, at long last containers could be worked direct to the berths. Sadly all this traffic and effort was presented to road hauliers only a couple of years later though the subway remains in use as part of pedestrian underpass at the western end of the Queen’s Bridge.

Going back to the RTs for a moment - they were allocated to Adelaide shed of course but it was only on Sundays that they were idle enough to receive much in the way of attention and they were cleaned then too by squads of cleaners brought in specially. During the week they did sometimes visit Adelaide for crew changing or working wagons for the stores and so on or to take on coal but received little attention on these visits.

Many other notable engines worked on the Central - they were usually ancient machines working out their last days but sometimes there were engines taken off main line work before entering the works or sometimes an engine which had had some minor repair job done at Adelaide might pass a day or two at Maysfields running in before going back on the main line roster.

The two oldest engines to work regularly at Maysfields were a pair of Ulster Railway locos, 137 and 138. The former spent most of her time in the passenger yard while 138, fitted with a short chimney for the subway, spent most of her time at Maysfields. These ancient machines were built in Belfast in 1872 and 1873 and were formerly named "Stromboli" and "Volcano"; they were rebuilt in 1885 and again about 1912/3 and were put on the duplicate list for a time around 1913 when two of that year's batch of SGs took their numbers for a while. This was just about the end of the period when the GNR directors voiced dismay at the sheer number of engines on the system and decreed that the loco stock should not exceed 150. Dundalk interpreted this as meaning that no loco should be numbered 151 and devised the duplicate list to accommodate the overflow. New engines were allotted whatever blank numbers there were and should there be no gaps in the list, a suitable number of old engines were put on the duplicate list and renumbered as, for example, 138A. The A, it must be admitted, was fairly minute and probably of such proportions as not to be seen by a befuddled director downing vintage brandies in the comfort of Saloon 50.

No.137 finally departed this life just on the outbreak of War but 138, which was noted for its brass beading on the splashers (the last GNR engine to retain it) lasted until June 1948.

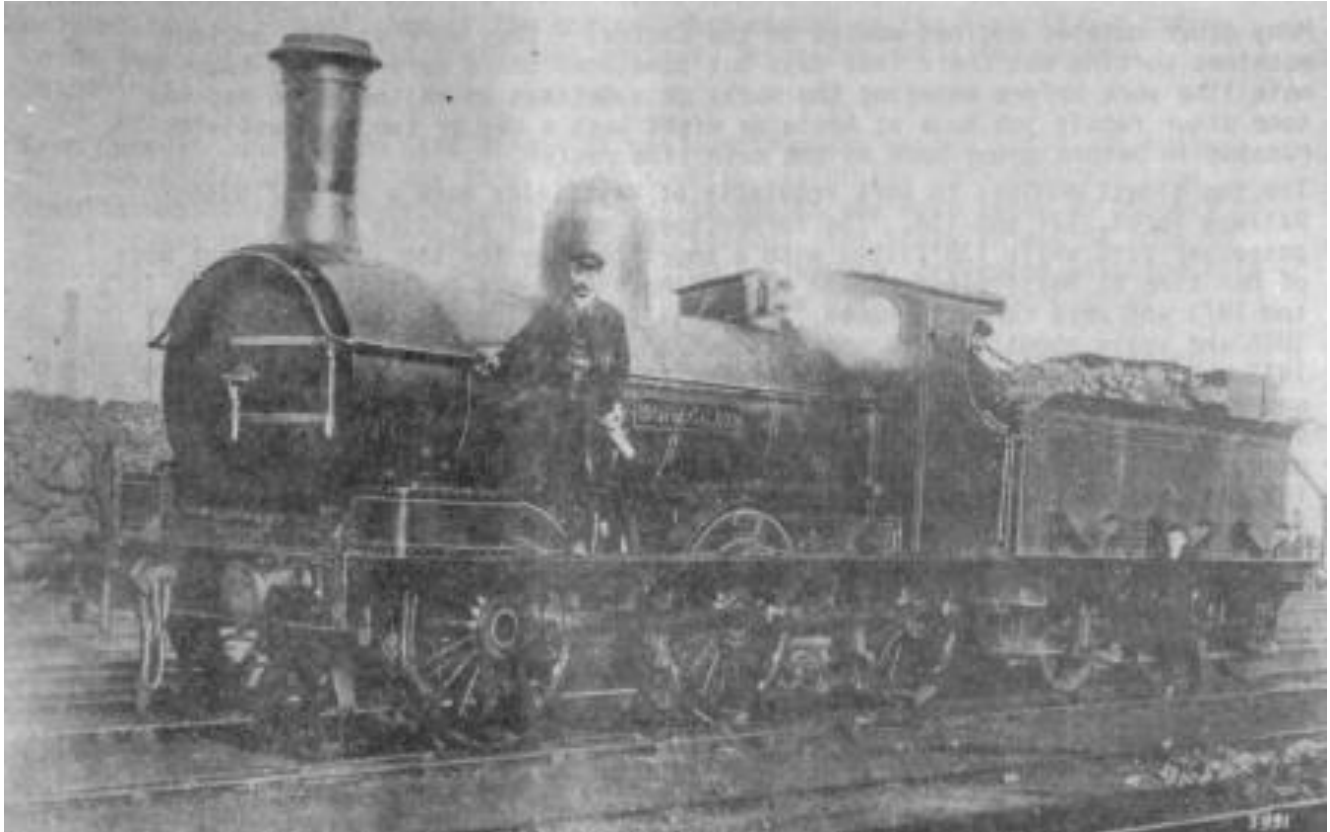
Several members of the A and AL classes worked on the Central. Amongst the longest serving were A class locos 28, 33, 60, 68, 80, 81 and 150 - all of them fitted with low chimneys for subway working. Of these 33 and 60 were Dundalk built and appropriately 33 was once called "Belfast". No.68 was for long the regular engine of Sammy McCready and 80, once named "Antrim", was the engine involved in hauling the NCC mogul parts to Antrim. Most of the As had gone by 1936 but 28 lasted until 1956 and 33 and 60 went to CIÉ in 1959 but they had little option other than to scrap them.

Of the AL engines - sometimes known as 'large As' - the best known was 56. Then after the closure of the Irish North, PG number 10 came to Adelaide and, with a squat chimney, began work on the Central. In the early sixties the Sligo tanks began work in Maysfields too but by then the traffic was vanishing, but two other engines of earlier vintage must be mentioned.

The first of these is illustrated as number 66 "Monaghan". She shunted Maysfields for years and years - she was built by Sharp Stewart in 1879 (the same year as No.186) as one of the first batch of B class engines. She was rebuilt about the turn of the century and renumbered twice - as 27 in 1930 and 149 in 1932. 149, as she was then, was the only engine to retain the old square cab and she had a short chimney as well. The other loco was 204, formerly "Mullingar", a Hunslet 0-6-0 tank bought from the contractor who built the Keady line. She lay at Portadown and then in number 11 road at Adelaide for many years and was used infrequently in Maysfields - it was on one of these occasions that a driver was crushed to death on her.

On that rather sad note we must bring this account of the Central to a close - others have written of the early history and you can see the present state of the line for yourself. I hope we have given you some insight of the line when it formed a vital, bustling link with the outside world at a time when the manoeuvring of politicians or dictates of insensible accountants had yet to wreak havoc with our

railways.



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

I had intended to remain quiescent, but certain remarks in the current 5' 3" drive me into print.

Amid all the back slapping, let us try to keep some things in perspective:

- (i) As yet 5' 3" is neither better nor worse than it was under Charlie Friel.
- (ii) Charlie had far too much to do. I gave him a certain amount of help - I wrote a couple of articles and Raitour Brochures, as well as providing many illustrations - but there were limits to what I could do (so far as I know, only Joe Cassells of the previous magazine subcommittee did anything) .
- (iii) Had it not been for Charlie's typing, 5' 3" and most of the brochures would probably have foundered - I had an awful job getting numbers 2-4 typed. "A Decade of Steam" would not have been published at all. After all, although Charlie wrote several articles for 5' 3" himself (as I did) he couldn't write the whole magazine himself AND type it and he hadn't time to chase up articles from railwaymen.

BUT

- (i) The book reviews (particularly that on the GSWR Book) are inane.
- (ii) 5' 3" (numbers 1-11) WAS 32 county orientated - for example, I remember the late inspector, Paddy Gannon, CIÉ, actually asking for a copy. There were articles by Barry and S.J. Carse, J. O'Neill and S.V. Kennedy to mention but a few. Many of the photos also were CIÉ, or 26 county. I only have numbers 1-4 and 9-10 by me, but the cover photos, if used, are ALL 26

county. The recent 'policy' of using only our engines (as if no others ever ran) has been disastrous (Charlie was most successful when he departed furthest from it) and it is to be hoped that you, Sir, will forget it completely. The inert membership must be tired looking at our engines gracing (?) the pages of 5' 3" and it is high time there was a change.

- (iii) One mustn't be too starry eyed about No.184 and No.461. The former has a very limited range (with a 1,864 gallon tender and no superheater). So far as piloting No.186 is concerned, there is a crewing difficulty (NIR recently could not provide FOUR drivers for two engines). No.461 was bad in 1961, she also needs a regulator, blast-pipe, piston-rod and God knows what else; so at least it will be a long time before she is fit to work a "Portrush Flyer" - even if there is such a thing then.

D Donaldson

Editor 5'3" numbers 1-11

Note for Operations Officer on NIR crews

NIR is a small railway with a severely limited number of drivers - enough to cover holidays, sickness, etc. Provided drivers are available, however, they will always be provided for special trains.

During the spring and early summer period many extra trains are run by NIR, in addition to which some drivers will be on holidays. Under these circumstances, there might not be more than two spare drivers available for RPSI specials on a particular day, from a total driving staff of about fifty. If, however, a tour is arranged sufficiently far in advance and the May-June-July period is avoided, it is quite likely that NIR could supply four drivers to work a two-engine railtour.

BY TRAIN OVER THE NORTH

Ian Sinclair

To commemorate the Queen's Silver Jubilee, NIR issued a special Commemorative Rail Ticket, available for unlimited travel on the system on Sunday 5th June last. Two members, Ian Sinclair and John Taylor, took advantage of this offer and travelled a total of 311½ miles. This is their story.

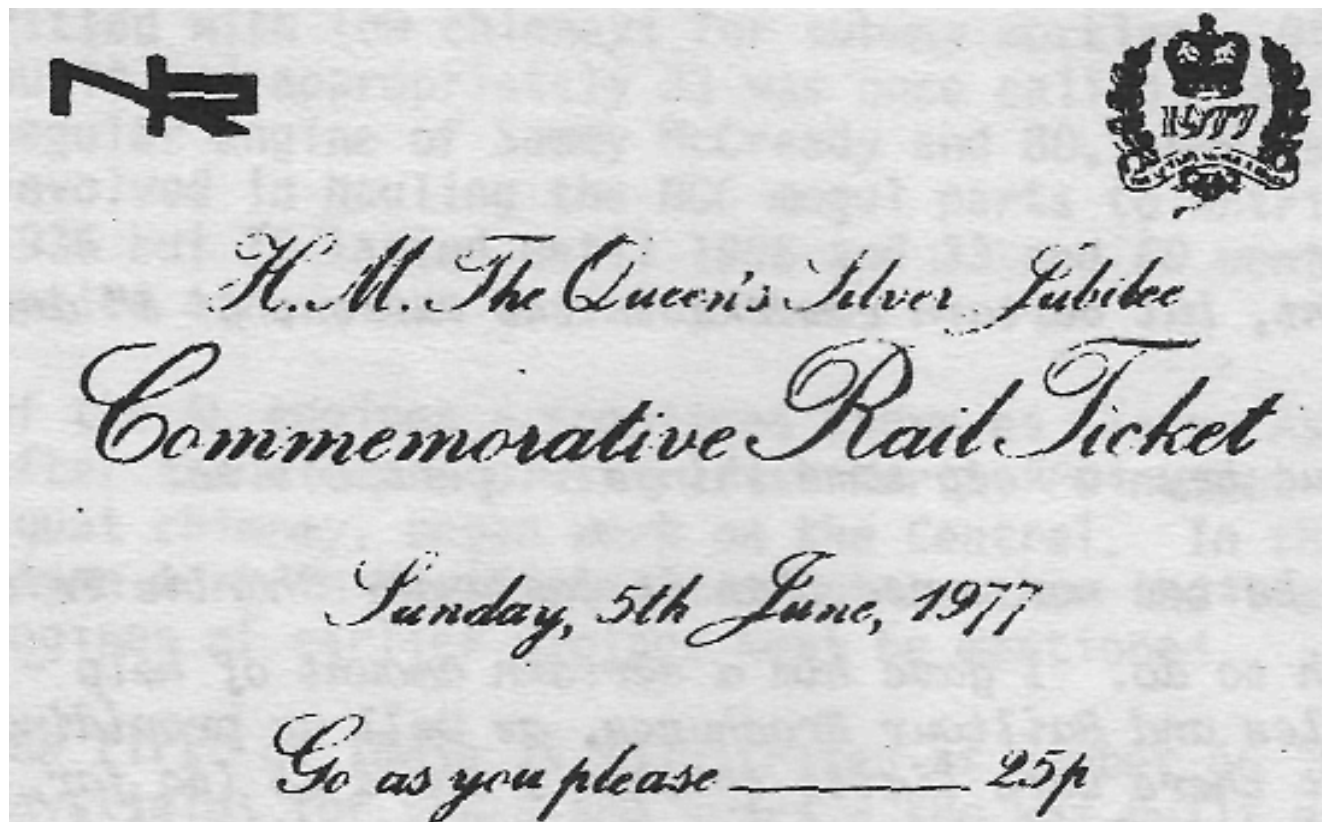
On Sunday 5th June 1977, Northern Ireland Railways offered a Jubilee ticket at 25p for unlimited travel on their lines. This was unlikely to be available ever again so we decided to cover as much trackage as possible. There was a big demand for tickets but we managed to get a couple in Bangor on the Friday evening. We made out a timetable but, as will be seen later, we changed our strategy half way.

Unfortunately we could not include the Lisburn-Antrim branch which, at present, is closed on Sunday. For timetable reasons it was either the Coleraine-Derry line or the Coleraine-Portrush branch. Derry is longer, so it won.

The journey started at York Road station in Belfast where we got the 09:20 train for Portrush, change at Coleraine. The weather was grey and overcast but brightened now and again. All the trains we travelled on were well filled but the majority of people were going from Belfast and Derry to the holiday towns of Portrush and Bangor. For these crowds some specials were fitted in during the day. There were only a few fanatics like ourselves trying to make as many miles as possible. The train was made up of three diesel electric power coaches and six trailers and after a great climb to the Antrim plateau we arrived in Coleraine one minute late. We crossed the footbridge and got into a five coach diesel electric set which arrived in Londonderry at 11:30 (timetables would suggest 11.23 for this but we left Coleraine 5 minutes behind schedule).

The Coleraine to Derry line is one of the most spectacular in Ireland and the sun came out for us. The banks of the Bann were beautiful and the sight of big seas rolling in at Downhill and between the

tunnels gave us something to talk about and prevent boredom ... after all it was diesel and not steam up front. At Derry we just had time for a brisk walk to the Craigavon bridge and a look at the station of the North West of Ireland, narrow gauge, line. Good luck and press on lads. The return train was timed to leave at 12:00. This was the same set as the one we arrived in plus two more trailers and it was delayed for ten minutes with brake problems. There was a further delay at Ballymoney but the time for this was made up as the train arrived in Belfast at 14:10, just ten minutes late.



The next trip was on the Larne line, again from York Road, Belfast. The train, a three coach, multi-purpose set, left at 14:20, arriving at Larne Harbour at 15:15. We grabbed a quick cuppa and left again at 15:33, three minutes late and got back to Belfast at 16:25. This of course is the line which passes that well known haven of railway preservation enthusiasts in Ireland, the Whitehead Excursion station. We gave a small cheer on the way back and one or two startled faces were raised.

What a pity the rail link from York Road to Central is not there yet. We had to resort to the car, intending the next journey to be for Portadown. The change of plan came when we found that we could just fit in a trip to Bangor before catching the "Enterprise" to Portadown. So it was a modern diesel electric set which left at 17:00 for Bangor with us on board. We waved to home as we passed. That great conversationalist Mr Irwin Pryce and a friend had joined us for the rest of the voyage. The return to Belfast was a special (we like to think it was for us), an old five coach MED, it left at 17:55 and arrived at 18:25. We ran over the bridge at Central and got aboard the 18:30 CIÉ air conditioned "Enterprise" set. There were a few startled looks from the regular passengers at this, by now, somewhat scruffy pair. We arrived at Portadown at 19:15 after a wait at a signal outside the station. Apparently the customs examination of some trains means holding others until platforms are clear. A damp Sunday evening in Portadown is not our idea of a big night out! However, we did discover a chipper which refreshed us for the last lap. This was the seven coach NIR Enterprise set which left at 20:22 and arrived in Belfast at 21:00. Our day's travel was over, 311½ miles for just 25p - surely some sort of record!

BOOK REVIEWS

Irish Railways In Pictures No.1 - The Great Northern

Published by Irish Railway Record Society, London Area

This slim, lowly priced volume captures much of the atmosphere of the GNR in the fifties with sixty-five superbly printed pictures which trace a journey round the system from Dublin to Bundoran, Dundalk to Portadown and Derry and Belfast, taking in the branches en route. The main content of the book is set off by an introduction (including map) and a selection of older engines and rolling stock views.

In all forty GNR steam locos of twenty classes are included, along with three NCC types, the MAK diesel, a railbus, five railcars and couple of architecture prints. It is odd that classes SG, SG2, QG and NAG are not mentioned but the saddest omission must be class Q, one of the least-acclaimed but most deserving of GNR locos. One is inclined to wonder at the UGs being covered by two photos of 146 on the same turn, or at the Fintona tram deserving a whole page, but these are minor points compared to the overall impression the book leaves on the palate - superb.

The photos come mainly from the cameras of Lance King and N.W. Spinks taken on something like nineteen visits to Ireland and their departure from standard station views has paid off handsomely. Their photos, from 1952 onwards, are backed up with some real gems from C.H. Hewison (1936) and R.G. Jarvis (1937) - the former's delightful, atmospheric shot of 25 at Enniskillen recalls much of the feeling of the place in late afternoon and does much to set the tone of the whole book. For this reviewer, pages twelve to fifteen are pure magic.

The text, on the whole, is solid stuff but contains nothing fresh, though it does its job well with few slips of importance; perhaps the most important concerns the upper print on page fifteen where 59 is not "shunting in the station" but is lying in the ash road off the turntable, probably having her fire cleaned before returning to Enniskillen with the goods, getting as far as Ballyshannon before being overtaken by the glittering 204.

Twenty years back in time is quite a trip for only 65p, let's hope the future numbers in the series are of the same quality.

CPF

The Tralee And Dingle Railway, by David G Rowlands D Bradford Barton Ltd, ISBN 0-85153-267-5

To anyone with an interest in Ireland's local history, to those with any knowledge of Kerry and to those who have been affected by 'steam engines' this book is a must. The author has succeeded in many points where other recent railway books have failed miserably.

At a very low price by today's standards we have good art layout, a balanced collection of photos, drawings, maps, a strong style of type - very easy on the eyes - on good quality paper, but most of all a sensible page shape instead of the continual upright format which makes it practically impossible to spread photos and diagrams to useful sizes. In general block making and printing are uniform and of a very high standard. The book has one other advantage over many others - it is obvious that the author knows his subject in great depth over many years and that what is presented here is a careful selection from a great mass of original material.

The author has also kept to a 'railway-trains' subject and has avoided wasting pages on shares, company laws, etc., which afflict many other books in this price range - there is just NOT the room and the only way is to make a very interesting complete account of a few items, in this case, the locos rolling stock and the line. Accuracy is almost 100%, the only tiny criticism I personally can make is that some of the drawings, while very accurate, have been over simplified, but this will really only affect the model makers. One last comment, with this book and the brilliant small book by P.B.

Whitehouse this railway has a monopoly of really fine books. Anyone planning future railway books might note artistic layout, good quality paper and reproduction, quality pictures, maps, drawings, all for under £4. The absence of pages of long rambling accounts of heavy business details is welcome. It is definitely a book which will be enjoyed by those who know Kerry and Irish Narrow Gauge Steam Railways. **SOC**

Wheel And Spindle, by Dr A McCutcheon
Published by Blackstaff Press

Dr McCutcheon will need no introduction to readers of 5' 3", since he is the author of two excellent books on Irish Railways, "Railway History in Pictures - Ireland", Volumes 1 and 2. The present work, while containing little of direct railway interest, should appeal to RPSI members, as rail transport is but a branch of Industrial Archaeology. The subject matter is divided into two main sections - Prime Movers, sub-divided into Animal, Wind, Water and Steam Power and the second section - Processing Machinery, sub-divided into Tilt Hammers, Distilling and Textiles. The historical development of each device is described, with an account of its Irish application, in a concise and readable manner.

Referring to the dependence on Britain of the Irish market for steam engines in the early years, it is interesting to note that Rev B.H. Blacker in his "Brief Sketches of Booterstown and Donnybrook" records the importation of a pumping engine from Holland in 1792 to drain reclaimed land in Dublin. In the section on tilt hammers, Dr McCutcheon says that no Irish spade mill had a steam hammer, but Henshaws of Clonskea, Dublin, possessed at least one.

One small fault is the absence of captions to the cover pictures, but as we have come to expect from Blackstaff Press, the production of the book is first class, the clarity of the illustrations being particularly gratifying. What makes the appearance of "Wheel and Spindle" especially welcome is that, as can be seen from the Bibliography, the literature on Irish Industrial Archaeology is meagre in quantity and it is to be hoped that Dr McCutcheon will be encouraged to enlarge on the contents of the book in future publications. **TFW**



This scene at Ennis station during last year's two day "Cu na Mara" railtour was aptly captured by David Carse.