

FIVE FOOT THREE



Magazine of the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland

FIVE FOOT THREE

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Editor: Alan Edgar

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

Front Cover: No.171 climbs past Ballyboyland gates on the homeward run of the first Flyer of 1980, 26th July. (C.P. Friel)

EDITORIAL

1. Financial stringency has become a fashionable cause in recent times. Whatever misgivings we may have about the effect of current government policies, there is little doubt that a small organisation such as the Society can benefit from a careful reappraisal of its finances.

It is particularly appropriate to do so in view of the Society's commercial performance during the past year. While there have been notable successes, there have also been failures, with the result that the Society now finds itself having difficulty making ends meet for the first time in several years.

This is not to say that the time has come to begin cutting back on capital expenditure, and contracting our activities. On the contrary, expenditure must be maintained at the present level, if not increased, to ensure our locos and rolling stock are capable of operation in years to come. Moreover, it is likely that certain of our activities would warrant expansion, rather than contraction, to improve our financial situation.

Nowhere is this better illustrated than in the field of railtours, where we have swung away completely from enthusiast-orientated tours; with the exception of the 2 day tour. It is a poor reflection on many of the so-called enthusiasts, both in the North, and in the South, that they have all too often failed to

support railtours. This is in complete contrast to our support from “across the water” which remains as staunch as ever. However, interest and support among the general public is very much on the increase. Thus we cut back on enthusiast tours and expand tours for the general public. Hard experience has shown us that successfully marketing public tours require a different strategy than that used for enthusiast tours. “Going public” also makes sense in commercial terms, as the public market is many times larger than the enthusiast one.

2. By the time this magazine appears in print, an EGM of the Society will have approved, or rejected, the principle of a branch line scheme. While it is to be hoped that the decision taken will be in the best interests of the long term future of the Society, there are important points to be borne in mind whatever way the vote goes.

Seldom has the Society been more deeply divided over an issue - as the vote by the Council shows. We can look to the history of several other railway societies, and see how a contentious issue has split the organisation in two, to the ultimate loss of all concerned. We must not allow this to happen to our own Society, after we have achieved so much.

NEWS FROM COUNCIL

Robin Morton

The branchline issue has been much on the Council’s mind and in October the branchline feasibility sub-committee report was produced. This comprehensive document recommended that the Society should proceed to re-open the Scarva-Banbridge line provided satisfactory arrangements could be made for finance, legislation, local authority backing and that sufficient volunteer labour was forthcoming.

The sub-committee examined in detail the various aspects of reopening such as civil engineering, land availability, costs, grant-aid prospects, the legal position, insurance liabilities and operating requirements. At the time of writing the proposal has been accepted by six votes to five by the Council and is to be put to an EGM.

An engine which would be ideal for such branchline operation as well as short-haul mainline tours is No.27 “Lough Erne” which was acquired by the Society in July from its owner, former RPSI chairman Roy Grayson. Purchase price was £5,000, and restoration will cost an estimated £3,000. An appeal to the membership was well supported and by October had raised some £4,600, including a grant of £1,250 from the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. The appeal is being broadened to take in industry. We would like to thank the large number of people who contributed towards the purchase of this locomotive. The fund remains open; any further donations received will be put towards the restoration cost.

Meanwhile, the lengthy process of drawing up an agreement between the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum and the Society for the loan of Museum loco No.85, “Merlin” is being finalised. It is hoped the 15 year agreement will be signed in October. The loco is still undergoing an overhaul in Harland and Wolff, work which is being sponsored by Lord Dunleath, to whom the Society is most grateful.

When she moves to Whitehead No.85 will undergo further restoration and will occupy one of the roads in the shed extension, news of which was given in the last magazine. The official opening is now planned for Spring 1981.

Insurance was one of the complications of the No.85 agreement, and the Society’s brokers Bowring Martin were of assistance. In general terms, insurance is now the major single overhead - albeit an essential one - in running the Society. In August the limit of indemnity on the principal policy, the public liability insurance, was raised upon CIÉ’s insistence from £1m to £5m, a move which more than doubled the premium to £1,650 per annum.

The major expenditure on this and other policies is one factor which forced the Council to recommend

that the subscription be raised from £5 to £6 for 1981.

A new venture on the fund-raising front is the marketing of first day covers which is being organised by the Society's philatelic agents, Belfast Stamp Shop. Some pilot projects involving covers being carried on board RPSI specials have already proved successful.



The Society's shop at Whitehead is declared open for business. Mr. H.A. Frazer (right) has just unveiled the plaque in the centre, to his left are Mrs Richardson, Mrs Frazer, and John Richardson, our Treasurer.

The Society has offered to provide the name plates for NIR's two new General Motors diesel electric locos, due to enter service in 1981 on the Enterprise. The names will be "Great Northern" and "Northern Counties".

The Society's own Steam Enterprise on 20th September saw the introduction of a new complimentary travel scheme. The Council decided it was time to bring the Society into line with other main line operators in Britain and offer free tickets to several categories of working members such as those rostered for duty on the tour, those attending regularly at Whitehead or Mullingar, fund-raisers, buffet car staff, and Council members. The project will operate on a trial basis for 12 months.

The steam train rides at Whitehead have enjoyed the best season to date with the new Whitehead railway shop on the platform proving to be a real attraction.

The train rides form this year's RPSI entry to the Northern Ireland Tourist Board Tourism Endeavour Awards - last year the Portrush Flyer won a commendation.

The Council has been pleased to see NITB interest in the Society's activities reaching a new peak this year, with plans for 1981 including specialist railway enthusiast holidays to Northern Ireland. The NITB arranged for editors of some of the railway journals in England to travel on the Flyer, and articles were expected to appear in the magazines over the winter.

The brunt of the steam train mileage in 1980 again fell on No.171. During the year, “Slieve Gullion” visited Londonderry on three occasions and found her way south of Poyntzpass no less than four times. However, No.184 was used on the first event of the year, the “Dublin Bay” tour on the 12th and 13th April. A series of 3 trips ran from Connolly to Bray and back on the Saturday, and from Connolly to Howth and back on the Sunday. Despite almost full trains on nearly all the trips, the high charges made by CIÉ resulted in a heavy financial loss. Saturday 19th April saw a series of 3 return trips from Belfast York Road to Carrickfergus, in connection with the “Carrick 800” celebrations. Support was disappointing, and a small loss was made. No.171 worked most of the trips, but No.186 substituted on the last return trip.



No.184 on the “Dublin Bay” Raitour passes Dun Laoghaire on the third trip ex Dublin. (C.P. Friel)

The usual 5 day long “2 day tour” took place over 17th/18th May with No.171 heading a 7 coach tour train on the 211 mile journey from Dublin Connolly to Tralee, in glorious weather. Beforehand, No.184 provided our last opportunity to visit the now closed branch to Dun Laoghaire pier.

Shunting delays in attaching coaches at Pearse and Connolly resulted in a loss of path onto the Cork main line, and consequential delays on the single track South Kerry line, with the result that our arrival at Tralee was an hour or two later than scheduled. However, this in no way detracted from the enjoyment of the day, and No.171’s performance was faultless.

Most of the tour participants attended a dinner at the Mount Brandon Hotel, which was our main overnight base.

Among our passengers was a party of 28 from the Australian Railway Historical Society, who included the “South Kerry” in a Grand European tour which also covered the Rainhill celebrations.

The return trip on Sunday was equally successful, with No.171 putting up an outstanding performance, particularly between Limerick Junction and Ballybrophy, where 67mph was attained before Dundrum.

No.171 was serviced at Fairview, whilst No.184 took a train of CIÉ coaches to Dun Laoghaire pier. Due to a misunderstanding, which still defies explanation, No.184 was then sent light engine straight back to Mullingar, leaving the train and passengers stranded at the pier! A diesel loco had to be commandeered to return the participants to Connolly whence No.171 returned to Belfast Central with the tour train. The “South Kerry” was almost completely booked out and was a great success both operationally and commercially.



*No.171 passes Tandragee en route for Poyntzpass with the film train for “My Dear Palestrina”.
(C.P. Friel)*

The Steam Gala at Whitehead on 5th July was served by a connection from York Road and back, handled by No.171 on the outward journey and No.186 on the return. This was No.186's last run before withdrawal pending major overhaul. The connections ran directly to and from the Society's platform at Whitehead.

On 16th July, No.171 again returned to the Great Northern, when a day of filming for the BBC 2 Playhouse production “My Dear Palestrina” was centred on Poyntzpass. Saturdays 26th July, 9th and 23rd August saw No.171 at the head of the Portrush Flyer which was ‘extended’ on all three dates this year. On the first date, the entire train was worked forward to Londonderry and became the first steam train to visit the new station there. On the other two Flyers, the train was left at Castlerock, whilst the engine continued light to Derry to turn.

A second film contract, in early September, was for a “Canada Dry” cinema and TV commercial, and involved No.171 taking part in all night filming at Malahide. No.171 was stabled at Fairview beforehand, and coach 114 accompanied her for staff purposes. The event was supposed to depict a scene in Russia, and No.171 was suitably endowed with red stars and Russian lettering. Both loco and station were coated with large tonnages of ‘snow’.

A new venture was the “Steam Enterprise”, a day excursion to Dublin which No.171 was booked to haul on 13th September. Unfortunately an explosion on the track near Bessbrook late on Friday 12th closed the line the following day. The trip was postponed for a week, and eventually ran on 20th

September. It proved to be an outstanding success, with nearly every seat on the eight-coach train being occupied. No.171 put up another outstanding performance, the running being up to VS-hauled Enterprise standards on many sections. The 33¼ miles from Portadown to Dundalk, which include severe speed restrictions at Scarva and Poyntzpass and the ascent of the Wellington Bank, were completed (start to stop) in 46½ minutes, with a minimum speed of 33mph and a maximum of 67 on the bank.



No.171 at Downhill with the extension from Portrush-Londonderry on 26th July. (C.P. Friel)

On the descent of Rush bank, a maximum speed of 69mph was attained, before adverse signals at Donabate.

Similar performance standards were achieved on the return trip, with 15 miles at over a mile a minute between Drogheda and Dundalk (maximum 68). It is ironic that on 20th September the weather was superb, but on 13th September when the train should have run, it rained incessantly. The “Steam Enterprise” trip replaced a proposal to run No.186 from Whitehead and No.184 from Mullingar, the two trains meeting at Dundalk and allowing the locos to be swapped over. This plan was a casualty of high costs, and of the decision to retain No.186 at Whitehead. Likewise a tour from Dublin to Portlaoise using No.184 was planned for 24th August, but had to be cancelled due to insufficient support.

Two trends have now emerged for RPSI operations, as a result of commercial experience over the past few years. The specialist enthusiast-orientated railtour has become confined to the 2 day tour, which relies heavily on cross channel support. Local support for additional enthusiast orientated tours, such as those run by the Society in the past, is not forthcoming.

This situation has led to the second trend, towards public-orientated trips, such as Dublin-Bray, Belfast-Dublin, Belfast-Portrush and Portrush-Castlerock. Over 90% of the revenue of these tours comes from non enthusiasts and it is clear that future commercial success will depend upon the exploitation of this market.

It is hoped that our 2-6-4T No.4 will emerge from her overhaul in the not too distant future, and will

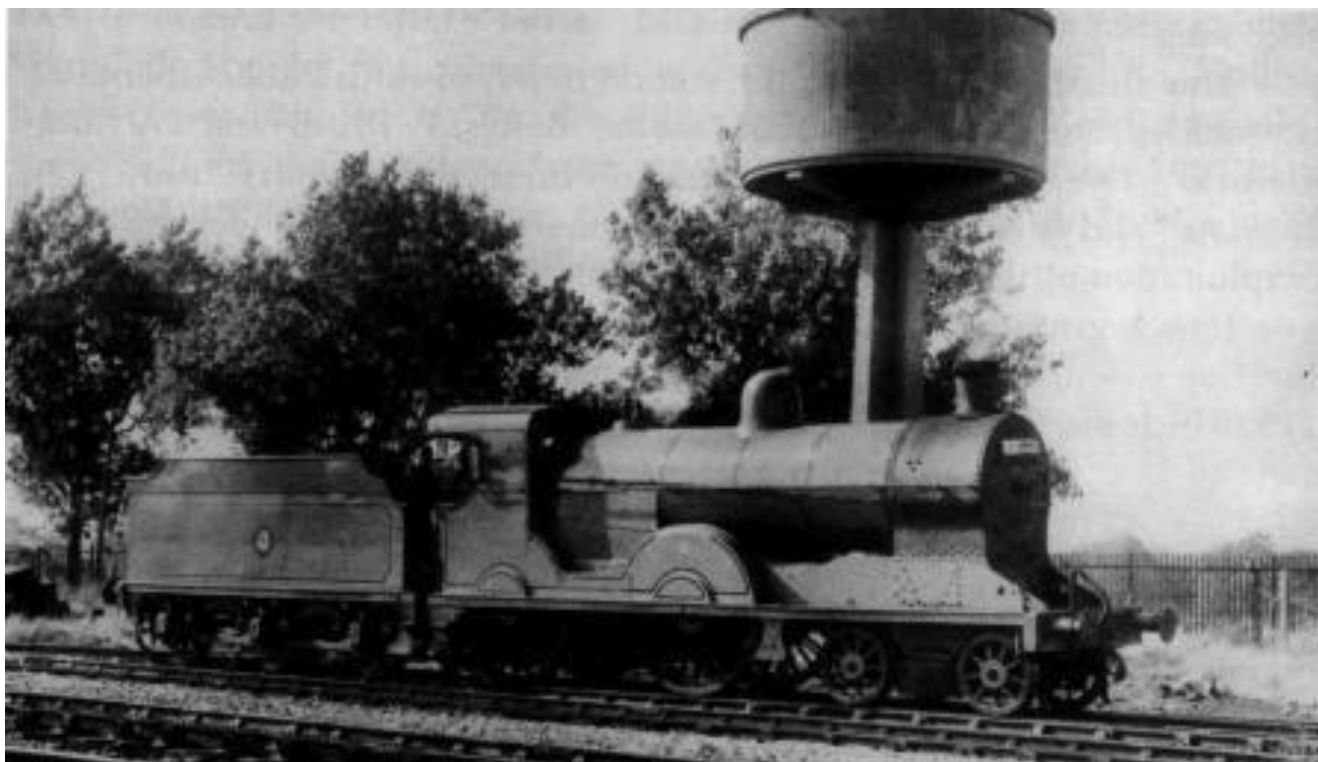
provide, once again, an alternative to No.171, which has handled all this year's workings impeccably.

LOCO RUNNING

Paul Newell

This is the first report I have written since taking over from John Friel, who, I must say, has given me invaluable help and advice.

Locomotive Running covers a variety of duties such as rostering crews (which now involves consideration of operating staff in the North and our Dublin-based members, who have established themselves in Mullingar), liaison with NIR and CIÉ, and purchasing of items such as oil, coal and spare parts.



No.171 prepares to move off shed at Fairview, prior to working the return "Steam Enterprise" on 20th September. (C.P. Friel)

The running locos at present are No.184 at Mullingar, No.171 at Whitehead, and 'departmental' locos No.23 and No.3 "R.H. Smyth" also at Whitehead. No.23 as ever proves to be reliable and useful for shunting, although plans are afoot to purchase another more powerful diesel loco to share the workload in Whitehead yard.

No.3 "R.H. Smyth" (known locally as "Harvey") continues to operate the Sunday Train Rides except on a few occasions when No.186 substituted. Harvey now boasts a vacuum brake which is primarily intended as a safety measure for the train rides but is also ideal for shunting long rakes of coaches, etc., at Whitehead. It took some time for drivers to master the use of this brake, as it does not operate on the loco, which retains its steam brake. This provoked comment from the Carriage & Wagon Department who claimed that on the Sunday Train Rides, where only one coach is used, the vacuum brake on the coach was being applied but the steam brake on the engine was not, to avoid wearing the brake shoes! Of course it is all completely untrue(!). No.171, I am pleased to say, has performed magnificently on her duties this year, travelling to Tralee, Londonderry, Dublin and Portrush without any serious faults whatsoever.

No.186 has now been withdrawn pending boiler repairs. This meant that her 3,345 gallon tender was also out of use, and it could be paired with No.184 to extend the latter's range. In a marathon operation lasting some 24 hours, the tender was transferred by road from Whitehead to Mullingar, where it was coupled to No.184. I would like to thank the following people for their help in the transfer of the tender: Peter Scott, Brian Hill, Patrick Kelly, Alan Edgar, the haulier, G. Gibson of Kilrea, and the Dublin men for their help in off-loading at Mullingar.

Our coal now mainly comes from Wakefield, Yorkshire and is transported in 20ft containers from the pit head to Whitehead via Garston and Belfast. This year we have sent up in smoke some 76 tons of coal, the 2 day tour alone taking 20 tons. For this tour we loaded coal at Whitehead into CIÉ open top containers which were despatched to Dublin and Tralee for replenishing the tender en route.



Loading bagged coal into CIÉ open topped containers at Whitehead. The coal was despatched to Dublin and Tralee prior to the two day tour. (C.P. Friel)

Esso Petroleum Ltd, Belfast still continue to supply us with free lube and cylinder oil for the locos which, in view of the price of fuel today, is a very worthy gift indeed. We have also purchased from Esso an HGV tractor unit, and most of a second one for spares, for the princely sum of £100. The current book value is over £2,000. This vehicle will eventually be used for the transport of various heavy loads, and should prove very useful indeed. In closing I would also like to thank the following companies who have assisted my department of the Society.

Lawther and Harvey Ltd., Belfast.
Brian Jones Freight Services Ltd., Bangor, Co. Down.
Gibson Haulage Ltd., Kilrea, Co. Derry.
Heron Haulage Ltd., Monkstown, Newtownabbey.
Stewart Haulage Ltd., Katesbridge. Co. Down.
Link Line Europa Ltd., Belfast,
Batyre Ltd., Belfast.
Cawoods Fuel Ltd., Belfast.

Wm. Smith and Sons, Wakefield, Yorkshire.
Northern Ireland Railways Ltd.,
Córas Iompair Éireann, Belfast and Dublin.
Shiels Haulage Ltd., Belfast.
John Kelly Ltd., Belfast.

LOCO MAINTENANCE

Peter Scott

No.3 “R.H. Smyth”. In traffic, Whitehead.

Completed: Partial retubing and hydraulic test. Fitting of vacuum brake.

Proposed:

- Attention to leading axleboxes to reduce side play.
- Repairs to smokebox, and smokebox door.
- Replacement of brake blocks.

No.3BG “Guinness”. In store, Whitehead.

No.4. Whitehead.

General overhaul continues.

Progress to date:

- Driving axleboxes - remetalling in progress.
- New tyre - bored out and fitted but not yet profiled.
- Refit keep plates - complete.
- Overhaul of steam heat apparatus - in progress.
- New piston and valve rings - being machined.
- New superheater flue tubes - fitted and still to be expanded.
- Fitting of new driving wheels - journals being prepared.
- Overhaul of steam brake - in progress.
- Overhaul of pony and bogie bearings - not started.
- New bushes for coupling and connecting rods - complete and metalled.
- Rebuilding of ashpan - in progress.
- Repairs to bunker - not yet started.

No.23. In traffic, Whitehead.

No.27. In store, Whitehead.

No.85 “Merlin”. Harland and Wolff.

General overhaul continues. Boiler removed from frames, repairs in progress.

No.171 “Slieve Gullion”. Whitehead.

- New tender brake blocks fitted.
- Patching of smokebox completed.

Proposed:

- New set of superheater elements.
- New piston heads, rings and glands.
- New slipper blocks.
- Repairs to tender tank.
- Hydraulic test.
- Repairs to smokebox door.
- Repairs to buffers and buffer beams.

No.184. In traffic, Mullingar.

Tender from No.186 fitted to increase water and coal capacity.

No.186. In store, Whitehead.

Completed:

- Adjustments to valve settings.

Proposed in long term:

- Repair firehole ring patch in firebox.
- New firebars.
- Attention to tubes.
- New superheater elements.

No.461. General overhaul, Mullingar.

Completed:

- Dismantling of pistons and valves.
- Removal of small tubes.
- Remetalling and fitting of driving axleboxes.

Proposed:

- Fit new tubes.
- New right-hand piston head.
- Repair and remetal bearings for Bissel truck.

Plant

Two shaping machines have been acquired from which one machine is to be assembled.

CARRIAGE & WAGON

Alan Edgar

It is now one year since Neil Hamilton and myself took over responsibility for the Carriage and Wagon department and it seems appropriate to review the period and examine what progress has been made. We have probably completed more work than in any other year, mainly due to covered accommodation allowing us to work unhindered throughout the winter. Despite this, the results may not be particularly apparent - there is no general transformation in the appearance of the train. This is because most of the work has been aimed at preventing further deterioration and has not been confined to coaches at present

in traffic. Only when this preventative maintenance is complete can we begin to restore coaches to a high standard.

Central to the concept of preventative maintenance is the roofing programme and the first job undertaken was to re-roof the North Atlantic brake. This work was made much easier by the construction of staging inside the shed by Ken Pullin. Ken also invented a jig, attached to the wall of the shed, and used to tighten the fabric on the roof. The fabric is nailed to the roof at one end of the coach, and is attached to the wall of the shed, via ropes, at the other end. It is then tightened by using a crowbar to move the coach away from the wall. Once tightened it is nailed down at the free end. Reroofing 91 was not without complication. One of the features of this coach in its later days was a large gap between one of the doors and the post it closed against. At some time this had been repaired by hammering a large number of six inch nails into the base of the post the door was hinged from (which was also a corner post of the coach), packing out the strike plate with old cigarette packets, and closing the gap with a double layer of draught excluding strip. Closer examinations revealed that the cantrail and solebar had rotted at the corner of the coach allowing the corner post to move outward from the body by about two inches. Repair of the defect involved piecing in new sections of cantrail and solebar to which the corner post, itself sound, was then fastened. In addition about 4 square feet of roof planking had to be replaced. The other three corners of the coach were found to have similar defects, although nowhere near as serious, but which had to be repaired before the new roof could be applied. This is one reason why roofing often takes longer than anticipated as it is difficult to predict such defects before the old fabric is stripped off.



Alan Love applying the final coat of paint to 114. (C.P. Friel)

Around the time that this roof was being completed, the decision was taken in the Council that all coaches should revert to their original numbers, (i.e. those which they will eventually carry) rather than the previous policy that coaches would be renumbered when overhauled. Most of the ex CIÉ coaches are not affected but all the ex NIR coaches revert to their NCC and GNR numbers. The table included shows the new and old numbers, and also the staggering size of our carriage fleet! At the same time the Council approved £200 expenditure on basic hand tools for carriage work.

Original No.		Description	No. When Purchased (if different from original)
Ex GSR	861	Comp Brake	484A

	934*	Composite	526A
	935	Saloon Brake	640A
	1142	First	4012
	1327	Third	
	1328	Third	
	1333	Open Third	
	1335	Third	
Ex GNR	9	Open Third	586
	50	Saloon	150
	88	Dining Car	552
	98	Open Third	581
	114	Open Third Brake	114N
	227	First	561
	231	First Brake	562
Ex NCC	68	Composite	274
	87	Dining Car	550
	91	Third Brake	472
	238	Third	340
	241	Third	342
	243	Third	358

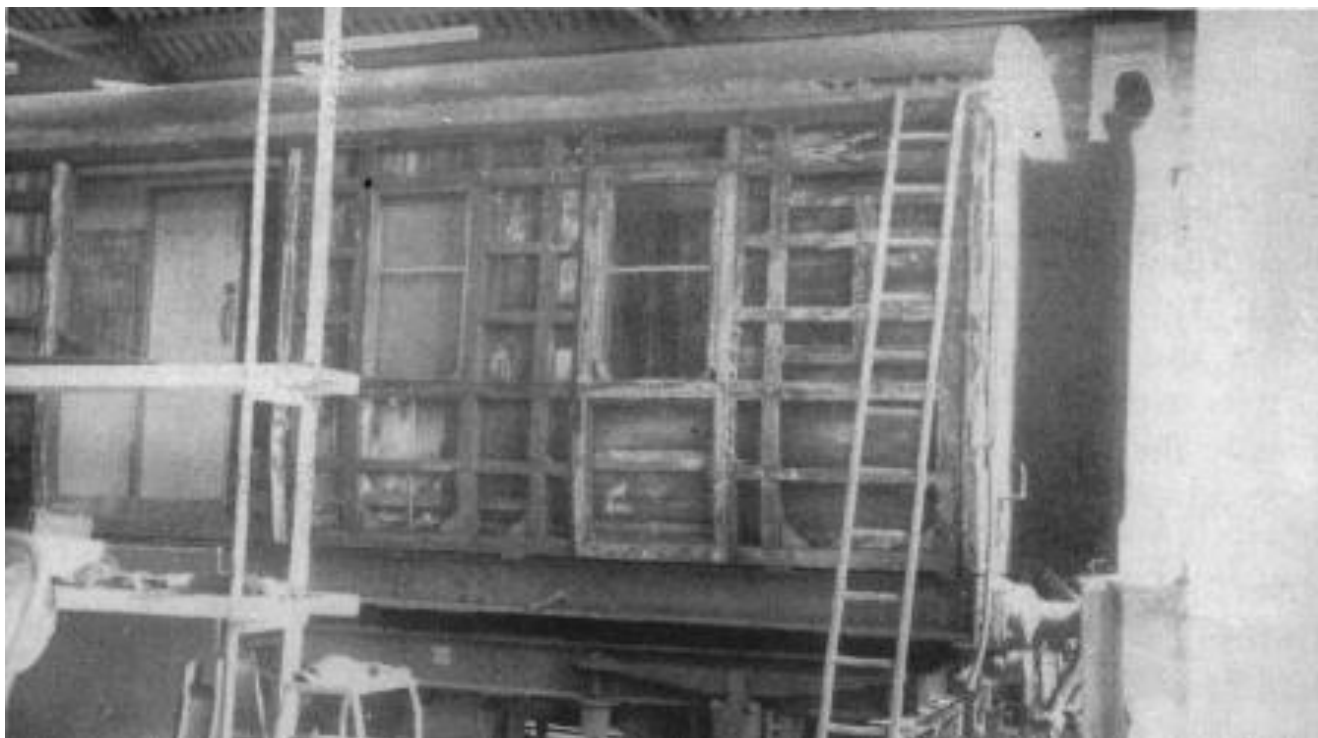
*Ex WL&WR currently fitted out as a dormitory,

These have proved extremely useful and have been heavily used ever since. The next coach brought into the shed for attention was 231, the 'Workers and workshop' coach. Stripping down revealed the roof to be sound, but there was evidence of rot in the doorposts. Consequently we removed four small panels from different parts of the bodywork to give some indication of the condition of the structure behind them. Unfortunately, extensive rot was found behind three of them. I was therefore left with no option but to rule out the coach's return to traffic for the 1980 operating season, and to strip off the panelling completely for examination and repair of the structure. When this was completed we found a total of 25 vertical members of the body frame in need of replacement. Wood has now been ordered for this work, but it will be two years at the very least before this coach becomes available again, following what will amount to a virtual rebuild. Opportunity will be taken to restore the coach to its original condition, which involves placing a fourth compartment where the guard's van is at present, and moving the guard's van to the end of the coach: its location before a heating boiler was installed.

The demise of 231 left us with two problems. In its stripped down state, the coach had to remain indoors, thus occupying the workshop road. Secondly, we now had no workshop vehicle for use on tours. The first problem was solved by courtesy of the Locomotive Department who gave us access to No.4 shed road for storage of 231, allowing other coaches to be brought into No.5. The second was solved by the resurrection of 114. The original 'gang of 114' were responsible for much of the work done, Alan Love achieving particular fame by repainting the coach almost single-handedly (no doubt

he was holding a big brick in the other one). Several others were also involved, with Tony Ragg and Ken Pullin replacing missing seats and damaged panels. The Locomotive Department undertook the replacement of one BUT gangway with a normal one, and replaced some rotten footboards. In addition they constructed a deluxe workshop in the van of the coach.

By now the operating season was virtually upon us and the coaches were brake tested. We then discovered that the brakes were not, as had been reported to us, in good condition with the exception of the dining car. Thus Neil had to overhaul the vacuum cylinders in several coaches in addition to the diner. In most cases this involved dismantling the cylinder and replacing all perishable components such as rolling rings and neck glands. To ease the task of raising and lowering vacuum cylinders from coaches a small trolley jack was purchased.



One end of 231 following removal of the aluminium panelling. (C.P. Friel)

238 and 241 were the recipients of considerable attention. The (very) life expired lead acid batteries were replaced with alkaline ones, thus restoring the lighting. Meanwhile, Tony Ragg spent several weekends crawling about on the ballast; while replacing missing steam heating fittings from beneath these coaches. It is our intention that next year's train will be capable of being fully lit and heated, allowing out of season operations if required.

Between the 2 Day Tour and the Open Day, 1333 was moved into the shed. All the Bredins suffer from leaky roofs and 1333 was chosen as guinea pig to see if this could be cured. Unlike the other coaches, the Bredin roofs consist of galvanised steel panels with aluminium straps over the joints. It is these joints which leak. All the old mastic was scraped out of the joints and replaced. In addition the very shallow section CIÉ pattern gutters were replaced with much deeper section NIR pattern. Finally the whole roof was given two coats of the light grey paint which we have adopted as standard roof colour. This treatment seems to have cured the leaks.

The final job before the Flyer season was the re-roofing of 241. Unfortunately, stripping down the old fabric revealed that water from a leaking toilet tank had caused extensive rot at one end of the coach. While the roof is now watertight, the rotten end will require stripping down and rebuilding in the near

future. The defective tank also meant that the toilet concerned had to be taken out of use. Both tanks in this coach now require replacement.

All was not lost, however, as in the meantime John Shaw and Dave Humphries were engaged (sorry) in repairing one of the toilets in 238. This had been boarded up in a vandalised condition since NIR days. It was not a straightforward job as the ceiling and much of the plumbing had to be replaced, and the door had to be heavily rebuilt. The formica, with which the UTA had panelled the walls, was removed, thus reverting to the earlier wooden panelled finish (some of the original panelling was intact behind the formica).

Following painting the 'superloo' was commissioned in time for the Dublin Tour, and has been the subject of much favourable comment.

During the running season, 1142 was moved inside the shed for re-roofing. Stripping down revealed, as expected, that she is about the soundest coach we have (sceptics please note). The only vehicle purchased this season has been 526a, a second WL&WR coach, formerly a composite but at present fitted out as a dormitory. There has been no further progress with the Director's Saloon at York Road.

There is plenty of work to keep us occupied before next operating season. The roofing programme continues, and it will be necessary to refurbish several of the running coaches - work such as re-upholstering and repainting. Needless to say, any help forthcoming would be gratefully received.

SITE

Johnny Glendinning

Since the last report, a large amount of track work has taken place at Whitehead. This has been due partly to the amount of mechanisation that the Site Officer can now call upon, but no amount of machinery would ever replace the large number of willing hands which I was able to call upon from time to time, and the small band of regulars who kept things moving weekend after weekend, especially Ken Pullin and Dermot Mackie who on occasions look charge of work parties in my absence.

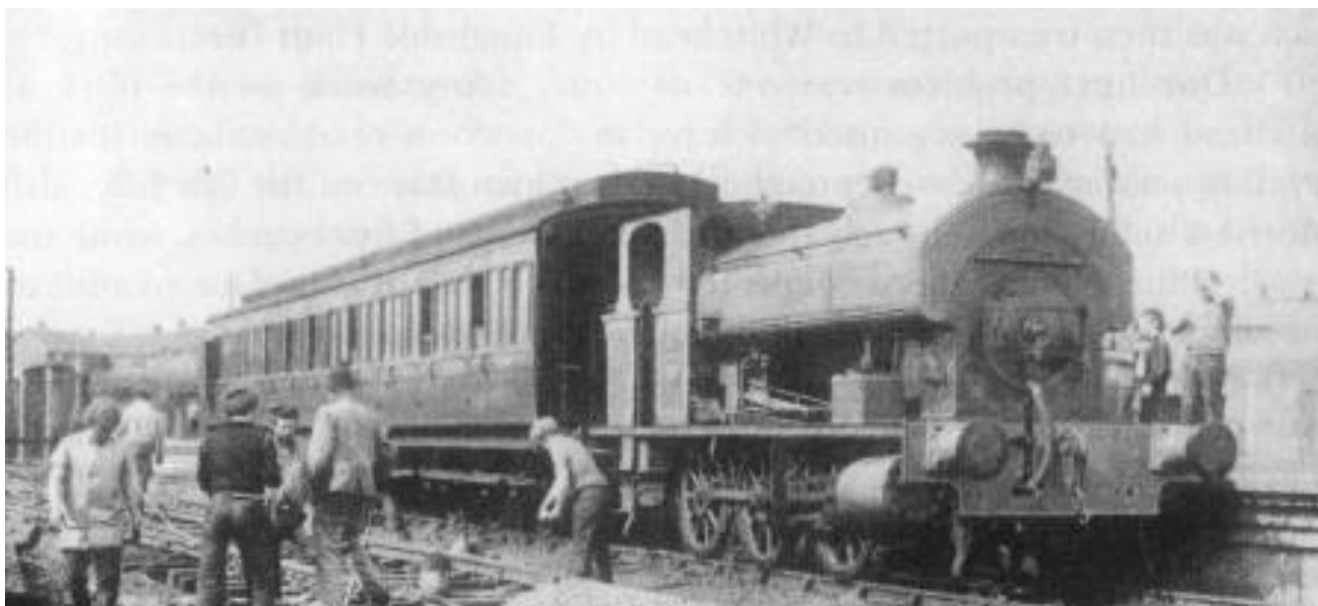


The New Crossover takes shape: We wish to deny any suggestion that the figure in the centre of the photo is sleeping on the job. (C.P. Friel)

No.2 carriage siding has been partially relaid and ballasted, the ballasting being the first job for the Society's recently acquired ballast wagon. Easter saw a gang working at Magheramorne removing a crossover, which was then transported to Whitehead by Loughside Plant Hire.

Our next problem was one of time. Any work on the track at Whitehead had to be organised to leave the platform road available for the operating season (June-September). The Open Day, on the 5th July, also required a siding long enough to store an engine and five coaches, while the carriage sidings had to be reconnected for the Flyer season. Due to a lot of hard work being put in by the members, each deadline was met, in one case by only an hour. My thanks go to all those who worked on the crossover project and especially those who turned out on Tuesday nights to put in a few hours. Without you all it would not have been possible.

Other jobs carried out under the control of the Site Officer have included fire precautions, plumbing and electrical work. Several additional fire extinguishers have been installed. This is part of a programme to keep the site up to NIFA standards. Among the items still to be installed are three fire hose reels.



***“R.H. Smyth” on Sunday train rides duty, while a track gang works at installing the new crossover.
(C.P. Friel)***

On the plumbing front, Tony Ragg, plumber extraordinaire, has installed three carriage watering points in the carriage sidings. Thus it is now possible to water an eight coach train without having to move it.

The present electricity supply to the site is under considerable strain; the amount and variety of work being undertaken at Whitehead being such that a great deal more electrical equipment is in use. Therefore the Council has approved uprating the present 3 phase 80amp supply to one of 3 phase 200amp. Our thanks go to John Taylor who designed the new scheme in such a way as to enable an easy change over. Our resident electrician Mark Stanley, who has managed to squeeze every last watt out of our present supply will welcome every helping hand he can get when work on the new scheme starts.

At the time of writing, trackwork has resumed: the next stage of the eight coach run round is being installed. This trackwork is necessary if the train rides are extended to Carrickfergus.

Finally, but by no means least, may I say thank you to Lavens Steele on behalf of the rest of the members who use the Tarry at Whitehead. Lavens not only comes down most Saturdays to work on the site but also one day mid-week to clean the Tarry. He keeps the place spotless against difficult odds(!).

I wish now to invite any member who would like to join what I can only describe as a happy band of workers, to come down to Whitehead and enjoy some of the facilities your society provides. The work

is not necessarily skilled. It's not even hard and, you never know, you might enjoy it.

COLLECTING IRISH RAILWAY PHOTOGRAPHS

Charles P. Friel

I suppose all of us have looked at the illustrations in books and magazines and wondered where the photographs had come from. You will have seen photo credits such as "Real Photographs X251" or "Locomotive and General Railway Photographs 2792", and wondered just where you could lay your hands on such material. Your author and the owners of the various collections would like to think that you will want to find out more and begin to build up your own collection of prints.

Some time ago when the late Drew Donaldson was editing this magazine, we began to use the occasional print from the commercial collections to supplement Drew's excellent photographs (which often had the uncanny knack of including some obtuse detail or rare working referred to by our authors). When I took over the magazine and tour brochures, I turned to the collections more and more and began to buy in vast quantities of prints in an attempt to keep up the high standards of illustration of our publications. The idea was that the collection material and my own contemporary photographs would cover the topics discussed in our pages.



From the Ken Nunn Collection is this shot of 325 at Mallow in 1914. The details of this photo are discussed in the article. (Nunn 1882)

So it came about that I gradually bought all of the commercially available prints and in the following paragraphs I want to share with you some of the thrills of discovery that lie ahead for the newcomer as well as give you some idea of the contents of the collections and provide enough information for you to go off hunting on your own. It is certainly an intriguing job working your way through a list, hoping to find a photo of your local station, favourite engine or well-remembered coach. And what about those odd vans you used to see sometimes; would they have been photographed sometime? Remember that evening passenger train with the van next the engine, could it be there somewhere too? Or maybe someone photographed that junction before the layout was simplified. What about the overall roof at??

The answers to questions like these and many more can all be found in the six lists under review here and summarised in the table at the end. The various figures quoted are not intended to be infallible but rather to give you some idea of the sheer bulk of material available. Figures alone, though, give no idea as to their actual contents. To take one example, the L&GRP list includes a smattering of buses, coats of arms and piers as well as a holy well! In some places, too, no distinction is drawn between pre- and post-grouping photos; a notable exception to this being the LPC list which includes Dublin and Drogheda, Newry Warrenpoint & Rostrevor as well as the Ulster.

I have arbitrarily broken the lists into broad and narrow gauge mainly because some folk I know will have nothing to do with one or the other - for reasons best known to themselves. This breakdown does reveal though just how popular the 5 foot 3 lines were with photographers. This trend is contrary to the plethora of published works on the narrow gauge lines and relative dearth of broad gauge books - a trend only now being slowly and painfully corrected.

A glance at the final column will show that the broad gauge lines, in order of popularity, are GSWR, GNR and NCC and this must roughly agree with any calculation based on mileage, locos or rolling stock. The following bunch is led by the small but highly efficient County Down, ahead of the capital-based DSER and the long but attractively branched MGWR. The Waterford Limerick and Western scores well for a line that lost its independence in 1910 and is just ahead of the much longer-lived Sligo Leitrim which was still in original pennilessness by 1957.



Locomotive Publishing Company photographers visited many a remote spot. Here MGWR F class 2-4-0 No.38 leaves Recess on the Clifden branch. (87301)

Perhaps it should be mentioned here that the collections all cover the period from about 1900 to 1939, with exceptions of course. The earliest published dates must be those of the Nunn Collection whose catalogue allows one to trace photographs at Waterside, Bundoran, Enniskillen, Sligo, Maryborough and Ennis on successive days between the 10th and 15th September 1898. This particular collection gives meticulous details of train times, locations and dates but details such as these are rarely repeated elsewhere. To take the collections in order, Fayle usually quotes the year but sometimes gives a period

such as “34-39” or “02-06”. Both the LGRP and LPC lists quote years, sometimes qualified with a “c” for circa or about. The lists from Real Photographs themselves, though, give very few date indications. The other privately-taken collection, the Kelland, usually quotes dates but sometimes includes only the year.

Why do we want dates? Let me use one of the accompanying illustrations as an example. The picture is Nunn 1882 and the given caption is “325, 4.4.0, 1.30pm Queenstown-Kingstown at Mallow. 26.7.1914”.

Behind the bald words lies hidden the legendary American Mails, the blue riband of GSWR trains (if you don’t mind a transposed metaphor). An eastbound trans-Atlantic passenger heading for London could reach his destination up to a day ahead of schedule by disembarking at Cobh (then Queenstown), paying six first class fares for the provision of a coach on the mail train and hurtling up the GSWR main lines as far as Islandbridge, round the Loop Line by Glasnevin and Newcomen Junction and out the DSE to Kingstown (now Dun Laoghaire). The purchasing of six first class fares was seldom called for; in practice a first and second class train was provided as there was usually a good traffic going forward. Before getting back to dates, you will probably notice that the train is firmly stopped, with the bag in. So what? The train was shown to the public as running non-stop! It did, however, stop at Mallow and Thurles in the Up direction.



Locomotive and General have quite a few station views like this one (7342) of Antrim taken in 1936 and showing many differences from the present day. The unnamed Scotch engine, U2 77 waits beside the water tank on the NCC Up main line.

Where does the date come in? Well, by looking up one of those clever multi-year calendars you will find that the date was a Sunday and that makes this a Cunard special. The shot ought to have been taken in late evening for the quoted Cobh departure time was about 9pm. The photo would have been almost impossible to take with the slow emulsions of the time at this late hour without losing the people moving about. Perhaps it was running particularly late (or early?) that Sunday. But if you look

up Messrs Murray and McNeil's "Great Southern and Western Railway" (IRRS 1976) you will find on page 136 that the last Cunard special ran on 1st March 1914. Where do we go from here then?

Elsewhere dates can be useful to confirm whether the coach on the tail, behind the just-visible guard's ducket, is the summer-only slip working; they can confirm when a GN loco still bore the green livery / nameplates / built-up chimney / exhaust injector; on the NCC they can help unravel the rebuilding / reboiling / renaming of the locos, the 4-4-0s in general and the A class in particular; they can help confirm BCDR records sadly lost in the Blitz or help identify just when a track layout was altered.

Trying to perform the operation in reverse, using available information to decide when a photo was taken, is a more demanding and more satisfying occupation. Could you date something using just the newspaper billboards at the station bookstall or a signal cabin under reconstruction, an engine coupled to an unusual tender or the livery of the coaches? Certainly it isn't easy but does provide quite a challenge.



Real Photographs provide this shot to please the modellers. BCDR 14 has brought this interesting train of six wheelers from Belfast to Newcastle and provides the backdrop to a loco release arrangement that would horrify modern maintenance cost accounting. (Z130)

If dates are rarish then places can present many a similar hazard for the student. The lists from Real Photographs, in particular, quote only the loco number and the class. It is only by ordering prints, or consulting someone else's collection (if you get lucky) that you can really sample the delights of the identifying Essexford, Shillelagh, Oranmore, Cahirciveen or Ballynure. On the whole the photographers stayed with the bigger stations, the main lines, the principal sheds. The LGRP list breaks the mould a bit by adventuring to Draperstown, Killaloe, Maguiresbridge, Castlederg or Correylongford (sic). The much shorter list from LPC penetrates the fastnesses of Recess, Courtmacsherry and, heaven help us, Ballybunion.

When you get your Nunn list, it could pass an evening over the winter trying to reconstruct his journeyings around Ireland - somewhere at the top of the piece I made a start and you can easily take over for his half-dozen subsequent visits.

Of course you can use the lists for slightly more legitimate and profitable pursuits and for a modest

investment begin to tap the endless surprises that await you. There are four and a half thousand prints waiting to whisk you back to before you were born, revealing all sorts of detail that will take an age with the glass to extract, depicting the everyday scene when trains were frequent, busy and varied, station hoardings proclaimed a multitude of excursions, Virol was advertised on many a wall, private owner wagons lurked behind a shunter's bothy, half seen coaches defied identification and elaborate signalling decorated many a quiet station.

Have you ever seen Great Victoria Station without the Boyne Bridge, the Bury single at Darlington, a 400 at Broadstone, Harlandic diesel electric 28 in BCDR colours, 900 running as a 4-6-2T or a maker's photo of Castlederg and Victoria Bridge No.1? They're all there just waiting.

By way of a footnote, let me say that this brief article only skims the surface of the possibilities presented by these collections. There are other and very much disorganised sources of photos which can be found in fusty attics, family albums, local papers or wedged behind fading picture frames. Amongst the small, but growing, band of serious collectors there is a rare degree of co-operation and in this way many interesting and rare items have been exchanged. Inevitably you will tend to concentrate on a favourite company/line/period and often other collectors can pass on items of particular interest to you and you will be surprised just how often you will be able to return the compliment. I suppose we will never know just how much rare material gets destroyed or discarded each year and it is probably just as well; but the fact remains that seldom does the twelve months go round without some new source being finally run to earth. You too can play a part here and find a considerable source of enjoyment, intrigue and challenge along the way.



Kelland Collection covers a slightly more modern period than many of its colleagues but even in 1950 there was still the odd left-over from much earlier times. Here Sligo Leitrim railbus, before it was rebodied, pauses at Manorhamilton, towing a hefty trailer presumably full of sacks of sugar, flour and the occasional bike. (24180)

But wherever or however you begin to assemble prints, it is hard to overlook the collections itemised here. There are boundless surprises awaiting you for what are really very reasonable prices. Certainly the quality leaves nothing to be desired, except in one or two cases where technical shortfall is compensated by the content and, in fairness, the lists do warn where substandard negatives are to be found. It is sobering now to look at my old XI list from Real Photographs dating back to when postcards were a shilling each or nine shillings a dozen, postage 6d extra. Prices nowadays vary and hover around the 20p region but there are still considerable reductions for bulk buying.

So there you have it; for the price of a couple of stamps and a few stamped addressed envelopes, you have an Aladdin's lamp back to those nostalgic days now so often seen through the haze of pipe smoke

and upraised glass. With just a tinge of imagination, it's like climbing onto a magic carpet.

FAYLE COLLECTION

Owned by Irish Railway Record Society.

LOCOMOTIVE AND GENERAL RAILWAY PHOTOGRAPHS

Owned by David and Charles Limited; list for Ireland is G14.

LOCOMOTIVE PUBLISHING COMPANY

Owned by Ian Allan Ltd; list for Ireland is LP9. List and prints from Real Photographs Co Ltd., see above.

KELLAND COLLECTION

Owned by Bournemouth Railway Club; lists for Ireland are 22 - Great Northern; 23 - Great Southern; 24 - rest of Ireland.

KEN NUNN COLLECTION

Owned by Locomotive Club of Great Britain; list for Ireland is Ireland.

REAL PHOTOGRAPHS CO LTD

Owned by Real Photographs Co Ltd; lists for Ireland are XI - all Ireland, broad and narrow gauge; X2 - narrow gauge - possibly temporarily withdrawn, but do ask; X3 - all Ireland, mainly broad with some narrow gauge.



Real Photographs bring us this nostalgic view of Great Victoria Street where two S2 locos wait to leave: Lugnaquilla and Slievenamon at platforms 3 and 2. No.190's tender is the extended one for the Enterprise test runs of the late forties. (Z108)

	Fayle	LGRP	LPC	Kelland	Numn	Real	Total
Broad Gauge							
Belfast and County Down	35	59	28	29	25	64	241
Belfast and Northern Counties		17	13				30
Cork Bandon and South Coast	22	5	11	10	20	7	75
CIE Diesels				47			47
Cork and Youghal		2					2
Dublin and Lucan	1		1		1		3
Dundalk Newry and Greenore	2	5	2	4	3	8	24
Dublin and South Eastern	109	1	36		27	11	184
Dublin Wicklow and Wexford		32			4		36
Great Northern	82	113	66	130	24	123	538
Great Southern (and Western)	153	296	114	307	50	356	1,276
Midland Great Western	75	30	34		27	11	76
Northern Counties	51	150	23	57	26	177	484
Rosslare Railway					1		1
Sligo Leitrim	9	20	5	13	10	25	82
Timoleague and Courtmacsherry			5		5	3	13
UTA Diesels				12			12
Waterford and Central Ireland	8	2	4		5		19
Waterford Dungarvan and Lismore	2		2				4
Waterford Limerick and Western	41	15	22		15		93
Waterford and Tramore	10	3	5	1	12	10	41
Others	108						108
TOTAL							3,699

Broad Gauge

	Fayle	LGRP	LPC	Kelland	Numm	Real	Total
Ballycastle	3		1		4		8
Ballymena and Larne		2			9		11
Bessbrook and Newry		4				4	8
Cork Blackrock and Passage	2	9	2	2	7	5	27
County Donegal	21	42	9	14	17	19	123
Cavan and Leitrim	6	43	2	31	11	13	106
Cork and Macroom	1	2	4	3	12	4	26
Cork and Muskerry	4	14	4		13	9	44
Castlederg and Victoria Bridge	1	10	2		7	6	26
Clogher Valley	7	42	1		8	21	79
Dublin and Blessington	5	5	2		9	10	31
Giant's Causeway		10			3		13
Listowel and Ballybunion	5	2	4		13	2	24
Londonderry and Burtonport Ext			3			4	7
Londonderry and Lough Swilly	13	55	7	8	20	23	126
Northern Counties	10	36	10		5	26	87
Schull and Skibbereen	7			1	5	2	15
Tralee and Dingle	9	9	3	6	15	13	55
West Carbery		1					1
West Clare	14	22	5	11	7	15	74
TOTAL							901
Industrials			5	10			15
Buses and Street Trams	43						43
TOTAL							58
GRAND TOTAL							4.658

It is now over 20 years since I first visited Ireland. It wasn't especially the railways which attracted me but rather the country itself. Whilst working during the holidays as a porter at Victoria Station, London, I had taken to reading the Irish Times, passed on to me by a student from Trinity. It was clear that whilst Ireland wasn't as abroad as, say, Afghanistan neither was it virtually another bit of England, only cut off by the Irish Sea. So I determined to see just how different it was for myself. The year was 1959, I set out from Paddington on the evening boat train in the charge of a Llandore Castle and arrived eventually at Rosslare as a misty September dawn was breaking. The bright green carriages and the rather grimy, unpainted diesel waiting on the quayside were certainly no part of British Railways. As we travelled west at no great speed across a flat, damp, mist-covered landscape, the absence of heating combined with my hunger and lack of sleep persuaded me that perhaps I should have stayed at home. But Waterford cheered me up.

I had breakfast in a cafe overlooking that marvellous waterfront, and then, feeling if not a new man then at least a much restored one, I walked back over the bridge to re-examine the station. The sun was rapidly dispelling the mist - indeed it shone almost continuously for the rest of my stay - and steam and smoke could be seen rising into the blue sky over the station buildings. This was better.



***J15 No.157 with the 10am Waterford-Macmine Junction via New Ross. The carriage is an ex-GSWR. Clerestory composite. A similar vehicle is still in departmental service with CIÉ.
(Michael H.C. Baker)***

I knew that dieselisation, which had hardly begun in England, was well advanced in the Republic, but steam obviously had not yet vanished. I was just in time to see a large 0-6-0 set off with a lengthy goods train for Wexford. Had I realised it at the time I should have felt much at home for the locomotive, No.263, was one of the few designed at Inchicore by Maunsell. In my part of the world Maunsell locomotives were two a penny, although the Irish 0-6-0 bore little resemblance to his later Ashford products. J15s, of whose fame I was aware, made up the rest of the active steam scene at Waterford.

The highlight of the day was the departure of the 10:40am to Macmine Junction. Although I was subsequently to come across plenty of steam worked goods and shunting duties, the Macmine branch

was one of the few remaining steam worked passenger services. No.157 was the engine, clean, if somewhat worn looking with bent front framing and a very old outside framed tender, her train consisting of a most impressive twelve wheeled clerestory and an incongruous looking 4-wheel tin van.

After photographing the departure of this ensemble I wandered down to the other end of the station and came across a substantial collection of more veterans. There were a number of six-wheeled carriages, intact but out of use, and some abandoned steam engines, rusting away on the banks of the Suir.

Several were fearsomely ancient 4-4-0s from the McDonnell and Aspinall eras, gradually being broken up, which in those days seemed to be the obvious thing to do with obsolete steam engines. Wouldn't we give something today to have had one preserved?



Maunsell 0-6-0 No.263 leaving Waterford for Wexford. (Michael H.C. Baker)

Next morning I hitch-hiked to Cork in a cattle truck which made several detours, the driver shopping to chat to locals whose accents were so broad that they might as well have been speaking Irish for all I could understand. The countryside looked its best on that warm, early September day, particularly the sweeping uplands of the Comeragh Mountains, silent and peaceful away to the north in the direction of Clonmel. We arrived in Cork just before 5pm, giving me my first experience of one of that city's ferocious traffic jams. But it was a place one could not but like with its setting about the Lee, its bustle and its general air of healthy prosperity. When I read Frank O'Connor's autobiography I liked it even more although I felt for him during his unhappy times as a GSWR goods clerk.

Cork engine shed, as at Waterford, was beside the river; but was a good deal larger. It housed a number of diesels but there was also a surprisingly large selection of steam classes, the greatest I was to see on the GSR section of CIÉ. Apart from J15s, of course, there were 0-6-0Ts, familiar looking Maunsell 2-6-0s, and a handsome Bandon 4-6-0T. This was a wheel arrangement new to me and its representative, No.464, made a fine show, steam bursting from her safety valves, brown smoke curling from her chimney. Steam had been displaced by diesel on the Dublin expresses and most of the 13 4-6-0 tender engines employed on them withdrawn, but I had the good luck to find that one of the

survivors, No.402, was rostered for the overnight Dublin goods, and a fine sight she made as she pounded out of the yard and up the 1 in 78 through Glanmire Road tunnel.

A railcar took me to Cobh. Transatlantic liners still called there but the only steam aided large scale movement of passengers that day was taking place at the Junction where a J15 pulled in with an excursion from Youghal. Back at Cork I found more six-wheel carriages and these, unlike those at Waterford, were clearly still in service, something to confirm the legends concerning the antiquities to be found in Ireland. That evening I went to see "South Pacific", which wasn't as bad as I had expected, and next morning set off for Limerick. It was drizzling when I arrived - a rare occurrence that summer. It did nothing to enhance the city's somewhat elusive beauty, and being Sunday everything was shut. I've since come to realise that Limerick needs more than sunshine to improve its appearance, indeed my mother-in-law, who is Limerick born, reckons its salvation lies in demolition and a new start. The only steam engines I found were another group of derelict 4-4-0s, including No.334, a 1936 built D4 with an outside framed bogie which gave it a distinctly Great Western air, and a partly dismantled GSWR 0-6-0T, No.218.

In the morning the sun shone and I was offered a lift by the coastal road to Galway which was a great delight. I passed through West Clare territory but saw no activity.

I liked Galway city instantly. Celebrated in one of Bing Crosby's less inspired efforts, "Galway Bay", the song doesn't mention the railway station and thereby missed No.653, one of the classic Midland 2-4-0s which was shunting in the goods yard. She was destined to become the last of her class, being withdrawn in 1963.



GNR 4-4-2T No.67 leaving Amiens Street for Howth. (Michael H.C. Baker)

Much as I would have liked to explore Connemara I had no time and next day I turned eastwards. By mid-afternoon another cattle-truck was depositing me on the Quays. Dublin may have its faults but its virtues are legion, not the least of them in those days being the Great Northern. Although it had been officially declared dead almost a year earlier, the GNR atmosphere at Amiens Street was little diluted. Certainly there were plenty of diesels, green CIÉ railcars on the southside suburban services and the

attractive blue and cream liveried GNR cars on the Howth branch and the Enterprise, but there was steam in great profusion. Indeed in an hour and a half on that brilliantly sunny Tuesday evening far more steam powered trains arrived and departed than I had seen in total in the rest of the country. And such engines. Smoke rolled out of the chimneys of big black 0-6-0s standing outside the red brick shed beyond the platforms at the east end of the station, elegant 4-4-2Ts with gold shaped GNR initials, wheeled rakes of mahogany coloured carriages, some modern steel panelled, many older wooden ones with plenty of straight edge beading, and finally, of course, there were the blue 4-4-0s.

I like brunswick green steam engines but it isn't a colour which ought to be universally applied and the reappearance of red Stanier Pacifics in the late 1950s was greatly welcomed. Now of course I'd heard about the blue GNR 4-4-0s, and maybe seen a colour picture of one, but nothing could compare with the real thing. And the real thing was VS "Lagan", safety valves lifting as she waited to depart with a lengthy special for Belfast. She'd lost her GNR tender markings and had been renumbered No.58 by the UTA but otherwise her pedigree was pure - blue livery with red tender framing and black and white lining and a rake of mahogany carriages. Ten past six and she let rip, blasting past the sheds, over the Royal Canal and the Tolka, gathering speed past East Wall Junction and Dublin Bay, which came almost up to the tracks then, my ears and eyes following her up the long straight until her exhaust was finally lost to view around the curve at Clontarf.



VS No.208 "Lagan", by now numbered No.58 by the UTA, pulls out of Amiens Street with a Belfast Express. (Michael H.C. Baker)

But there was more yet, one of the 1915 Us, No.197 "Lough Neagh", arriving with a stopping train from Drogheda, and on the turntable, behind the shed, S Class No.174 "Carrantouhill". These two latter still carried their GNR initials, crest and numbers. Their blue paintwork was beautifully clean and they were certainly something to remember, especially the supremely elegant S, but I count myself most fortunate to have been in time to experience the spectacle of the last and perhaps the most handsome design of all 4-4-0s at work on the top link express duties for which it was intended.

Two years later I came back and visited the North, I travelled behind steam on both the GNR main line (although not behind a 4-4-0) and on the Macmine branch. Six years later I met Maeve - my wife, now No.800 - and since then I have spent at least one month in Ireland every year; perhaps your editor will allow me at some future date to indulge in some more reminiscences of the last days of steam.

Every now and again the question of a Great Northern 4-6-0 comes up for discussion and when H.C. Casserley mentioned the topic in his book, I suppose it was inevitable that questions would be asked again. I have been doing some research and would like to bring members up to date with the latest state of the art.

Before doing so, let me support a couple of Robin Barr's comments in the last Five Foot Three that the heyday of the GN was before World War I when the QLs (that forgotten class) and the Ss were setting a new pace on the main line. Mention of David L. Smith reminds me of his "Tales of the Glasgow and South Western", surely one of the best railway yarn books ever and one that stands many re-readings. I suppose the closest Ireland gets is Ahrons and his inebriated friend stumbling around dark sheds or indeed Mac Arnold's closely-observed GN with its wealth of characters and details. On the subject of the blue livery on the Compounds, others will tell you that the first loco so painted was No.87 but I am sure No.84 was the first.

I should like to take a little more time to consider the question of a Great Northern 4-6-0 mentioned by Henry Casserley and discussed briefly by Robin Barr in the last Five Foot Three.

Let's start at the beginning. H.C. Casserley said "The reason the GNR never had a 4-6-0 was dictated by the length of the traversers in Dundalk Locomotive Works which could not accommodate a 10-wheeled engine" Taking this up, Robin Barr comments that:

1. The difference between a 4-6-0 and a 4-4-2T eludes him.
2. The LNER B12 4-6-0 was as compact as many a 4-4-0.

Beginning there, I'd like first to look at Robin's first comment. The passenger tanks, or Glover tanks as some people call them, were indeed awkward to get into and out of the shops.

Their total wheelbase was 28ft 4½in and getting one into the shops should have taken a couple of hours if all went well but usually ended up as a half-day job. The tanks were brought to the running line end of the erecting shop and pushed onto the traversing table chimney first to Belfast. Two operations were then necessary before the engine could be placed over the pit in the shops. First was the removal of the rear buffers and then work was concentrated on lifting the rear, or radial, wheels clear of the rails. We packed up between the bottom of the box and the stay and then the rear of the loco was jacked up until the radial wheels were clear of the rails, using a pair of 20 ton water hydraulic jacks. Packing was then put under the radial wheels and on top of the trailing driving boxes and the engine lowered to compress the springs. With the engine down, the packing between radial box and stay was increased as much as possible. Another short jacking allowed the packing under the radial wheels to be removed and the loco was now being carried on four axles with the rearmost wheelset raised 2½ or 3 inches. The packing on the trailing drivers was to keep the rear of the engine as high as possible so that the radial wheels would clear the rails.

The engine was now ready for the traverser and could be traversed along the front of the Erecting Shop - the raised rear axle would be just clearing the rails into the pits while the rear of the bunker was only a couple of inches from the front wall of the Shop.

The tanks were usually worked on in one of the first three pits at the east end of the shop, nearest the running lines, wheelsets were stored along the outside of the Shop further along. In any event, we usually had two and sometimes three Glover tanks in at any one time. The other tanks, either shunting, JT or Greenore, could and did fit onto the traversing table quite easily. Once in the shop, with the doors closed, the length of the Glover tank left only a couple of feet clear across the rear of the engine. There wasn't enough room to wheel a hand barrow past. The removal of the rear buffers, by the way, saved only 18 inches off the length, but in the Shop those inches made all the difference. Fair enough then, a

tank was difficult but not impossible.

Great Northern Railway Co. (Ireland)

Chief Engineer's Office

Amiens Street Terminus

Dublin

25th March 1911

C. Clifford Esq.

Dundalk

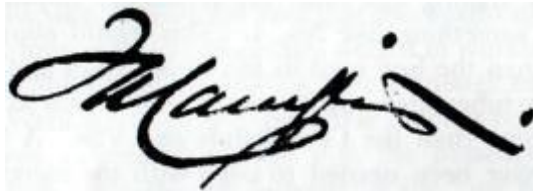
Dear Sir,

4-6-0 Type Engine

A question has been raised as to the allowable wheelbase and axle loads for a 4-6-0 type engine.

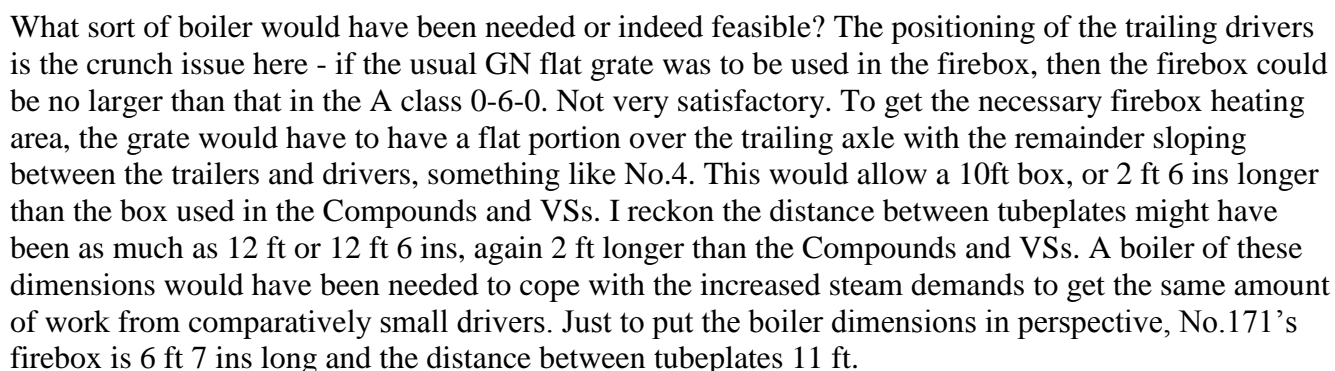
I have gone very carefully into the matter and bearing in mind the Boyne Viaduct and our rails, curves, &c, the most liberal weights and dimensions which we can give are shown on the accompanying diagram.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, likely of the Chief Engineer, written in a cursive style. The signature is positioned below the text "Yours faithfully," and above the bottom border of the letterhead box.

Now enter Charles Clifford. The time is March 1911, the famous exchange is only a couple of weeks away and the GN's Civil Engineer is asked by Clifford, "What are the most liberal weights and dimensions you will allow in a 4-6-0?" The Civil Engineer replied on Saturday 25th March 1911 and both his letter and the accompanying drawing are reproduced here. The drawing is not truly to scale and the print here is probably less so. Nevertheless a whole new area now opens up for discussion, so let's take a look at some of the more immediate points. It is hard to know where to start but I'd like to begin with the wheelbase and ask Robin's question about the traverser. Would it be any worse than the passenger tank? The wheelbase of 29 ft is 8½ inches longer than the tank but by using the jacking procedure mentioned earlier, it might have been possible - difficult again but just possible. I estimate the maximum locomotive length, as permitted by the Civil Engineer, without front buffers, to be 37 ft if fitted with a Clifford cab. If this estimate is right, then the loco would have a similar clearance to the tank's along the front of the Shop and would have fitted into the Shop very much like the tank. Again just a couple of feet clearance across the back but no worse than the tank which measured 36 ft 9 ins without rear buffers. Not a lot in it, is there? Turning now to the wheels, the bogie seems to be the

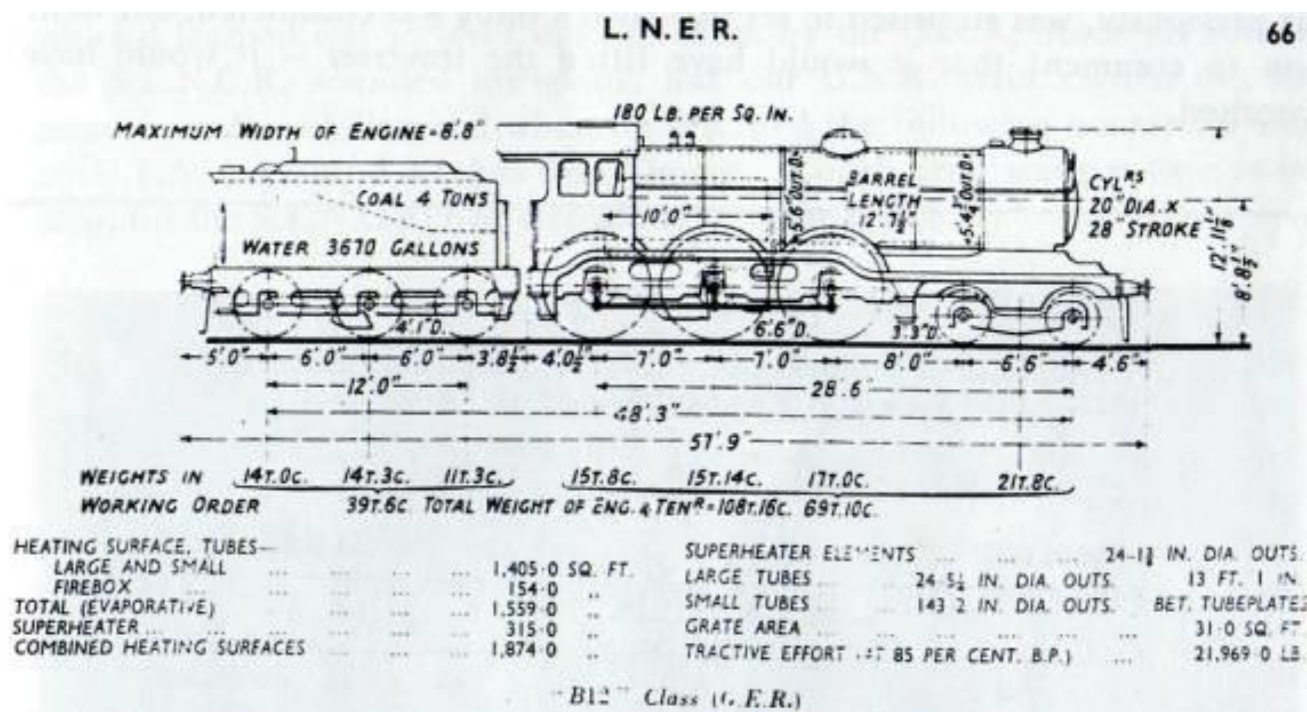
The next question to consider is whether the dimensions, as dictated by the Civil Engineer, would have been feasible. When considering this, let us assume Clifford would have stuck with inside cylinders and see if that would work. The critical dimension here is the distance from the centre line of the cylinders to the centre line of the leading drivers. We can safely take the centre line of the cylinders to coincide with the centre of the bogie. That leaves us with a dimension of 10 ft 6 ins in the 4-6-0 which ties in exactly with the 10 ft 6½ ins for the S class. The Glover tanks measured only 9 ft 6 ins here without the motion being particularly cramped but with 19 by 24 cylinders. All of this would allow cylinders of 19 ins diameter and 26 ins stroke, the same as No.171.



Having come this far, we can take another short step to suggest that we are looking at what might well have been a six-coupled S class, very much like No.171 in many respects apart from the size and number of drivers. It isn't too much, I think, to suggest the locomotives would have been numbered

from 170.

When Robin Barr mentioned the B12s and their compactness, he was a lot closer than he might have imagined, and here the wheel has almost turned full circle. I've reproduced a B12 diagram here and you'll see that all the dimensions quoted by Clifford are very similar to Holden's B12. Just as a coincidence, the B12 first appeared in - you've guessed it - 1911!



A stronger and indeed unanswerable objection was the overhead crane in the Erecting Shop. At the time it could only lift 40 tons and it wasn't until 1941 that it was rebuilt so that it could lift 60 tons. Until then the lifting of the Compounds had to be done in two phases; first the boiler had to come out and then the frames could be lifted. The same procedure would have to be used with the 4-6-0. But even with a 60 ton crane, another difficulty gets in the way. Ignore the fact that the weight quoted on the Clifford diagram is 62 tons as this is, of course, weight in working order. No, the overhead crane's lifting bogies couldn't get close enough to the rear wall of the Shop to get a vertical lift on the usual rear craning point in the cab floor near the dragbox. Remember here that the passenger tanks' craning point, in the cab floor, was thrown forward by the long bunk. So no matter what was done, it looks as if the locomotive would have to be lifted in two portions, with the rear craning point being found somewhere between the drivers and trailers.

So we reach the conclusion that the project was just possible. Why then did it not materialise?

Possible objections from a works point of view now come into play. I have already mentioned how awkward the tanks were to move in and out of the shops and that might have been a factor. I might mention here that the Clifford diagram came to light in the works some years ago and when I showed it to Harry Wilson, our last Mechanical Engineer, he had not heard of it previously, was surprised to see that such a thing was considered, but went on to comment that it would have fitted the traverser - it would have worked.

So there you have it. That's about as far as I have been able to go, until now anyway. There are still very many unanswered questions, do you know any of the answers? Please let us hear from you if you do.

Notices in the railway press recently intimating that ex-Sligo Leitrim & Northern Counties Railway 0-6-4T “Lough Erne” is up for sale, brought back distant memories of this locomotive at work. My first encounter with “Lough Erne” was in July 1957, a few months before the SLNCR came to its enforced end, when at a tender age I spent a holiday in Bundoran. Returning to Belfast on the GNR that year, we went via Enniskillen where I laid eyes for the first and last time on the SLNCR in working order.

My memories of Enniskillen station are vague, but I can recall vividly my father pointing out a fascinating looking locomotive called “Lough Erne” which was shunting in the sidings. This awakened my interest, especially as he told me that “Lough Erne” hauled trains across the border to Sligo, a place which I learned was served from Bundoran by the GNR buses. A run on the SLNCR sounded intriguing, but our GNR train carried on, far away from Enniskillen and when we returned the following summer, it was by UTA Leyland PSI bus from Omagh. “Lough Erne” was nowhere to be seen, for the SLNCR had died along with the GNR.



A Reception was held to mark the acquisition of “Lough Erne”. Pictured here in front of the locomotive are (left to right): Treasurer - John Richardson, Chairman - Bob Edwards, “Lough Erne’s” former owner, Roy Grayson and Secretary - Robin Morton. (C.P. Friel)

1st April 1969 found me on a day trip to Belfast, and armed with a newly acquired instamatic camera, which, taking into account my position in life as a penniless student, seemed like an enormous investment. I began to take some photographs of York Road station as it then was, and wandered round the goods yard. Imagine my surprise and delight when I saw “Lough Erne” resting between shunting turns. Looking much as she had done in 1957 she sat simmering quietly, and her nameplate proudly proclaimed her name now to Belfast’s dockland instead of the more picturesque environment between Enniskillen and Sligo. Although by then in NIR stock, she carried her UTA number 27 and crest. Her black livery wore that half-cared for air of dilapidation which typified UTA steam locomotives in their final years, and her crew lazed in the cab to add to the picture of decayed splendour.

Then, with some initial puffing, creaking and groaning of track, wheels, springs and connecting rods, “Lough Erne” slowly negotiated the crossing of Dufferin Road, disappeared for a few minutes and returned with some wagons, giving me time to record the event with my camera. She then set off at a steady pace up York Road Yard and was gone from sight.

This brought back many half-forgotten memories of 1957: the refreshment room at Bundoran Junction, varnished wood in vintage GNR carriages, roses on Castlecaldwell platform, our through coach to Belfast being shunted on to a blue and cream railcar set at Clones, and last but not least that quick glimpse of “Lough Erne” at Enniskillen, all now sadly part of history.



Purchase of the locomotive was greatly assisted by a donation of £2,375 by the Northern Ireland Tourist Board. Here Mr Rodgers Whittaker (centre) presents Bob Edwards with the cheque. To his left are Councillor Sam Simms, the Mayor of Carrickfergus, and Mr Shane Belford of the NITB. (C.P. Friel)

The last time I saw “Lough Erne” was last year, when passing Whitehead on the Larne boat train. She looked distinctly woebegone, but she has survived as a link with the railway past which becomes more distant each year, and it would be a happy outcome if “Lough Erne” were to enjoy a renaissance. If a brief encounter at York Road could unearth so many half-buried memories of childhood journeys by rail in west Ulster, what memories might a journey behind “Lough Erne” evoke for those whose span of recall stretches beyond my own? Let us hope she will steam again.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

I read with interest your excellent publication “Five Foot Three” and I would like to offer my views on the branch line scheme.

I live in England but have an Irish wife, so we visit Ireland once or twice a year on holiday. Each year I try to arrange our holiday around one of the steam railtours, but it is proving more and more difficult. For example, last year we took our main summer holiday in late May so I could travel on the “Croagh

Patrick” railtour, but the weather was so bad that my wife insists on going later this year. Thus I cannot travel on your “South Kerry” railtour on 17th May, and the next steam trip in the Dublin area - where my wife’s relations live - is not until 27th September, which is far too late in the summer. I would love to take my two small sons on a steam railtour, but my wife will not allow me to take them anywhere near Belfast, because of all the violence one hears about on TV. I would also be a bit nervous about leaving a new car parked all day in Belfast.

Thus there is not one railtour this year that I can plan a holiday around. Now, if you had a branch line I could take the family there and travel by steam in June or July. A location between Belfast and Dublin such as the one planned would attract visitors from both Northern Ireland and the Republic, and would I feel be tremendously attractive as the only regular steam operated line in Ireland. This member, for one, is therefore very much in favour of the plan.

Yours faithfully,

R.P. Turnbull

Dear Sir,

I was very interested to see in the latest “Five Foot Three” an editorial on the construction of a branchline and an invitation for comment.

Based on considerable experience in laying and maintaining track of various gauges and standards from main lines to ‘cattle specials, Wednesdays only’, I began to think of the basic issues, and I have set them out below in case they might be of interest:

The general requirements assumed to be necessary are:

- A minimum of one mile of track with a run round loop at each end, connected to an open running line
- Easy access to the public, preferably convenient to public transport and with parking facilities.
- Preferably as near to Whitehead as possible if the intention is to run a train out each weekend to operate the service.
- A securely fenced compound for overnight stabling of the locomotive and three coaches, with water, coaling facilities and a platform about 200 feet long.
- A route as free as possible from level crossings and both under and over line bridges, and preferably easily graded.

The cost of a mile of track using second-hand 85 lb flat bottom rail on sole plates with second-hand wooden sleepers would cost, I estimate, about £27,000 in materials to which would be added transport and laying costs.

Four turnouts in similar materials would cost a total of £8,000 in materials costs, and perhaps another £3,000 for a main line connection.

The cost of a platform, fencing and other items might be taken as £1,000.

The total cost of materials on this basis would be £39,000.

With the present trend towards concrete sleepers, the availability of reasonable quality timber sleepers could give rise to increasing difficulties in the future, while the supply of suitable second-hand 85 lb flat bottom rail could also be difficult.

As far as possible revenue was concerned, if it is assumed that operations would be carried out from

mid-June to mid-September, say 28 days (Saturdays and Sundays) from 2pm to 7pm, doing 7 return trips during this period, using three coaches with an average of 90 passengers at fares of £1 for adults (say one third of the passengers) and 50p for children - then the gross revenue for the season could be £11,500.

I am not in a position to say how realistic the above might be, nor can I estimate the running costs to get the train from Whitehead to the branch, or to run on the branch. I would, however, expect to allow about £1,500 per season in depreciation for the sleepers at least, as a ten year life might be their limit - if indeed they would be replaced on a 'like for like' basis in the future.

Looking at the possibilities of using a closed branch as a route, I would think that the following could be governing factors:

- Goraghowood-Newry: Gradient undesirable, too remote, main line connection difficult.
- Scarva-Banbridge: A large bridge costing £100,000 would be needed across the realigned road about half a mile from Scarva. There are other bridges and level crossings along the branch, even if only a mile of it was relaid.
- Cookstown Junction-Randalstown: Level crossing at the junction point, remote.
- Greenisland back line: A bridge and two accommodation crossings, otherwise access under control of an existing signal box reasonably easy. Close to Whitehead.

In my opinion, if the above estimates are anywhere near the mark, it would not be in the Society's interests to try to lay and operate a branch. Even if it was to be presented with one, the potential traffic might be insufficient, in the long term, to cover the costs and the strain on resources might well interfere with the present programme of steam excursions.

If there is an increasing difficulty about operating costs, perhaps the two tourist boards would be prepared to help, over a period, to meet at least part of the CIE and NIR charges so that fares for steam excursions could be held at a level which would ensure full loads and possibly justify one or two other trains in the season.

Yours faithfully,

H.C.S. Beaumont

Sir,

I read with interest your editorial in "Five Foot Three" No.24 on the subject of branch line operation by the Society. I feel that your remarks are indeed timely, and that this subject is one which the Society must urgently consider with a view to a major decision on future policy. My own opinion is very much in favour of branch line operation for three main reasons:

First, present RPSI operations give little opportunity for participation by volunteers in the actual running of the railway. At best participation is limited to unofficial assistance with the less pleasant jobs, and always at the risk of giving offence to railway staff. Unless the volunteer can get satisfaction from the specialised engineering work required to overhaul and maintain the locomotives and rolling stock, practical preservation must remain a frustrating and disillusioning business. I am certain that many willing hands have been discouraged because of this.

Second, the Society has until now made no attempt to preserve railway installations as well as locomotives and coaches, since there is little scope for this at Whitehead. The result is that preserved trains operate in increasingly unnatural environments of modernised stations, track and signalling, from which the traditional railway features associated with steam are fast disappearing.

Third, although operation of steam trains is at present unlimited throughout the Irish railway system, there is no guarantee that this will be possible in the long term. As time goes on and both the staff and installations appropriate to the running of steam gradually disappear, we can at best expect the operation of main line preserved steam to become more difficult.

These three reasons point firmly in the direction of branch line operation. There are, of course, numerous reasons which can be found against branch line preservation, but all of them represent difficulties or prejudices which I feel can be overcome. Not least of them is the fact that in Northern Ireland there is no suitable disused branch line where legal powers are still in existence; both the legal authority and the actual hardware of the line would have to be established from square one. Bearing this in mind, the finance required for the project would be considerable, and real progress would probably depend upon grant aid. This may not be an unrealistic hope, even in the present times of economic stringency, and would depend largely upon grant support for the scheme and its acceptability in railway circles.

Regarding such problems as viability of operation and sufficient volunteers, probably the best parallel is Great Britain, where there are about 40 successful and expanding preserved railways, ranging from 1 to 20 miles in length. On an equal proportion to that of population, Northern Ireland should support at least one major preserved branch line. The truth of this assertion can of course only be established in practice.

Finally, I would like to add a point which is, I feel, most relevant, and which could possibly be overlooked in the desire to find an 'easy' preservation scheme to reduce costs. It is most important that any proposed branch line should be interesting and challenging to operate, and attractive to visitors. In particular the line selected should include such features as severe gradients, intermediate stations, level crossings and bridges. It is unfortunate that these very features, which make a line attractive, are also those which render it awkward and expensive to maintain. However, in the long term a dead flat section of line without such features would be the worst possible choice for the Society to make.

Yours etc.,

P. Scott

Locomotive Maintenance Officer

Sir,

Having read with interest the Editorial in issue 24 regarding the thought being given to establishment of a branch line by the Society, my view is that this move is absolutely essential for the future of the organisation. I say this for several reasons. Firstly the rapidly advancing demise of oil based products by the turn of the century is going to lead to either mass scale electrification of our railways, or else mass scale closures of the route mileage which will make the closures of the 1950s seem insignificant. This electrification, if it takes place, will be accompanied by advanced electronic train control systems and other sundry 'micro chip' technology which will eliminate the possibility of steam operation on main lines. Secondly, by this time steam experienced drivers and train crews will no longer be available, and the likelihood of Society personnel being permitted to operate on a railway system of such technological sophistication would be very remote. Thirdly, the RPSI cannot depend on the high degree of freedom and goodwill from the railway authorities for ever. It would only take one accident involving a railtour to change everything. This has not happened yet in the British Isles thankfully, but if it did, the politicians and civil servants would be sure to devise rules and regulations which would eliminate most, if not all, of this type of operation on the state systems.

For these reasons, I think it very likely that within the lifetime of most of the members, the Society

could find itself confined to Whitehead site, so it must look now to a feasible stretch of branch line and actively pursue the establishment of an operation. As far as profitability is concerned, this type of operation is going to capture a far greater market than the purely enthusiast orientated railtours, and without the danger of a market oversaturated with preserved stretches of line (a danger that could become reality in parts of England), there is no reason that this development cannot be without great potential.

I do not want to be a doomsday prophet, but I believe that the rapidly dwindling oil resources of the world is going to lead to changes in our whole lifestyle on a scale parallel with the industrial revolution in the last century, and that actively preserved forms of transport from what then will be a bygone age, will be sure of continued public interest. The RPSI was founded in the 1960s, and during the 1970s developed with locomotive and coach acquisitions, railtour activities and the development of Whitehead and an Éire base; let the 1980s therefore see the next step in the progression by developing a working section of line, where the whole spectrum of locomotives, coaches, signalling, architecture, and railway operation can be seen. Then the Society can really be justified as the "Railway Preservation Society of Ireland".

Yours faithfully,

Gordon Marshall

Dear Sir,

The Society's Early Days

Several times during the progress of the recent very successful South Kerry Railtour I heard people expressing appreciation of the hard work of the Society's officers and members concerned, and also of the wholehearted co-operation of CIÉ and NIR, acting through their various senior officers and other staff members, to all of whom we are so greatly indebted.

Without in the least detracting from the great debt which we owe to so many of today's railwaymen of all grades I would like to remind members, before names are forgotten, of the invaluable aid which the Society received in its early days from NIR and CIÉ officials now retired or, sadly, in some cases dead.

The help which Campbell Bailie, Willie Marshall, John Coulthard and Bill MacAfee of the then UTA, and Frank Lemass and Brian Patterson of CIÉ gave us was all important in getting the Society off the ground as an operator, and not just a preserver, of steam locomotives.

As a founder member of the Society, and as its first Treasurer and second Chairman, I was closely involved in all the early work and negotiations, and am probably better able than many others to appreciate the extent of the help which we received.

The success which the RPSI has attained as a result of the dedicated work of members, and the active assistance of both Irish Railway undertakings, not only reflects great credit on all concerned, but is far greater than any of us had reason to hope for in 1966/7/8. However, let it never be forgotten that had we had less sympathetic and co-operative people in positions of authority on the railways in those years there would have been no railtours today.

Yours sincerely,

L.H. Liddle

Dear Sir,

With regard to the photo of No.184 on page 22 of issue 24 Five Foot Three entitled "Kavanagh's

Engine". I am convinced that this shot was taken at Clara on the GSWR Portarlinton-Athlone branch. No.184 is in fact sitting right on top of the junction with the MGWR branch from Horseleap and Streamstown. The buildings which can be seen on the right of the engine are those of the MGWR goods store and further back the water tower (Clara had two stations, GSWR and MGWR, until 1927 when the MGWR one went into disuse). Just behind the van being hauled by No.184 you can see the edge of the turntable pit, this turntable had to be locked when trains passed on the GS line as the turning engine would foul them.

An RPSI tour to Athlone in the early seventies reversed into the old Midland station at Clara (as in photo) and departed from there to Tullamore. This was possible because a stub of the old branch had been left to store wagons of jute for unloading at Goodbody's factory siding. This stub has since been lifted and neither Goodbody's nor Ranks sidings are any longer used although they are still in existence. As well as the branch and sidings already mentioned Clara was also the terminus for the Banagher branch closed in 1962.

I hope that this answers your question about the location of the photo.

Yours sincerely,

A.H.L. Crawford





No.184 storms towards Dalkey tunnel on the first trip ex-Bray, Dublin Bay Railtour. (C.P. Friel)