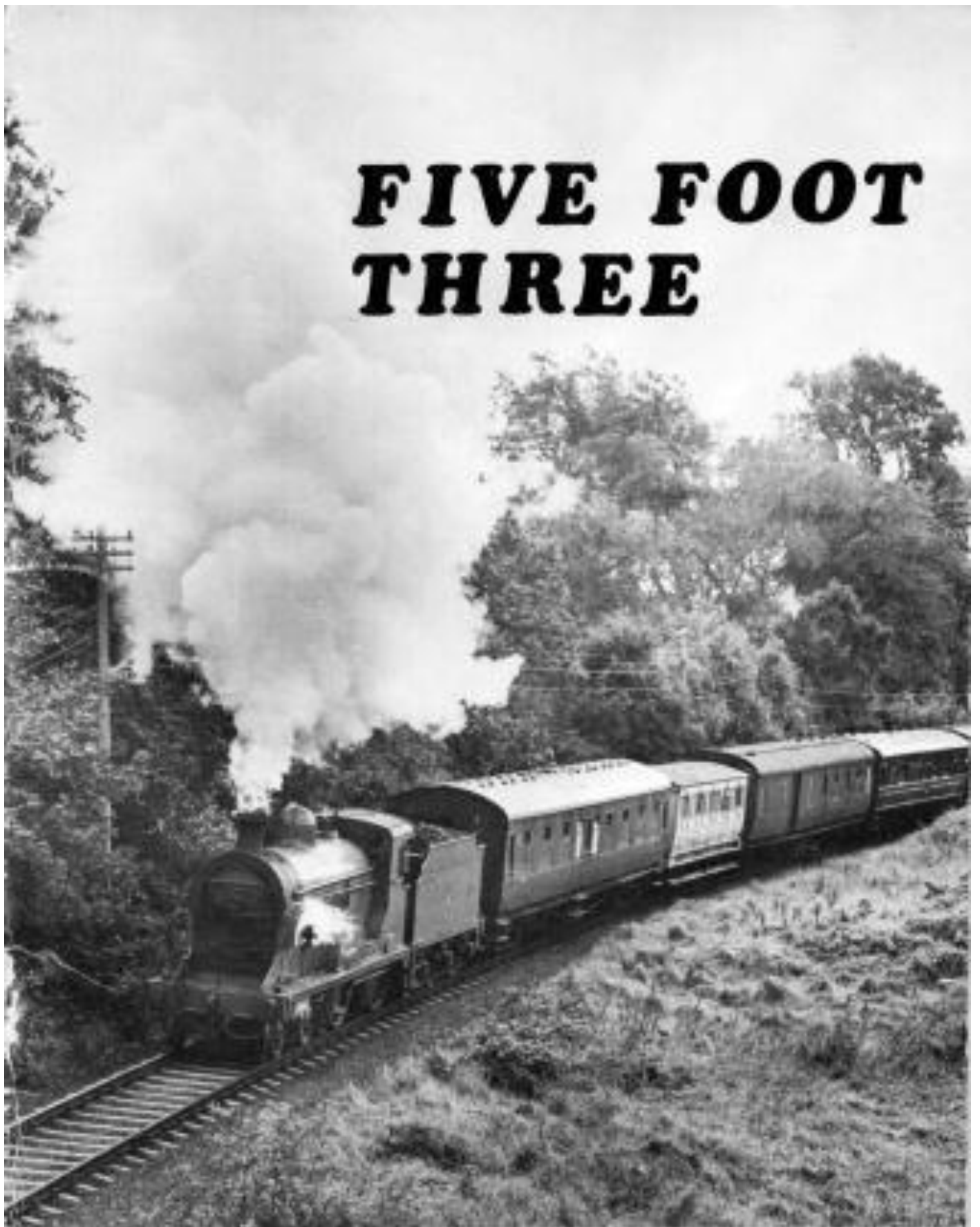


FIVE FOOT THREE



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No.27

Spring 1982

Editor: Alan Edgar

CONTENTS

Editorial	
News From Council	Robin Morton
Operations 1981	Denis Grimshaw
Loco Maintenance	Peter Scott
Loco Running 1981	Paul Newell
Coach Maintenance	Alan Edgar
Site Report	Johnny Glendinning
Rail By Road	Paul Newell
It All Began In Pettigo (Part 2)	R.A. Read
Sligo Leitrim Memories	George Stephenson
CIÉ Departmental Coach Stock	Martin Hewitt
Letters To The Editor	

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

Front Cover: A train for carriage enthusiasts? Looking like something from the early fifties on CIÉ, the return empty stock working from the 2 day tour is seen here approaching Antrim on 28th September 1981. The train consists of GSR side corridor Bredin 1327, MGWR six-wheeled third 62, GNR brake third 114, GNR directors' saloon 50, and GNR dining car 88. (C.P. Friel)



Hardly a triumphant arrival, but a welcome one nevertheless. GNR class V compound No.85 emerges from Whitehead tunnel, en route to the Society's depot, hauled by NIR diesel hydraulic No.3. Hopefully next time No.85 ventures on to the main line it will be under her own power. (C.P. Friel)

EDITORIAL

Torrential rain, the late running of the train, and the understandable desire of all concerned to be in Sligo as soon as possible, curtailed what was originally envisaged as an auspicious occasion. The tour was the “Ben Bulbin”, and the somewhat unlikely location was the erstwhile junction at Collooney. In the event, a hasty photo stop was made before the train, with the Society’s President, Lord O’Neill, at the regulator, restarted and ran through a tape stretched across the line (not before some enterprising person had managed to provide additional embellishments definitely **not** in the original plan). Thus the coverage of all Ireland’s railways by RPSI steam was marked.

So where do we go from here? It is not good enough just to sit back and say that we will do it all over again. Since RPSI 2-day tours were conceived, in 1968, the situation ‘across the water’ has changed from a total steam ban to a programme which the RPSI cannot hope to match in terms of variety. Yet still participants come year after year from Great Britain to travel on our tours - far outnumbering the ‘native’ contingent. Up to now this has been fortuitous, but if we are to succeed in the future we must carefully consider what the attractions of our tours are and develop them to the full.

Interesting rolling stock can be a draw, and while RPSI stock is limited, it is of interest due to its antiquity, and because of the exacting work it is called to do.

Interesting routes can be a draw, but where should the balance be struck between having an all-out ‘track bash’ covering the maximum amount of track possible within the given time, and having a less hectic programme, with less actual mileage but with more traditional RPSI facilities such as photo stops, train splitting, runs past and lineside buses?

Talking of lineside buses, at a time when at least one letter has appeared in the ‘national’ railway press praising the RPSI for this facility, should we not be thinking of expanding them rather than cutting back to one lineside bus per tour?

There are other aspects as well - could the catering be improved? If so, how? Are the cross-channel connections always convenient? Are the departure and arrival times of the actual railtour suitable?

It was gratifying to see that a number of members took time and trouble to comment on the magazine following the last editorial. So perhaps you, the member, could also give us a consumer’s eye view of our railtours.

NEWS FROM COUNCIL

Robin Morton

After the AGM, there are two new faces on the Council - Ernie Gilmore, who has taken over from Denis Grimshaw as Operations Officer, and Brian Hill, who has been co-opted if not coerced as Locomotive Running Officer in succession to Paul Newell.

Apart from that, it’s all the same old faces and one feels it is unhealthy that the AGM provided absolutely no contests for office. It is also unsatisfactory that one Council member is faced with having to hold down two posts - Publications and Coach Maintenance.

To recap on my last report, the “Ben Bulbin” railtour to Sligo was operated successfully in September and the landmark of ‘All Ireland by Steam’ was comfortably passed. The ‘close season’ has now virtually evaporated with the Santa train rides at both Mullingar and Whitehead now being a vital part of the annual fund-raising operation.

We look forward in 1982 to another worthwhile and well-supported year of railtours. Following high-level meetings with both NIR and CIÉ we hope that the essential financial return on railtours will be more significant this year. The problem on the financial front stems in part from the rate at which the Society’s fixed costs such as insurance and electricity continue to rise. These must be offset in part

against railtour proceeds.

A bright spot was the emergence in January of locomotive No.85 from Harland & Wolff, and the task of completing the engine's overhaul will be tackled at Whitehead. To mark the Society's gratitude to Lord Dunleath for his funding of the re-commissioning of the engine, the Council has appointed Lord Dunleath Vice-President of the RPSI. No.85 will be one of a number of projects to benefit from the Action for Community Employment scheme which has three men based at Whitehead.

Our next major project at Whitehead is to be carriage maintenance shed which will probably cost around £15,000. At the time of writing, the Council is still deliberating over whether to risk possible delay by going for a 75 per cent tourist grant or attempting to press ahead on its own.

One of the Society's carriages, the recently restored GNR Directors' Saloon, is at Belfast York Road for safekeeping and the Society has signed an agreement with NIR absolving the company of liability for any accidents. Insurance to cover any mishaps has of course been taken out.

The Council held a special meeting in December to plot the way ahead on the carriage front. One ground rule now is that we have accepted that tours on CIÉ just have to involve the Society's own carriages, so prohibitive is the cost of carriage hire from that company. To this end the Society expects to base a set of carriages at Mullingar over the winter period for the years to come.

Ultimately, when sufficient carriages are in traffic, the plan is to have two rakes, one based in the Republic and the other at Whitehead.

Further south, CIÉ has approved in principle the Society's request that Mallow engine shed be set aside for possible use by the RPSI. The Society has been approached by a group from the Cork area and the success of the project depends on their gaining expertise at the Society's Mullingar base.

Looking further ahead, the Society has agreed in principle to be fully involved in celebrations being planned by CIÉ to mark the 150th anniversary of Irish railways in 1984.

The Council was surprised to find that the Belfast & Co. Down Railway Museum Trust report "Recommendations For A Working Railway Museum in Co. Down" suggested that the RPSI might be involved in the project. There had been no formal consultations, although the Society had always made it clear at the meetings of the Association of Railway Preservation Societies (Irish Branch) that it was interested only in a rail-connected branchline scheme. The Society wrote to the various interested parties which received copies of the BCDRMT report to clarify the position.

The Society's own branchline sub-committee has meanwhile been continuing its feasibility study and may report back during the year.

On an optimistic note, the Society has been gratified to receive a commendation for the "Portrush Flyer" from the magazine "Steam Past". The citation says the Flyer has given pleasure to countless numbers of families in Northern Ireland since 1973.

OPERATIONS 1981

Denis Grimshaw

The 1981 tour programme was built around the two basic parameters of locomotive availability and market demand, which somewhat limited the options, but also created the opportunities.

Only No.171 and No.184 were expected to be operational in 1981, based at Whitehead and Mullingar respectively, the former loco restricted to main lines only, and the latter to light trains at low speeds, and both dependent on turntables.

Commercially, only the 2-day tours can now attract sufficient enthusiast traffic to be viable as a specialist railtour, and all other trips have to be geared to suit the general public as well - hence popular destinations such as Portrush, Castlerock, Galway, Bangor and Dublin.

Hopefully in future years the re-introduction of other locomotives such as No.4, No.85 and No.461 will attract enthusiasts back on to other railtours, but that is a problem for the future.

The season 'opened' on 1st May, when No.171 worked a train from Whitehead to Bangor (5 miles as a sea-going crow would fly, but 75 by rail!), and returned light engine to Central Service Depot (Queen's Quay). The following day, an intensive train service was operated on the Bangor line under the guise of the "Bangor Belle" with sponsorship from North Down Borough Council, without which the venture would not have been financially successful.

Operationally, all appeared well on the surface, with end to end timings of 21 minutes being obtained with the 7-coach train (express diesel takes 18 minutes).

Unfortunately, beneath No.171's polished blue boiler cladding, all was not so well, with tube leaks developing. During detailed examination a couple of days later, it was realised that the tube problem was more serious than expected, and the Locomotive Department had to declare No.171 unable to work the planned "Ben Bulbin" railtour the following week.



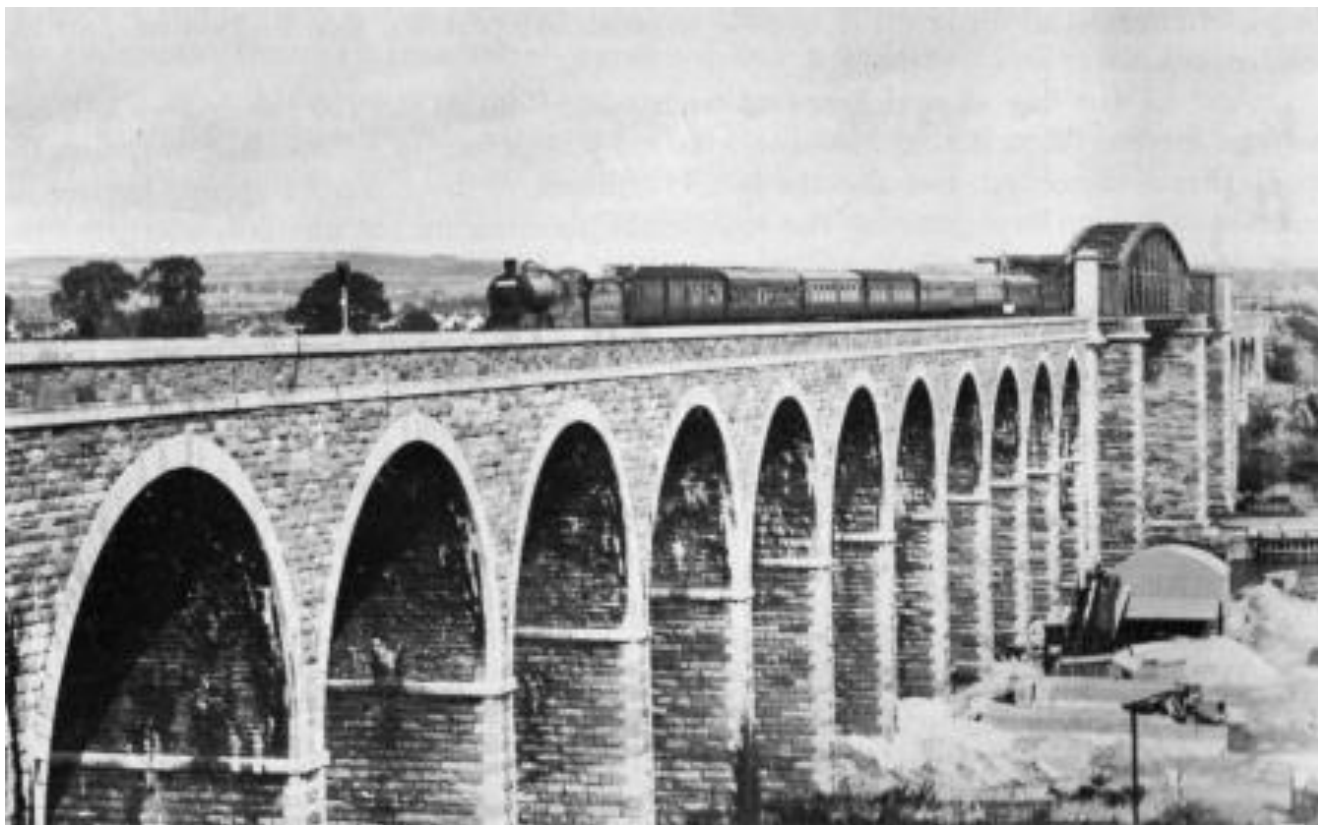
Cameras are put to good use as the "Steam Enterprise" of 5th September 1981 departs from Drogheda. (C.P. Friel)

And so, the day after tickets had been posted out to 250 passengers who had booked for the "Ben Bulbin" - cancellation letters had to follow. Not only was the special train cancelled, but also the hotel bookings, cross-channel shipping berths, air reservations, etc. Reorganising the tour for September meant virtually starting from scratch again, and losing some 60 passengers into the bargain.

Meanwhile, back at Mullingar, No.184 was being prepared for her first venture of the season on 27th June, a revival of the "Claddagh" railtour from Mullingar and Athlone to Galway, including (for the first time) an afternoon excursion for local people from Galway to Athenry and back.

Although the only technical problem to beset the "Claddagh" was No.184's appetite for coal, which

precluded a further extension of the afternoon jaunt as far as Attymon Junction, in order to ensure sufficient coal to get us home to Mullingar, insufficient patronage of the main part of the tour, together with the astronomical costs of carriage hire from CIÉ, caused the trip to run at a substantial loss.



The “Steam Enterprise” crosses the Boyne on 19th September 1981. A rake of GNR coaches in the correct livery and the illusion would be complete. (C.P. Friel)

The outcome of this experience is that the 1981 “Claddagh” will in all probability be our last ever railtour using CIÉ coaches - in future we will endeavour to stable a train of RPSI stock at Mullingar for at least part of the season for southern based tours - using 2 day tours and the “Steam Enterprise” to facilitate transfer movements.

High speed surgery to No.171’s innards ensured her reappearance on 4th July on loan to NIR to haul the GNR Directors’ Saloon from York Road to Whitehead and back on our first ‘Ministerial Special’.

This was followed three weeks later by the first “Portrush Flyer” of the year, extended as is now customary to Castlerock, while No.171 renewed her acquaintance with Londonderry turntable, as it happened, for the last season for this facility. Once again, the main part of the Flyer operation just broke even financially, and the only surplus made was on the Castlerock extensions.

September came, and with it our most prolonged and extensive operational effort ever, the “29-Day Tour” - more commonly known as two “Steam Enterprise” operations and the reheated “Ben Bulbin”, with the tour train absent from Whitehead continuously from 31st August to 28th September.

This year the “Steam Enterprise” operated from Bangor to Dublin and back. Bookings were very light for the 5th September run, causing red ink on the account which negated the black ink generated on 19th September.

No.171 traversed the Belfast-Dublin line three times in three days by returning to Dublin on Monday 21st September in preparation for the Sligo tour and, on all her trips over this route, excellent

locomotive performances were achieved.

On Saturday 26th September the “Ben Bulben” tour finally got under way, running a mere 38,304 minutes late!

Starting from Dublin Pearse with No.171, we were wrongly routed via North Strand Junction, instead of Newcomen Junction as booked, but otherwise reached Mullingar without any problems. Here No.184 was attached as train engine and the tour was double-headed to Longford. At this point, No.171's right-hand injector gave trouble with threads stripping on a spindle, resulting in a large volume of steam escaping. No.184 took the 7-coach train on to Ballymote unassisted, including the ascent of Kilfree bank, although a short stop had to be made about a mile from the summit to re-establish the water level in the boiler. Temporary repairs were made to No.171, which followed light to Ballymote, and thence piloted the train to Sligo.

At Collooney station a notable event was celebrated - the completion of the entire Irish railway system (as existing at present) by RPSI steam railtours, a venture started away back in 1967.



Unmistakably Sligo. The “Ben Bulben” tour arrives at Sligo passenger station on 26th September 1981. (C.P. Friel)

At the dinner held in the Innisfree Hotel in Sligo that evening, the Society was welcomed by the Mayor of Sligo and the Regional Tourism Manager. On a personal note, I would like to sincerely thank the Council and members of the Society for their thoughtful and kind presentation made at the dinner to my wife and myself on the occasion of my retirement from the post of Operations Officer.

On the Sunday morning the whole procession started off again for Dublin, with various combinations of locomotive(s) on different sections.

Before this, however, the train visited the goods only Sligo Quay branch - the first passenger train on this line for 17 years.

The return to Connolly Station was made via the Newcomen Junction route, in compensation for Saturday's omission, but a signal failure brought the train to a stand at the bottom of the sharply curved 1 in 50 gradient up to Connolly. To make matters worse, engineering works had prevented any trains using this curve for a couple of weeks, and a slippery film of rust covered the rails. Under these circumstances the 7-coach load was well beyond No.171's adhesion limitations, and the train slipped to a stand, and had to be rescued by a diesel - ironically on the last 200 yards of the main tour. It should be noted that this was not a loco failure of any sort, and No.171 was not in any way defective.

Four coaches were discarded at Dublin (and returned to Mullingar on the Galway Mail the following morning, to be based there for the winter), and No.171 set off on her own main line. At Drogheda, our newly acquired ex MGWR 6-wheel third No.62 (built 1892) was attached to the rear of the train, en route for Whitehead. Despite the nominal 45 mph restriction on this coach, we were in fact able to establish that it rides very well at 63!

The CIÉ crew handed the train over to their northern counterparts at Dundalk - and the expression on the face of (now retired) Guard Andy Lawlor, on seeing 62 on the train, will long be remembered! The train stabled overnight at Queen's Quay, and coach 1327 (left behind from the "Steam Enterprise") was attached outside 62, which looked utterly incongruous in the middle of the train. On Monday 28th September, the entire circus arrived back home at Whitehead after 29 days 'on the road'. A marathon effort for the loco, and carriage staff in particular - but an essential boost to our commercial operations for the season.

But we didn't rest on our laurels for long - on Saturday 10th October, No.184 hauled the 5 Mullingar-based RPSI coaches to Athlone and back on the "Shannon" railtour which was a considerable success.

Santa was in evidence at Mullingar on 12th December, with No.184 operating a sort of Mullingar suburban service, visiting Multyfarnham, Killucan and Castletown (twice). The event was an outstanding success, and is scheduled to be repeated in April 1982 - the excuse this time being "Easter Bunny" specials.

All told, it was a hectic and eventful year, but just as fascinating and rewarding as ever to those involved.

Finally, I would like to thank all those people who made the whole show possible - the Locomotive, Carriage, Site, Commercial and Secretarial departments of the Society, and last but by no means least - our passengers.

LOCO MAINTENANCE

Peter Scott

No.3 "R.H. Smyth" (ex LP&HC 0-6-0ST shunting locomotive)

Whitehead. In traffic.

Requires replacement of some boiler tubes, minor boiler repairs, and attention to the leading axleboxes to reduce sideplay.

No.3BG "Guinness" (ex A. Guinness 0-4-0 ST shunting locomotive)

Whitehead.

Requires retubing. Mechanically in good order.

No.4 (ex LMS NCC 2-6-4T locomotive)

Whitehead. Undergoing general overhaul.

The spare set of driving wheels has been re-profiled and fitted, together with refurbished axleboxes. Retubing is nearing completion. Extensive sheet metal repairs to the tank and bunker have been carried

out. The ashpan is being rebuilt. Repair and reassembly of pistons, valves, crossheads, coupling and connecting rods is in progress. A half set of superheater elements was acquired and it has now been decided to replace the remaining half set in the interest of reliability.



Happily, No.4 now no longer looks like this: shortly after the photograph was taken, she was positioned over the wheel drop and the new set of driving wheels (ex Jeep 54) fitted. (C.P. Friel)

No.23 (ex Irish Shell 0-4-0 Diesel Mechanical shunter)

Whitehead. In traffic.

Requires minor repairs to the engine and to the radiator.

No.27 “Lough Erne” (ex SL&NCR 0-6-4T)

Whitehead.

Requires general overhaul, including boiler repairs which will necessitate removing the boiler from the frames.

No.85 “Merlin” (ex GNR(I) 4-4-0 V class Compound locomotive)

Whitehead.

Harland and Wolff have carried out general repairs of the boiler and working parts of the locomotive, in particular pistons, valves, crossheads, and glands, renewal of bushes for connecting and coupling rods, overhaul of bogie axleboxes, renewal of regulator valve, general replacement of worn and missing minor parts. While the boiler was removed from the frames repairs to the firebox platework were carried out where cracking had occurred; this also necessitated the replacement of some stays. The boiler has been retubed, and the main steam pipe in the smokebox has been renewed. New insulation and boiler cladding has been fitted. There is a considerable amount of work outstanding which was not in the Harland and Wolff contract. The principal jobs: overhaul of the vacuum brake and

lubrication systems, provision of superheater elements, firebox and smokebox brickwork, wooden footplating in the cab and tender, painting of locomotive and tender. The tender to be paired with No.85 is ex GNR(I) No.31, which ran with VS class No.207, and with No.171 for a short period after acquisition by the Society. This tender requires extensive repairs to the tank, replacement of springs, overhaul of brakes, and a host of minor repairs.

No.171 “Slieve Gullion” (ex GNR(I) 4-4-0 S class locomotive)

Whitehead. In traffic.

The bogie springs are being renewed. Some repairs to the tender and intermediate buffers are required. A lubrication fault which has caused hot driving axleboxes in the past was traced to a defective ratchet spindle in the mechanical lubricator. Unfortunately, this fault was only discovered some time after the right driving axlebox had been repaired during last summer, and some damage may have been caused to the bearings in the intervening period. It will be examined when a suitable opportunity arises.

No.184 (ex GSR 0-6-0 J15 class locomotive with saturated boiler)

Mullingar. In traffic.

The regulator is being faced up and a number of boiler tubes being renewed. Repairs to the firehole ring have been postponed until after the 1982 season, when the boiler will be due for its 5 yearly hydraulic test.

No.186 (ex GSR 0-6- J15 class locomotive with superheated boiler)

Whitehead.

Boiler repairs are being carried out as opportunity offers. Retubing and renewal of superheater elements are required together with repairs to the smokebox.

No.461 (ex GSR 2-6-0 K2 class locomotive)

Mullingar.

This locomotive is undergoing a general overhaul as time permits. Work is progressing on replacement of boiler tubes. The right piston and piston rod are being renewed - necessary because the original piston seized and the rod was cut through to render the locomotive mobile. This was done some years before acquisition by the Society, when restoration to working order was not a consideration.

CSÉ 0-4-0 Diesel Mechanical Shunter

Whitehead.

Requires overhaul of the engine and replacement of missing parts. This will be done as opportunity offers.

Boilermaker: The Society now employs its own boilermaker, who has spent most of his time since September in repairing the tank and coal bunker on locomotive No.4. It has been a lengthy and awkward job, and is quite typical of the type of work found necessary on the locomotive. When one considers the number of weekends of voluntary work which would have been necessary to complete the job, it is easy to see why returning No.4 to traffic has been a lengthy procedure.

Apart from No.4, there is a considerable backlog of repairs on other locomotives, involving replacement of corroded platework, and thus there is plenty to keep a boilermaker occupied. Repairs to the tender for locomotive No.85 will be started shortly.

Metalwork Class: Some years ago the Society asked the Belfast College of Technology to lay on an evening metalwork class suitable for those wishing to learn the basic skills necessary for the overhaul of locomotive components. The class was duly arranged, and has proved most successful, both

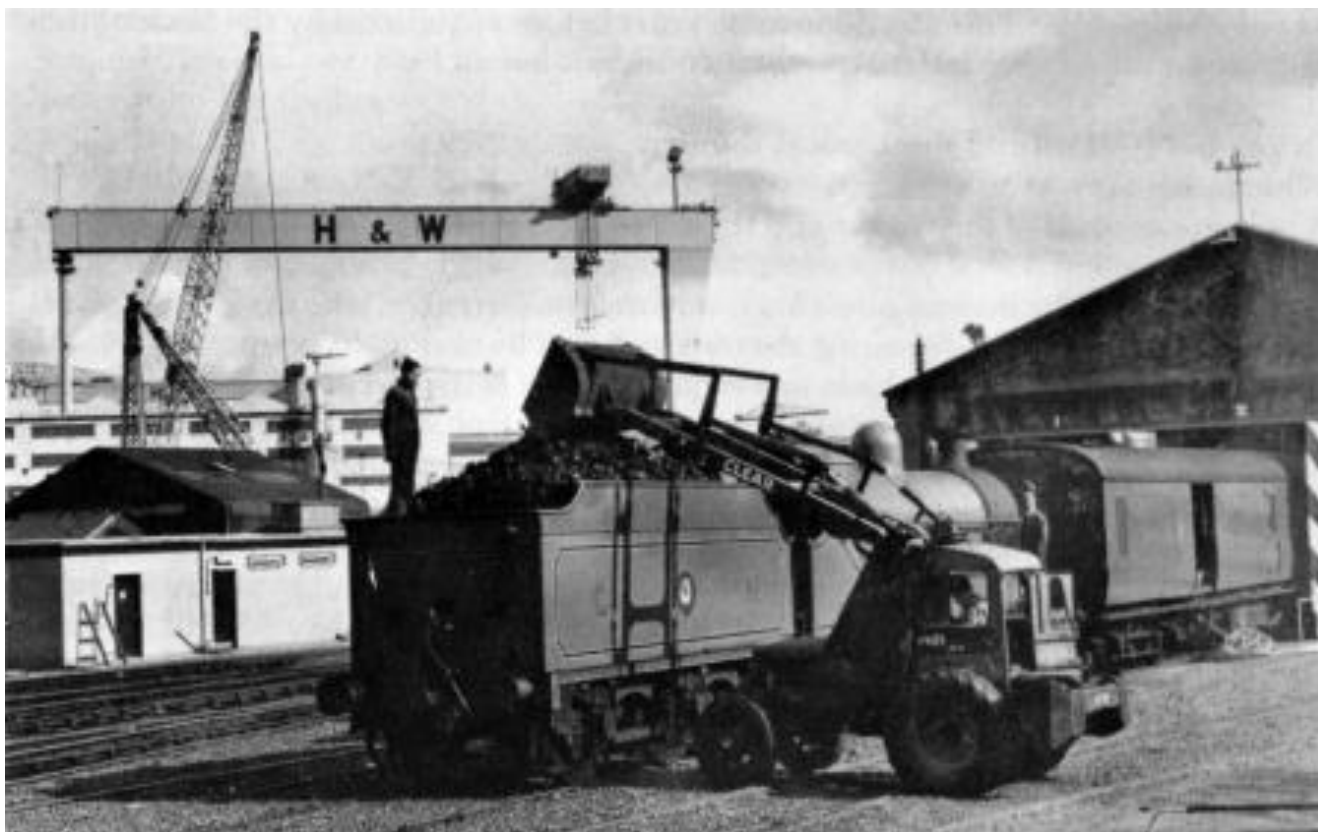
regarding instruction and the carrying out of repair work which would otherwise have to be done at Whitehead or contracted out at great expense. A wide range of machinery and welding equipment is provided, and expert tuition is available. Unfortunately, the class is suffering from poor attendance and it may not be possible to continue after this year. Should this happen, the effect on our ability to keep the locomotives available for traffic will be most detrimental.

Anyone interested in joining the class is therefore encouraged to do so, either to carry out work for the Society, or any metalwork of their own choice.

LOCO RUNNING 1981

Paul Newell

This year has been exceptionally busy, mainly because a lot of tours were grouped together due to No.171's unavailability during the early part of the year. The following engines were in traffic during 1981: No.171, No.184 (mainline); No.3, No.23 (Whitehead). On 31st August, No.171 worked the train round to Bangor, thus positioning it for the Dublin excursion, and the postponed 2 day tour. There are considerable problems in having the locomotive away from Whitehead for any length of time, as servicing it, i.e. coaling, cleaning, routine checking, minor repairs, become extremely difficult.



Paul Newell directs the coaling of No.171 at Central Services Depot, using the Society's loading shovel. Has he also enlisted the help of Harland and Wolff's Goliath crane, we wonder? Coupled to the locomotive is the workshop coach, 114. (C.P. Friel)

Taking the coaling aspect first. After some deliberation I arranged for a container of coal to be taken to NIR's Central Services Depot (Queen's Quay) and tipped there. Peter Scott and Brian Hill arranged for the Society's loading shovel to be driven to Belfast from Whitehead in order to coal the engines. This greatly speeded up the operation which would otherwise need to be done by hand. Coaling at Queen's Quay usually involved negotiations with the depot foremen there who were most helpful in having the

engine shunted from the Railcar shed into position for coaling. Opportunity was also taken to turn the engine, and to put the coaches through the wash. As well as this, coal had to be bagged at Whitehead, and loaded into CIÉ containers for transport to Mullingar, where we intended coaling the engine during the 2 day tour. I would expect that few passengers on these tours fully realise the background work in coaling.

For example, the coaling for the 2 day tour was as follows:

No.171		No.184	
Coal at NIR Queen's Quay before departure to Dublin	6 tons	Coal at Mullingar on Saturday morning during 2 day tour	5 tons
Coal at Mullingar on Friday before 2 day tour	4 tons	Coal at Mullingar on Sunday of 2 day tour	5 tons
Coal at Mullingar on Saturday during 2 day tour (no facilities at Sligo)	5½ tons		
Coal at Mullingar on Sunday of 2 day tour for run to Belfast	5½ tons		
Coal at NIR Queen's Quay on Monday for run to Whitehead	3 tons		

Incidentally, in order to save transport costs, a few members at Whitehead have clubbed together and bought a 32 ton articulated unit. This, complete with trailer, will be a very useful item in the Society's growing fleet of road vehicles.

After the Dublin trips had been completed, the following points became apparent:

1. Belfast (Queen's Quay) - Bangor - Belfast (Central) - Dublin - Belfast (Central) - Bangor - Belfast (Queen's Quay). This is simply too much for one day's work for an NIR crew.
2. It is outside the engine's coal capacity. We had to put a ton or so of coal on the engine by hand on arrival at Amiens Street.
3. From my rostering point of view, it is too long for the RPSI crew to be on duty. We had to roster two sets of RPSI men; one set to raise steam and prepare the engine, and the other set to watch the engine during the day, clean the fire at Dublin, and dispose of the engine on return to Belfast. Regrettably, although the engine was stored in a nice dry, warm, lighted shed, there was no rush of volunteers to clean it, and therefore it did not appear at its best all the time.

Finally, once again we ran Santa trains this year - both in Whitehead and Mullingar. Whilst these make the Treasurer very happy with the rustle of notes, etc., it must be borne in mind that they seriously interfere with the planned maintenance of engines and coaches - which is essential for the continued operation of our stock.

COACH MAINTENANCE

Alan Edgar

Coach maintenance this winter has been unusual in that most of the running coaches - five in all, have been stabled in Mullingar. To cope with this, Rory McNamee has been appointed PSR for coach maintenance at that location, and plans are afoot for Dublin members to carry out considerable work

before the operating season recommences. Besides having our rolling stock dispersed all over the country, we have also had to keep all the running coaches available for traffic at Christmas. This effectively prevents any maintenance of other than a minor nature being carried out. However profitable these events might be, they seriously damage the maintenance programme; this is the second year running, for instance, that essential maintenance work on the GN diner could not be carried out, as she was required for traffic. It would be all very well if the rake of running coaches were completely restored, but at least four of these need fairly major repairs. The solution (currently in hand) to this problem is to restore additional vehicles to traffic, but this will cost a considerable amount of money; a fact which I hope the Council will bear in mind when allocating funds. It is all too easy to regard coach maintenance work as non-essential window dressing.

Work at Whitehead has been concentrating on GSWR 1st 1142, recently the subject of an appeal to finance the materials to restore her. We are very grateful to members who dipped into their pockets and supported this cause. The work was to have been carried out by the Limestone Youth Training Project but, unfortunately, that organisation has been dormant recently - at least with regard to the RPSI, as they were engaged in extending their Belfast workshops, and were re-manning with a complete new intake of trainees. Where one door closed (albeit temporarily) another door opened, however, as largely due to the efforts of our Treasurer, John Richardson, the Society now employs three men full time under a Government sponsored scheme. The two relevant to carriages are a joiner, Jim Robinson, and a general handyman, Tommy Dorrian. The last mentioned will need little introduction to many of our members, particularly supporters of his well-stocked bar in the dining car.

Since the scheme commenced, many man-hours have gone into the restoration of 1142, and we are hopeful that she will be completed in late 1982, re-entering traffic after ten years of dereliction. This will be the first coach to be completely reconditioned by ourselves.

Elsewhere, Fred Graham and Lavens Steele have been making great inroads into the refurbishing of the second dining car, 87, with a view to early return to traffic. To date, much of the interior has been repanelled, and painting and decorating will shortly begin.

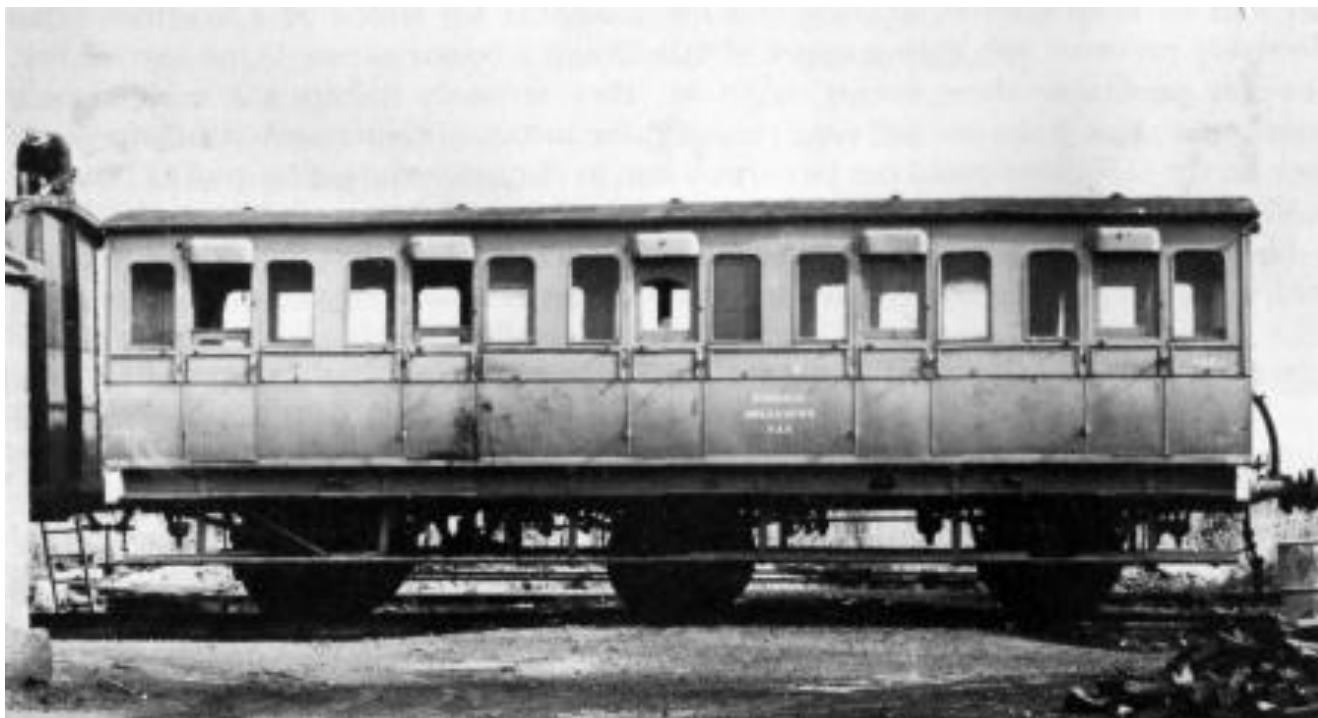
One of the attractions(?) of this vehicle is the large bar, and rumour is rife that the sales department have calculated an index of number of pints sold per foot length of bar per mile as an additional incentive to get the coach running. We can but wait!

RPSI coach livery policy is to turn out vehicles in either GSR/LMS maroon, or GNR scumble, but an exception has been made in the case of 87. Member Denis Grimshaw requested that the coach be turned out in the blue and cream livery which she was painted for the 1953 royal train, and offered to provide the paint himself. Livery was one of the many issues mulled over at a special Council meeting to discuss coaches. Reluctantly, the decision was taken to mothball the GNR Brake 1st, 231, for the time being. There were two principle reasons for this; the space which she occupied was required for loco No.85, and the feeling was that additional passenger-carrying vehicles should be given top priority. Accordingly, the entire body was sheeted over with heavy duty polythene, and the PVC proofed nylon roof laid on top of this. To hold the roof in place, offcuts from previously re-roofed coaches were cut into strips, and these were passed right over the roof and firmly attached to the body sides. The restoration of 231 must nonetheless be faced up to in the not too distant future, as the condition of the present workshop coach, 114, leaves a lot to be desired.

On the volunteer front, another sad loss has occurred in the shape of John Shaw. Like Dave Humphries, John has changed the location of his job, in his case to England. John was responsible for a large part of the restoration of NCC 3rd 238, and he will be greatly missed.

On the plus side, some volunteers have sneaked out of the Site Department and adopted the recently acquired ex-MGWR six-wheeler, 62, as a project. To date those concerned, chiefly Colin Holliday and

Jeremy Saulters, have replaced all the broken windows, and now are preparing to rebuild the interior to its former glory. Most of the glory consists of what are euphemistically described as “shaped wooden benches” in the compartments. Upholstered seats were a later addition to these coaches; presumably when they were built third class passengers were made of sterner stuff. Wooden seats will be very practical for the intended use of the coach, in train rides at Whitehead.



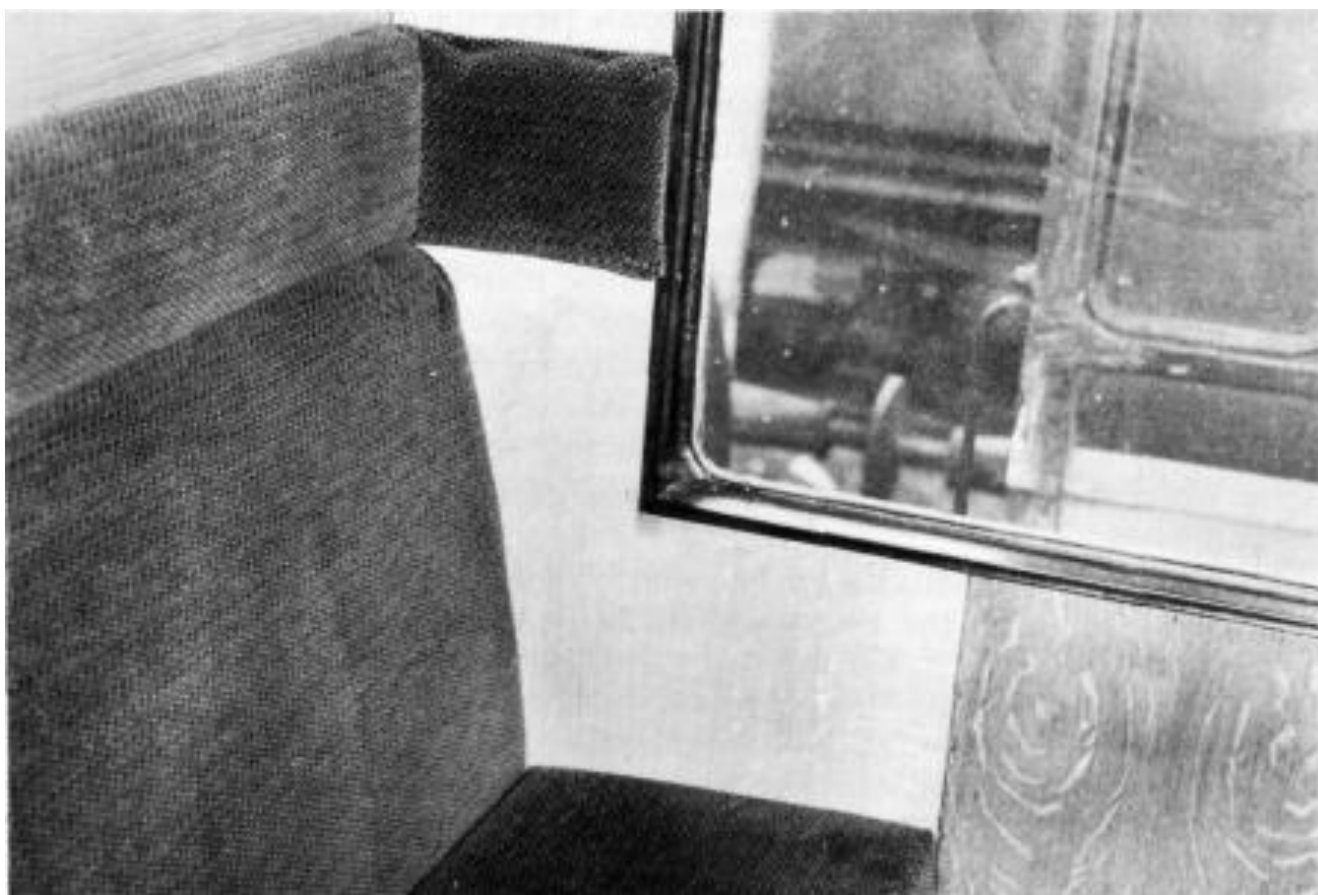
The recently acquired Midland 6-wheeler 62 (468a), pictured here at Drogheda about a week before ‘collection’ by the Society. (C.P. Friel)

The six-wheeler has already stolen some limelight from the Director’s Saloon by carrying a VIP; it was used as Santa’s Grotto at Whitehead last December. Fortunately he did not park his reindeer on the roof.

Good use has therefore been made of this excellent little vehicle, in contrast to an opinion I heard expressed when the coach was being attached to the returning “Ben Bulben” train at Drogheda; that it would “merely be another piece of rubbish to clutter up Whitehead”. This was, incidentally, a rare, possibly unique, opportunity to sample main line travel in a six-wheeled coach; the last ones running in passenger trains in the early sixties. Those of us who did so were amazed at the smooth riding qualities of the vehicle, so much so that we decided to replace all our bogie stock with six-wheelers. The thought of lavatory stops all around the countryside, or of teddy-bear raffles being conducted by sooty figures who swung down from the roof en route forced us to reconsider this idea.

With regard to other coaches, quite a lot of the work to Bredin 1327 referred to in the last magazine remains undone (again she had to be retained in traffic for the Santa Claus trains) while the final touches have to be applied to the Director’s Saloon in the shape of lettering. A very unwelcome development has been the theft from GNR all 1st 227 of the designation plates. The fact that these plates have been carefully removed indicates that a so-called “enthusiast” is responsible - they would be of no value to a casual thief in any case. It is particularly sickening that there are those who would vandalise the Society’s own stock for their personal gain. The plates in question were approximately 12” x 2” and designated “C², 60’0¾” x 9’6” 32½ tons”. Should anyone know the whereabouts of these plates I would be grateful if they would be returned to Whitehead.

May I conclude by thanking anyone who assisted with the coach programme in any way and, as usual, the ever open invitation for new faces to come down to Whitehead.



One corner of one of the compartments in Bredin 1327, showing new panelling and window frame, and re-upholstered seats. (C.P. Friel)

SITE REPORT

Johnny Glendinning

Since my last report I am glad to say that work has carried on at a steady pace. At the height of the operating season last July we were faced with moving one of the gate posts erected by Enterprise Ulster.

Some members may be tempted to ask why the gate post was not put in the right place to start with. Unfortunately, when EU were erecting the gates, some vital part of the trackwork was laid on ground where the post should have gone.

As the yard was relaid, this became the case no longer, and indeed it became necessary to move the gate post before proceeding any further with the track alterations, as it would have been more or less in the middle of one of the new sidings. Had EU waited until this track work had been completed, it would have meant a four year delay in erecting the gates.

The chief difficulty in shifting the post was the size of its concrete base, some 4ft x 4ft x 4ft, which proved too heavy to lift with the JCB alone. It was thought that perhaps the JCB and one of the loading shovels could lift it between them, but due to the topography of the site the two machines could not get round it.

It would of course have been possible to break up the concrete, but this is a very time consuming task, and would have also meant the extra cost of pouring a new base for the relocated post.

Also in the expensive category would have been hiring a road crane to shift the post, let alone the difficulties of positioning the crane on site.

Fortunately, NIR came to our rescue, and allowed us to borrow a 6½ ton capacity rail mounted crane. This vehicle could be shunted right up to either the old or new positions for the post, and thus it was possible to lift and reposition in one afternoon; notwithstanding the activities of a little green steam engine which trundled past us every so often.

The platform and loop road trackwork is now nearing completion, and hopefully by the time the Portrush Flyer comes round we will be in a position to run round the train within our own site. Besides some ballasting, all that is needed is the acquisition and installation of a crossing on one of the turnouts. We are currently negotiating with NIR for a suitable crossing.



Besides moving gate posts, the handcrane which we borrowed from NIR is also invaluable for trackwork. Here it is seen lifting panels out during the relaying of No.3 shed road. Left to right are Simon Marsh, Ken Pullin and Thomas Charters. (C.P. Friel)

This final repositioning of the turnouts in the loco yard had to be completed in a hurry, to allow loco No.85 to be moved into our site. The work was complicated on two occasions by the trackwork being cunningly concealed under snow, but on both occasions after ringing around I had a work force of six or more, who bravely set off across the permafrost in search of the turnout where they had been working. My thanks are due to Ken Pullin who kept the track gang on the straight and narrow.

Unfortunately, the electrical work has been held up for financial reasons, but by the end of December JR's hard working team had raised sufficient funds to allow us to proceed. At the time of writing NIE have finished all the major alterations to the incoming supply - this has involved the erection of a new pole and the provision of new input cables. All that is required is to connect the new terminal inside the shed. Following this, John Taylor's team still have a few months of work ahead of them, putting in new

wiring for extra equipment in the shed, not to mention lighting and power to the new shed.

The Site Department is also responsible for the buildings at Whitehead, and considerable work will have to be undertaken on these during the next few years. Not the least of these is the former bus garage recently taken over by the Society. This corrugated iron building needs considerable repairs to prevent it decaying any more. Plans are being drawn up for a proper workshop shed for the C&W Department, but before any building can commence, the present carriage sidings will need to be realigned and straightened. This will also make for easier shunting, and provide some additional storage space. A certain amount of excavation is required before the sidings can be straightened.



Compare this view with the similar photo in the last magazine. The almost completed run round can be seen at the end of the platform. (C.P. Friel)

I briefly mentioned the mid-week squad in my last report. They are Fred Graham and Lavens Steele, who come down one day mid-week to work. In the autumn they creosoted the Tarry, and also repaired the platform seats which are used on the Sunday Train Rides. They are currently working for the C&W Department on dining car 87. Anyone who thinks that they could help on a weekday would be most welcome and should contact myself or Fred.

The Tuesday night squad started in summer 1980 to work on the track, but they decided to continue work through the winter, and therefore switched their attention indoors. They are currently building new berths in the dormitory coach, increasing its capacity from 8 to 13. As I was unable to attend during the winter, Colin Holliday kindly took charge of the work force for me.

Lavens Steele still manages to keep the Tarry clean and tidy even though it is now in use 7 days a week, though I think Tommy Dorrian does a good deal as well. Due to circumstances beyond our control there has as yet been no work for the signalling squad. Simon Marsh has put some preliminary work into contacting a number of people who expressed interest, and a list of definite and possible

workers has been drawn up. NIR's resignalling plans have been delayed and this of course means that mechanical signalling equipment is not yet available.

Unfortunately we are soon to lose Simon back to the Kent and East Sussex, and I would like to thank him for all the hard work he has put in on the site.

I am sure that you will all join me in congratulating Simon on his recent engagement, and hoping that he and Sandra will be very happy.

Finally, once again, thank you all for the help, in whatever form it took.

RAIL BY ROAD

Paul Newell

Late last summer, following lengthy discussions, Comhlucht Siúcre Éireann at Carlow presented the Society, care of Mrs Margaret Prendergast, with the last locomotive at that plant, a Ruston and Hornsby diesel shunter.

So at the beginning of September we set aside the weekend of the 12th for the transportation of the loco from Carlow to Whitehead.

Through my company contacts I organised the Gibson haulage company of Kilrea for the job because they had a suitable low-loader and had already moved No.186's tender by road from Whitehead to Mullingar about a year previously. Furthermore, I knew the particular driver very well which enabled me to do some driving with the actual unit.

The operation really started on Thursday 10th September when another Gibson vehicle arrived at Whitehead to collect the necessary equipment for the job, comprising rails, sleepers, packing blocks, etc. Following the job with No.186's tender, Peter Scott had modified some old rails to form a ramp to simplify the transfer from ground to the floor level of the low-loader. In the event these proved ideal.

The following evening, we set off for Carlow with the intention of staying overnight and loading the loco at first light; allowing us to reach the border about 17:00 on Saturday. I had previously arranged with driver to meet him at Newry Customs Post; Patrick Kelly also nominated himself for the trip.

Jim, the driver, picked us up at Newry and we eventually arrived at Carlow at about 12:30am. We had arranged to meet the rest of the party at Carlow and stay in a hotel, but somehow we missed them and ended up staying in DAF Towers - the cab of the truck, which fortunately had bunks provided. The following day, which luckily was sunny, we found the missing members of the party and had the loco loaded by 11:00am, with the help of an articulated loading shovel and some of our Dublin members who had driven down to give us a hand.

We then set off for Dublin; some of the Dublin city roads were not exactly smooth, and I would swear that the low-loader levelled off a few of the irregularities. We arrived at Dundalk at about 16:40. We had to export the loco from Éire to Northern Ireland, and then re-import it at Newry, which we did at 17:20, 10 minutes before the closing time of the Newry Customs Post.

Then the last part of the journey took us to Whitehead by 19:20, but not before being caught in traffic jams in the centre of Belfast.

The locomotive was taken off within a couple of hours on Sunday morning, again with the aid of Peter Scott's improvised ramp.

The lorry unit was a DAF 2600 Turbo, with sleeper cab, which I must say handled the load very well. The loco itself dates from 1954, we think, is 4-wheeled and chain driven. It is considerably more powerful than Diesel 23, and boasts a spacious and comfortable cab, with dual controls. Starting is by means of compressed air, a reservoir first being charged by a small petrol engine mounted on the loco.

Generally, the loco needs wheel turning and an engine overhaul. Mention should also be made of a large quantity of spares which came with it, also negotiated in the deal by Mr and Mrs Prendergast, to whom the Society is most grateful.

Compared with the marathon effort to move the diesel from Carlow, it might be thought that moving No.85 from the shipyard to Whitehead would have been fairly simple. It was not without problems. First thoughts were to move the loco all the way to Whitehead by road, and unload it in our site. Unfortunately, the bridges in the Whitehead area ruled this out. King's Bridge has a weight restriction of 32 tons; Slaughterford and Ballycarry are hump back bridges. Therefore, a combination of road and rail was mooted. Queen's Quay depot is most convenient to Harland & Wolff, but a lengthy rail journey to Whitehead would have resulted, which would not have been good for the engine, especially as it was ex works, and not run in. The same consideration applied to Adelaide Goods yard. This reduced the possibilities to York Road, and NIR kindly gave us permission to rail the loco there, and made arrangements to haul it to Whitehead.



The CSÉ Loco immediately prior to off-loading at Whitehead. (C.P. Friel)

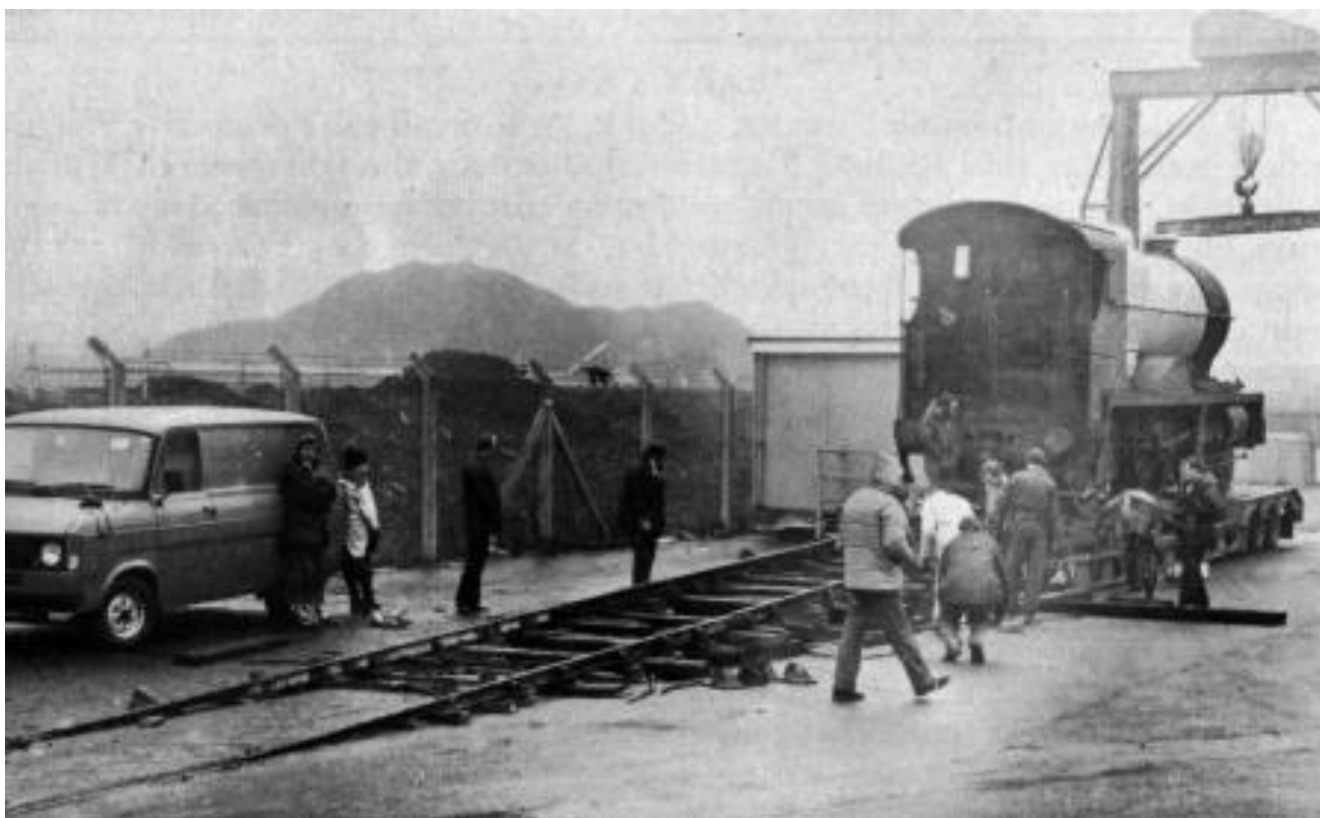
The next problem was that Northern Ireland Carriers, who had moved No.85 into the shipyard, had since gone out of the heavy haulage business. Fortunately, Dennisons of Antrim still had a heavy haulage unit, and they were duly contracted to shift the loco.

The movement was carried out on the weekend planned, but fate intervened. The tractor unit developed a fault during the previous job. Therefore, when the low-loader arrived in Harland & Wolff on the Saturday, it was drawn by another tractor unit, which did not have the hydraulic equipment to unload the low-loader.

Thus No.85 was loaded on to the low-loader (using an overhead crane) which was left in the shipyard until Sunday morning, by which time the proper tractor unit was repaired. Early on Sunday the convoy

(now complete with police escort) set out for York Road, in somewhat misty conditions. The route taken involved crossing the Queen Elizabeth Bridge in the wrong direction, round the back of the Customs House, along Donegall Quay to Corporation Street, then up Great Georges Street to York Street. The lorry driver skilfully negotiated his heavy load through the narrow entrance to the railway yard beside the Midland Hotel.

Avid readers of the loco reports may remember the use of a Society loading shovel for coaling at Queen's Quay. This fine machine was kept in Belfast in anticipation of No.85's movements, and proved invaluable at York Road in manipulating the components of the P. Scott patent railing ramp, which had been suitably modified to take the much heavier load of No.85. The ramp took some two and a half hours to build and half an hour to dismantle. Getting the loco down the ramp was an involved process; we employed the tractor unit at the Larne end, hauling No.85 off the low-loader by means of a wire rope. At the other end, a heavy road locomotive equipped with a power winch was connected to the front draw-hook of No.85, by means of a second wire rope in order to stop the loco 'running away' down the ramp. An anxious moment occurred when one of the rails of the ramp broke in two as the loco passed over it, but fortunately it was still possible to continue. Finally, No.85 was on the rails again.



Shrouded in fog, No.85 is unloaded from the low-loader at York Road. (C.P. Friel)

The movement of No.85 coincided with relaying in Whitehead (NIR) station, which involved the temporary disconnection of the RPSI site. So No.85 was stored in the running shed at York Road for a few days, being hauled to Whitehead the following Saturday. Unfortunately, this trip was not without incident, as she arrived at Whitehead with the centre large end carrying heat. Even then the heavy hand of fate had not finished with us, as the VS tender chose to become derailed as it was being shunted into the shed. About half an hour's work with the traversing jacks and it was on again, and I can now report that both No.85 and tender are safely housed in the shed. At the time of writing, restoration work has

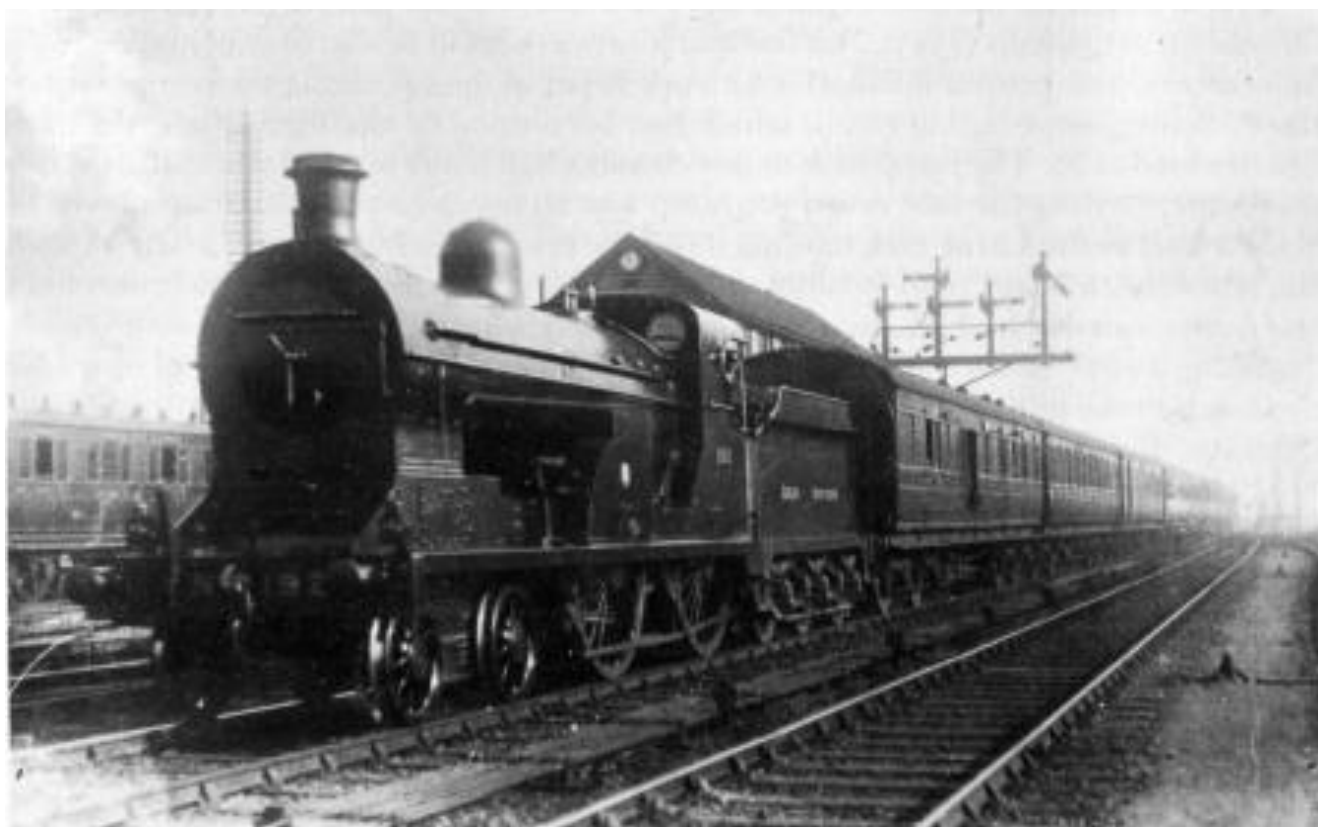
commenced in the form of sheet metal repairs to the tender.

Finally, thanks are due to all those members who assisted in either of the 'movements' described, to Gibsons of Kilrea, to Dennisons of Antrim, to Northern Ireland Railways, to CSÉ of Carlow, and to Mr and Mrs Prendergast.

IT ALL BEGAN IN PETTIGO (PART 2)

R.A. Read

"Up the Airy Mountain" was the title of P.W.B. Semmen's Locomotive Practice article in the May 1981 Railway Magazine, and perhaps this fairy poem by William Allingham, who was a distant family connection of mine, has influenced me in many ways, but though he had "Fear of Little Men" as the poem goes, I certainly took the opposite view concerning locomotives, having a great love of "the little engines", especially the smaller 4-4-0s of the GNR, and that is why I mention them specially in my articles.



S2 class 4-4-0 192, unnamed and in black livery, arrives in Amiens Street with an Up train. Probably in the early twenties. (Loco Publishing Company 88121)

Fairies, however, continue to intrude into this story as my aunt, Mrs Evelyn Whitla of Coleraine, tells me she used to lay two crossed pins on the rail and after the train had passed tiny scissors were formed. On one occasion the fairy scissors embedded in the rail, presumably because a locomotive of greater weight had appeared.

My aunt was always well looked after by the stationmaster at Bundoran Junction and was usually invited to inspect his ferrets, the smell of which she was afraid she would carry into Portora Royal School where she worked. She reminds me that early in the century, one put one's watch back twenty-five minutes when arriving in Ireland and that Standard Time did not arrive till daylight saving was introduced during the Great War. Incidentally, she suggests an alteration to the first part of this article

as it was Brewsters of Londonderry who sent down bread by rail after the local baker McCall retired.

Having made these additions and corrections to my first article, I can now continue my reminiscences with a visit to Dublin on 21st November 1929 as a member of the Edinburgh University Hare and Hounds team for a cross-country race in Phoenix Park against Trinity College, Dublin.

We left Belfast on 22nd November behind 170, one of the large 4-4-0s on the 10:15 to Dublin. Noted at Adelaide were small 4-4-0 70, 0-6-0 SG 37 and the old 0-6-0 57. At Portadown class S2 4-4-0 192 was on the Clones train and the small 0-6-0 37 class E on the Keady train. At Goraghwood 4-4-0 74 was waiting to go to Armagh and 2-4-0 87 was on the Warrenpoint train. At Dundalk 2-4-2T 92 was seen and also the boiler and tanks of an old 4-4-0T were visible. We stayed at Trinity College and spent the Sunday afternoon with a member of the rival team called Harpur at Blackrock. On the way back I noted GSR 0-6-0 176 and 433 a DSER 2-4-2T. On the 25th we returned to Belfast behind 4-4-0 190 on the 11:30, noting at Dublin 4-4-2Ts 3, 188, 189, 4-4-0 126 and 145, an 0-6-0 of class A. Small GSR 4-4-0 59 was also there. At Drogheda 0-6-0 9 with its Phoenix superheater, 0-6-0 15 and small 4-4-0 107 were noted, while 2-4-2T 91 was at Dromin. At Dundalk 4-4-0 172 was ex-shops and rebuilt 4-4-0 127 could also be seen. The Warrenpoint train at Goraghwood was headed by 2-4-0 86 while at Portadown could be seen 4-4-0 135 and old 0-6-0s 58 and 194. A visit to the NCC next day produced 4-4-0s 61 and 62, 2-4-0 52 rebuilt with large boiler and old 2-4-0 8. After we returned to Edinburgh, a GNR carriage board with 'Belfast' on one side and 'Dublin' on the other mysteriously decorated our changing room at the University sports ground for many years.



NQG class 0-6-0 No.9 of 1911 seen at Dundalk about 1915. (L.J. Watson Collection - WG2)

In August 1931, we were on holiday in Cushendun and I made a trip from Ballymena to Londonderry via the Northern Counties line. At Ballymena 4-4-0 63 was still in green and unrebuilt, but by now most engines were red, such as 4-4-0 21 (rebuilt in 1928) and 3 "Galgorm Castle" (rebuilt in 1926). 21 was on the 10:10 slow to Belfast, 77 on the 10:00 excursion to Portrush, and 74 "Dunluce Castle" on the Portrush non-stop with ten coaches making a fine sight in their immaculate maroon livery. My train was the 10:27 with 4-4-0 78 and five bogies and six six-wheelers. 103 (red) was on a narrow gauge

train and red 108 was seen at Ballymoney.

Visible at Coleraine were 0-6-0s 54 and red 27. While there, 56 a red 2-4-0, took over our train on to Derry. At Limavady Junction I made a note of green 49 which was a 2-4-0T but I had noted it as a 2-4-0, so perhaps I wrote down the wrong number. At Derry I visited the GNR shed where shunting was being done by 119, an old 0-6-0T which had been built as a 4-4-0T numbered 1 in 1889, the first locomotive completed at Dundalk Works. It had been rebuilt as a 0-6-0T in 1921. Also present were small 4-4-0s 12 (recently superheated in 1930), 44 and 106, SG 0-6-0 117 and small 0-6-0s 10, 11 and 101. None had any lettering on the tender. Large rebuilt 4-4-0 122 was on the 12:30 buffet car express to Belfast, and I was pleased to be given a footplate ride back to the station on sister engine 132, seeing on the way old 0-6-0s 145 and 152. My return to Ballymena was behind 4-4-0 58, red and unrebuilt, on the 3:50 to Belfast. Noted were 4-4-0 4 "Glenariff" red and 54, a large-boilered green 0-6-0. 2-4-0s 56 (red) and 16 (green) were at Coleraine which we left with ten coaches packed out, and we arrived at Ballymena 12 minutes late. Narrow gauge 111 (red) was waiting on the Larne branch and K 0-6-0 30 (green) was seen, completing an interesting set of operations.

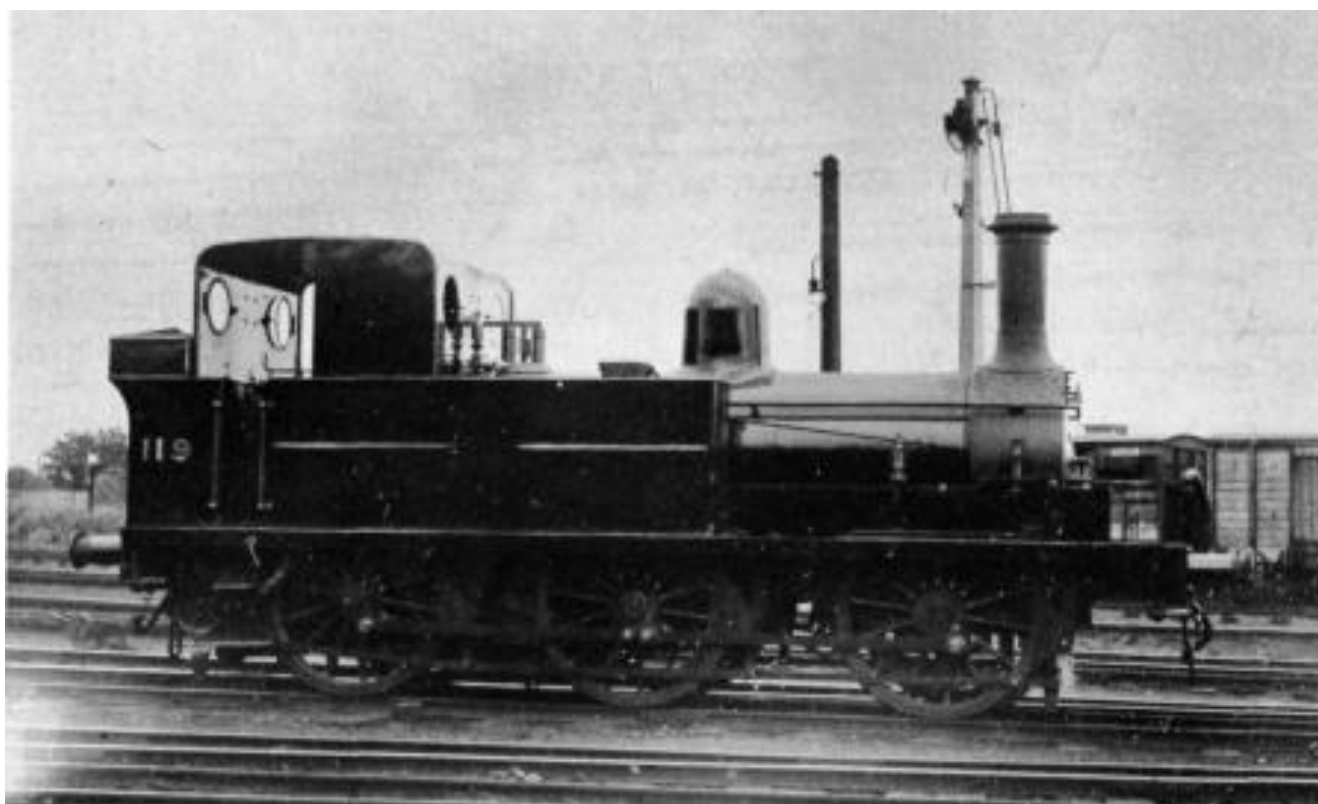


A class 4-4-0 63 "Queen Alexandra" before rebuilding and renumbering in 1936. (Real Photographs x215)

I went along to the York Road, Belfast, shed of the NCC on 17th August 1931 and noted two green locomotives 2-4-0 51 and 0-6-0 19. In red livery were small rebuilt 4-4-0 66 "Ben Madigan", 0-6-0 15 and 4-4-0 70. 68, a red rebuilt 4-4-0, was on a Larne train and red narrow gauge 2-6-0ST 109 was present. The usual GNR locomotives at Adelaide Shed included old 0-6-0s 137 and 138 built for the Ulster Railway in 1872 and 1873 respectively. The shed list showed the locomotive duties as follows: Main Line - 156, 190, 120; Antrim Line - 64, 115, 116, 139, 144; Derry Line - 122, 132, 135; Derry, Armagh, Clones - 123, 124; Clones - 65, 131, 134; at Antrim 66; at Newcastle 72, 74, 76; Banbridge Line - 21, 40, 43, 54; Lisburn - 62, 63, 143; Mixed Duties - 7, 15, 19, 151; Main Line Goods - 160,

161, 164; Enniskillen Goods - 117, 201, 202; Derry Goods - 8, 14, 20, 48, 96, 97; Other Freights - 9, 13, 16, 57, 100, 140, 153, 155, 176, 184; Shunts - 22, 23, 27, 80, 81, 93, 95, 99, 138, 150, 166, 167, 168, 169.

On 19th August I travelled to Dundalk on the 7:45am train to Dublin behind 4-4-0 191 with six bogies, two more being added at Portadown, where large 4-4-0s 124 and 134 were noted. Old 2-4-0s 84 and 87 and old 0-6-0 194 were around. 0-6-0 (E) 41 was on the Scarva-Banbridge branch. Alighting at Dundalk I went to the works which contained SLNCR 0-6-4T "Enniskillen" which was in for a new Beyer Peacock boiler. Also in the erecting shops were large rebuilt 4-4-0 131, small 4-4-0s 73, 83 and 89, old E 0-6-0 40 and other 0-6-0s 154 and 173. I was looking for QGT 0-6-2T 98 for a photograph as another distant connection of mine, John Kells Ingram, had written "Who fears to speak of 'Ninety Eight'" but I was unsuccessful! The most interesting locomotives around the works were 4-4-0T 195, crane 0-6-0T 31 and awaiting scrapping 0-6-0 B 26 and 2-4-0 85.



119 started life as a 4-4-0T, being the first loco built at Dundalk Works in 1889. She was rebuilt as an 0-6-0T in 1921. (Real Photographs x68)

When I was leaving a messenger asked me to go up to see Mr Glover, the locomotive superintendent, in his office. I was made very welcome as Mr Glover said his grandfather had been a medical student in Edinburgh Royal Infirmary where I now worked as a house surgeon. He chatted cheerily about his work, being particularly proud of the rebuilding and superheating he had carried out on the small 4-4-0s, pointing out that 73 and 83 (in the works) were the last to be done. He said the U class 4-4-0s 196-200 were very popular, 200 itself being the directors' engine which was always kept spotless. He said they had tried painting tanks with number transfers only but they were now returning to 'Great Northern' on the side tanks. He told me new flat-sided tenders and 12 new side-corridor coaches were being built. His room was lined with interesting photographs of GNR engines and he allowed me to copy a long list of the lengths of firebox casings applied to various locomotives. I will not bore readers with the details but figures for the smaller engines showed 3ft10 for 119, 4ft4 for 91, 4ft5 for 31 and

4ft11 for 195. Tea finished off a very pleasant interview and I then caught a train to Dublin. There I visited Amiens Street shed, being especially pleased to see and photograph LQG 0-6-0 78 which used to be "Pettigo" where all this hobby of mine started. The shed list was: 4-4-0s 24, 170, 171, 172, 173, 174, 126; 4-4-2Ts 2, 4, 5, 142/7, 186-189; 0-6-0s 18, 78, 178 and old 0-6-0s 34 and 69. Drogheda shed had: 4-4-2T 1; small 4-4-0s 45, 46, 71, 107; 0-6-0s 39, 109, 165 and old 0-6-0s 55 and 61. The Newry list was: small 4-4-0s 51, 73, 82, 83; 2-4-0s 86 and 87; 0-6-0s 17, 79, 175 181, 182. A visit to Kingsbridge produced 4-6-0 405, large 4-4-0 331 and a little inspection engine plus coach numbered 92, the engine being green with black and yellow lining.

My return was on the 6:40pm to Belfast with large rebuilt 4-4-0 127 pulling nine bogies. Drogheda was reached at 7:16 where, after two coaches had been removed, departure was made at 7:19. Another coach came off at Dundalk after arrival at 7:48½. Leaving at 7:53 a fast run was made, Bessbrook being passed at 8:15¾ and Goraghwood being reached at 8:20. A coach was added there and the train departed at 8:30, small 4-4-0 51 being noted on the Warrenpoint train. A stop was made at Scarva from 8:40½ to 8:41, small 4-4-0 105 being noted on the Banbridge train. After a stop at Portadown, 8:52¼ to 8:56, Belfast was reached dead on time at 9:30 with 4-4-0 190 which must have taken over from 127 at some stage of the journey.



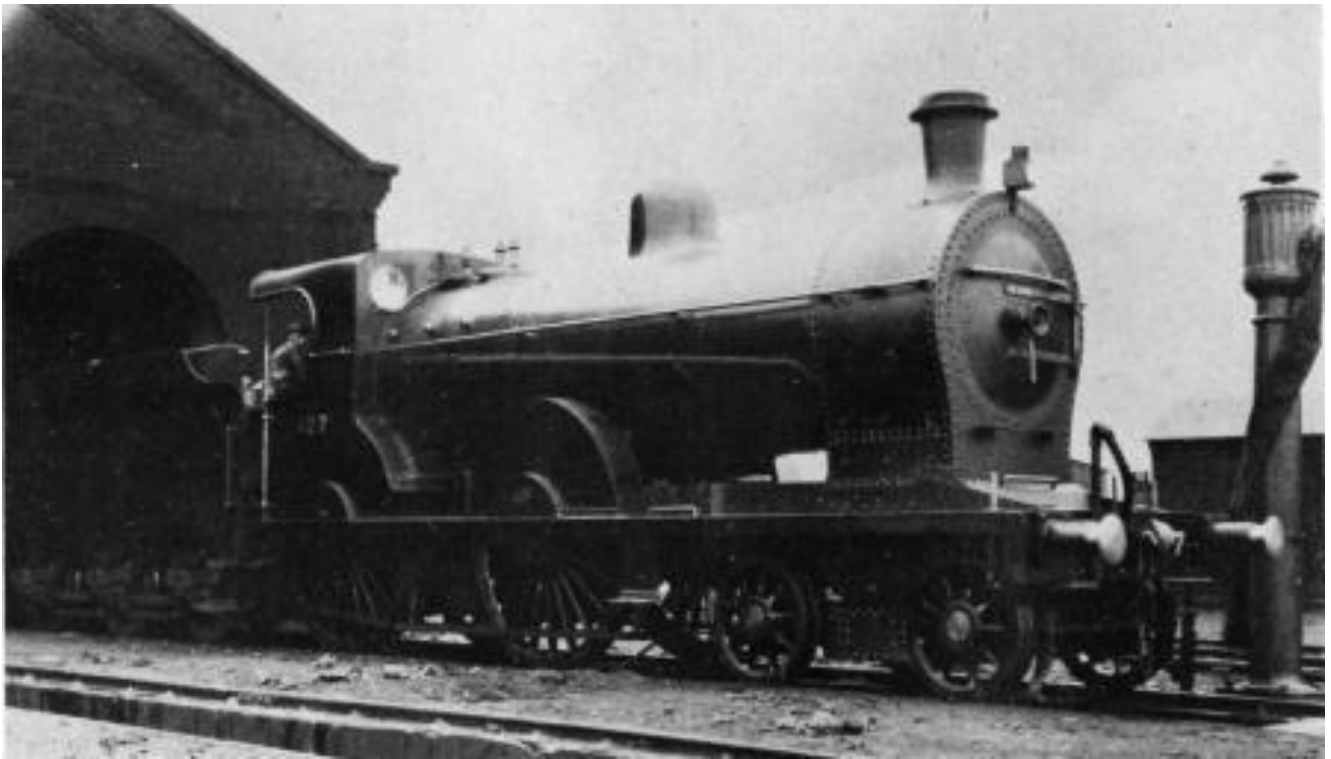
200, immaculate in black livery with burnished metal work, shunts a coach off the back of a Down train at Dundalk. (Lens of Sutton)

To finish off it might be of interest to add some notes on the Irish links with my other favourite railway, the North British. Has anyone heard of the Waterford, Limerick and Western atlantics that worked on the NBR? Well, the story is as follows. In 1888 Mr J.G. Robinson became locomotive superintendent of the WLWR and in 1896 produced three 4-4-0s 53 "Jubilee", 54 "Killemnee" and 55 "St. Bernard". Close examination of photographs shows that Robinson's first 4-4-0s for the Great Central Railway which he joined in 1900 were really an enlarged version of these locomotives although, of course, built to the British mainland gauge. They were numbered 1018 to 1042 and 104 to

113 and their frame details, wide splashers, boilers though now fitted with a Belpaire firebox and shapely chimney reveal their WLWR ancestry although they were much larger locomotives. A logical progression was to the Atlantic type which came out in 1903. Their beautiful proportions earned them the name of 'Jersey Lilies' after the nickname of Lily Langtry, a well-known actress friend of King Edward VII. A more portly version of this design became the North British Atlantic of 1906. The NBR were desperate for a more powerful locomotive for the Edinburgh-Aberdeen and Edinburgh-Carlisle routes and instead of enlarging their 4-4-0 design to 4-6-0, as happened on the Caledonian Railway, the NBR went to the North British Locomotive Co. for their new engines. The NBLCo. were in 1905 building a batch of Great Central atlantics and it was no surprise when their NBR Atlantic proved to be an enlargement of the GCR variety. Apparently no documents have come to light to show the design was copied but this is hardly surprising. The new Atlantic had no evidence of NBR ancestry and my claim is that it was a direct descendant of the WLWR locomotives. After many teething troubles the engines proved excellent and further batches were ordered in 1911 and in 1921.



D2 class 4-4-0 No.331 storms out of Kingsbridge on a Waterford train in March 1952. (Kelland Collection 115)



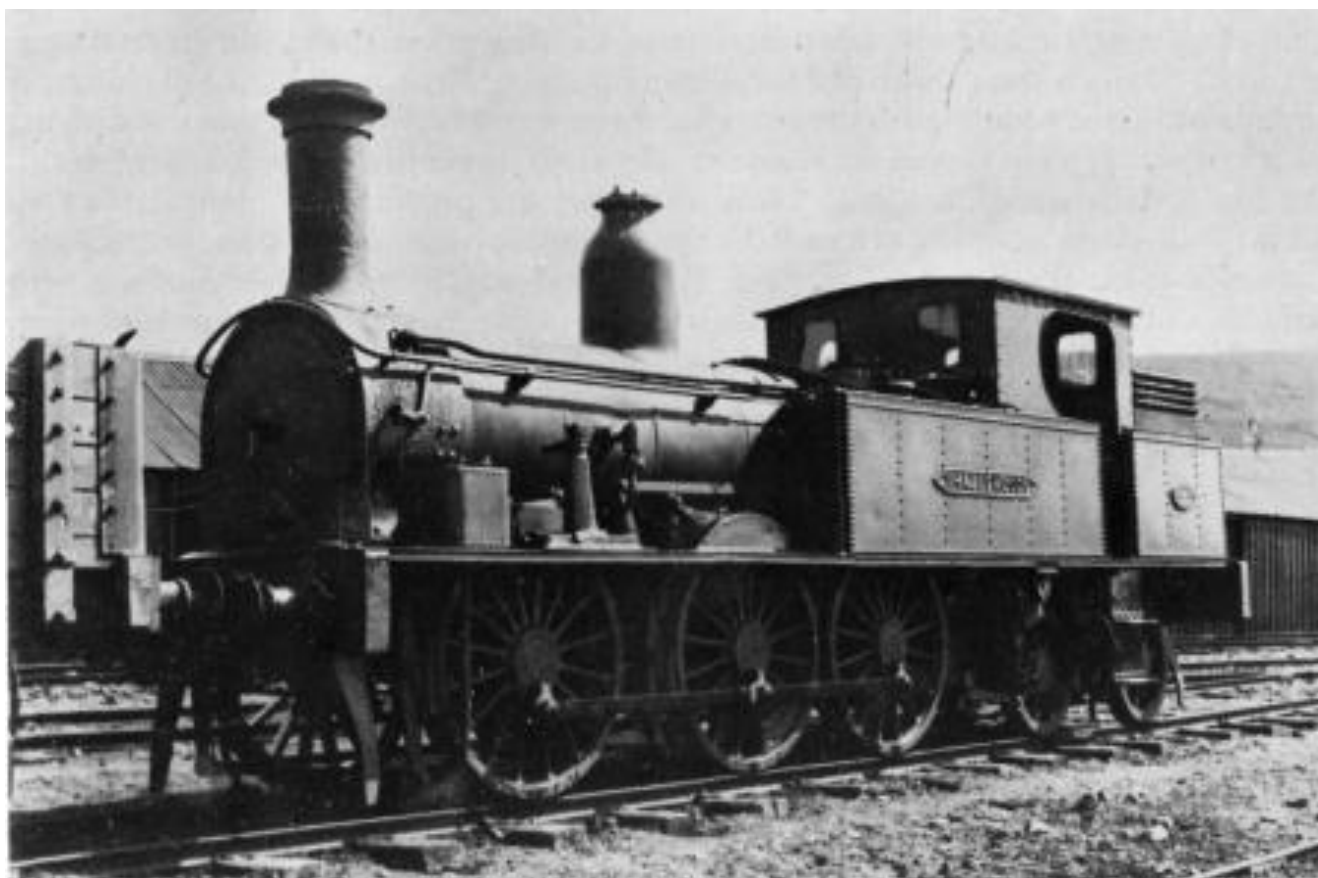
QLs 127 at Amiens Street Shed in 1931. (Loco and General 6963)



42 class 0-6-0T No.92 poses for the camera at Inchicore, while hauling a six-wheeler on the workmen's train. (Real Photographs x502)

The Sligo Leitrim and Northern Counties Railway - or as the wags used to call it, the Slow Late and Never Come Regular. I was born, reared, and lived for 33 years just 50 yards from the line, on the Manorhamilton-Glenfarne section. This was the steepest bank on the road, and the highest point on the whole railway was ½ mile above our house.

From whenever I was able to walk I had a keen interest in the engines and the general working of the line and I got to know every driver, fireman and guard as well as several plate-layers. Indeed, one plate-layer lived in No.15 crossing house, about 250 yards from our house, where our country road crossed the line. This crossing was at the upper end of a very deep cutting which was also on a very sharp curve, and with the gradient as well, Enniskillen-bound trains had some very hard work to do. Many times they slipped to a stand and had to reverse back some 1½ miles to take a second run. We often stoned the rails to help them out.



“Hazelwood” at Sligo Quay about 1935. (Lens Of Sutton)

Heavy trains were often banked by a second engine - when that took place it was a sight to see, especially at night, as it was like a fireworks display. There was one driver in particular, who lived in Manorhamilton for a short while, and if he was on the banking engine the last ¾ of the wagons would be buffered up and the blast from the chimney could be heard for miles. Needless to say he was disliked by the firemen because if the coal was in any way small they could never get it to go down on the fire. One fireman told me the second the shovelful went through the firehole up it went over the brick arch and out through the tubes. He said the only way to fire under these circumstances was to keep piling it on, and if the box was so full that the coal was just able to go through the firehole, so much the better, as the lumps might stay down just long enough to burn.

Each of the engines had a character of its own. Mr N.W. Sprinks described the “Leitrim” class well in his book, when he referred to “the curious spider-like grace of these engines”. Many a time I watched them coming up the bank, with their tall chimneys and big bellmouth domes with the safety valves on top. They would be down to walking pace and would seem to rock from side to side as each cylinder took a charge of steam, just like a duck waddling along. Then when they got properly into their stride they would settle down as steady as a rock. Of the 5 engines of the class, “Leitrim”, “Fermanagh”, “Lurganboy”, “Lissadell” and “Hazelwood”, “Hazelwood” was by far the best and was very popular with all the men. In my time “Leitrim” was in bad shape and seldom on the road. She was withdrawn in 1947 when both injectors packed up on a special, and her firebox got a bad scorch.

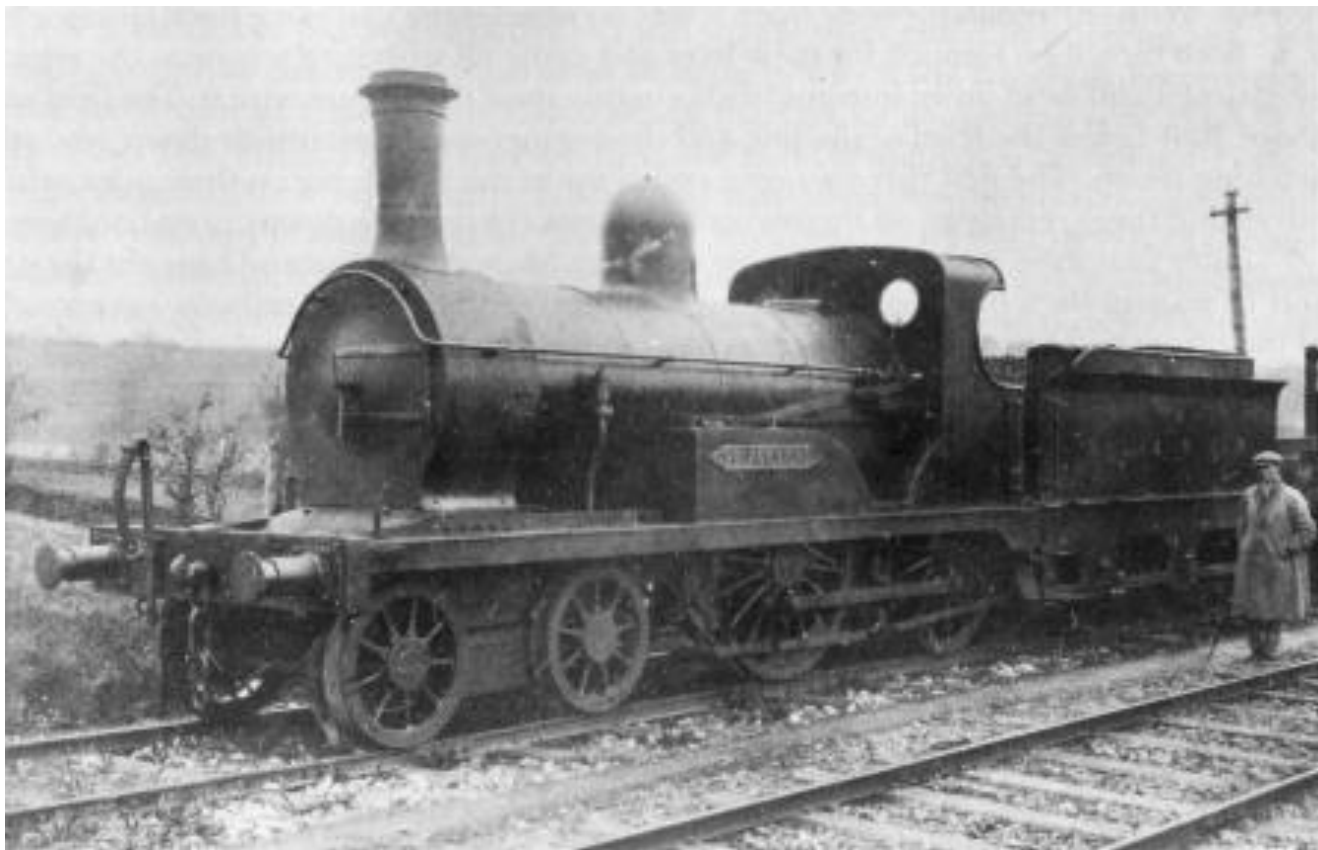


Conversation time at Manorhamilton. “Sir Henry” is shunting the passenger portion of the Sligo-bound mixed into the Up platform. The date is probably 1930. (Real Photographs x723)

I remember one early morning in June 1944 loading a horse into a wagon at Manorhamilton station. The loading place was right beside the Loco shops in which some of the engines were housed. As the door was open I went in and there was “Lurganboy” being prepared for a market special, by a lad I had grown up with. He was just wiping off the last of her grime and had about 40lbs on the clock. As it was only 7am and there was no one around I asked him if I could put some coal on. He said go ahead as it was time to bank her up. He explained that the way they were fired was across the back of the box with the back corners packed, and with the steep slope forward in the grate the rocking movement of the loco brought the fire forward.

The “Sir Henry” class were bigger and stronger engines, and had Belpaire fireboxes. Of the 3 engines “Sir Henry” was a real good one and seldom gave trouble. “Enniskillen” was also a good one, but one man told me she was very shy to steam and you had to be on top of the job all the time. “Lough Gill” never was a good one. I often heard her coming up the bank with a heavy train and her 3 cornered beat

was like a car running on 3 cylinders. As one driver remarked, she pulled like a man with a long leg and a short one. The 0-6-0 tender engines, of which there were two, “Glencar” and “Sligo”, were ex-GNR. I also remember a 4-4-0 named “Blacklion” which was used for the Mail train and the fastest train of the day. I once travelled on “Glencar” from Collooney to Dromahair. It was the year before she was scrapped, and she was in a shocking state with every joint in the cab leaking steam and water. She was so rough that it was impossible to stand without holding on to something. The fireman told me to sit on his seat and hold tight, but she pulled her heavy train up the sharp Ballintogher bank without any trouble. The last engines in the stock were “Lough Melvin” and “Lough Erne”. Unfortunately I did not see much of their work as we moved to Enniskillen district 6 months after they arrived on the scene. I did, however, have a chance to travel on the footplate of “Lough Erne” at Enniskillen and am delighted to see her in our stock at Whitehead.



4-4-0 “Blacklion” at Manorhamilton on 19th May 1924. Originally GNR(I) J class No.118 “Rose”, she was bought by the SLNCR in 1921. (Real Photographs x724)

One day I will always remember was Saturday 6th June 1925. I was a very small lad and, as usual, was out at the side of the line to watch the heavy evening goods train coming up the bank; 20 minutes previously the fast mail train had come down the bank from Enniskillen, hauled by “Blacklion”. The day was very hot with the sun blazing down. When the goods came up out of the cutting I could see that the engine was “Enniskillen” and that she had a full load of 22 wagons and a 10 ton brake van. Just as the van passed where I was standing at the fence, there was a fearful grinding and screeching noise from up front, and a banging of buffers as the brake van was shot violently backwards. The van and about 16 wagons ran several yards back down the bank until the guard got them stopped with the brake. I will never forget him climbing down from the van with blood pouring from a cut across the side of his head where he had come into violent contact with the brake handle when the van was pushed back. What had happened was this: the rails had spread out with the intense heat, thus derailing the engine.

The driver and fireman felt the road going and, quick as lightning, the driver pulled the big lever full into reverse. With the regulator wide open it was no wonder the van came back with such a jerk. Both men then jumped for their lives and came off without a scrape as the engine overturned and went down into our field bringing six of the wagons with it. The field was about 10ft below the level of the line and the engine was almost upside down, and still belching steam. The first three wagons ended up in the field lying on their sides, while the second three remained on their wheels, but at a crazy angle down the embankment.

Later that evening an engine came out from Manorhamilton and brought the van and 16 wagons back into the station. Every plate-layer on the whole railway was brought to the scene, and by sunset the line was back in position and the 6 wagons were re-railed and away. It was very interesting that evening to see the passenger train from Sligo come up the bank and stop and wait for the evening passenger from Enniskillen which also stopped short of the scene of the accident. Both sets of passengers then exchanged trains, and then both engines propelled back, to Manorhamilton and Glenfarne respectively, where they ran round. This enabled the passengers to make their journey, and get home before bed time.

The engine lay in the field for a week, when on Sunday the Company borrowed two Great Southern steam cranes and, with one at the front end and one at the bunker, they lifted “Enniskillen” up and set her on the rails. The whole operation took four hours. She was none the worse for her ordeal, and was back at work within a week.

Incidentally, it was “Glencar” that was involved in the Glenfarne accident in which Railcar A was damaged beyond repair. A brother of mine was in the railcar and received a badly injured ankle. Several other people were hurt, but none seriously, which was a wonder as the body of the railcar was completely folded up.



“Enniskillen” shunts at Enniskillen alongside the GNR station, 27th September 1957. (S.C. Nash)

If one takes a train journey from Dublin to any of the provincial termini he is quite likely to observe one or more ancient looking carriages lying in some bay platform, loop or siding. These wooden carriages, either six-wheelers or bogies, and with beautiful side, door and window designs, not to mention the ornate door handles, do not run in regular service any more. Instead they are used as sleeping cars, mobile workshops or instruction vehicles, and are referred to in official railway terminology as 'Departmental Stock'. The divisions in CIE which make most use of these interesting vehicles are the Permanent Way, Signal and Electric and Maintenance Departments, while others are attached to the Breakdown Trains at Inchicore, Cork and Limerick. An eye-catching feature is their distinctive colour schemes, orange, green, yellow and grey being the most common liveries applied. They can usually be found at locations where track alterations or resignalling schemes are in progress, and on completion of the work move with their crews to the next place, often spending several weeks, even months, stabled at one particular point.

I have always been interested in these vehicles, almost all of which are former MGWR, GS&WR, D&SER, or even WL&WR, passenger carriages or brake vans. Since 1976 I have taken notes and photographs, wherever possible, of each vehicle observed, its location, colour, wheel arrangement and number. The latter is always a 3-digit number beginning with 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and they all have an 'A' suffix on the end, e.g. 234A, 342A, 465A, 531A, 605A. Recently I put all my data together and catalogued them according to number series, builder, date, colour, wheel arrangement, original number and type, locations and dates observed, and department to which they are allocated, or fate, such as awaiting scrapping. As the present editor is also Carriage & Wagon Officer of the Society I decided to put pen to paper as I feel readers might be interested in some remarks and news concerning these vehicles, some of which will hopefully become part of the RPSI fleet at a later date. One already marked for acquisition is ex WL&WR Saloon No.900, at present at Claremorris in the guise of 465A (see "Five Foot Three" No.19, page 23). Readers requiring further information on these vehicles should consult Herbert Richards' and Brendan Pender's excellent work "GS&WR Carriage Diagrams" published by Transport Research Associates some years ago. Information on the disposal of some, and the conversion of others into departmental services, can be found in many back issues of the IRRS Journal. It is a real pity that a companion volume is not available for MGWR carriages, some of which still survive in this secondary role.

Some of these vehicles are worthy of special mention and I will treat the most interesting in numerical order.

Six-wheeler No.234A is a beautiful coach complete with GS&WR axlebox covers. Originally 1st/2nd No.907, it was built in 1889 for the WL&WR, their carriages being numbered 900-1050 upon absorption into the GS&WR in 1901. I first saw it in Clonmel on the occasion of the IRRS New Ross Tour in 1977, and then found it in Tipperary on 25th May 1980 when the All Ireland Club Football Final (Ballinasloe v St. Finbarr's) was staged there. It has been there ever since, parked beside the level crossing and used as a store or sleeping van. Clearly a worthy candidate for preservation.

Its sister stands in Claremorris posing as 239A, and coupled next to 517A, more of which later. This was WL&WR No.926, built even earlier in 1881, probably in Limerick. Both were withdrawn from regular service as far back as 1947.

Coach No.363A, painted a yellow and black combination, is parked beside the River Suir just beside the divergence of the Dungarvan line at Suir Bridge Junction. I don't think it has moved an inch in the four years between my two spottings. Withdrawn from revenue earning service in 1961, it was GS&WR 3rd No.877 built in 1907. Its external condition is good.

No.368A is an example of what might have been saved, but fell foul of the cutter's torch at Mullingar

in 1976. I found it in Athenry in July of that year at the head of a rake of crippled wagons awaiting the last leg of their final journey from Limerick to Mullingar. Originally GS&WR brake van No.14, built in 1911, it was scrapped soon after I saw it; a great pity as it would have made a fine van at the rear of any preserved train of six-wheelers.

Nos. 380A and 643A travel as a pair with the Signal and Electric Department, one as a mobile workshop, the other as a sleeping/kitchen van. As can be seen from the dates and locations in the table they spend much of their time in the Galway area, and at the time of writing (May 1981) are in Athlone, stabled at the Shannon end of the bay platform, where 380A has just received a new coat of bright green paint, with equally dazzling red ends. According to Messrs Richards and Pender, 463A was GS&WR 1st/3rd brake No.863, built in 1906. This would make her a sister of our own 861, both being shown on the same page (27) of their work. However, the 463A I have seen and photographed bears no resemblance to our 861. It is an 8-wheeler, is much shorter (60' at most I would say) and has only three doors each side instead of four. Even more significant is the absence of a clerestory roof and guard's lookout.

[It would appear that a typographical error occurred in Richards and Pender, and that 863 should be 836. - Ed.]

However, I have no such doubts about the existence of another sister of 861 in Claremorris. This carriage was one of the second set built at Inchicore a year later in 1907, with four-wheeled bogies, 871. This vehicle, which was withdrawn in 1965, subsequently became Maintenance Department vehicle No.517A, and has been in Claremorris since 1978 at least, and is still there now, opposite the Ballinrobe branch (No.4) platform. Whatever about 463A, this carriage would make a splendid companion for 861. Sister coach No.873 was adapted to 445A but I have never seen this vehicle in my travels around the CIÉ network. It would seem that 517A is destined to remain in use at Claremorris for some time to come but is well worth saving when finally available as it is in very good external condition at present.

Poor 861 would not feel so lonely at Whitehead among all those 'modern' coaches of the 1930s and after if she had her sister with her to recall old times together!

Also of interest are carriages Nos. 604A and 605A, attached to the Inchicore Breakdown Crane, as they are the only service vehicles I have seen painted in current CIÉ passenger livery.

Finally, some general observations and suggestions could be made. Most coaches have survived remarkably well in Departmental service in regard to their bodywork and panelling especially. CIÉ has, perhaps unwittingly, done all us preservationists a great favour by reclassifying and redeveloping them, otherwise they would have all disappeared when withdrawn in the 1950s and 1960s before enough people became interested in carriage preservation. It is indeed quite remarkable that vehicles dating back to 1881 are still running around from station to station a hundred years later, and it is quite possible that several will reach their centenary with the national railway company before this decade is out, the first to achieve this being 239A which is exactly 100 years old right now.

What will happen to them all eventually? My own personal feeling is that we would all be guilty of a most grievous sin if one more old carriage is cut up. We have lost enough already, the hundreds scrapped during the last 20-25 years, plus vehicles like 368A, 379A, 485A, and 541A-544A which were in Departmental use until the mid-1970s. "But how can the RPSI preserve and accommodate them all?" ask those of you who know how limited both the Society's financial resources and Whitehead accommodation are.

I think the answer is clear enough. Both the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland and the West of Ireland Steam Railway Association are planning to re-open and operate branch lines of their own. While the Banbridge and Loughrea schemes are both in the early stages at present they will need

rolling stock. Judging by the successful growth of the many privately run leisure railways in Britain more and more stock will be required as time progresses and passenger traffic increases. These old vehicles will only become available one or two at a time unless CIÉ suddenly strips three of its most important divisions of their mobile homes. This would give both societies time to raise the necessary cash, purchase the coaches and restore them to their former glories. However, now is the time to start fundraising and planning.

The two branch lines would provide Irish preservationists with the opportunity of running really historic stock.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Please Note: In the interests of space it has been necessary to shorten some of the letters.

Dear Mr Edgar,

In your Editorial in Five Foot Three No.26 you asked for comments from members on the usefulness or otherwise of the magazine.

To begin with, as a non-participating member because of distance and domestic ties, I find it a very useful link with the Society. Probably those members who are more active will find the information out of date but, for myself, the Society news supplemented by the newsletter is adequate.

Secondly, I have had an interest in Irish railways since my first contact with them 40 years ago, when part of my service was at the Kinnegar Ordnance Depot, and I therefore look forward to the historical articles. As regards frequency of issue, whilst I would prefer a more frequent magazine, say six-monthly, I realise that there are many other factors which must be considered, such as cost, volunteer work, etc. Once a year is much better than none!

In conclusion, I wish the Society every success during these most difficult times.

Yours sincerely,

Robert L. Davidson

Dear Mr Edgar,

I notice from your Editorial that you wonder if anyone reads the magazine.

I can assure you that they do. The Committee are well aware of what is going on, but you have a great number of members whose only link is through it, but who only go on the occasional tour and Flyer.

My magazine is read by three or four people, and I find interest mostly in:

- (1) What is happening at Whitehead.
- (2) Historical articles.

These people continue to support all the raffles, etc. However, I feel that the Society has not really considered just what it is undertaking with the Banbridge line. The bridges alone are going to cost far more than in the outline of costs.

In the meantime, good luck with the magazine.

Yours sincerely,

Michael F. Mackie

[The feasibility study for the Banbridge proposal is being undertaken by professional railway engineers who are members of the Society. As far as I know, some of the bridges were costed using

redundant steelwork from closed lines, so this may explain why the costs seem low. - Ed.]

Dear Sirs,

What sort of magazine does the membership want? A few thoughts follow. Firstly, how does the current magazine appear to me?

- (1) Excellent illustrations on the cover and inside the cover.
- (2) The illustrations with the Pettigo article were very poorly reproduced (most other illustrations in the text are reasonably clear and informative). In spite of the poor reproduction of the Pettigo article's illustrations they are necessary.
- (3) Magazine seems well balanced with news and interesting articles.

As I seem to be an armchair follower of the Society, and probably would even be so if I lived on your side of the water, the news and illustrations are very useful to understand what is going on at Whitehead.

A reduced version of the magazine would not worry me terribly with fewer briefer articles (historic). The news sheet which you produce for the intervening periods I find excellent, although I have to search for it amongst all the other bumf you send - necessary as it might be.

So on the whole you probably have it right with 2 or 3 news sheets per annum, plus one magazine (with the illustrations). I can well imagine that regular attenders at Whitehead find all the news 'old hat' but to the likes of me it is all I get. And from your writings there are quite a few distant souls like myself.

Whilst I am writing can I suggest one or two little publication topics for you?

Firstly, I know of no maps of Irish railways. A comprehensive map might be a useful sales item like the gazetteers that Ian Allen produces. Secondly, small books or pamphlets published on each of your locomotives might sell well as souvenirs.

I hope these comments are of some help. I realise how heavily committed you are for a small dedicated group - that certainly manages to come through without giving the appearance that it is taking the enjoyment out of life

Yours,

Derek Watkins

[An Irish Railway Atlas by S. Maxwell Hadjucki is published by David & Charles. - Ed.]

Sir,

I feel prompted to write in response to the recent Editorial in Five Foot Three No.26. I have been an avid reader of your magazine since it was founded in 1966, and I for one would be appalled at any serious suggestion of dispensing with Five Foot Three. Speaking from the point of view of those who, for geographical reasons, cannot be very closely involved in the activities of our Society, I would regard the news sheet alone as little substitute for a printed magazine containing photographs.

A magazine enshrines the Society's history. Using back issues enables one to build up a picture of the Society's activities over the past seventeen years - what its members have thought, said and achieved. Furthermore, photographs enable us to see our progress over the years What **did** No.186 look like in 1968? The newsletter too has its place, and could I suggest that it might be helpful if the newsletters, like the magazine, were numbered? They can be easily lost and without numbers it is difficult to know which, if any, are missing.

I think the magazine is ideal as it stands. I would not welcome the English-style humorous articles. We need Society news - but not too much. Historical articles, especially if accompanied by old photographs, are needed to add to the interest and variety. I would like to see more on coaching stock. A magazine exclusively on Society matters would be dull. Our Editor and Magazine Committee do a great job, but if they could manage two a year again, it would be appreciated.

Norman Johnston

Dear Sir,

In your Editorial in the latest number of Five Foot Three, you asked for views on that publication.

I think that it is excellent in its present form, and together with the journal of the IRRS keeps this exile in touch with Irish railway matters.

My interest in the RPSI centres somewhat on No.171 which I knew when she first arrived (and was green!). A photograph of mine, taken as she headed an Up express through Knockmore Junction, appeared on an RPSI Christmas card many years ago (without my permission, but never mind, I felt honoured!).

I appreciate the financial aspect of publishing a magazine, being involved in a similar publication elsewhere, and would be satisfied with one issue a year.

But please continue.

Yours faithfully,

Cecil Smith

Dear Mr Edgar,

As an 'across the water' member whose participation in the RPSI is limited to paying an annual sub, and - once in a long time - travelling on one of your admirable two-day railtours ("South Wexford" and "Ben Bulbin", so far) may I respond to your Editorial request for readers' views on the magazine?

For my taste, the latest edition is exactly what Five Foot Three should be: a blend of up to date news of RPSI activities and of history and reminiscence, with relevant and general high quality illustrations (the four cover photos this time are excellent). A sizeable magazine, twice a year, seems about right, though I certainly wouldn't complain if it came more often!

One complaint I do have: the news about current locomotive and carriage activities would be much more enjoyable if one knew (as I do not) the identity of, e.g. Locos 3, 23, etc., or of coaches 1142, 1327, etc. No doubt it would be tedious for those 'in the know' to spell it out each time any particular vehicle is mentioned, but if a simple stock list were produced and distributed (or sold) to members, it would be very interesting and useful and would solve the problems I have mentioned. I'm sure that members, and casual customers at Open Days, railtours, etc., would pay gladly a modest price for a stock list of this type.

Yours sincerely,

Alec L. Ross

[A carriage stock list was published in Five Foot Three No.25. It is planned to publish a proper stock book at some stage in the future. - Ed.]

Dear Alan,

May I say how sad I, as an English member, would be if Five Foot Three should be curtailed in any way. It is an excellent magazine, and I very much like the balance between what's going on now and historical interest.

The more issues you can produce in its present format the better.

The only criticism I have is the quality of reproduction of the photos which isn't quite honestly all it might be. Other than that, keep going.

As one who doesn't often get to Northern Ireland, and who has never actually got to Whitehead, Five Foot Three does a great job in keeping me in touch.

Yours sincerely,

Michael H.C. Baker

[The Editor would like to thank all those who took the trouble to communicate their views in writing. The views expressed here, and the discussion which took place at the AGM will guide both the Editor and the Council in their future magazine policy. - Ed.]



The empty stock working for the "Steam Enterprise" and the 2 day tour is seen near Greencastle en route to Central Services Depot, 31st August 1981. (C.P. Friel)



*Apart from the lorry and the crowd of onlookers on the overbridge, the 1980s scarcely intrude into this photograph. No.184, Sligo bound, is shown departing from Longford during the 2 day tour.
(C.P. Friel)*