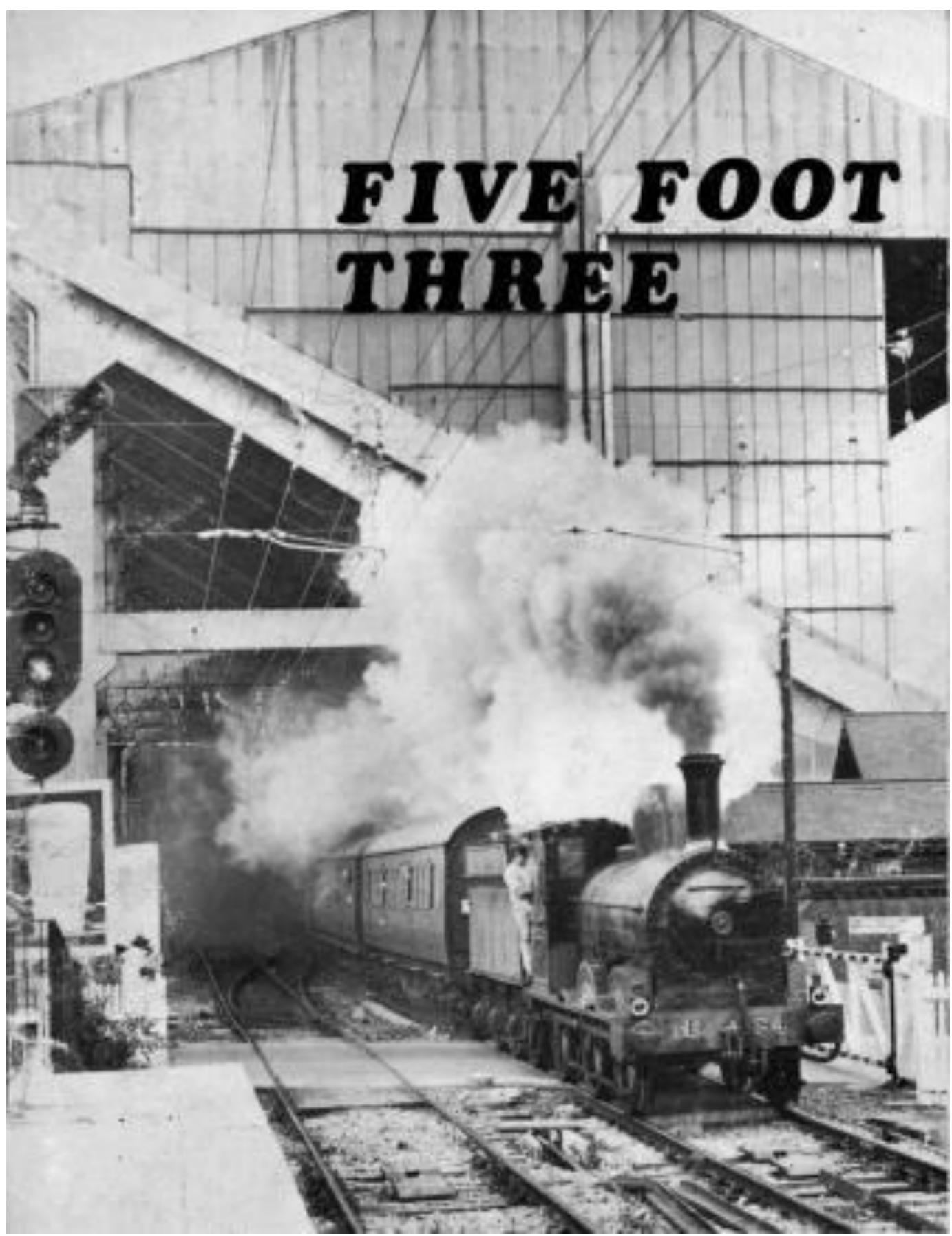


**FIVE FOOT  
THREE**



# FIVE FOOT THREE

## No.29

### Winter 1983/4

**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: Under the wires at Lansdowne Road. No.184 heads towards Bray on the “Dublin Bay” railtour on 24<sup>th</sup> September 1983. (C.P. Friel)*

#### **EDITORIAL**

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*“The Association of Railway Preservation Societies Annual Award for 1983 is made to the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland for its continuing highly successful operation during 1983 - as for many years past - of steam excursions, comprised of its own locomotives and coaches over the lines of both Córas Iompair Éireann and Northern Ireland Railways, together with the restoration to traffic during the year of LMS NCC 2-6-4T locomotive No.4 (after a five year overhaul), UTA dining car No.87, GS&WR coach No.1142 and LMS NCC coach No.91.”*

To say that the Society is honoured to receive what is arguably the Railway Preservation movement's highest accolade is, perhaps, an understatement. It is particularly fitting that the award should be made at the start of 1984, a year which marks not only the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Irish railways, but also the Society's own 20<sup>th</sup> birthday. Those who took the first tentative steps to set up the Society in 1964 surely never contemplated the scale of the Society's operation today, with an extensive railtour programme, and events like the “Portrush Flyer” and “Steam Enterprise”. While we enjoy today's activities we should pay tribute to those who had the foresight and courage to try to save some of the then fast disappearing steam locomotives.

It should also be noted that the Society's present status owes much to the valuable co-operation of both NIR and CIÉ, whose attitude has done so much to nurture the RPSI. We are indeed lucky to have enlightened managements who recognise the value of their railway heritage, and the importance from the educational, recreational and tourist aspects of keeping RPSI steam alive.

The citation for the award makes specific mention of three aspects of the Society's activities. All those volunteers involved with planning and running the railtour programme, and restoring locomotives and coaches, can feel justifiably proud that their efforts have been recognised. It goes a long way to make those long hours spent working, often in adverse conditions, and sometimes seemingly taken for granted, worthwhile.

The winning of the ARPS award is a tribute to all those who have helped the Society in so many ways down the years. But it must also be seen as a great encouragement for the future. We have achieved much in the past, but just as much awaits us in the years to come. Let us not now rest on our laurels, but let us build on this success for the next twenty years.



*The scene at Carrickfergus during a pause in the filming of the BBC's "Aunt Suzanne". This was 91's first trip since restoration. (C.P. Friel)*

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#### **NEWS FROM COUNCIL**

**Robin Morton**

The branch line issue was tossed back into the melting pot at the 7<sup>th</sup> October EGM. Deadlock had been reached on the Scarva-Banbridge project, with Banbridge District Council offering moral but not financial support. The RPSI Branchline Sub-Committee had reported on this state of affairs to the RPSI Council at a special meeting in September and it was decided to hold an EGM to point the way ahead.

At the EGM it rapidly emerged that there was no option but to shelve the Banbridge proposal and in the meantime get the Sub-Committee to reconvene and cast its net again, but this time more widely.

At the back of everyone's mind was the recent approach to the RPSI from the Downpatrick and Ardglass Railway Society which is hoping to persuade Down District Council of the virtues of reopening the Downpatrick-Ardglass branch line. The DARS realises the whole project depends on RPSI support, and so detailed discussions will be opened but no major commitments entered into without the prior approval of the membership.



*The "Aunt Suzanne" train at Carrickfergus. Newly restored coaches 91 and 1142 are immediately behind the engine. (C.P. Friel)*

The resolution at the EGM read: "That the Society takes note of the report of the Branchline Sub-Committee, expresses its thanks for the Sub-Committee's efforts, decides that no further action can be taken at this stage on the Scarva-Banbridge scheme, and directs the Sub-Committee to explore any suitable preserved railway possibilities."

The EGM also heard a brief report on the fire at Whitehead on 1<sup>st</sup> October. The bus shed, owned by Carrickfergus Borough Council and used by the Society to store loco and coach equipment, was burnt down. At the time of writing the cause of the blaze was not known, but it seemed unlikely that it was malicious. Unfortunately, the RPSI Council had as recently as June taken a conscious decision not to insure the contents of the shed pending the drawing up of a lease with Carrick Council.

Fortunately, loco spares, including boiler tubes and superheater elements, escaped unscathed but valuable carriage spares, including 20 doors and five sets of batteries, were destroyed. Also engulfed in the flames were a bus privately owned by a member and two lorry units which had been purchased from Esso. Again, none of these items had been insured.

The Society's insurance bill already amounts to £3,800 per annum, the bulk of the premium being paid for the obligatory £5m public liability policy which enables us to run railtours. The rest is taken up by covering the obvious risks, but it would be financially prohibitive to provide a safety net for all

eventualities. Policy is decided by the Council in consultation with our insurance brokers, Bowring Martin.

Contrary to the information in one of the news-sheets, it turned out that rolling stock will be based at Mullingar for at least part of the winter season. The Little Bird Film Company wished to hire No.184 plus three vintage carriages for a day's filming in October of the Channel 4 series "The Irish RM". Filming took place at Moate, a pretty little station between Mullingar and Athlone which loomed large in "The First Great Train Robbery". Also on the film front, No.171 and a train of splendidly restored RPSI carriages from Whitehead were hired in March by the BBC for the filming at Carrickfergus station of the drama production "Aunt Suzanne". On a smaller, but still lucrative scale, shots of No.171 rushing through the countryside on the "Port Lairge" railtour will be featured to provide a 1950s flavour for the film "The Country Girls". Spot the gricer!



*Filming for "The Irish RM" at Moate, 14<sup>th</sup> October 1983. Pictured left to right are: Sean Lally and Johnny Clynes (CIÉ crew), William Roe (RPSI), Brendan Claxton (actor playing the driver), Peter Bowles and Rory McNamee (RPSI). (Barry Pickup)*

The ACE (Action for Community Employment) scheme was renewed in October with the new team comprising two joiners, a welder, a painter and a handyman. The Society pays 10% of the salaries and provides all the materials, while the Government foots the rest of the wage bill. A new venture at Whitehead is the Youth Training Scheme set up under the auspices of NIACRO (the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders). Research conducted by NIACRO found that young people who are unemployed are much more likely to come in contact with the law than those

with jobs, so the aim of the scheme is to provide employment and basic training for young people from the area.

Consideration is now being given by the RPSI Council to the building of a more substantial station building on the platform at Whitehead. It is envisaged that this would incorporate a booking office, shop, classroom and toilets, and it should lead to an upturn in business for the Sunday train rides as well as being a boon for ventures such as Santa trains, the Easter trains, and schools' days.



*If you appear in a BBC play you have to look the part! The engine crew of Davy McDonald (left) and Harry Ramsey (right) are ushered along Whitehead platform by a bemused Frank Dunlop (centre). They had just visited the BBC's wardrobe. (C.P. Friel)*

In May the Society was represented at a meeting in Belfast of the Museums and Galleries Commission. Our delegates put forward the RPSI's view that the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum would be wise to consider the playing field at Whitehead as a possible location if the Belfast Transport Museum is being moved from Witham Street.

Up north moves continue to have a turntable reinstated at Coleraine so as to assure the future of the "Portrush Flyer". Professional drawings are being prepared and we hope to call on the assistance of Coleraine Borough Council and the Northern Ireland Tourist Board to bring the scheme to fruition.

A new departure in the autumn was the hiring of RPSI rolling stock for promotional trains. First in was the Northern Ireland Chamber of Commerce, which made a three-day tour of the NIR system to mark the Chamber's bicentenary. Chamber members and guests enjoyed the luxury of an RPSI special comprising restored carriages 50 (the directors' saloon), 87 (dining car) and 1327 (Bredin side corridor). On the first leg of the journey, from Belfast to Portadown and back, they also had steam haulage courtesy of No.171. Thereafter, the party had to make do with an NIR diesel, but there was the compensation of the usual high standard of RPSI catering from John Richardson's team.

Then in October Appletree Press hired the Directors' Saloon and Diner for the successful launch of a

new book being published to mark the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Irish railways. Again, RPSI catering was to the fore.

Incidentally, that 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary, which falls in 1984, promises to keep the Society on its toes. At the time of writing we are co-ordinating our plans with proposals from CIÉ, Bord Failte and the Department of Posts and Telegraphs, all of whom want to mark the anniversary. The RPSI will have a double reason for celebration, of course, as 1984 marks, incredibly, the Society's own 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary.



*Some of our members also got in on the act. Would you believe (left to right) Guard Johnny Glendinning, Porter Tommy Dorrian and Ticket Collector Ken Pullin? (C.P. Friel)*

My thanks to all those who have helped, and in particular the following PSRs:

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Mervyn Darragh                     | Membership Secretary                   |
| Mark Kennedy / Jan Irwin           | Addressograph plates                   |
| Charles Friel                      | Belfast Area Meetings                  |
| Lavens Steele / Johnny Glendinning | Ulster Tourist Development Association |
| Derek Young                        | Insurance                              |
| Brian Ham                          | Solicitor                              |

## **OPERATIONS**

**Ernie Gilmore**

If "something for everyone" was last year's summing up of the railtour season, I would submit that this year's should be "we seem to have got it right". I refer to the balancing of fares with the cost of operations, the latter depending on how the rate of inflation in Northern Ireland and the Republic increases the railway company charges, and the former depending on the projected numbers travelling. I am happy therefore to report that none of our operations in 1983 lost money, and most made their proper contribution to the upkeep of the locomotives and rolling stock.

The Operations Committee has been keeping a very close watch on operating costs and railway company charges during the year and every turn of the wheel has been examined at meetings with CIÉ staff in order to run the tours as efficiently and economically as possible. Useful savings have also been made in the purchase of coal, as explained in the locomotive running report. While such economies keep fares to a minimum, they are no substitute for running with full capacity trains, and here I must pay tribute to the excellent work done by the Society's publicity team under John Friel. They ably took up the challenge of the annually empty seats on the first Flyer and Enterprise, not to mention the unknown quantity of the "Bray Shuttle".



*This photograph of No.184 with mostly GSR stock at Limerick Junction could date from the forties or fifties, but was taken during the "Port Lairge" tour on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1983. (C.P. Friel)*

A review of the season starts with the "Claddagh" railtour on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 1983. A moderate turnout of 120 passengers travelled from Mullingar to Galway behind No.184, hauling five RPSI coaches. Thanks to the efforts of member Martin Hewitt, and the West of Ireland Steam Railway Association (who provided publicity in the Galway area), a record crowd of 340 passengers travelled on the afternoon trip to Attymon Junction. The operation was successful financially, but there are still those empty seats from Mullingar. No.184 performed her duties as well as we have come to expect, although there was a problem slaking her thirst in Galway which, unlike some of the participants, was nothing to do with the price of a pint!

In spite of seemingly insurmountable difficulties, the "Port Lairge" railtour started out from Dublin Heuston on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May, albeit in total confusion over seating arrangements. However, it subsequently ran like clockwork through to Monday afternoon. Eight weeks before the tour we were informed by CIÉ that locomotive No.171 would not be permitted to traverse the DSER coastal route to Rosslare and that no passenger trains would be allowed over the New Ross and Ballinacourty goods only lines. This was a bitter disappointment and almost jeopardised the running of the tour to Waterford. The alternative route via Kilkenny had been believed impossible due to lack of water until a 'panic' survey of the route was carried out on 17<sup>th</sup> March.

Even worse was the closing of Connolly station to all passenger traffic for three weeks, commencing on the Saturday of our proposed carriage working from Whitehead to Mullingar. This was due to the commissioning of the new signalling installation, and we were forced to run the empty stock a day early, and to start the tour from Heuston. This meant running ECS from Mullingar to Heuston via Athlone and Portarlington, necessitating a 1:15am departure from Mullingar on Saturday morning.



*The first “Portrush Flyer” passes Muckamore on the return journey to Belfast. The first coach is the GNR Directors’ Saloon, fifth coach is diner 88 on what turned out to be its last run before restoration. (C.P. Friel)*

While passing through Carlow we happened to see the fire brigade preparing their engines for the St. Patrick’s Day parade. A bold approach to the Chief Fire Officer revealed that great minds think alike, as local member Chris Prendergast had already been in touch on the same subject. Yes, he would be pleased to facilitate us at Carlow and Kilkenny by providing fire pump tenders for our exclusive use on Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> May to fill the tenders of both locomotives. Having thus overcome one major hurdle, others appeared before us. Just three weeks before the tour CIÉ banned No.171 from entering Waterford following the discovery of a structural problem on Bridge 114 on the outskirts of the city. As luck would have it, this bridge carries both the Kilkenny and the Limerick lines into Waterford side by side, and so No.184 was on her own for the Campile trip and the Sunday morning departure to Carrick on Suir. The tour went through some hectic re-planning at this stage. Limerick was the eventual choice for the overnight stabling of No.171 (and workshop coach 114), giving rise to the term ‘alternative railtour’.

And so to Waterford on a bright Saturday morning with a nicely loaded train. The water stop at Carlow was a complete success, enlivened by the appearance of a preserved 1937 Ford V8 fire engine loaned by the County Council. At Lavistown gates, where the lines from Cherryville Junction and from Waterford unite just outside Kilkenny, was held the first runpast of the tour. No.184 was waiting to work the train forward from Kilkenny, having travelled light engine from Mullingar. A too hasty

runpast at Lavistown - in the opposite direction this time - meant that only the athletic got good positions for photographs. We lost marks for this one. A busload of photographers was dispatched to a vantage point in a field to photograph the train traversing the Nore viaduct, albeit half an hour behind schedule due to a delayed crossing with a late service train. The lineside bus itself caused a further delay at Mullinavat (it got lost!). In the meantime, member Henry Beaumont sold a 3" thick pile of No.171 colour posters to the local populace at £1 each! What a reception we had in Waterford. The station was jammed with an estimated 1,000 people and we only had space for 150 on the return trip to Campile. Due to the lack of a turntable at Waterford, No.184 had to go to Rosslare to turn for the Sunday tour to Limerick Junction, and this precluded a second trip to Campile for the local people.



*The third “Portrush Flyer” negotiates the loop line, just crossing Auld’s Bridge. (C.P. Friel)*

The usual evening activities were enjoyed by all. The mayor of Waterford welcomed the travellers officially at the dinner in the Ardmore Hotel. We gathered by this time that we were performing a useful function for the County by drawing attention to the Waterford-Limerick Junction line which the Government was threatening to close. All along the route the local papers interviewed and reported the story of our tour, with accompanying pleas to save the railway. Indeed so much enthusiasm was engendered that one Clonmel paper had a write-up or photograph on every page, all twelve of them. This must be a record! Thanks are due to member Peter Bowen-Walsh for his assistance with the country publicity.

Sunday morning bright and early favoured us with sunshine and a wet rail for a classic departure from Waterford, the exhaust of the little engine echoing off the cliff face. Meanwhile, the ‘alternative railtour’ had left Limerick Junction at 5:30am and was proceeding to meet us at Carrick on Suir. A stirring double-headed runpast occurred at Kilsheelin amid beautiful countryside, while at Clonmel, the town dignitaries met us on the platform with an official invitation to join in the Charles Bianconi (father of Irish public transport) bicentenary celebrations in 1986. We hope the line survives.

A study of the railtour route from Whitehead to Waterford and back will indicate an uneven number of reversals. For operating reasons it was therefore necessary to turn the train on the triangle at Limerick Junction. A normal approach from any direction to the Junction is Irish humour at its best but our

approach was nothing short of ‘amazing’. A synopsis of the manoeuvres is given in the railtour brochure, some of which may still be available from the RPSI shop.

A leisurely stop at the Junction to service the locomotives gave ample time to explore its idiosyncrasies. There then followed a fast run by No.171 to Dublin on the main line, which was interrupted at Portarlington to allow water to be taken at that well known hydrant, and bags of coal to be transferred from the workshop coach to the tender. This year not everyone caught the Liverpool ferry. We were very encouraged that twenty of our friends travelled to Belfast on Sunday evening and finished off the weekend with the 65 mile trip from Belfast Central to Whitehead on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> May. This part of the tour was highly praised by those taking part last year and we look forward to a greater response for this year’s “Galway Bay” railtour.



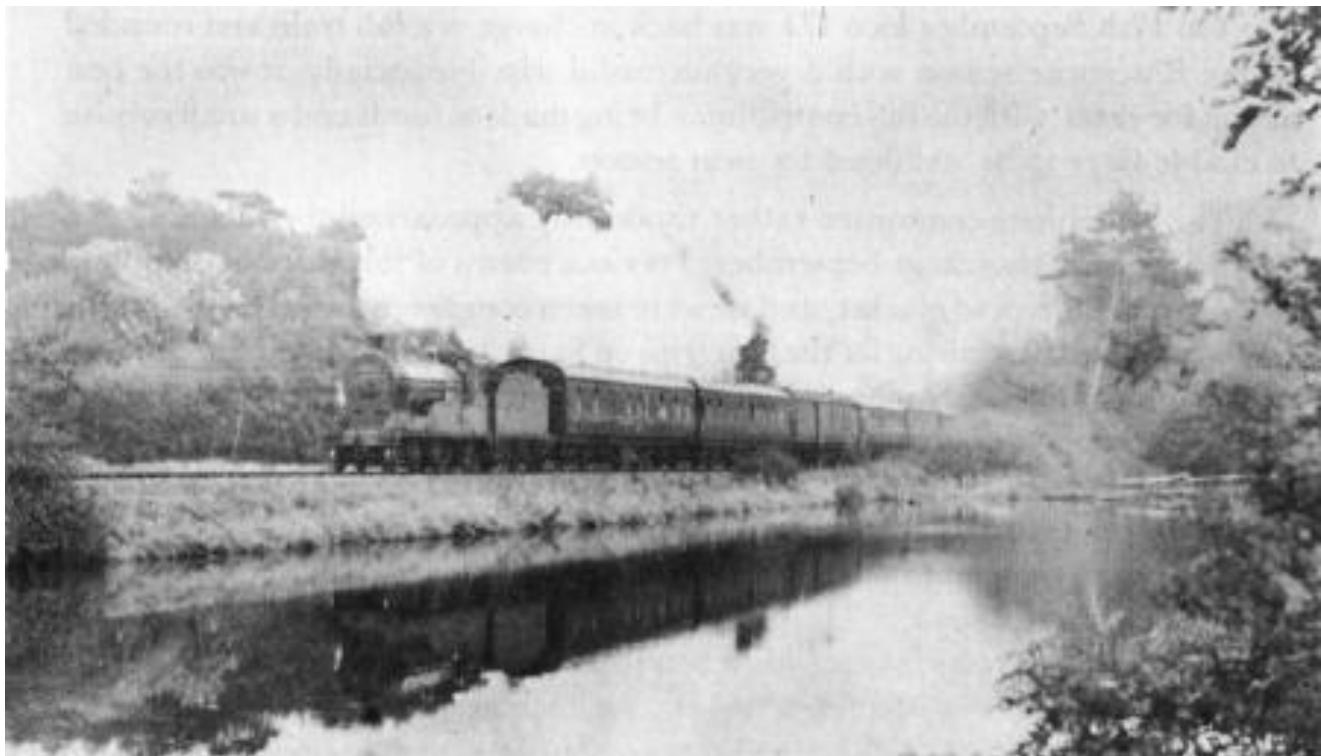
***Huge crowds witness the arrival of the first trip of the “Dublin Bay” shuttle. (C.P. Friel)***

Meanwhile work was progressing nicely on No.4, the ex 2-6-4 tank, and hopes were rising that she would be ready for the “Portrush Flyer” season beginning on 23<sup>rd</sup> July. This was not to be and we obtained a waiver from NIR to run No.171 tender first in the Down direction to Portrush, with speed restricted to 40 mph on the mainline and 30 mph on the branch. The intensive advertising paid off and we had an unusually well filled train for the first excursion. The good weather and a dry rail helped the tender-first locomotive climb the steep Mossley bank. That afternoon we carried over 200 people to Castlerock, the local advertising, with assistance from member Arthur Wickham, having been relatively successful.

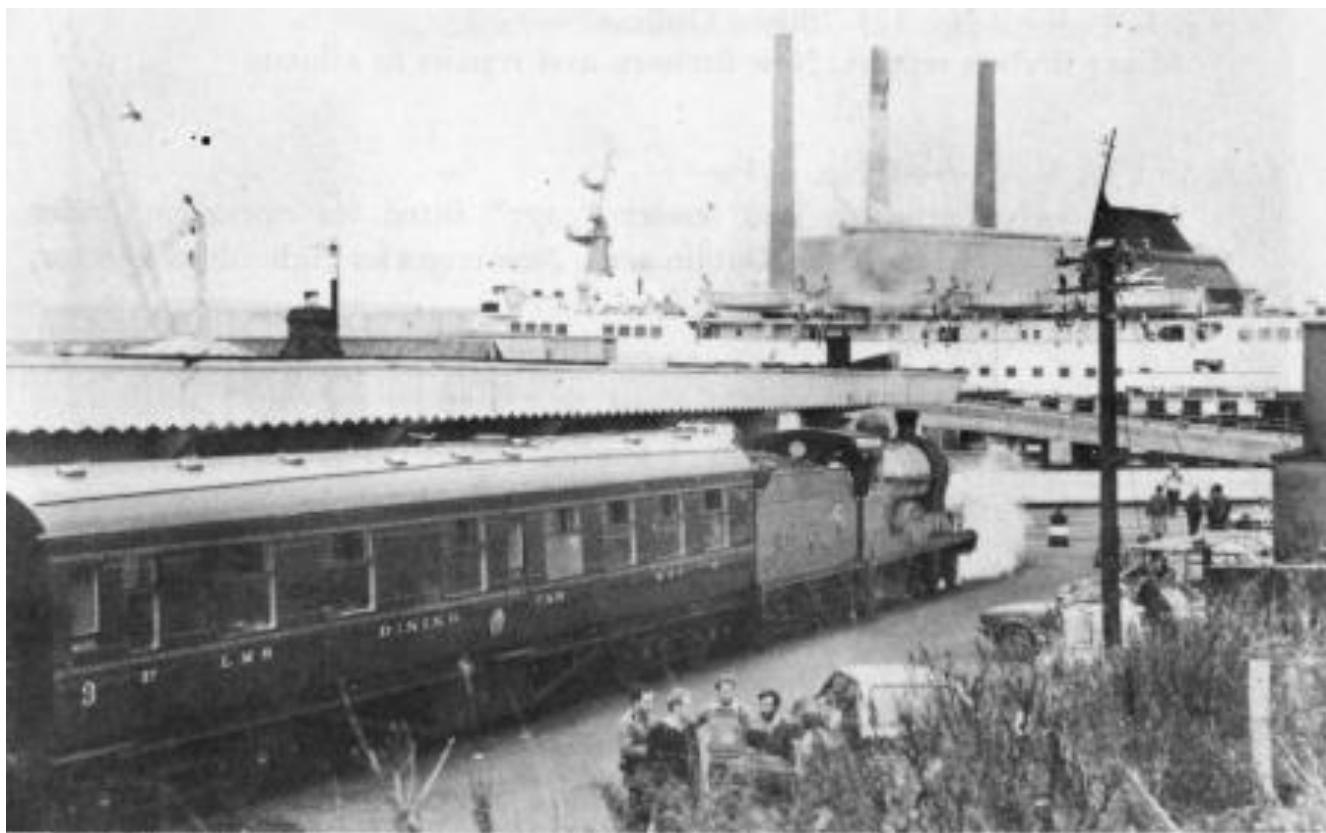
In order to hedge our bets, we decided to run No.171 and No.4 double-headed on the second Flyer on 4<sup>th</sup> August. This combination proved highly successful and provided some interesting photography as well as running. The train was almost full for the trip to Portrush and was full to capacity for the run to Castlerock, which was worked by No.4 on her own.

On 20<sup>th</sup> August all fingers were crossed when No.4 set out alone with eight packed coaches. The

crowds turned out again in Portrush, for Castlerock, and on the way home to Belfast No.4 showed us all that she was back with a vengeance.



*The “Larne Lough” railtour just after leaving Magheramorne, heading towards Glynn. (C.P. Friel)*



*No.171 sits at Larne harbour on 25<sup>th</sup> September, having arrived from Belfast. (C.P. Friel)*

Overall, a very successful Flyer season, with perhaps a little disappointment in the lack of response to our postal advertising campaign to clubs and societies. The contribution to the Society for the upkeep of the working locomotives and coaches was increased to within 70% of the target break-even figure. Filling the empty seats would do the trick whereas a fare increase may be counter-productive. Having been well satisfied with No.4's performance on the Flyers, and taking into account that she would need to clock up mileage if she was to work the proposed 4-day special tour to Galway in connection with the Train 150 celebrations, we decided to run her on the "Steam Enterprise" to Dublin.



***The double-headed Flyer prepares to leave Whitehead Excursion Station on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1983.  
(C.P. Friel)***

On 3<sup>rd</sup> September No.4 set out for Dublin with a moderately full 8 coach train which included a party of NIR officials and their families travelling in the GNR Directors' Saloon. No.4, after a record-breaking climb over the Wellington bank, was found to be carrying heat in the big end. This became worse between Dundalk and Drogheda, and it was reluctantly decided to summon a diesel locomotive to substitute on the return journey. The following events are well described in the Locomotive Running report.

On 17<sup>th</sup> September locomotive No.171 was back in charge of a full train and rounded off the Enterprise season with a very successful trip. Financially, it was the best season for years, with the full contribution being made to funds and a small surplus to enable fares to be stabilised for next season.

The Operations Committee rather timorously approached the planning of a Dublin to Bray shuttle in September. Previous events of this sort out of Dublin had proved difficult to market, so we were taken completely by surprise with the response to our advertising for the four trips on Saturday 24<sup>th</sup>

September. It being uneconomical to hire coaches from CIÉ, and having no coaches at Mullingar, we decided to run a diesel-hauled train of RPSI coaches from Belfast, leaving early on the Saturday morning. No.184 was waiting to take over the train, depleted by 32 seats due to the removal of coach 861 by a CIÉ inspector. Unfortunately, CIÉ could not supply us with a replacement and the loss of 128 seats over the four trips left us bursting at the seams. The turnout was overwhelming and provides the Committee with lessons learned for a return outing next year before the electric units are working the full schedule. Financially, it was the most successful railtour yet run by the RPSI. Special thanks are due to those members who worked so hard to cope with the crowds and who bore the brunt of the surprisingly few complaints.



***No.4 passes 'Father Murphy's Chapel' with the first "Steam Enterprise" on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1983.  
(C.P. Friel)***

The comparative serenity of the final working of the year, the "Larne Lough" railtour of Sunday 25<sup>th</sup> September, was reflected in the mild sunny weather and calm waters of Belfast and Larne loughs. The Committee had been examining the possibility of upgrading some of the so-called empty stock workings, and we extended the trip to Larne as an experiment. It was therefore encouraging to welcome aboard a party of 24 from the Lady Victoria Boat Club; who travelled in the luxury of the Directors' Saloon. A private waiter served refreshments to the party, and our dining car staff laid on an excellent meal. The total number of passengers travelling on the train was around 150 and with a little more advertising perhaps a viable operation could be established for next year. Arguably the highlight of the operating season took place on this railtour at Kilroot. Having a few minutes to spare in the schedule, locomotive inspector Frank Dunlop showed how a runpast should be done! The looks of consternation from a dining pair relaxing on the terrace of their nearby bungalow had to be seen to be believed as

No.171 showered the area with red hot coals. Wine was never so beautifully mulled!

In conclusion, my thanks are due to the entire Operations Committee, north and south, not forgetting our London agent, for their continuing support. Special thanks to "Portrush Flyer" officer Alan Love, "Steam Enterprise" officer Tony Ragg, and Charles Friel for the "Port Lairge" brochure. We look forward with anticipation to the 1984 season and also to the return of GNR(I) compound 4-4-0 No.85 "Merlin" - an event now visible on the horizon.



*No.171 on the second "Steam Enterprise", approaching MP59½, 5 miles of climb over, another 6 to go. (C.P. Friel)*

## **LOCOMOTIVE MAINTENANCE**

**Peter Scott**

The following maintenance programme is planned for the near future:

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

Renew smoke box door.

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

Machine driving wheel crankpins true. This involves sending the wheelset to Harland & Wolff. Re-metal and fit big ends. Overhaul left-hand small end and gudgeon pin.

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

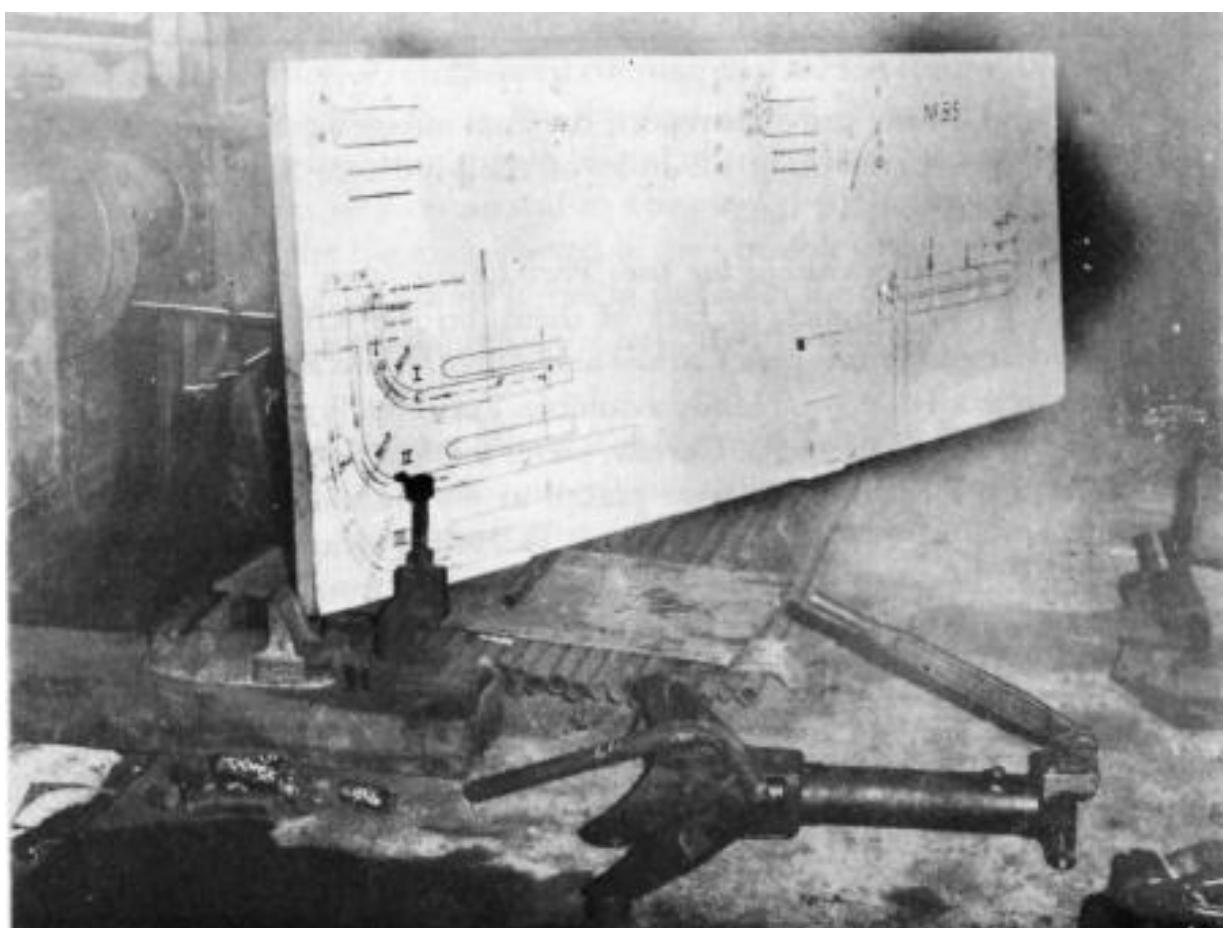
Repairs to clutch. Repairs to cylinder head and gasket. Repaint.

### **No.85 "Merlin" (ex GNR(I) 4-4-0 V class Compound locomotive)**

General overhaul proceeding. Replacement of corroded tender platework is at an advanced stage, and construction of new superheater elements is in progress.



*One of the elements after being welded up in the jig. The 'ball ends' which fit into the header were turned at the Society's metalwork class at Belfast Tech. (C.P. Friel)*



*Constructing No.85's superheater elements. The plan shows the three different sizes required, while in the foreground is the tube bending machine and one of the 'elbows' formed in it. (C.P. Friel)*

### **No.171 "Sieve Gullion" (ex GNR(I) 4-4-0 S class locomotive)**

Minor firebox repairs. New firebars and repairs to ashpan.

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

Safety valve deflector and tender cage fitted for operation under overhead electric wires in Dublin area. New cones for right hand injector. De-scale injector feed pipes.

#### **Plant Maintenance**

Overhaul air compressor. No.1 loading shovel: Repair hydraulic seals, injectors, general service. No.3 loading shovel: Overhaul hydraulic valves. Wheel lathe: Repairs to spindle advance threads in No.2 headstock.



*No.85's tender jacked up to allow the removal of the wheelsets for turning. (C.P. Friel)*

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#### **LOCOMOTIVE RUNNING**

**Brian Hill**

To round off my previous report, the final mileage figure for 1982 was 3,353 miles, No.184 contributing 189 miles on the Mullingar Santa trips; coal consumption topped 102 tons.

During initial planning for the "Port Lairge" tour, the question of locomotive water supplies, or lack of them, on the Kilkenny road was paramount; fire hydrants near Carlow and Athy stations and a water tap at Kilkenny were all that was readily available. Fortunately, through the good offices of Chris

Prendergast of Carlow, water tenders belonging to Carlow and Kilkenny Fire Brigades were placed at our disposal; engine No.184 to replenish at Kilkenny and No.171 at Carlow. This sort of arrangement has been shunned in the past, but the benefits accruing from their use were overwhelming in this particular instance.

When it was announced that No.171 could not reach Waterford due to weight restrictions on a bridge, an alternative plan to send No.171 plus workshop coach 114 to Limerick via Kildare to stable over Saturday night was quickly evolved. Phone calls to Belfast ensured an additional container would be at Whitehead the next day enabling bagged coal to reach Limerick as well as Mullingar and Waterford. Thus the final schedule appeared with No.171 hauling the carriage from Mullingar to Dublin via Athlone in order to avoid Connolly, and the same engine being booked to water and coal (from the van) at Carlow, with a top-up of water at Kilkenny to eliminate water stops en route to Limerick. These 'alternative tours' may well have to become titled trains in view of their regular occurrence.



*The protective 'cage' fitted to No.171 at CIÉ's request, to prevent fire irons, etc., from touching the overhead wires in Dublin. (C.P. Friel)*

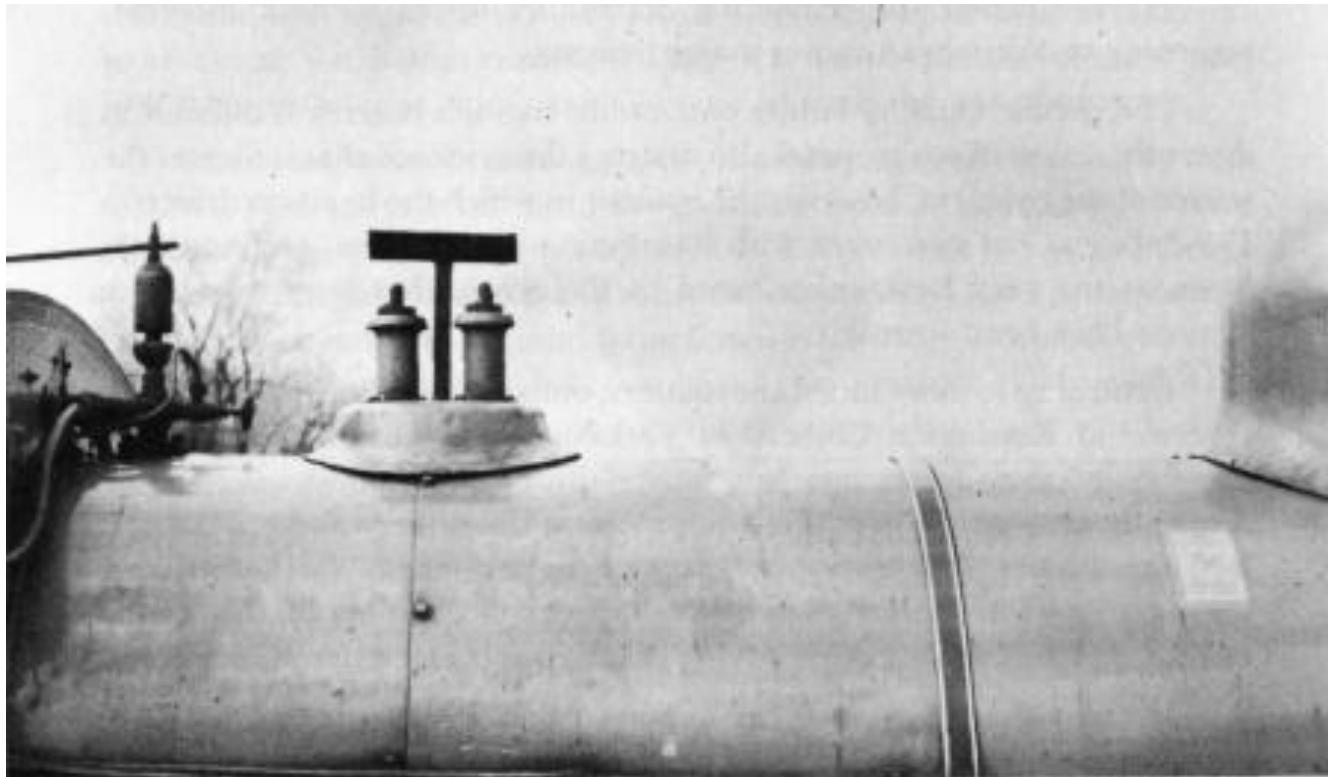
From a locomotive running aspect, the tour passed off remarkably well. The 01:15 departure on Saturday morning from Mullingar gave some hardy photographers an inspiring sight as No.171 steamed over the Curragh with eight coaches on a cold and misty dawn; probably the best moment of the entire weekend. An unusual attraction was the locomotive and train turning exercise over the Limerick Junction layout; the presence of a briefed RPSI representative to liaise with the signalman proved especially worthwhile.

The 2-day (?) tour is something akin to an endurance test, but it becomes somewhat more worthwhile when rostered volunteers offer thanks for the opportunity to work closely with the locomotives on CIÉ, particularly when I am indebted to them for offering their services to run the event.

Turning now to Whitehead, the Sunday Train Rides saw a variety of motive power with No.171

deputising for No.3 (undergoing axlebox repairs and partial retubing) during the early part of the season, and No.4 making regular forays to assist running-in. Having been in receipt of remedial action during the previous winter, No.4 commenced running-in duties at the end of June but was not deemed ready for the first of the "Portrush Flyer" trains, No.171 substituting. On the penultimate Flyer, No.4 piloted the tender-first No.171 to Portrush. All was well on arrival so No.4 worked the "Castlerock Extension" alone. However, the big ends started to give trouble although this did not prevent the engine returning home in the main formation. Quick repairs saw the locomotive available for the last Flyer which she worked alone without incident.

Thus the tank engine was sent to Central Services Depot (CSD) for the September operations. Unfortunately, her debut on the "Steam Enterprise" was marred by a recurrence of the big end problem on the run up to Dundalk; the engine brought the train into Dublin at 13:00 whence a contingency plan was swung into action to provide alternative power home and to get another steam locomotive (No.171) to CSD to work the Chamber of Commerce Anniversary Special on the following Monday. An RPSI crew was immediately dispatched back to Belfast on the 13:00 Enterprise to eventually reach Whitehead and get No.171 in steam. In the meantime an NIR Hunslet locomotive was summoned from Belfast to fill the breach. Once serviced, No.4 headed for Whitehead to arrive at 20:00, and a quick changeover saw No.171 on her way to reach CSD by 22:30. My thanks to the NIR and RPSI crews for services rendered.



*This device fitted to the safety valves deflects the blast away from the overhead wires. (C.P. Friel)*

No.171 completed the remaining September duties without incident, returning to Whitehead minus major defects.

The precise cause of failure of the tank engine's bearing is difficult to ascertain as loss of white metal also destroys the evidence that indicates the source of the problem. However, the manner in which the locomotive was driven to Dundalk was not consistent with its running-in condition, and can only have, at the very least, contributed to the events that later transpired. Lessons have been learnt!

Returning to more mundane matters, our source of the 'black stuff' has reverted to Rossington Colliery in Yorkshire. This coal was used quite successfully some years ago but proved prohibitive money-wise; in the meantime changes in handling equipment at the colliery end now permit larger quantities (18.5 tonnes) per container to be shipped. This has reduced the cost per ton delivered to Whitehead to below that of the locally purchased item, as well as improving locomotive coal consumption figures.

In order to improve our on-tour communication between the various RPSI departments, I would be interested to hear from anyone in a position to assist with obtaining 2-way 'walkie-talkie' radios.

To conclude, I would like to thank all those who have been of assistance, particularly the following:

- CIÉ and NIR, including management, footplate and depot staff.
- Peter Scott - RPSI Locomotive Maintenance Officer.
- Paul Newell - co-ordinating coal and oil acquisition, as well as arranging road haulage movements.
- Frank Dunlop - NIR Locomotive Inspector.
- William Smyth Ltd, Wakefield - supplier of Rossington cobbles.
- Coastal Containers, Belfast - shippers of coal to Belfast.
- James Corey & Co., Belfast - road haulier of coal and various RPSI loads.
- Stewart Bros., Katesbridge - road haulier of various RPSI loads.
- Dennison Haulage Services, Antrim - heavy road haulage for RPSI.
- Esso Petroleum, Belfast - suppliers of road and rail lubricants.
- Bell Lines, Belfast - container and shipping services.

The above mentioned haulage companies have been very generous in their loan of trailers and containers for use with the RPSI lorry in connection with moving loads for the Locomotive, Carriage and Site departments.

Finally, my thanks to those volunteers working for the Locomotive, Carriage and Site departments of the Society who come together to operate steam trains throughout Ireland. The work and hours are not always pleasant, and the overtime rates of pay paltry, but the social climate that endures makes up for these discomforts. Anyone wishing to join this illustrious group will be most welcome as it is only through the actions of these members, and others, that our steam trains can operate.

## CARRIAGE & WAGON

**Alan Edgar**

I once likened maintaining old railway carriages to being on a treadmill. I think now perhaps this model merits revision as, looking over the past year, I can see a period of progress, mostly forwards, occasionally backwards, and on least one occasion, sideways.

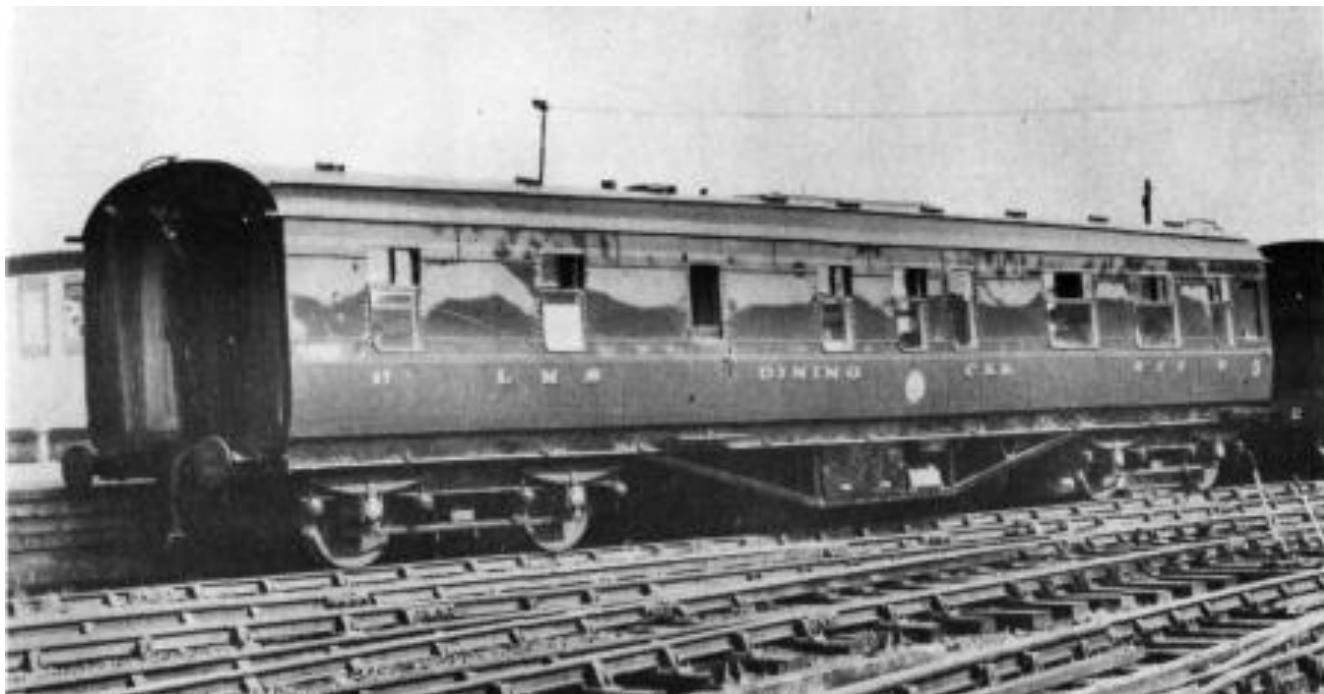
Undoubtedly the most pleasing aspect is that the average member can now begin to see the fruit of our efforts, with the first fully restored carriages going back into traffic. This has not happened suddenly; it is the end result of several years' hard work.

The burning of much midnight oil ensured that external restoration of 91, the North Atlantic brake, was completed in time to allow her to accompany GS&WR first 1142 on the BBC "Aunt Suzanne" film train last March.

1142 is now completed, but just missed participating in the 1983 operating season due to several complications. Prominent among these was the discovery of a broken bolster spring on one of the bogies. Fortunately a replacement spring was donated by the Society's dormitory coach, but several weekends were spent removing the defective spring and its replacement, then fitting the replacement.

After much thought it was decided to completely strip the old varnish, which was badly crazed, from the interior. Colin Holliday achieved fame (notoriety?) not only by the tenacity with which he stuck to

the task of removing 60 years of varnish from the corridor but also because anyone who happened to pass the carriage was likely to be hijacked and coerced into doing the same. The finish achieved has made this effort seem well worthwhile. At the same time Phil Lavery, our painter employed under the ACE scheme, was giving the same treatment to the compartment interiors, and also papering the ceilings with embossed paper.



***Dining Car 87 in ex-works condition. (C.P. Friel)***

Exit of 91 allowed entrance of 1327 to No.5 road, for a rapid external repaint. 1327 has been having an overhaul on the sly over the past few years, and this was the final part of the job. Again much midnight oil was necessary to complete this in time for the 2-day tour, the coach being shunted onto the train with the varnish still wet on the transfers.

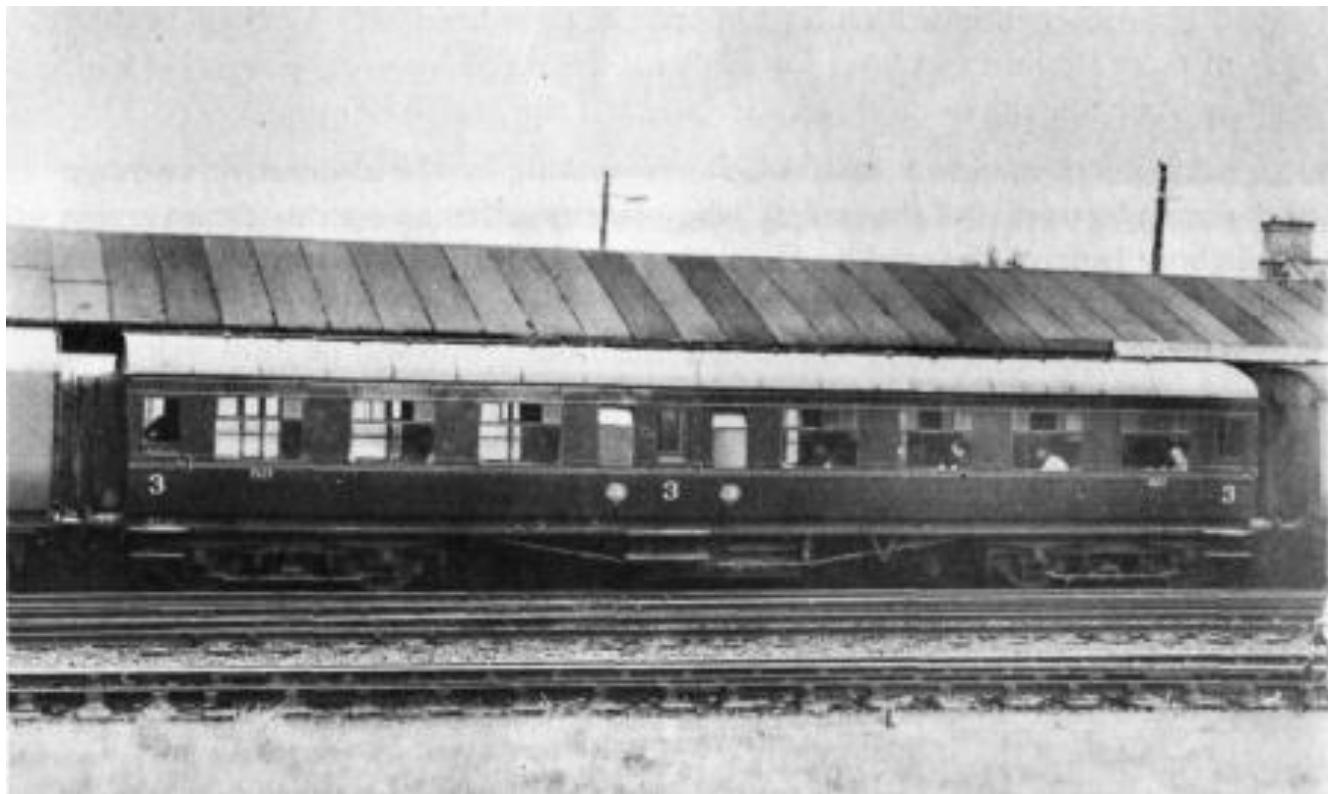
Next candidate for No.5 road was diner 87. Although Fred Graham, Lavens Steele and Bob Wilkinson had by this time virtually completed a very professional job on the interior, there remained a considerable amount of joinery on the exterior before the coach could be repainted. This was carried out by ACE scheme joiner Thomas Hill Moore.

We eventually decided to paint this 1950 built coach in LMS NCC livery which, of course, it never actually carried. The argument for doing this is to match in with an LMS set, which hopefully we shall assemble in the not too distant future. 87 is an LMS design, and the order for her was actually placed by the NCC. Thanks are due to Denis Grimshaw whose donation largely financed painting, lining and lettering 87. Like the other coaches, 87 has been lettered by Billy Lyons, who has mastered the intricacies of LMS shaded lettering.

A big effort by virtually the entire C&W department saw 87 completed in time for the second "Portrush Flyer", with Neil Hamilton putting the finishing touches to a complete re-plumbing, and Mark Stanley spending most of a week at Whitehead finishing off the jobs which inevitably manifest themselves whenever you set yourself a deadline. Right up to the end it was touch and go whether or not 87 would run, if only because of doubt over whether the bar fittings would arrive on time. They did not. They arrived a day early. There was always the unexpected, however, like having to shunt the Guinness locomotive uphill with a crowbar to allow 87's exit from No.5 road. It was the Friday night before the

Flyer that 87 was eventually substituted for diner 88 in the rake, the latter having made her last run on the first Flyer two weeks previously. Thus, on the minus side, 88 has now been withdrawn pending full restoration.

Deprived of their previous employment on 87, the midweek squad turned their attentions to the corridor ceiling in 1142 and, having completed this, are now making steady inroads on the compartment interiors in 91. They have recently been joined by a very welcome new recruit, John McCutcheon.

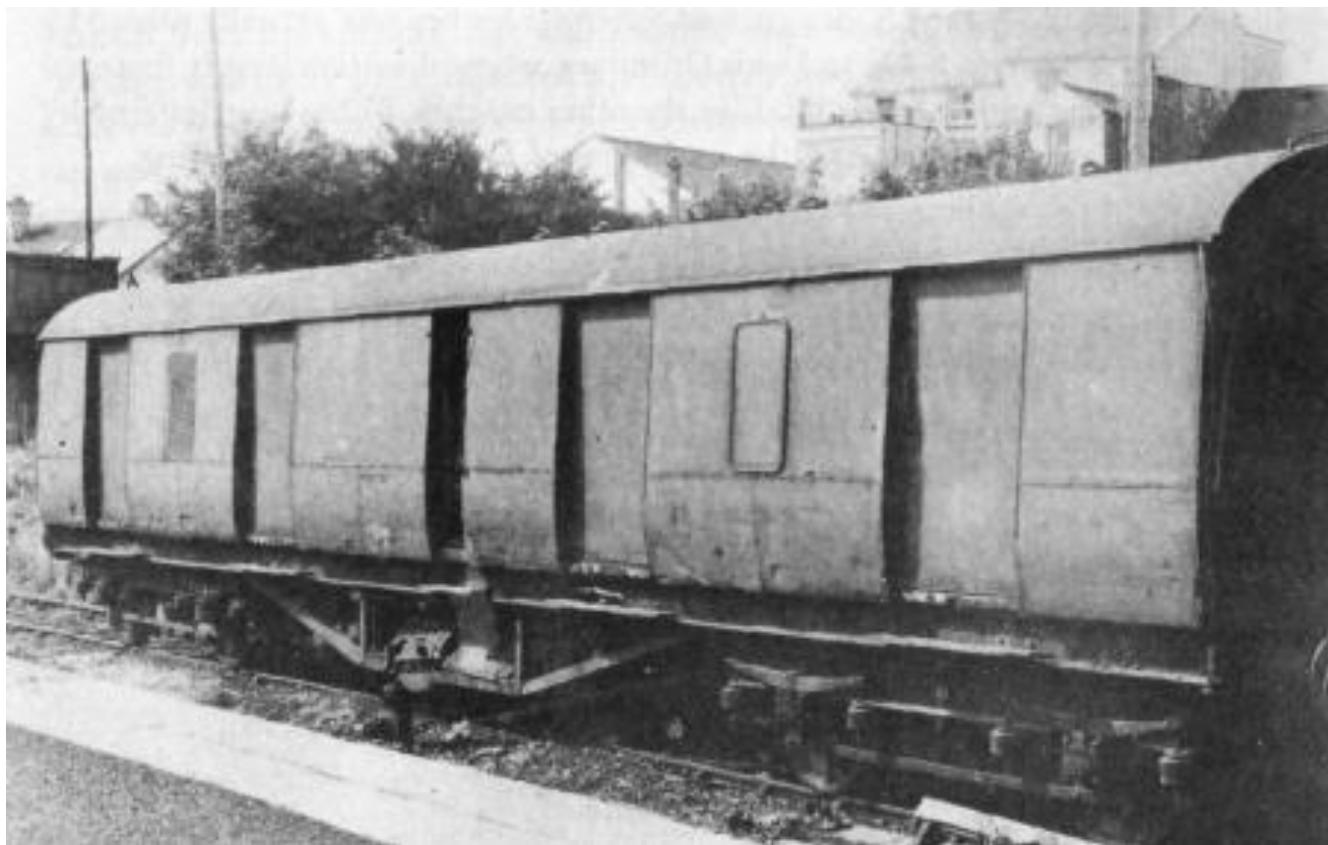


*Bredin 1327, seen here at Limerick Junction, restored to GSR livery. (C.P. Friel)*

Frank Gallagher, the other ACE scheme joiner, left the Society's employment in March to take up the position of senior supervisor with the NIACRO project on our site. Also employed as a NIACRO supervisor is Jimmy Robinson, another former ACE joiner. NIACRO have been working on NCC composite 68 and GNR goods brake van 81. In addition, NIACRO have very generously purchased for the Society two NCC passenger brake vans, 613 and 616. Both are in use, 613 as NIACRO's workshop and 616 (which is being restored to running condition) as Santa's Grotto. The body of a similar vehicle, 615, was jacked off its underframe one weekend (the frame being required by NIR), and lowered to rail level. It was then moved sideways until clear of the rails with the aid of a tractor and much esoteric language. During the following week NIACRO dismantled the body, yielding many useful timbers, including pillars and doorposts, for NCC coaches.

It is unfortunate that no similar source of materials exists for GNR coaches as the condition of open third 9, by then resident in No.5 road, became apparent. Removal of aluminium panelling from the exterior revealed much evil-smelling black stuff which, on first examination, had the appearance and consistency of sponge. Closer scrutiny confirmed our fears that it was, in fact, the structural framing of the coach. This tale of woe continued with the removal of further panels. One complete side of the coach, and about one half of the other side, was found to be fit for nothing but lighting up timber, assuming that it can be dried out!

The slightly large task of reconstructing the sides of this coach has fallen to our new ACE joiners William Binding and Irvine Craig, who have handled this task capably and have most of one side completed. The blame for at least part of this deterioration to one of our coaches which, after all, was in traffic in 1975, must lie with the lack of covered storage and restoration facilities at Whitehead. There is some evidence, however, that this allegedly 1954 built coach was actually a conversion from one of the wartime workmen's coaches, built with any timber then available. This may explain the rapid deterioration once water leaks in. Most of our GNR coaches suffer to a greater or lesser degree from structural rot, a problem which is noticeably absent from most of the NCC or GSR stock. Future plans include the restoration of GNR brake first 231, releasing 114 from traffic for similar treatment. Like 88, 12-wheel brake 861 and Bredin 1335 have been withdrawn pending restoration. The red-carding of 861 at Connolly on 24<sup>th</sup> September was *not*, as reported in a Dublin newspaper, due to "metal fatigue", but to a torn canvas on one gangway. Murphy's Law ensured that this totally erroneous report came to the attention of the upper echelons of CIÉ, which led to various repercussions until the true state of affairs was established. The defect was subsequently repaired at Mullingar in time for the filming of "The Irish RM".

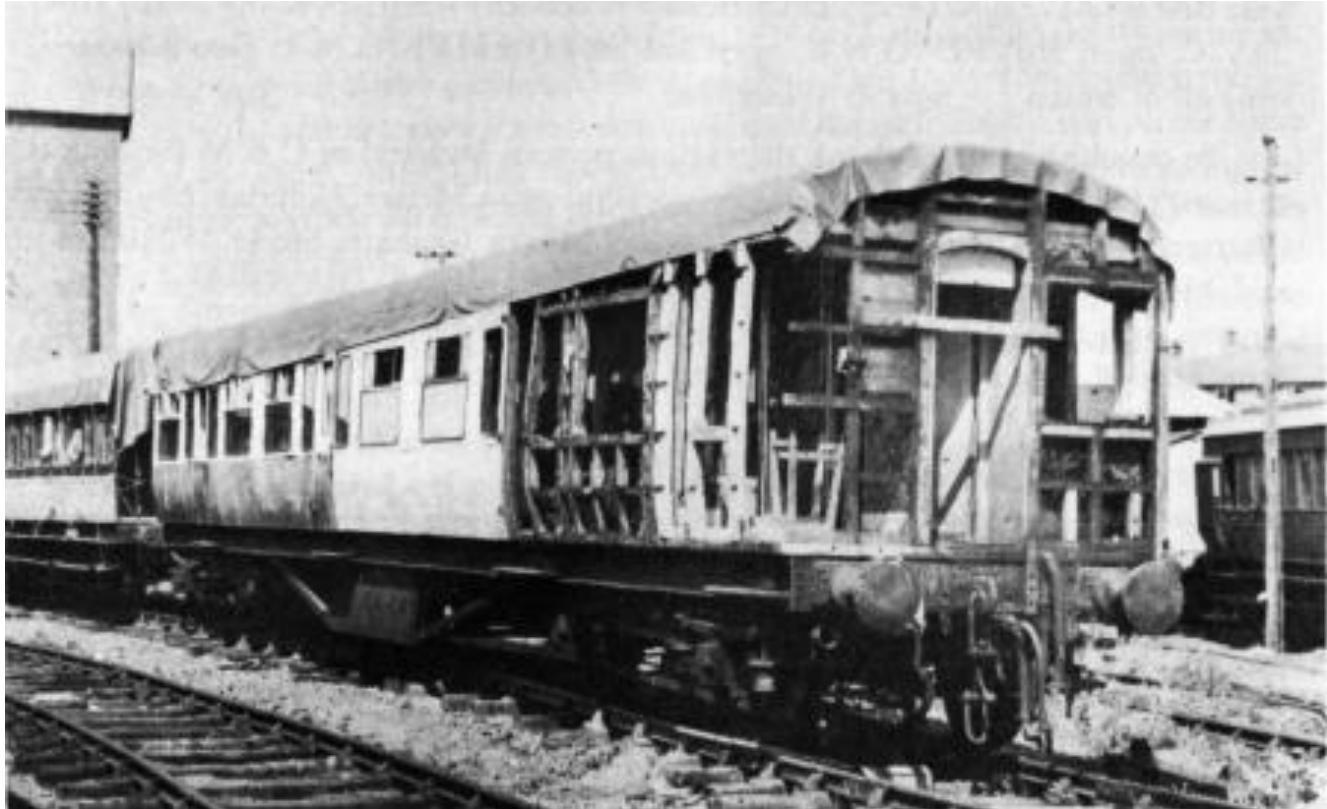


**NCC full brake 616, purchased for the Society by NIACRO, seen here immediately after delivery. (C.P. Friel)**

Members who generously donated to the last coach appeal will be pleased to hear that we have now concluded purchase of coaches 727 (GNR open third), 526 (NCC open third), 595 (GNR open third brake) and 81 (GNR goods brake van), all of which are now at Whitehead.

In conclusion, may I thank the various persons involved in C&W for their various, often large contributions, the weekend team - Messrs Holliday, Saulters, Charters and Martin, and midweek squad - Messrs Graham, Steele, Wilkinson and McCutcheon, not forgetting the ACE and NIACRO staff. Needless to say, anyone who thinks they would like to become involved will be welcomed with open

arms if they appear at Whitehead, or get in touch.



***GNR(I) third 9, shortly after restoration commenced. Some of the new vertical ribs can be seen, as can some of the rotten structure awaiting replacement. (C.P. Friel)***

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## **SITE**

## **Johnny Glendinning**

At the time of my last report (May 1982) we were working on the crossover at the Larne end of the platform. Having completed negotiations with NIR for a turnout from Magheramorne, use was made of the RPSI 'Road Haulage Division', i.e. Messrs Newell, Hill and Kelly, to remove the materials to Whitehead. The lorry was loaded and unloaded at the respective ends of the journey by the Society's JCB. During its return trip from Magheramorne, it was waved down by a man doing repairs to his house, and subsequently hired for a period to assist in the job!

The remaining weekends in June were used to complete the crossover mentioned, therefore bringing into use the 8-coach run-round. Most of the passengers on the 24<sup>th</sup> July 1982 Flyer were unaware that their train made railway history by being the first to run round at Whitehead Excursion Station under RPSI ownership.

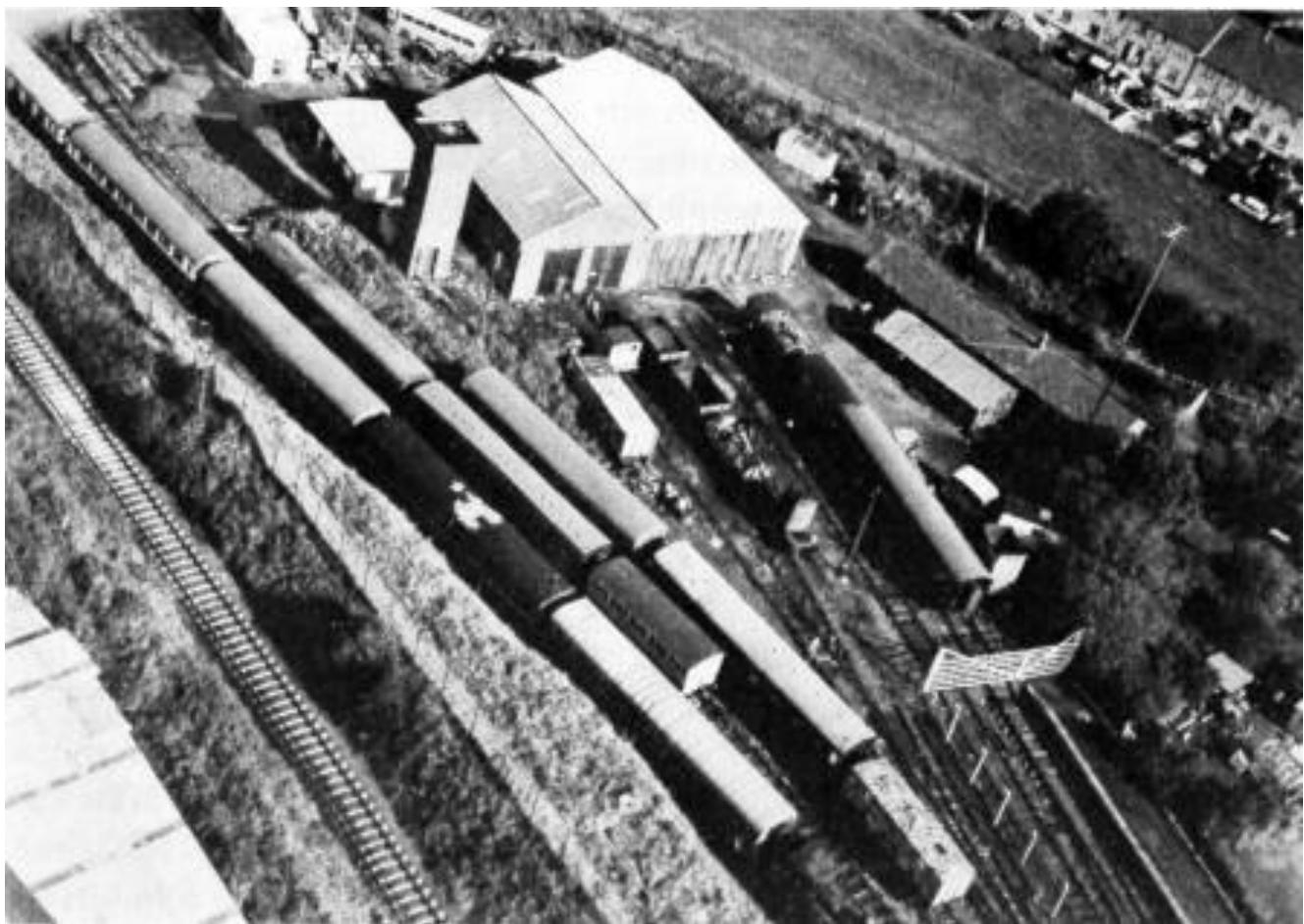
During summer 1982 a start was made to lay the heavy lifting road on a temporary alignment which allowed the Society's dormitory coach to be shunted into the position in which it will eventually be isolated. Unfortunately, at this point, three coaches arrived unexpectedly from NIR, and the only available space included the 'temporary' track, which will now likely remain until the new No.1 carriage siding is laid.

Laying this siding was planned for winter 1982/3, taking advantage of the migration of five coaches to the south for the winter thus allowing the JCB access to make the necessary excavations for the trackbed.

This plan was thwarted by the need to provide a site for the NIACRO project and provide sewage,

water and telephone facilities, NIACRO having decided to provide their own electrical connection. Thus the JCB was fully occupied clearing and levelling this site, and also excavating the foundations for the wheel lathe house.

One problem which faced us was a massive concrete block used as a foundation for the wind pump which in early NCC days filled the water tower. When Enterprise Ulster excavated the area behind the tower they found it too big to deal with and merely excavated around and below it until it was on the same level as the shed. After much thought we carried this operation on to its logical conclusion, and the large block is now buried beneath the NIACRO hut. In late September / early October 1982 the JCB decided it needed a holiday and broke down. Fortunately, Joe Weatherup of Carrickfergus was in a position to overhaul the ailing machine; once again the Site department had to call on the aid of the RPSI lorry fraternity and the machine was whisked off for repair, returning some six weeks later in good health.



*An aerial view of the site showing the locomotive sheds and carriage sidings. (Marcus J. Leith)*

In the meantime, site work had concentrated on laying a temporary track which came alongside the partially completed wheel lathe house. Its purpose was to bring the hand-crane to a position from where it could lift the various components of the lathe and position them on the lathe bed. When this operation had been completed, the temporary track was slewed over to the NIACRO site, becoming the NIACRO siding. Over part of this a carriage workshop shall be built.

Our next task was to provide 180ft of ducting to carry cables across to the wheel lathe, and provide some 300ft of sewer, including the provision of 4 manholes. This was new work for our Site

department but, as usual, it was tackled with enthusiasm, and what was lacking in skill was more than made up for in determination. By mid-June, the NIACRO hut was being erected and services were one by one being connected. Work then moved to the preparation of the site for the erection of their shed.

Looking now to the near future, we hope to spend this winter relaying the platform road with new (to us) materials. The track there has long been in need of this work. On the electrical front, work has continued well. The new 200 amp 3-phase supply was connected in April 1982, and work has continued on provision of a permanent supply to the new shed. Last autumn and winter were spent on the wiring up of the wheel lathe, and included is a report on this work. I feel though that John's modesty has got the better of him when writing it. He does not do justice to the number of weekends he spent tracking out the circuitry in a dark, cold shed before coming up with the final solution. The Society owes a vote of thanks to John for the fact that the wheel lathe turns at all.



*The wheel-drop, gantry and wheel lathe can be clearly seen in this view, as can the NIACRO hut beside the old shed. The site of NIACRO's carriage shed is approximately marked by the shadow of the water tower. (Marcus J. Leith)*

A new recruit to the site is Bob Collins, a long-standing member of the Society, and an electrical contractor. Bob has taken over responsibility for the electrical work, and has been pushing the work forward at a good pace. Having a tradesman leading the team means that the others involved are picking up skills as they go along - very useful for the budding DIY. Bob hopes to finish the new shed wiring, and to provide new outside lighting. To Bob I say welcome, and also thanks to him and his helpers for all the work so far.

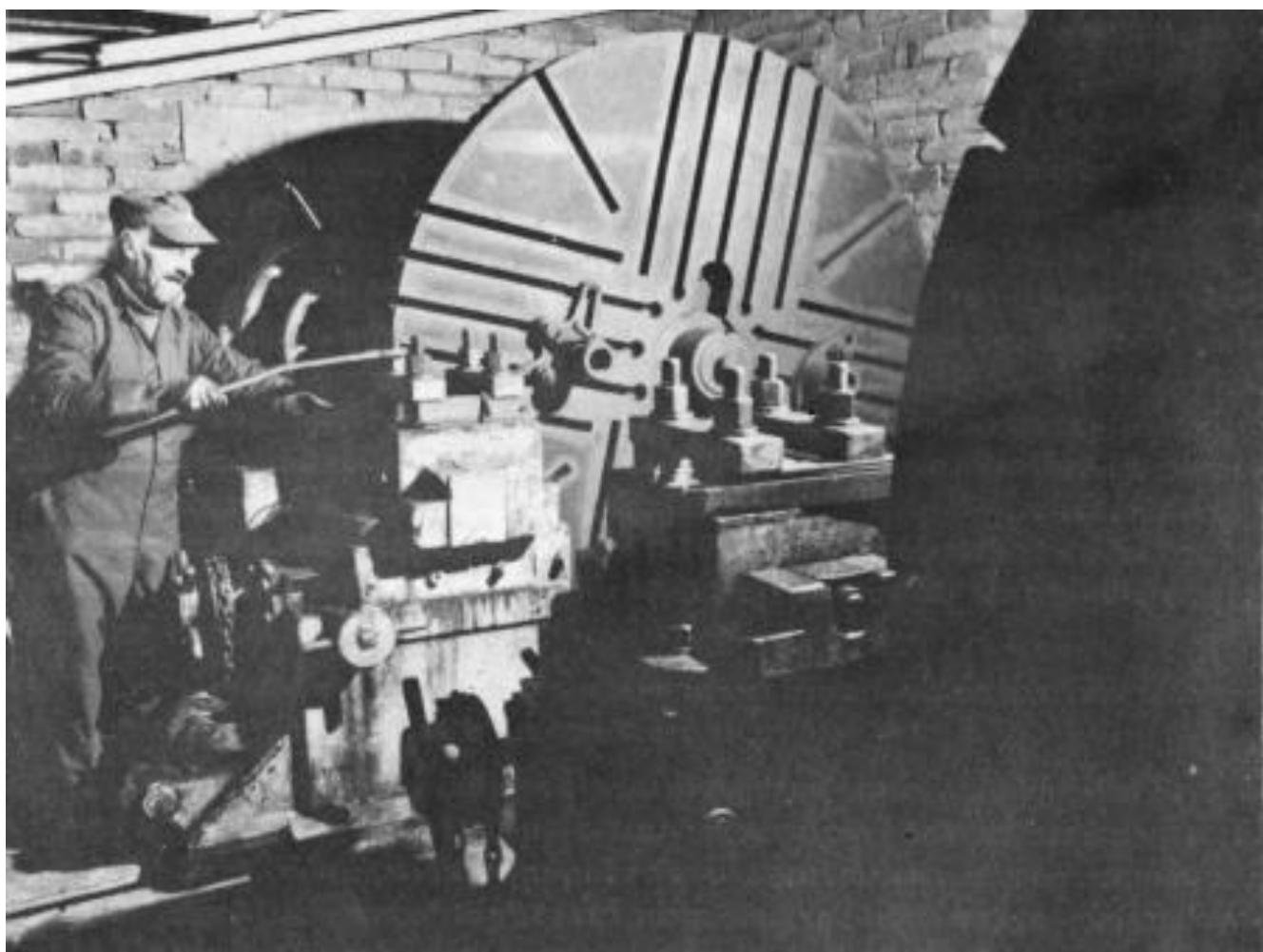
The tarry still struggles on, now being in use seven days a week, and is beginning to show signs of wear. However, I am very hopeful that Fred Graham, Lavens Steele and Bob Wilkinson are going to work wonders on it and bring it back up to standard.

One scheme which has been tried on the site to boost manpower is the use of lads on Community Service Orders. Most of those who have been assigned to us from time to time have worked well and made a contribution to the Society's efforts at Whitehead. On our part we hope that their sojourn with us has been a pleasant one and that we have been some little help to them on their way through life. All that is left for me to do is to thank all of those who have worked on the site for me and especially my two lieutenants, Ken Pullin and Dermot Mackie.

### **THE WHEEL TURNING LATHE**

**John Taylor**

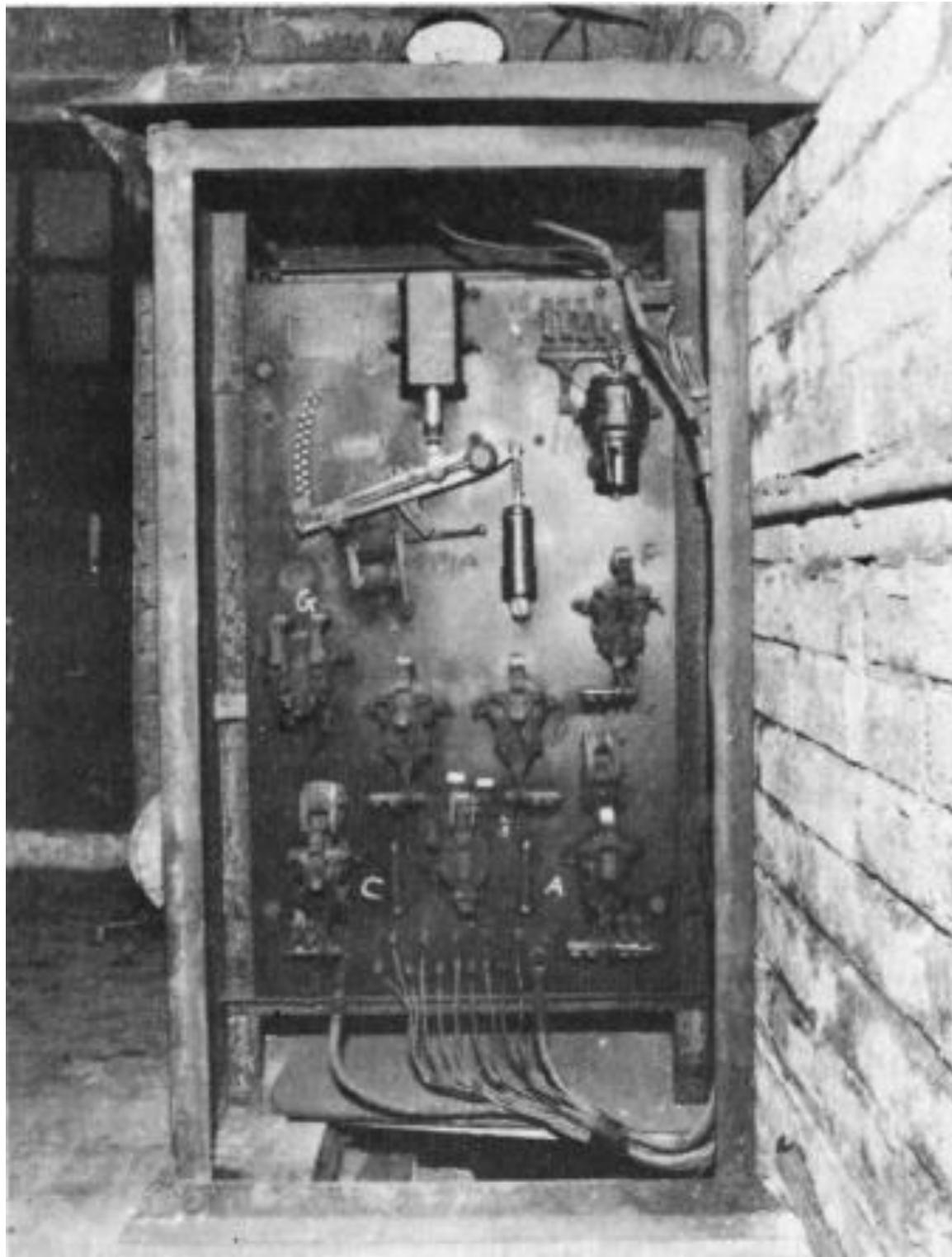
It was all the fault of Johnny Glendinning and I can only guess that Peter Scott talked him into it knowing that the Telecom ought to understand relays. I served my time as a fitter but I was always interested, as a youngster, in radios. Most of my work has been electro-mechanical and indeed I believe an engineer ought to be something of an all-rounder - even though he has some speciality.



***John Taylor at work on the wheel lathe. (J. Taylor)***

I must say that these men of ours have strong wills. You should have seen Peter, Brian and Ken and others dragging yon great lump of iron onto the concrete and starting to build up the gearboxes, the face-plates, the drive shaft and the motor. That is when Peter explained the problem. It is a 400 volt,

direct current, 45 horsepower motor, and it must be speed controlled. The control box is a huge steel box with a slate panel supporting electrical contactors, adjustable and fixed resistors. These were once operated by six push-buttons on a small panel which could be mounted near the operator. Unfortunately, someone had cut the wires at the push-button end and at the control console - wouldn't you know ... all the wires were the same colour - and no drawings, no circuit diagrams, nowt!



*The massive control box for the wheel lathe. The cut wires referred to can be seen in the top right corner. (J. Taylor)*

Us two Johns studied the insides of that console and of the motor. As expected, the motor has two sets of field windings (these are the fixed coils around the outside casing). The armature, with its coils fed from the brushes, spins round in the magnetic effect created by the field windings. All the electrical current that goes through the armature also goes through a thick coil which is in 'series'. A much smaller part of the total current used passes through the 'shunt' field coil.

If the motor was switched straight onto the supply it would take a huge current and burn itself out. To prevent this horrible happening, a large amount of cast iron in a zigzag shape is connected, at the console, along with the armature and series field. As the motor runs up to speed the automatic switches 'short circuit' bits of this resistance until it is all out of the circuit. There is another resistance in series with the shunt field winding, and changes in it control the motor speed by weakening the field current.

This motor, and controls, were made in 1924. (Rumour has it that so were some of the engineers on this job!) They don't make them like that now! These days most motors are AC and they use electronic speed control. I had a bit of luck when one of my colleagues in the Technical College found me an old text book containing descriptions with pictures and diagrams of very similar control equipment. After sliding my fingers up and down a few hundred bits of bent copper wire behind that slate panel I managed to make some sense of the connections. It is a bit like reading a detective story and putting together the clues; some are misleading and are put in to catch you out. I made various drawings and Johnny Glendinning and I thrashed them into shape. It is essential to have someone to bounce ideas off at this stage, and we sure bounced them! Final checks with a meter showed that most bits only needed cleaning up. A couple of resistors had burned out, luckily near the end. I was able to apply the resources of the Tech to soldering some copper wire over the end and connect it to the brass fitting. I was very impressed by the solid brass construction of all the parts.

Bob Collins made a suitably professional job of connecting up the various units, ably assisted by Tony Ragg. It was a thrilling moment when Peter pushed that button and that b@?#!y great thing began to trundle round and round. The contactors clattered in and out in a most satisfying way. I think we must have got it right Johnny.

## THE WEE STEAM TRAIN

James H. McIlfatrick

I can mind it well, that oul' Lammas Fair,  
With a war still on, the pleasure trips were rare;  
'Twas down in Ballymoney, in the station there,  
We awaited the Wee Steam Train.

The crowd was big, and the day was fine,  
'Twas my first trip on the narrow gauge line;  
Now all packed in, as the guard gave his sign,  
We were off on the Wee Steam Train.

Under the bridge, tho' the speed's not fast,  
Still the Garry Bog we'll soon canter past;  
Arriving in Dervock, with a shrill whistle blast,  
Where they wait for the Wee Steam train.

Over in Stranocum, quite a crowd was there,  
Every one excited about the Lammas fair;  
And sweet Armoy also had its share,  
To travel on the Wee Steam Train.

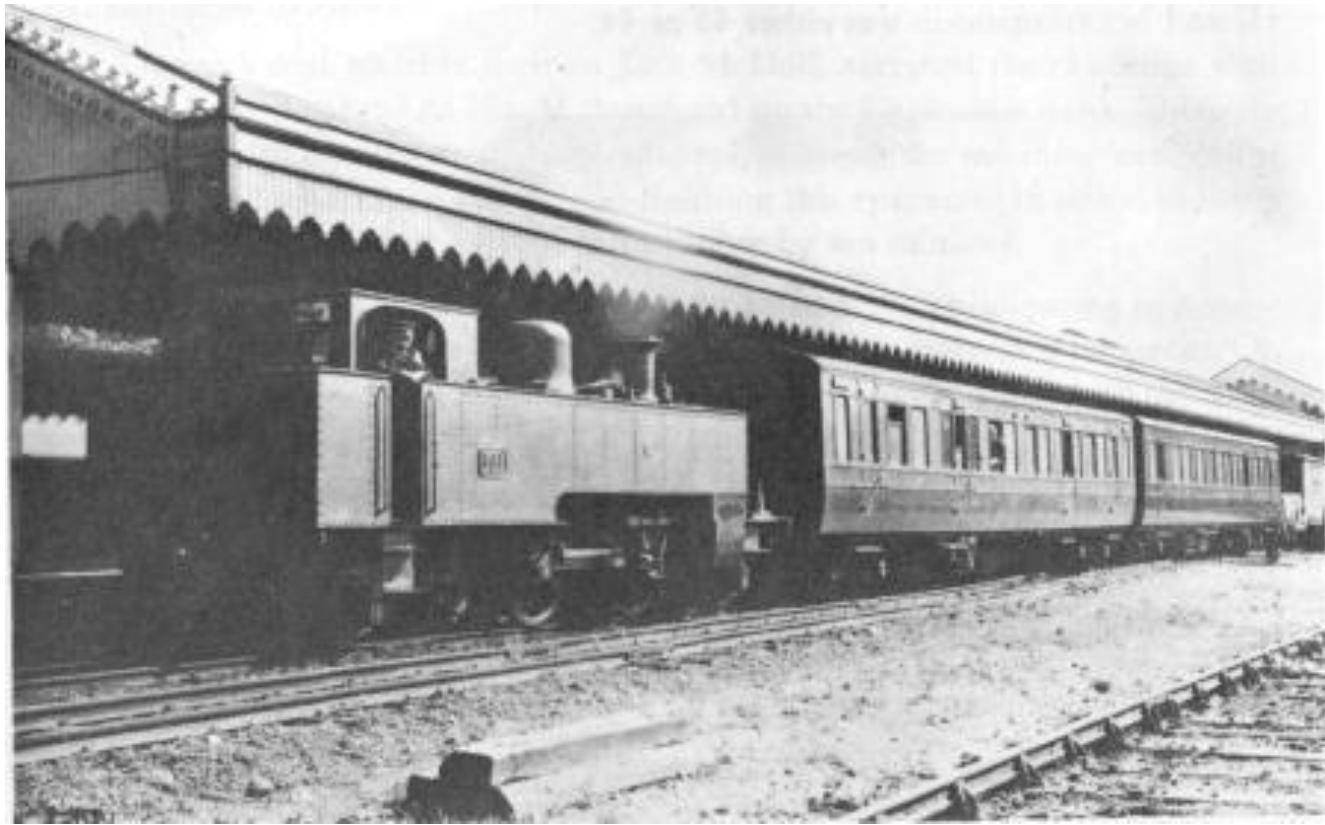
'Twas the journey back, I can best recall,  
With double-headed locos for the upward haul;

The valleys were darkened with coal smoke pall,  
From the engines of the Wee Steam Train.

Panting and clanging, struggling round Knocklayd,  
The hillsides echoes to the sounds they made;  
Now silent the valley where that line was made,  
Alas, gone for ever the Wee Steam Train.

Recently leafing through an old 'railwayana' scrap book I discovered the foregoing little poem, written after the closure of the Ballycastle Railway in 1950. Reading it brought back nostalgic memories of my one and only trip on this distinctive narrow gauge, on a Lammas Fair Day during the last World War.

It was a depressing time of rationing and stringent restrictions on private car travelling, and thus pleasure outings were limited.



**2-4-2T 101 (later 41) in the narrow gauge platform at Ballymoney with a mixed for Ballycastle.  
(Loco & General 7355)**

However, a cousin and I decided to attend the annual Lammas Fair in Ballycastle in 1943. We arrived in Ballymoney on our bicycles and proceeded to the mainline station where the Ballycastle line had its inland terminus.

The annual big fair was the real 'harvest day' for the little railway, and the outgoing train was packed. Many of the carriages used on the fair day were redundant for the rest of the year. Some of them were ancient and very crude, with bench type seating and lacking upholstery. No one seemed to mind this rather austere seating accommodation. In fact, it seemed to add to the enjoyment of the trip.

The little train moved out of the station at a leisurely pace, under the twin-arched Roddenfoot Bridge (nicknamed the "Cow Bridge"), running parallel with the broad gauge main line for a short distance.

Veering left we passed the Garry Bog, with its neat stacks of peat ready for carting to the various homesteads. Jogging briskly over this level terrain we crossed the River Bush, before entering Dervock station, the most important of the intermediate stations, tapping a prosperous farming district. Dervock had a renowned horse fair, second in importance, perhaps, to the monthly horse fair at Kilrea, on the Derry Central line.

The next stop was Stranocum station, quite a step from the village of that name. Then climbing steadily, past Gracehill halt, we arrived at Armoy, a picturesque little village nestling in the shade of Knocklayd Mountain. Still climbing, we reached Capecastle halt, originally a station, which owed its existence mainly to the close proximity of a busy limestone quarry. After passing through a tunnel, it was then a steep drop down into the seaside town of Ballycastle.



*No.41 pilots the heavy special out of Ballycastle during the Lammas Fair. (J. McIlfatrick)*

The talking point during this winding descent was the episode of a runaway goods train on this treacherous bank on the previous January. The train of two carriages and ten wagons (unbraked), palpably overloaded with farm fertiliser, got out of control on the Capecastle bank, and gaining momentum on the 1 in 50 descent, thundered over the curving Tow viaduct at a mile a minute. How it remained on the rails at this point no one can understand, but it came into Ballycastle station, crashing through the buffer stops, and crossing the busy road, the engine uncoupled itself and landed right way up in a stream! Miraculously, no one was killed. Driver James McKissick suffered from shock and minor bruises, but fireman John Heffron jumped clear in the station unhurt.

After an enjoyable time at the Oul' Lammas Fair, we returned to the station for our return journey. This time the train was double-headed, so I strolled up for a close inspection of the two little tank engines. The piloting engine was numbered 41, and her companion was either 43 or 44.

A railway enthusiast came past and, nodding towards 41, remarked, "That was the lady on the runaway train that was heading out to sea, but stuck in the wee burn!"

No.41 was apparently a very efficient engine, and popular with the local drivers despite its tendency to become involved in history-making episodes. Built at York Road (Belfast) in 1909, its original number was 113. In 1920 it became No.101 after a rebuild, and in 1939 it was finally numbered 41. A two-cylindered compound, it weighed almost 33 tons, being a ton heavier than its compatriot survivors of the line, 43 and 44.

In the twilight of her life, No.41, when in a rundown condition, created a running record for the railway. A few of the top brass of the NCC, on a tour of inspection of the railway, fearful of missing their mainline connection, exhorted Barry Limerick, the driver, to make all possible haste on the connecting train from Ballycastle to Ballymoney.

Limerick and his able fireman, Jack McDuff, accepted the challenge with typical Ulster stoicism. As No.41 thundered up Capecastle bank, filling the Tow valley with the echoes of her staccato exhaust beat, she was minutes ahead of the prescribed schedule running, and finished this epic run (16 miles) in thirty minutes, beating the best express train timing by ten minutes.

The winter of 1947 was memorable for its severity, culminating in a snow blizzard on 12<sup>th</sup> March which left remote dwellers marooned for weeks. On that particular day, the evening train ex-Ballycastle had struggled up the snow-covered incline, the engine bulldozing the accumulated drifts as it went. Between Capecastle and Armoy the engine got almost buried in a mountainous wreath, which brought it to a halt. It was the ubiquitous 41 again at the head, with the redoubtable Limerick in control. Limerick had voiced his misgivings about undertaking the run, but the eighteen passengers, in a panic to get home, had implored Guard Jimmy Lyons to chance it. That night, passengers and crew huddled together in the guard's van, trying to coax a recalcitrant stove to shed its heat.

A good Samaritan, in the person of Joe Delargy, a farmer, whose home was adjacent to the line, provided tea and eatables. The beleaguered passengers were taken back to Ballycastle the next day, but the crew remained at their post. An 'army of dole men' was commandeered from the surrounding labour exchanges to clear the track, and on the third day of the protracted journey No.41 and her crew arrived in Ballymoney safely with their empty train! I can remember reading the account of the besieged train in the local press, which had aerial photographs to illustrate it.

Back now to that return journey, the most jolly and entertaining I had ever experienced. Of the big crowd aboard the train, there seemed to be a preponderance of female company, including a strong sprinkling from Ballymoney town. These jolly ladies, rather on the mature side, gave the impression that they had been sampling a beverage slightly stronger than cola! As we pulled out of Ballycastle, the vocalists amongst them regaled us with: "Did ye trate yer Mary Ann to dulse an' yell a man, at the oul' Lammas Fair in Ballycastle-O?"

As the little tanks laboured up the mountain side, round Ballylig curves, it was a fine chance to assess the scenic beauty of the ever-widening vista, extending from the green valleys to the rugged cliffs of Rathlin Island.

On the 1 in 50 gradient the speed fell to a walking pace, as the wee locos vehemently barked their way up. One jolly old girl called to her pal, "Hi Aggie, what about you an' me gettin' out on the slope and getherin' a wheen o' blackberries tae them wee ingins get their wind?" "Ach," quipped Aggie, "A'd rether take a young fella out tae the slope than an oul' doll like you!" How they all laughed, everyone

enjoying themselves.

We had topped the hill at last and, once through the tunnel, the engine music became softer to the ear, and it was time for the ladies to read a verse or two of "Lovely Armoy".

It was songs, jokes and good Ulster 'crack' all the way, delivered in the best brand of broad North Antrim dialect.

All too soon we were back in Ballymoney. With a farewell glance at the wee engines, we passed out of the station at the end of a perfect day.

In conclusion, a little poem dedicated to No.41 which is, I think, worthy of inclusion in this little story.

### NUMBER FORTY ONE

Had ye iver a trip o'er the railway,  
That skirted the slopes o' Knocklayd?  
If iver ye had, then sure an' Bedad,  
Ye've seen its wee engine parade.

Now ye might not've seen "Dalriada",  
Or her sister they called "Lady Boyd";  
But Ah'll bet ye, me son, ye've seen "Forty One",  
The best one they iver employed.

Sure she headed the runaway goods train,  
That gave her scared crew a rough ride;  
In Ballycastle station, she caused a sensation,  
When she swept the big platform aside.

Ah'm sure ye will mind that wild blizzard,  
On the twelfth day of March forty seven;  
On the last upward train, Forty One heads again,  
Through the snow drifts - wheels mad revvin'.

On the hillside at length, she got firmly stuck,  
There, three freezin' days for to spend;  
Till the men from the 'Broo' finally cleared a way through,  
An' brought the 'train seige' to an end.

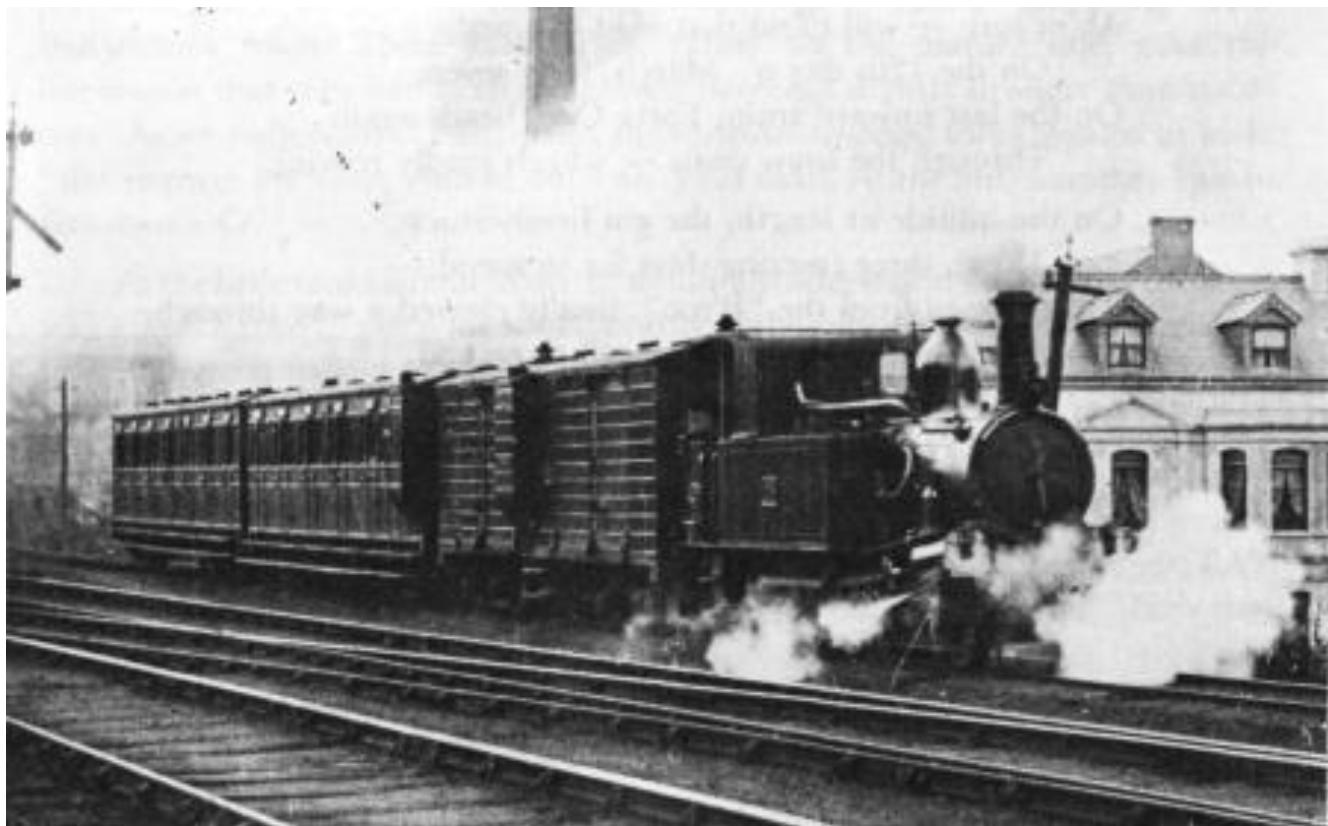
On a run in her last days, when oul' 41,  
Really blazed the headlines again,  
When ten minutes ahead, of the schedule, they said,  
For the time o' the best express train!

### COAST TO COAST BY NARROW GAUGE

**D.B. McNeill**

Two 3ft gauge railways would have crossed Ireland from East to West if certain proposals for the building of narrow gauge lines had materialised in the 1880s and 1900s. The first was for a 48½ miles extension to the Ballymena and Larne Railway from Ballymena to Londonderry via Portglenone and Dungiven, together with a narrow gauge railway from Ballyclare to Belfast. The second was for the construction of lines from the Clogher Valley Railway to the Bessbrook and Newry Tramway in the east and to the Cavan and Leitrim Railway in the west, together with a proposal to build a completely new narrow gauge railway, 110 miles in length, from Dromod on the C&LR to Clifden in County Galway. The schemes came to naught for the country they passed through was mainly thinly populated agricultural land lacking in industrial and commercial resources.

The scheme for a railway from Ballymena to Londonderry was put forward in the autumn of 1881. Two years previous to this, the B&LR had successfully promoted an Act for the Ballymena and Portglenone Railway to construct a ten mile extension from Ballymena to Portglenone via Gracehill and Ahoghill. The line had been vigorously opposed by the Belfast and Northern Counties Railway which had intentions of building its own standard gauge (5ft 3in) branch to Portglenone thereby preventing the intrusion of the narrow gauge into the Bann Valley. At the time the B&NCR was *persona non grata* in Ballymena for its engineers had been found making a survey for the Portglenone branch on the Sabbath! Nevertheless, it succeeded in getting clauses inserted into the B&PR Act requiring that company to acquire enough land and to construct all its engineering works to be of "sufficient width, height and strength for a railway of 5ft 3in gauge". In addition, the Act contained a paragraph stating that if ever the B&PR was extended beyond Portglenone an additional track, built to the 5ft 3in gauge, would have to be laid between Ballymena and Portglenone.



**0-6-0T 104 departing from Ballymena for Larne. (Loco & General 21773)**

By the time the Act was promulgated, the B&LR must have been already thinking further into the future and in November 1881 published a Parliamentary Notice stating it intended to extend its Portglenone branch to Londonderry and to change its name to the Londonderry and Larne Railway. The new line was to have passed through Swatragh, Dungiven, Claudy and Feeney to reach the eastern bank of the Foyle at Newbuildings. On the section between Swatragh and Dungiven the railway would have traversed the Northern Sperrins where it would have reached a height of 879ft above sea level, thereby making it the second highest railway in Ireland; pride of place being given to the Ballymena, Cushendall and Red Bay Railway, which reached a height of 1,045ft between Parkmore and Retreat. At Newbuildings the L&LR would have gone over the Foyle on a long viaduct and then would have followed the Great Northern Railway to this company's terminal at Foyle Road in Londonderry. However, the L&LR Bill was withdrawn early in 1882 and neither it, nor the branch from Ballymena to Portglenone, was ever built.

In 1881 Parliament authorised the construction of narrow gauge railways from Belfast to Ballyclare and from Belfast to Holywood. Both lines were promoted by the same London syndicate which virtually controlled the unsuccessful Belfast Central Railway, and once more the syndicate met with no success, for none of the proposed lines was built and the two narrow gauge companies were wound up by Parliament in 1885. The railway from Belfast to Ballyclare would have been owned by the Ballyclare, Ligoniel and Belfast Junction Railway and that to Holywood by the Belfast, Sydenham and High Holywood Railway. The BL&BJR was to have followed the same route as that ultimately taken by the Doagh extension of the B&LR from Ballyclare to Doagh. From here it would have climbed to a summit of 454ft above sea level near Mallusk, having *en route* passed under the main line of the B&NCR about a mile to the east of Doagh (Main Line) station. From Mallusk it descended at an average gradient of 1/40 for about three miles, after which it went over comparatively level ground through Ardoyne to join the BCR at Belfast Central Junction. The BCR agreed to lay a third rail within its tracks from the Junction to enable BL&BJR trains to get to the BCR terminal which was sited where the Oxford Street Bus Station is situated today. The total distance from Belfast to Ballyclare by this route would have been 17½ miles compared with 15 miles by the B&NCR from York Road.



**2-4-0T 106 on a Ballymena passenger train seen here approaching Larne Town. (Loco & General 21774)**

The completion of the L&LR and BL&BJR would have provided a third route between Belfast and Londonderry, which would have been 87 miles compared with 95 miles by the B&NCR via Greenisland and 101 miles by the GNR(I) via Portadown. Narrow gauge trains would have had to reverse at Ballyboley and at Ballymena, whereas the B&NCR had only to reverse at Greenisland, and no reversals were required by trains on the GNR(I). Despite having the shortest route it is unlikely the narrow gauge would have been competitive for through traffic between Belfast and Londonderry; but for traffic between Larne and Londonderry it could have provided formidable opposition to the B&NCR for the distance between the two places was 73¾ miles by narrow gauge compared with 87

miles by standard gauge, and it is just possible the former might have inaugurated a 'Boat Express' scheduled to do the run in three hours.

The opening of the County Donegal Railway between Strabane and Londonderry in 1900 and the completion of the Londonderry and Lough Swilly Railway to Burtonport in 1903 might possibly have provided some interesting through workings, especially during the summer tourist season. The L&LR would have crossed the CDR at Newbuildings so it is probable a spur would have been built for interchange traffic, and at Londonderry mixed gauge tracks along the quays would have provided a narrow gauge link between the L&LR at Foyle Road and L&LSR at Pennyburn. The distances from Belfast to Killybegs and Burtonport would have been about 135 and 160 miles respectively, so if through carriages had been worked during the tourist season, passengers would probably have had to spend at least seven hours cooped up in a small compartment; a fate which might have been preferable to that of shepherding a large family with a mountain of luggage from the broad to the narrow gauge stations at Strabane or on the horse trams of the City of Derry Tramways from Foyle Road to Pennyburn.

The other coast to coast narrow gauge was mooted in the early 1900s. In 1900 a company, known as the Newry, Keady and Tynan Light Railway, obtained an Act to construct a 3ft gauge railway, 28½ miles in length, from Bessbrook on the Bessbrook and Newry Tramway to the Clogher Valley Railway at Tynan. The line would have left the B&NT just outside Bessbrook station and would have proceeded via Camlough, Newtownhamilton and Keady to Tynan where, after crossing over the GNR(I), it would have made a Y junction with the CVR outside the latter's passenger station. In general, the line would have been heavily graded with short lengths of 1/40 and in three instances, all in the vicinity of Newtownhamilton, it would have climbed to heights greater than 700ft above sea level. Between Newtownhamilton and Keady it would have run through County Monaghan for about a mile, but in those days the county boundary between Armagh and Monaghan had not the significance it has today. At Keady the NK&TLR would have crossed the Castleblayney-Armagh branch of the GNR(I) but, as the construction of the latter began when the NK&TLR Acts were in force, the GNR(I) had to provide facilities for the narrow gauge to pass under its branch by making a tunnel through one of its embankments immediately to the north of Keady station. In addition to the main line, the 1900 Act authorised the construction of two short branches in Newry, one was from the Tramway terminus to the Albert Basin and the other was from this branch to the Dundalk, Newry and Greenore Railway. At the time the DN&GR was interested in the possibility of making its line between Newry and Greenore dual-gauged by laying down a third rail to enable narrow gauge trains to get to the quays at Greenore.

In 1903 Parliament authorised the building of a western extension of the CVR from Maguiresbridge to the Cavan and Leitrim Railway at Bawnboy Road station. The railway would have been easily graded, the steepest bank being 1/52 to the fly-over crossing which carried the extension over the GNR(I) at Maguiresbridge. The Erne was to have been crossed at Derryharney, three miles west of Maguiresbridge, on a low viaduct consisting of three 50ft spans. After this the line went through Swanlinbar to reach Bawnboy Road station some 21½ miles from Maguiresbridge. The Act not only authorised the amalgamation of the C&LR, the CVR and the B&NT to form a single company with the title of the Ulster & Connaught Light Railway but also provided for a four mile extension from the Arigna branch of the C&LR to the Leitrim Coalfield, the acquisition of certain mining rights in the latter, and the building of a two mile extension from Dromod to Roosky Lock on the River Shannon.

In the next year the U&CLR planned a 110 mile extension of its railway westward from Roosky Lock to Clifden via Roscommon, Tuam and Leenane with branches to Ballinrobe and to Galway City. By so doing its directors seem to have overlooked the fact that their railway, for the greater part of its length from Newry to Clifden, would have passed through sparsely populated countryside and that only six towns on its system had a thousand or more inhabitants. Parliamentary authority for its building was

never sought, and in 1905 a new act sanctioned the abandonment of all new construction west of Maguiresbridge and the reversion of the name of the company to the Newry, Keady and Tynan Light Railway. Powers for the completion of the track between Bessbrook and Tynan were kept alive a little longer by an Act passed in 1909 but neither this line nor any of the other railways authorised by the 1903 Act was ever built.

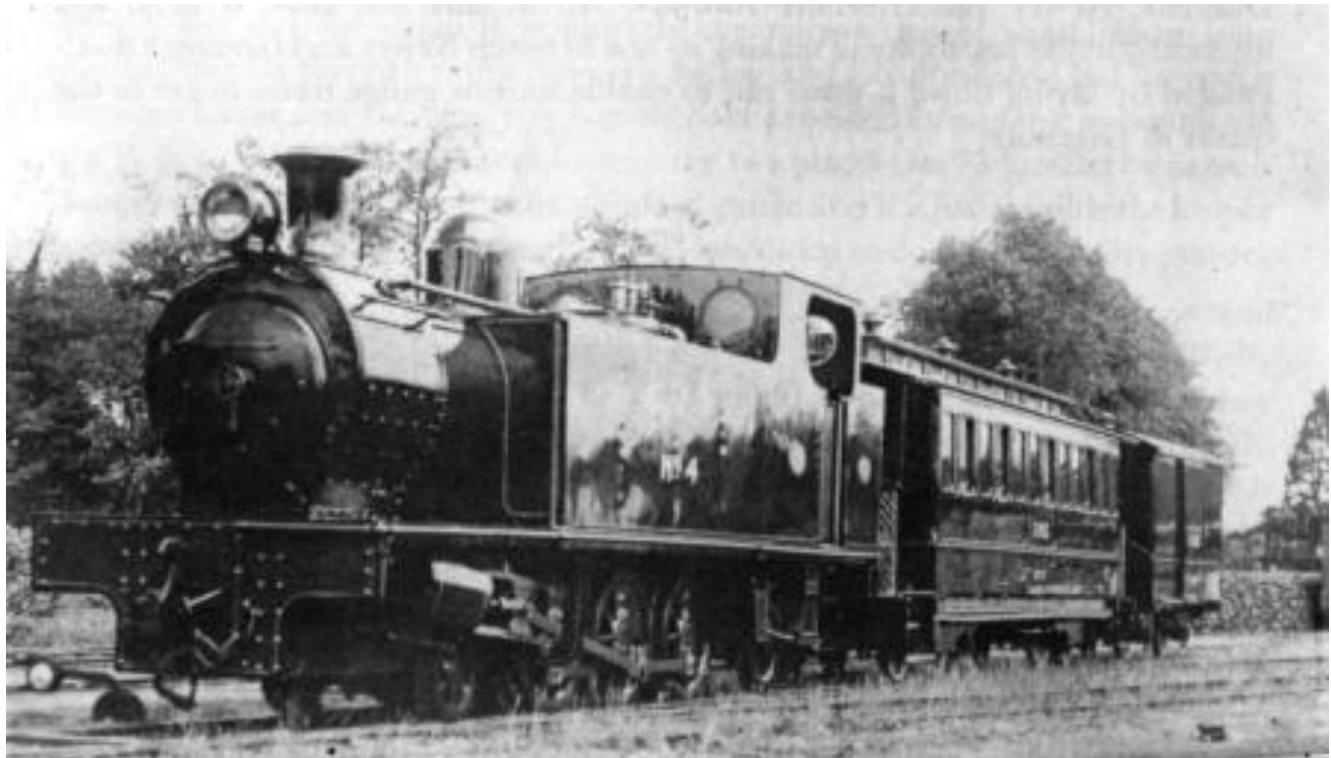


***Cavan & Leitrim 4-4-0 No.8 on the 12:45pm from Belturbet to Dromod, 17<sup>th</sup> May 1924. (Ken Nunn Collection 3909)***

If the ambitious scheme of 1904 had materialised, it would have been possible to have travelled by narrow gauge from Greenore to Clifden, a distance of 237 miles. This would have formed the longest *main line* in Ireland and, if through workings had been provided these would have been the only regular workings at that time in Ireland to exceed 200 miles, indeed the 237 miles would have remained an Irish record until the introduction of the Belfast-Cork Enterprise Expresses in 1950. On the other hand, if the through trains had been scheduled to travel at speeds comparable to those operating on the CVR and C&LR in Edwardian times, the journey from Greenore to Clifden would have taken at least thirty hours!

It is particularly interesting to surmise the types of rolling stock which might have been used if the L&LR and the U&CLR had been completed. The L&LR could have been worked by rolling stock similar to that in use at the time on the B&LR, but neither the locomotive nor coaching stock of the C&LR and CVR would have been suitable for the U&CLR. All the B&LR locomotives had been obtained for working on the steeply graded banks between Larne and Ballymena and would have had sufficient coal capacity to work, if necessary, from Ballymena to Londonderry. If the railway, like its parent, had been taken over by the B&NCR in 1889, it is quite probable that Bowman Malcolm would have designed his well-known 2-4-2Ts with increased coal and water capacity, indeed they might have appeared as 2-4-4Ts. As for passenger stock, the compartment coaches originally used between

Ballymena and Larne provided a similar standard of comfort as that found on many of the standard gauge railways of their day in Ireland and the 50ft bogie corridor coaches, which appeared in the late 1920s, would have been ideal for the long runs between Belfast, Larne and Londonderry. Furthermore, if the heights above rail level of the central couplers on some of the coaches could have been quickly altered from their standard height of 1ft 11in to the 2ft 7½in of the L&LSR and 2ft 10½in of the CDR, through workings would have been possible from the L&LR to Burtonport and Killybegs respectively, for B&LR rolling stock would have presented no loading gauge problems on either the L&LSR or CDR and all three companies used the automatic vacuum brake.



*Clogher Valley Railway stock, all in immaculate condition. 2-6-2T No.4, clerestory coach - very similar to C&LR stock - and van.*

The working of the U&CLR would have presented greater problems, for the 37 miles between Tynan and Maguiresbridge would have been over the CVR which had been laid as a roadside tramway with 1/30 banks and sharp curves, the one in Caledon village having a radius of 110ft. Indeed, when the company acquired a 0-4-4T (Blessingbourne) in 1910, its new locomotive had such difficulty negotiating some of the curves that it spent most of its life at the back of a running shed. The C&LR was also noted for its sharp curves and had similar trouble with a 0-6-4T (King Edward) which it bought in 1904. Both companies worked their trains with engines with a maximum axle loading of under 8½ tons, those on the CVR being 0-4-2Ts with 3ft coupled wheels and their counterparts on the C&LR being 4-4-0Ts with driving wheels 3ft 6in in diameter. Indeed it was not until after the close down of the Cork, Blackrock and Passage in 1932 that heavier locomotives worked regularly on the C&LR. The provision of suitable locomotives for working over the whole of the U&CLR would have provided many problems to their designer for they would have had to be able to develop enough power to work between Bessbrook and Keady and still retain the flexibility and light axle loading for running over the CVR together with a coal capacity to work the 82 miles between Dromod and Tynan. New passenger rolling stock would also have been required as the longitudinal seats in the tramcar type coaches used on the CVR and C&LR would have been most unattractive to twentieth century travellers.

working their way from Greenore or Newry to Dromod or Clifden. On the other hand, all the rolling stock on the two lines could have been interchangeable for they had almost identical loading gauges, used the automatic vacuum brake and had central couplers 2ft 2in above rail level.

It is interesting to speculate on the possible fate of the Trans-Hibernian narrow gauge lines. The L&LR would probably have been taken over by the B&NCR in the late 1880s; in which case its passenger services, like those on the former B&LR, would have been withdrawn in the early 1930s and the line closed at the end of the 1939/45 War. The U&CLR, as a cross-border line, would probably have escaped merger with the Great Southern Railways in 1925 and might have continued to eke out a precarious existence until the 1939/45 War when that part of the system situated in Northern Ireland would probably have suffered the same fate as the CVR by being closed in 1942. The portion in County Leitrim, however, might have remained open for another two decades to facilitate the movement of fuel from the Arigna Coalfield to the Electricity generating stations in the Republic.

## NOT TRINITY REGATTA

**Ian James**

*[This article is reproduced from the Bulletin of the Ulster Branch of the Irish Amateur Rowing Union. Have you ever wondered what impression our Society makes on its tour passengers? Have you ever wondered who are those strange people on the 2-day tour in fancy dress? Then read on...]*

Did you know there was a viable alternative to that weekend in May usually set aside for Trinity Regatta? Or, how to avoid controversial umpiring decisions, the non-existent starter, the impossible buoy at the Boo House bend, the ghouls at the finish hoping to see a novice (or not so novice) eight disappear over the weir, and the Ballyfermot mob waiting their chance to burn down the beer tent yet again? If all this is too much, then why not try the alternative of a real step back into the Edwardian scene and indulge your fantasies on a two day steam train ride to the furthest corners of Ireland?

This is what several of the members of the Lady Victoria Boat Club have been doing for the past three years as an alternative to Trinity. Join the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland who own and operate eleven steam locomotives and a rake (railway jargon meaning several) of preserved coaches. The rowing pioneers of this venture into steam in 1979 were John Martin, Alva Brangam, Angus McKibbin (imported from Sunbury-on-Thames at enormous expense) and tour leader Ian James.

The weekend starts unpretentiously on the Friday evening CIÉ Enterprise from Belfast to Dublin and an overnight stop in an equally unpretentious Dublin city hotel, taken over en bloc by the RPSI. A good number travel regularly from England and further afield as Irish railways still have a lot of nostalgia to offer the discerning railway buff - until very recently no overhead electrification, much semaphore signals (the ones which stick out from the sides of a post, not colour lights), many signal cabins (the less informed call them boxes) are very original complete with levers, repeaters, cranked telephones and bell codes, and as much of the system is single line, token or tablet working is still operational.

The tour proper starts on Saturday morning about 07:00 with breakfast, then by private coach to Westland Row or Amiens Street to join the train. Early mornings, even in May, can be grey, cold and miserable, equally so for the underage IV or ladies novice VIII making their slow painful way down the courses to become the first crew to make their exit from the Regatta. But enough of that. Mr Grimshaw (Denis to his friends), the RPSI Operations Manager, is anxiously pacing the platform glancing at his watch for the tenth time, wondering if his carefully planned timetable is going to be screwed up even before the tour starts. But no, a plume of smoke in the distance, a toot from the whistle and 0-6-0 J15 No.186, resplendent in green livery, chugs into view followed by her train of coaches. Two hundred shutters click in unison while cines and tape recorders whirl recording this and just about every minute over the next 48 hours. The same scene will be repeated over and over again throughout the weekend at various locations along the route.

All seats are reserved so there is no need for a wild dash. The reservation form allows you a choice of side corridor compartment, open coach, milepost side (very important for the timers) or not. Curiously, there is no choice of smoking/non-smoking. No matter as the seat is more a base for luggage. A short walk along the train will take you to the nerve centre - the dining car which is already open for business at 08:00 and Tommy is dispensing beverages of every kind. (Can Trinity Regatta match this?) Despite having reserved seats in Coach B the LVBC crew seem to feel at home here and establish a headquarters for the rest of the trip. Tommy has a bar area about 6ft x 3ft from which he can dispense any kind of draught beer you care to mention. Guinness, Smithwicks, Tartan, Bass, Harp, Tennants, you name it and Tommy serves it up. Each pint is pulled and delivered with a polite "Yes Sir". To a casual observer this is an impressive feat and worthy of admiration to have such a variety of draught drinks available from a moving train. (Can Belfast Rowing Club compete with a static bar?) The more critical observer, if there be one, might notice that all the drinks come from only three taps. One for beers, one for lagers and one for stout. Has Tommy got some special plumbing arrangement with several barrels connected to each tap? No one dares to ask. Does it matter? All customers return to their seats with a perfect pint declaring "it's the best pint of ... I've had all day".

By this time we are through the tunnel beneath Phoenix Park (hands up those who knew there was a tunnel), across the Liffey via the railway bridge (those who have competed at Dublin Head will know this landmark) to join the Cork main line at Islandbridge Junction. Our passage up past Inchicore, the railway workshops for CIÉ and soaked in steam history, is greeted by the maintenance staff who have turned out to a man to see once again the sight and listen to the sound of a steam engine lifting its load up the incline. Not even a thought now for the unfortunate intermediate VIII disqualified because an oar touched the buoy at the Boo House bend.

Our journey down the main line must be strictly to schedule as being a special working we have to fit into the normal CIÉ timetable. However, after Mallow we leave on the branch line to Killarney and Tralee. Times here are more relaxed as the regular traffic is much lighter. This allows several photo stops where the train halts at closed or little-used stations or former junctions.

At Killarney, reached in the mid afternoon of a glorious May day, a stop was made for the lineside bus. This allows for those who wish to leave the train and travel ahead by private bus to an advantageous spot for a photograph. For timetable reasons we have over an hour to wait in the station to allow the regular evening passenger train from Tralee to cross our path - the line here is single. The LVBC crew decide to explore the adjoining Great Southern Hotel where the style of the cocktail bar is inviting and Pimms is ordered as refreshment. The bus tickets were pre-booked so we placed our faith in Robin Morton the RPSI Secretary to advise us of bus departure time. A Pimms for Robin was also ordered with an assurance from him that the bus could not possibly go without him. After the fourth Pimms a loud hoot from the engine whistle warned of the train departure. A rather red faced Robin was shocked to find the bus had gone 30 minutes earlier. The astonishment from LVBC was more in jest than anger.

For the more technically minded, Killarney station, though not a proper terminus, is, because of its situation, at the end of a short spur or branch off the main line. Thus stopping trains from Dublin or Mallow drive into the station engine first. To continue to the terminus at Tralee trains then have to reverse out to regain the main line. Trains from Tralee go through the opposite procedure and have to reverse into Killarney station.

At Tralee a convivial evening was held in the company of several of the RPSI experts talking on railway matters. A problem of concern to the LVBC crew was how do steam trains go backwards? It was understood that steam engines do not have gearboxes and could go equally well in either direction but how did the engine know which was forward and which was reverse? It was patiently explained by Robin Morton that it was all a question of changing the eccentrics. Whether this was a shaded reference to the composition of the Lady Vic crew was never clear.

On the return trip to Dublin an opportunity was afforded by a stop for engine servicing to observe the complexities of Limerick Junction. One of those Irish peculiarities which produced a station in the Middle of County Tipperary near nowhere except a horse race course (built after the station) and some 60 miles from Limerick from which town it gained the name. The reason was the crossing of two major railway routes, Dublin to Cork and Waterford to Limerick, and the legacy was a station with a single platform at which all stopping trains must reverse to gain access.

Dublin was reached on Sunday afternoon and after a further stop for carriage and engine servicing the train worked through to Belfast. In subsequent years the destinations have been Sligo and Waterford.

In 1984 the destination will be Galway and the dates 13<sup>th</sup>/14<sup>th</sup> May, so watch out for the LVBC boaters.

## BOOK REVIEW

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### **150 Years Of Irish Railways, by Fergus Mulligan**

**Appletree Press**

Mr Mulligan's book purports to be a general account of the railways of Ireland, produced to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first railways in the island. It is really little more than a general review of the literature on the subject. The text is drawn from all the existing and well known sources. There has been no effort to cross-check the accuracy of the information presented, and it contains all the errors of the original texts with a few more creeping in here and there. There is little or nothing about the technicalities of railway working in the island, or its locomotive history. The book is, however, top heavy with the by now well-known tales and anecdotes with which Irish railway history seems to abound.

After a first chapter, predictably about the Dublin and Kingstown, the main companies are treated to a short chapter apiece. That irrelevant oddity, the Listowel and Ballybunion Monorail, rates a complete chapter to itself. The last sixty years is condensed into a pitifully brief chapter at the end of the book. The photographic content is equally disappointing. Most of what is produced has appeared before. There is no indication as to the source of most of the illustrations although many are recognisable as belonging to the national Library of Ireland Lawrence collection. The quality of reproduction of most of the photographs is abysmal, with an almost complete loss of detail in some.

This book will certainly have no appeal to the Irish railway enthusiast or historian. Neither can it be recommended to the general reader.

**Nevin Hamilton**

One anticipates a new book on Irish railways with mixed feelings, for they can range from the accuracy of Kevin Murray's Dublin and Kingstown, the enjoyable Tralee and Dingle to some better not mentioned in good company. Launching a good technical/historical book is a difficult job, requiring a deep expert knowledge of one's subject, plus the back-up of associates who are experts in different aspects of the subject, who observed and studied the events over many years as they happened, assembled lectures and papers over thirty-five years, and in some cases would one believe - sixty odd years.

Some of the above were somewhat overwhelmed by a whole series of unique comments in this book - "The 800s are amongst the largest locomotives in the world!!" While I give way to none in my admiration for these one hundred and fifty ton monsters, compare them to hundreds of average African, Kenyan, French and German at two hundred and fifty tons. Not to mention the average American at three hundred and fifty tons, and may at five hundred tons. I am confused!! "GNR coaches were teak!" Not so - they were highly varnished mahogany, a totally different colour. The GNR of England was teak. The GSR did not build wooden framed coaches in 1934, they built steel framed coaches with sheet steel covered wooden bodies. Again, the oft repeated clanger, the 800s were NOT queens, Maeve was. Maca and Tailte were not, they were mythical celtic goddesses and the names of the others not

built qualify this, and so they continue, away too many to list in this note.

Now the photographs and diagrams. It is just not acceptable by today's standards to reproduce photographs without crediting the photographer, also providing the reader with source information, especially so when the bulk of the work is by the tragic French who, having left to us his magnificent life's work, died in poverty. Worse, some eighteen of French's photographs have been abused by the shocking quality of reproduction, being so blacked out as to be unviewable, and to add to that his famous Ballydehob view is used as a cover shot, but printed in reverse! Here the printers must share the blame as the legends on the coach sides can clearly be read. The same careless finish is apparent in the mistakes in the captions. To get three separate errors into a short caption, as on page 96, must be some sort of record!

- (a) The GSR was long gone before the through Enterprise service.
- (b) The train is a Cork-Belfast, not as described.
- (c) Should it depart from that position it will need the Rosslare ferry to get it to Belfast, etc., etc.

Need I say that all of the diagrams are wrong - the all-important Glasnevin Junction once traversed one way - was then changed to the opposite through way, they certainly never joined at one point!

Make no mistake, it is with utmost regret that one has to say the above about an Irish product, but all the faults - photo reproduction and script - need not have happened. Aside from this the work is simply a repetition of what is already in print.

**John Kennedy/Sam Carse/David Murray**