

FIVE FOOT THREE



Magazine of the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland

FIVE FOOT THREE

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Editor: Nelson Poots

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

Front Cover: No.85 leaves Portrush on the "Railtour Round-up". (N. Poots)

EDITORIAL

January seems an appropriate time to emulate Janus, the Roman god who, like the modern diesel loco, looked backwards and forwards at the same time (one was actually named after him). Behind us, as various reports will relate, we have another successful season marred only by the mishap with No.85's tender. We even managed to come out of that with considerable public goodwill, thanks very largely to the rescue operation mounted by a certain well-known railwayman. It could be remarked in passing that such an operation, where the interests of both the customer and the railway were served by the application of common sense and experience, is surely what running a railway is all about and owes little to all the 'state of the art' trappings of modern business. Anyhow, taking it as a whole, we had a good year and can look forward to more of the same - or can we?

Looking from the front cab, as it were, some cautionary signals can be seen. It must be remembered that, since we do not own a branch line, at least 95% of our operations are run over the railway companies' tracks and, while amicable agreements are usually achieved, at the end of the day it is the companies who say what goes - or stays. Whilst this is not the place for delving into the cause of No.85's accident it is probably safe to predict that the incident is not going to make life any easier for

us. With Irish Rail's impending introduction of modern coaching stock on the GN section and the recent Clapham accident thrown in for good measure it is not too difficult to visualise our freedom to roam the Irish rails being curtailed.

What then of the Society's current coach policy? Do we - indeed could we afford to - put up with an increasing amount of empty stock mileage in order to reach a decreasing number of non-restricted lines or should we be thinking about the acquisition of acceptable modern stock. If we pursue the latter course another difficulty looms, namely the possible incompatibility of braking systems. Should we even now be scouring Eastern Europe for locomotive air pumps?

Assuming that such problems will be resolved, there remains the question of who will do the work. While Mullingar appears to be coping quite well, the position at Whitehead is alarming. Here, despite the appearance of some welcome recruits, some Saturdays have seen a workforce of as few as four, yes four, people. Even allowing for the fact that a number of members undertake other vital non-manual work it is a sorry situation when so few out of a membership of about eight hundred can be bothered to lend a hand. The Society's financial situation permits only minimal use of outside labour yet everyone expects to see clean and shiny coaches hauled by strong and gleaming locomotives when summer comes.

Exchanging the locomotive hat for the literary one, it was gratifying to find that the last Five Foot Three was well received and that the appeal for material did not go unanswered. However, as it is almost all used up, a further supply would be very much appreciated! Does no one write letters to the Editor nowadays - even to take him or someone else to task? Such correspondence might not achieve the standards of vituperation which entertained readers in the Donaldson/Arnold era but a little controversy isn't a bad thing, as witness Mr. Liddle's article in this issue. Unfortunately, if anyone wants to argue with him they'll probably be a year older by the time their thoughts appear in print!

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

Sullivan Boomer

Writing a short note for the magazine at the end of our busiest ever operating season is not a task I undertake lightly; it would be all too easy to bask in the euphoria of what has been by and large a success. However, the only way to progress the Society is to look at our past summer programme in a very cold and analytical way. It was indeed a very successful season, with the "Shannon" International Railtour running without any major hitch, and turning in a respectable surplus. The Dublin Millennium trains staggered off to a moderately well patronised start, and although they caused some early misgivings to our organisers in Dublin, the later trains were fully loaded and the whole operation proved to be operationally and commercially successful. The Steam Enterprise trains were well filled, provided some of the finest locomotive work seen from the companies' crews (I understand No.171 gave a fine demonstration of how fast an S class can accelerate a heavy train!), and also justified themselves financially.

The only cloud on our horizon was the Portrush Flyer series which, in spite of a minor mishap, ran well and loaded quite satisfactorily, but lost money! A careful analysis of fares showed that they had been underpriced rather badly, and higher fares for this operation in future will be necessary if it is to have a chance of continuing. It should be remembered that our advertising lead-in time is over 9 months; we are now setting next year's fares and getting publicity organised, so the Operations Committee has to do a lot of hard gazing into their crystal ball and try to anticipate increases in operating costs nearly a year in advance - not an easy task.

Maintenance will now be the order of the day, and we have up to Easter 1989 to get through a major programme of work. On the locomotive front No.171 needs retubing and other repairs, "R.H. Smyth" will need some attention (we tend to forget how hard we work our small Whitehead shunter with

minimal maintenance), and No.461 is being re-assembled. At the same time the Carriage Department has to bring every vehicle of the running rake into the shed, overhaul the running gear, carry out any body repairs, touch up the paintwork, service the lighting (and hopefully the heating), and thoroughly clean each vehicle. Repairs to toilets will also take a high priority.

As you can see, as well as specialist skills we need a very large number of people for unskilled labour, cleaning and painting as well as general housekeeping. One significant failure in this year's operations out of Belfast was train cleaning; this relied upon about 4 people and if they were unavailable, the train stayed dirty. This must not happen again! Without more volunteers coming forward for this sort of mundane and unglamorous work, we will just have to stop running trains!

Of course, the Carriage Shed will eventually make life considerably easier for us, providing better valetting and maintenance facilities, but we can not wait until it is built, as stock needs work done now. You can help the Society in two very practical ways. Firstly, raise as much money as you can for the Carriage Shed Appeal Fund, for which we need over £40,000, and secondly, if you can make it to Whitehead (or Mullingar) join the regular work squads and help to keep the Society running. We have the reputation and image of a successful and resourceful Society who have achieved much and are going on to greater strengths. Please help us to maintain that progress.

As we enter upon our 25th year, let's see a major effort by all the members to really make it a good one. Shall I book you a paintbrush at Whitehead now?

NEWS FROM COUNCIL

Robin Morton

Much Council time has been devoted to consideration of the biggest construction project the Society has ever undertaken - the new carriage shed at Whitehead. Our thanks to Kirk McClure and Morton, the Belfast consultants, for their help in preparing drawings and applying for planning permission and building control.

With the costs involved estimated at £90,000, the main issue to be decided was the funding of the building. To secure expert advice the Council engaged Jim Parke, a professional fundraiser, and thanks to his efforts, we managed to secure a 50% grant from the International Fund for Ireland.

This left the Society with responsibility for raising the other half of the cash required - some £45,000. The Coleraine turntable project, which had seemed daunting enough at the time with its bank overdraft of £12,000, paled into insignificance.

Jim has written to the membership to enlist their assistance in the project, and is meanwhile approaching various bodies to check out possible assistance.

One area being explored for the first time is specific sponsorship by commercial companies of the Society's excursion trains, and a more formalised arrangement for the hire by the business world of the RPSI steam train for a day.

The Society is grateful for the support of the Carrickfergus Literary and Historic Trust Fund, which has pledged a grant of £1,000 to the project. In addition, several members have already organised private fund-raising efforts on behalf of this good cause.

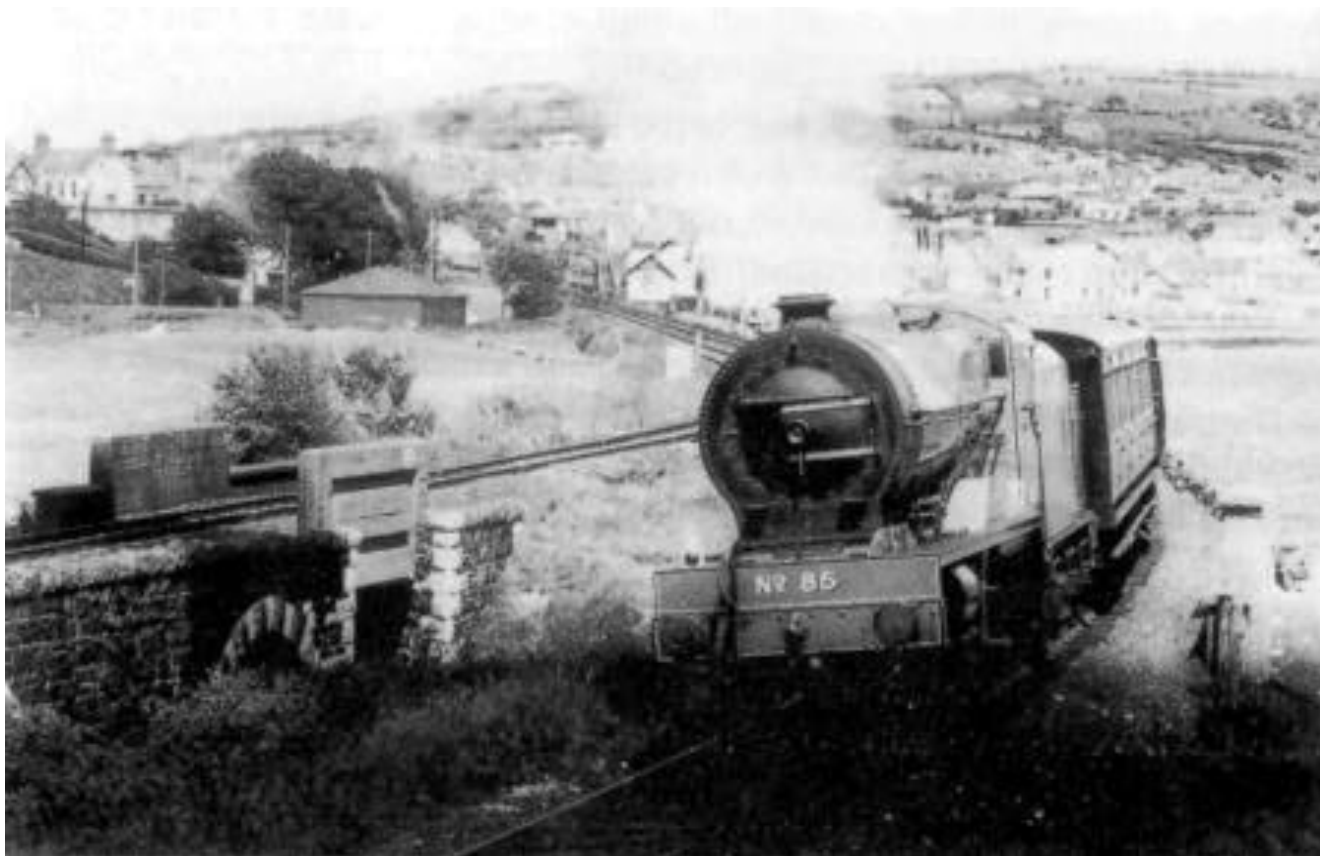
Proceeding in tandem with the carriage shed plan has been the feasibility study into the proposed interpretive centre at Whitehead.

Carrickfergus Council has pledged assistance of £1,000, and means of raising the rest of the £3,000 cost are being investigated.

After the AGM, the Council found itself with two vacancies, which have remained unfilled throughout the year. These were the important posts of Coach Running and Commercial, and Council was

concerned that nobody could be found to come forward.

As against that, there were two new Council posts which were filled - those of Mullingar Coach Maintenance and Mullingar Coach Running. This expansion of the Council reflected the increasing level of RPSI activity in the Republic - which manifested itself in the highly successful operation of the Dublin Millennium trains.



No.85 swings into the curve skirting Whitehead Tunnel at the start of the working to Belfast Central on 5th June 1988. (W.T. Scott)

As part of the Society's campaign for a higher profile in the Republic, consideration was being given to the appointment of a Vice-President from south of the border.

Council considered several possibilities and it was agreed that candidates should be sympathetic to the aims of the RPSI and of preservation in general.

On a less public scale, the RPSI Council was due to hold its monthly meeting in Dublin for the first time, with Connolly Station rather than Belfast Central being the venue in November.

At Mullingar contact has been maintained with AnCo, the youth training project, with a view to starting a carriage restoration scheme. This, it is hoped, would mirror the success of the Whitehead Railway Project, which continues to make a valuable contribution to the Society both in terms of coach restoration, administration, and publicity.

The work of the Whitehead Railway Project in restoring the Society's carriages received a considerable shot in the arm from a London-based charitable trust which gave a grant for materials of £4,000. The trust, which prefers to remain anonymous, was put in touch with the Society thanks to our membership of the Northern Ireland Council on Voluntary Action. We are most grateful to all concerned for this valuable assistance.

The unfortunate derailment of No.85's tender on the Portrush Flyer on 23rd July has had ramifications on the insurance front. At the time of writing a meeting was due to take place with NIR and the RPSI insurers, Bowring Martin, to investigate various possibilities.

The Belfast winter meetings have moved to a new home - but under the same management. St. Jude's hall in Sunnyside Street closed, but the church is now accommodating the Society's meetings in its other hall on the Ravenhill Road. Charles Friel again organised an entertaining series of meetings.

Once again the Council was grateful to those members who helped spread the load by taking on posts of special responsibility.

OPERATIONS 1988

Ernie Gilmore

Equal Opportunity would be one apt description of the plans for the 1988 operations season. The Dublin Millennium Celebration was the ticket to launch the RPSI southern steam operations on a grand scale. Some said it would never work, others said it was too much too soon, but it worked! And how! Such an operation just could not have been mounted using our dear old No.184 so first priority was to negotiate for a big locomotive based in Dublin. No.4 was the right choice and the IR crews took to her with an obvious enthusiasm. One locomotive inspector passed a remark to me which summarised the feelings of the steam crews, "Sure it's just like having the first of a new class of engine allocated to shed for evaluation." If we have achieved nothing else, No.4's sojourn at Dublin Connolly has highlighted the need for a Company based steam training programme - the passengers are there aplenty but are the crews? It is encouraging however that some 'old hands' have returned to the footplate. Welcome back.

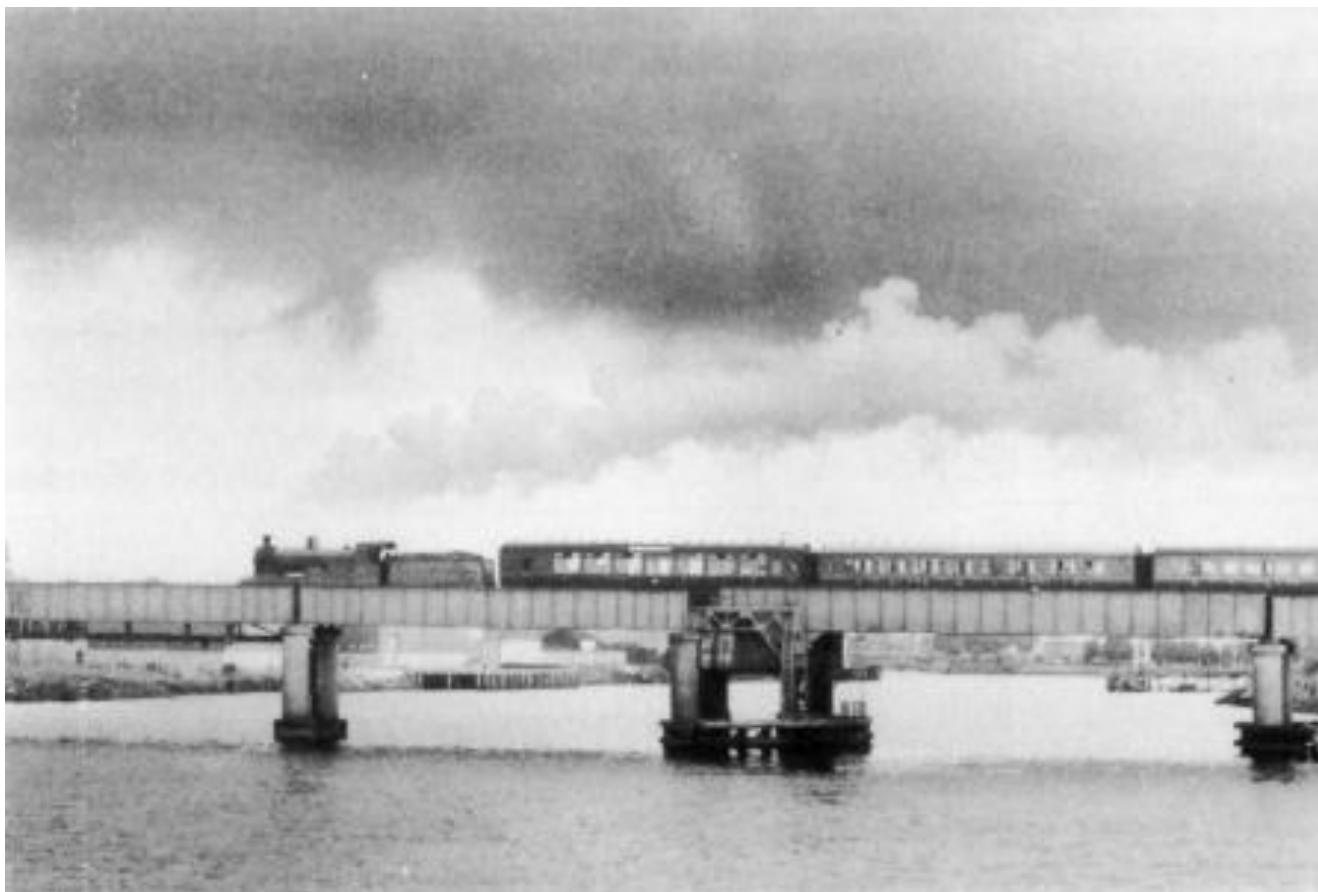
It is opportune to mention here the retirement of Senior Locomotive Inspector Eamonn Lacken. Eamonn has been a tower of strength and encouragement to the operating staff of the Society at all levels and has been firmly adopted as 'our man' in the Midlands. An untiring worker for local charities, we were particularly pleased to be able to charter No.184 and the Mullingar set to him for a charity fund-raising trip from Athlone to Clara and back on 15th May. Over £1,000 was raised on the short trip which ironically was to be No.184's last trip before retirement for a heavy overhaul. We wish Eamonn and his wife Bridie a long and happy retirement.

The gel for the Northern and Southern Operations Committees is the three day International Railtour in May. The Shannon Railtour must rank high in steam events anywhere. True, we didn't obtain our membership of the rare 100 mph club as did our friends in Austria but for sheer spectacle, complexity (some enforced), conviviality (all spontaneous) and all round satisfaction it was the tops. Imagine our delight at making the front cover of "Cara", the Aer Lingus in-flight magazine followed by an eight page colour illustrated article about the "Shannon" written most eloquently by Bernard Share, RPSI member and Editor of Cara. Surely this must be the widest recognition yet of our preservation work and our eternal gratitude must be to Bernard for a most reflective piece encapsulating the spirit of the RPSI.

The advance planning of the Railtour began 8 months before and proved to be well worth the effort. 350 passengers from a dozen countries were entertained to a feast of steam. In fact the Railtour was booked out two months prior but the RPSI Council agreed to an additional coach being run and we managed to accommodate everyone.

We took the first hurdle on Saturday 14th May in full flight when at 09:15 ex LMS NCC 2-6-4T No.4 charged out of Heuston down the Cork main line to Ballybrophy hauling 350 eager passengers in seven Irish Rail steel bodied Cravens coaches. These were hired in response to Irish Rail's ban on carrying passengers in our wooden bodied coaches over the 90 mph sections of the Cork Main Line. As there were no bar facilities on the Craven set several circumspect members were observed fortifying

themselves for the journey in the Heuston Refreshment Room before departure! The only recorded complaint about the hired coach arrangement was the double handling of baggage at Ballybrophy where we transferred to the RPSI Whitehead coach set for the remainder of the journey to Limerick. The diesel locomotive which had brought the Whitehead set empty to Ballybrophy earlier in the morning then returned to Heuston with the empty Cravens set. Incidentally the RPSI Dining Car crew had to travel on the 08:40 ex Heuston to Tralee service train to have all the facilities ready for us on arrival at Ballybrophy.



Under a sky typical of the 1988 summer, No.171 crosses the River Bann on her way back from the Portrush Flyer Castlerock extension trip. (C.P. Friel)

Well-planned fire hydrant water stops were made at Portlaoise and Nenagh with memorable runs-past at Cloughjordan and Birdhill. The obligatory lineside buses departed (full) from Nenagh for nice shots of the train on the move at Kilmastullagh Shale Sidings and Lisnagry level crossing.

While all this was taking place on Saturday morning, ex GSWR 0-6-0 No.184 and the RPSI Mullingar coach set were operating two round trips at 09:10 and 11.20 ex Limerick to Birdhill for the citizens of Limerick. The train had left the RPSI Mullingar depot on Friday morning ostensibly as empty stock and worked to Limerick via Athenry and Ennis with an unplanned trip to Limerick Junction to turn coach 1415 on the triangular junction. These latter events are recorded on the Railscene Video No.15, well worth purchasing for the 20 minute coverage of the Railtour alone.

Sterling work from the RPSI Southern Operations saw a neat and clean Mullingar set and a sparkling No.184 resplendent in her new black livery ready for the Railtour trip from Limerick to Tipperary and back. Unfortunately, this portion of the tour was overcrowded since it was planned for a large party to travel on the alternative coach trip to the closed North Kerry line. Consequently not everyone had a seat

on the train but there were plenty of seats and afternoon teas in the Riverdale Hotel in Abbeyfeale for the forty-five sightseers who in scorching sunshine visited some of the stations on this romantic railway including Barnagh Tunnel, the summit of the line with its fine distant views of Counties Limerick and Kerry. The return trip was over the mountains to Foynes and our first view of the Shannon, shimmering in the evening sunlight. We had applied to go to Foynes by train but Irish Rail came up with a prohibitive cost of £5,000 to cut back the hedges and to carry out repairs to the track. C'est la vie!



No.184 accelerates past Limerick Check cabin on the Limerick-Tipperary portion of the railtour, 14th May 1988. (W.T. Scott)

The best laid plans are sure to have their last minute hiccups! Thus we all had to catch a coach from our hotels in Limerick to Castleoaks House Hotel, Castleconnell, 11 miles out of Limerick for our Annual Railtour Banquet. Due to a double booking at the planned hotel we had to switch the Banquet just one week before the Railtour to the Castleoaks House and we will be forever in their debt for rising to the challenge and providing us with a most excellent meal for 250 people at such short notice. They also had laid on some talented musicians and singers for our traditional entertainment spot. Unfortunately, we were only able to persuade one bus crew to extend their rostered duty past midnight and an all too hasty exit had to be made just when the entertainment was getting into full swing. This earlier departure from the Banquet was appreciated next morning, however, at the 08:50 departure of No.184 and the Mullingar set for Athenry.

Those who had eschewed the trip to Tipperary and the Railtour Banquet for a marathon alternative Railtour to Galway on the Whitehead set behind No.4 had ten minutes longer in bed and could still catch the first of two Galway-Athenry local round trips on the Sunday morning. Some I understand waited till the second departure at 10:20 and a few just made it for the final departure at 11:40.

Meanwhile, No.184 was never in better form, winding her way up the nominally goods only Limerick to Athenry section, taking in her stride the runs-past at Gort and Craughwell. Lineside bus passengers

departing at Gort were well rewarded by two excellent shots, one at a road crossing where the wee engine could be heard for miles climbing the 1 in 70 section to Ardahan and the other at a stone overbridge outside Craughwell.

The highlight of the Raitour was undoubtedly the meeting up of the two trains in Athenry, once a busy junction, and for one brief hour reliving its historic past. Decisions had to be made here with a choice of trains to Athlone. After taking water and posing side by side, No.184's train set out first for Ballinasloe with a long hard slog of the Woodlawn bank ahead. She acquitted herself very well with constant firing against the injectors and dropping less than 10% of her boiler pressure on the 13 mile climb, finishing her run with a sprightly 46 mph down into Ballinasloe. What a way to celebrate your 108th birthday.



No.4 arrives back in Galway after one of the Athenry trips on 15th May 1988. (C.P. Friel)

No.4 was supposed to follow in her block departing Athenry at 13:18 but the guard from the east did not turn up so the Stationmaster at Athenry jumped into his car and persuaded a local man Greg Rabbitte, on his way to Church, to take over the job (Sunday best clothes and all). It was not the first time that we have been indebted to men like Greg who have willingly given up their day off to help the Society. In fact our hero, unknown to him when he volunteered, had to travel with us all the way to Dublin since the rostered guard, as we later discovered, had not been rostered at all!! He eventually reached home again around 21:30 having rushed across Dublin to catch the 18:50 Galway ex Heuston. I hope someone remembered to tell his wife where he was! I can also confirm that he was actually a passed guard.

Back in Ballinasloe, however, a quick re-schedule saw No.184, which was supposed to have been leap-frogged by No.4 and the Whitehead set, dispatched timely for Athlone to operate the Eamonn Lacken Private Charter as mentioned. I waited for No.4 to arrive in Ballinasloe only to discover that she had broken a number of records with her magnificent running over the Woodlawn Bank. Perhaps it could be termed the eastern Midland showing up the western Midland! - hardly fair since we do not have a preserved Woolwich mogul or 540 class 4-4-0. In any analysis the tribute must go to outstanding enginemanship from both driver and fireman who after nearly 30 years since regular steam are still able to coax such sparkling performance from our engine. On this note it was particularly gratifying to have ex Limerick driver Roger Healy take charge of our train on his last rostered day with Irish Rail. Tributes were paid to him at the Railtour Banquet and we wish Roger and his wife many happy years of retirement.

One problem of operating over closed sections of railway is the manning of crossing gates. The Athlone-Mullingar section had officially closed to traffic some months before the Railtour. Irish Rail had granted us special permission to travel over this section, recalling their staff for the occasion. The scorching sun beat down on us while we were halted on the Shannon Viaduct for almost 30 minutes while someone hunted for the key to the White Gates (the Moorings Level Crossing). No one complained at the gentle breeze wafting up from the river especially not the Stevenage Locomotive Society party who thoroughly enjoyed the local boating scene on the 'lordly Shannon'. Zoom lenses are sine qua non on RPSI Railtours.

The delay gave No.4's crew the awesome task of pulling back one hour on the fifty mile stretch to Dublin Connolly. Admittedly the schedule was leisurely but planned to be so to allow for just such delays. With 3 tons of fresh coal added at Mullingar and a full tank of water she covered the fifty miles in a very creditable time, despite a forced stop by that dreaded hot box detector triggered as usual by the firebox of the locomotive, the most notable part of the run being the excellent start from Mullingar to Killucan.

By comparison the run north to Belfast Central on Sunday evening behind ex GNR(I) compound 4-4-0 No.85 "Merlin" was less spectacular. To appreciate the full scale of the Society's operations on Sunday 15th May 1988 it would be necessary to realise that at 10:00 on that day No.184's train was departing from Ennis in Co. Clare, No.4's train was arriving in Galway and No.85's train was departing from Whitehead in Co. Antrim. Admittedly No.85's train consisted of just one brake composite coach, the beautifully externally restored ex GS&WR twelve wheeler 861, but the total steam hauled mainline passenger mileage of 588 for the day must surely be a record for a preservation society. To quote the Railscene video commentary "nobody runs Railtours like the Irish - it's impossible to travel on all trains".

Because No.4 was remaining in Dublin for the Millennium trains, coach 861 proved most useful in providing a brake compartment and 56 seats for the Steam on Sunday outing behind No.85. We were able to attach the single coach to the front of the Whitehead set and for the first time ever we had the sight of an RPSI locomotive hauling 9 preserved coaches on the Dublin-Belfast route. In an idyllic sunset the big blue 4-4-0 made a magnificent sight crossing the Boyne with the 80 year-old 12-wheeler at the head of the train. Surely it is not too much to ask that properly maintained museum pieces such as these are given special priority for operating over railway systems.

By Dundalk the Catering Department was calling for the last sitting for dinner. Over 200 had booked and, in the absence of a second dining car, five tables were commandeered in ex GNR(I) open third 9 as an overflow to ex UTA Dining Car 87. In this way over 50 could be catered for at one sitting with consequently less haste over the meals. There is a limit, however, to what can be done from one small kitchen and it would be our intention to have ex GNR(I) dining car 88 returned to traffic for 1989. Let us give a big thank you to the regulars on the dining car staff who work non-stop on our tours and to all

those visitors who thoughtfully offer their services for part of the day.

Monday 16th May saw No.85 at the head of the 9 coach Whitehead set setting out from Belfast Central on a grey morning for Coleraine and Portrush at the civilised time of 09:25. For this enjoyable part of the Railtour, the “Round-up”, we had a record 180 passengers on board. Those who had come along to see No.85 climbing out of Portrush were not disappointed. We had consulted NIR Senior Inspector Frank Dunlop regarding the start up the bank from Dhu Varren with 9 coaches and were assured that it would be no problem - and neither it was! The pick-up at Dhu Varren halt meant that passengers could walk ahead from Portrush station to obtain a breathtaking view of the train climbing the 1 in 75 with the Atlantic Ocean and West Strand in the background. This was possibly the best photographic/video opportunity of the weekend.

The journey to Belfast York Road took us over the nominally closed Antrim to Bleach Green Junction section now singled with much of the up line lifted. As usual our progress over this section was punctuated to allow the train crew to open and close the unmanned level crossing gates.



With sanders on, No.171 attacks the Dhu Varren bank on the return Portrush Flyer, 20th August 1988. The first coach is very much on its home ground, being North Atlantic brake 91. (C.P. Friel)

The final leg to RPSI Whitehead, arriving around 17:00, saw the last barrel of stout consumed, the 18th of the weekend (not to mention the 10 barrels of beer and one or two bottles of spirits). The logistics of the Dining Car would warrant a separate article in the magazine, as indeed would the Alternative Railtour from Limerick to Galway arriving in Galway around midnight after various adventures. It is

rumoured that over half the stout was consumed by the fifty-odd passengers on this trip but no one can remember for sure and the bar staff are a tight-lipped bunch!

In my last Operations Report I mentioned the drama surrounding the demise of No.4 one week before the Clew Bay Raitour. By comparison the run up to the Shannon Raitour was a breeze until the ferry companies went into dispute with the seamen. We had always relied heavily on rail/sea connections and 10 days before the Raitour a decision was reached to switch all our intending passengers to air travel.

We could not take the risk of waiting longer because we had been warned that air tickets were getting scarce. As it turned out it was a fortuitous decision since the seamen's dispute was not settled until one day before and the cross channel ferry movements were still chaotic on the Saturday of the Raitour. We are indebted to Reta Craig and her staff of trainees at Whitehead Railway Project for some quite feverish activity over the last 5 days before the Raitour in arranging over 200 transfers from sea to air. Only two people declined to fly and six found it less expensive! Is it worth paying for an extra overnight in Ireland for the convenience of flying?

The Portrush Flyer season started on 9th July when, because of carriage shed work at Whitehead, the first of our Flyers departed from Belfast Central behind No. 85 "Merlin". The new route gave the people of the Lisburn area a good chance to support us and they rose to the occasion. Nelson's Medical Hall in Bow Street sold over 160 tickets, 30 more than from the Carrickfergus area in 1987, so it is interesting to note that a potential market is waiting to be tapped.

As I have detailed in previous years' Operations Reports, the relatively high operating costs in proportion to revenue raised continue to cause concern. Passenger loadings this year were 77%, 63%, 76% and 100% respectively, against the 100% required to cover our costs. Traditionally the Castlerock Excursion trips were relied upon to subsidise the costs of the main trip, but this year because of poor weather, loadings on the Castlerock were 59%, 52%, 73% and 41% respectively. Perhaps the longer stop-over at Castlerock had something to do with it.

The fare structure and number of Flyers run in the 1989 season will have to be closely reviewed to assess the viability of this particular part of our operations. The response from the membership is particularly disappointing, this section representing the smallest proportion of passengers travelling: Member Season Tickets - 8 issued represents 1% of membership; Member Awayday Tickets - 23 issued represents 3% of membership. Even if another small percentage of members travelled, it could make the difference between Flyer success and failure.

Mention must be made of the derailment of No.85's tender at Kellswater on the return trip from Portrush on 23rd July. In one sense we were most fortunate that no one was hurt although some of the old hands who recognised the flying ballast were shaken. 99% of the passengers were just surprised that they had to 'walk the plank' to a following service train drawn up alongside on the down road.

In another sense we were most unfortunate to be last over a piece of track that was fast disappearing into the Ballymena Bog. Scheduled to be replaced by a relaying programme starting the very next day, part of the track collapsed altogether into a culvert within a few days.

By contrast, as I reported last year, the three Steam Enterprise trains operated in 1988, were highly successful. The inclusion of the Directors Saloon for a large party and excellent ticket sales by Irish Rail at Dundalk helped get the season off to a good financial footing. The remaining two trips were patronised at 83% and 90% loadings and indeed over 950 passengers travelled to Dublin by steam in 1988!

The highlight of the 1988 Enterprise season must have been the fine spectacle of No.4 being pushed up the bank out of Dundalk on the last return trip by No.171, hauling a heavy 8 coach train! It is

heartening to note that NIR's steam familiarisation programme for diesel drivers is producing positive results.

The most successful operating season yet enjoyed by the Society began with the Curtain Raiser, a steam, wine and cheese special positioning run from Whitehead to Belfast Central. The opportunity was taken to invite representatives from industry and commerce to introduce the Society and its aims with a view to seeking sponsorship at a later stage. We were overwhelmed by the response, over 200 travelling on a Friday evening in April, over half of whom had not been on our trains before.



The traditional way of getting everything home at the end of the season. No.171 pilots No.4 past the White Harbour, approaching Whitehead Tunnel, on the Larne Lough railtour, 2nd October 1988. (W.T. Scott)

Just a week later on the Bangor Belle, the RPSI Council were pleased to welcome Bill McAlpine and Robert Guinness, guests of The Lord O'Neill. Hot whiskies were prescribed all round against the vagaries of the weather. The rest of the day is best forgotten as our schedules were knocked for six by NIR's new central signalling system. We consequently received an apology from NIR and a refund to compensate for lost revenue to the Society. In total contrast, the season ended with resounding success, silver band, Sunday lunch and two steam locomotives up front. No.4 piloting No.171 on the Larne Lough Railtour with a runpast at Greenisland was a fitting climax to a year in which we carried 8,500 passengers over 4,000 steam miles.

And how was all this achieved? By a dedicated band of members North and South numbering not more than 50, giving up a large slice of their spare time to maintain the sights and sounds of the steam train in the countryside. To single out any one member or group of members would be unfair. I must

however say a big thank you to the Operations Committees and to the following for their continuing support.

- Northern Ireland Railways Co. Limited.
- Iarnród Éireann (Irish Rail).
- Northern Ireland Tourist Board for sponsorship.
- Bord Failte (Irish Tourist Board) for sponsorship.
- Patton Engineering for continuing sponsorship of Portrush Flyer and Steam Enterprise leaflets.
- Carrickfergus, Coleraine and North Down Borough Councils for sponsorship.
- Irish Life Building Society for ticket sales in connection with Millennium trips.
- Other ticket outlets including:
Mullan's Bookshop, Donegall Place, Belfast; NIR Travel Centre, Wellington Place, Belfast; Cater's Estate Agents, Carrickfergus; Nelson's Medical Hall, Bow Street, Lisburn; Keenan's Chemists, Newry.

For those interested in statistics here is a table of locomotive mileages compiled by Locomotive Running Officer, Brian Hill:

Loco	Revenue Train Miles	Light Engine Miles	Totals
4	2,274	2	2,276
85	832	259	1,091
171	492	88	580
184	478	44	522
Totals	4,076	393	4,469

It is to be noted that we have broken the 4,000 revenue mile barrier for the first time, previous totals around 3,500.

Locomotive coal is mainly supplied by Kane Fuels of Carrickfergus and amounted to approximately 130 tons, our biggest single outlay in the operating budget. Consistency in quality is still a problem.

Whitehead Operations had a quieter year than usual due to the curtailment of Sunday Train Rides to the month of July. As usual the Santa and Easter Bunny events were very successful carrying over 5,000 people. In order to support our increased main line activity, the Whitehead Operations are a very essential training ground for new recruits to the operating staff. Congratulations to all those who have passed out as steam-raisers, firemen and drivers. Thank you to all those who don siren suits and rabbit skins together with shop assistants, dining car staff, ticket touts and general dogsbodies. Especial thanks to North Eastern Education and Library Board staff at the Youth Centre and to Whitehead Railway Project for so much help in so many ways. Keep up the good work!

THE DUBLIN MILLENNIUM

Rory McNamee

Normally September brings the end of the operating season and with it a well-earned rest before sliding into gear for the winter maintenance programme. The 1987/8 winter was not to be a relaxing time, for in 1988 Dublin was to celebrate its one thousandth birthday. As part of the festivities the operations team, under Dave Humphries, set about planning a series of runs to take place on six weekends during the summer. Five of the trips were to travel to provincial centres, off-loading the passengers to sample the local delights, while a second stage of each trip would provide a journey to a nearby town for the local population and after a short layover return them home, pick up our long-distance passengers and

bring them back to Dublin.

Two very important factors were obvious if we were to contemplate any degree of success. To operate day excursions of around 200 miles we would require a large locomotive capable of haulage at speeds that would allow a comfortable timescale, i.e. to leave Dublin at around 10am and arrive back as near to 7pm as possible, exhausting neither ourselves nor our customers in the process. The second point was that if we had a large engine we could also have a large train. As the Whitehead set of coaches would be required for its own series of trips, Mullingar would have to remain independent on the stock front. This would be our first attempt to run trips to the provinces on a regular basis and it was hoped that we could build up business for future years.



***“No trouble with the distant here!” Driver Tommy Blackwell in conclave with RPSI Chairman at Enfield during the return working of the Dublin-Athlone excursion of 30th July 1988.
(Barry Pickup)***

Five coaches had been in traffic but were not internally refurbished to the coaching team’s standard. The summer runs would require an eight-coach train including, for the first time, a buffet car as part of the running fleet. Since the coaches arrived in 1985 they had run in a piebald livery produced by simply painting the orange over in green. Nothing political - it was merely to identify the preserved coaches which the Society had bought and paid for and thereby ensure that they did not accidentally fall into the clutches of the scrap man at Mullingar. The temporary colour scheme, while not repulsive, really did not make sense. It had always been the Society’s intention to have sets in different liveries so, as the Mullingar coaches had been built in the 1950s, a two-tone green livery with “flying snail” seemed

ideal. Council approval was given and a budget set. Now would we have the time?

With this in mind Dave Humphries, he of the scrounging pen, got busy seeking sponsorship and donations of equipment and materials to carry out the task. Mark Hodge and Aidan McDonnell produced a schedule of work to be done and a list of hardware required for each coach. Gareth Brennan moved in full-time while others, captivated by pressure, moved out temporarily.

In October 1987, outside our normal running season, we had a curtain call for our third film job. This took us to Moate for the making of "The Old Jest", with some familiar looking 'actors' on the footplate. With this out of the way we could proceed with our ambitious plan. It was going to be a long hard winter with everyone working so hard that they wouldn't notice the cold. However, work continued on the shed doors in case there should be any blizzards and an adjustment was made to the door of No.1 road which enabled coaches to be carefully hand shunted in and out. A large truck was hired to transport an avalanche of donated material, along with scaffolding, to Mullingar. To facilitate work on the coach bodies the scaffolding had to be adjusted to fit between the shed wall and the coaches. Work then proceeded on schedule, enabling us to turn out five fully renovated coaches for the Shannon Railtour in May.

No.184, the Mullingar-based engine, was to play a major role in the tour although this would be something of a swansong as her boiler certificate was due to expire at the end of May. So, after running for some years in various inappropriate green liveries, the loco was finally painted in the black CIE livery of the 1950s. On Sunday 29th May No.184 was steamed for the last time to shunt coaches at Mullingar to complete the eight coach train for the summer operations.

The Dublin Millennium Programme got under way on Saturday 4th June. The previous night had something of a nervous pre-wedding feeling. Would the lighting-up of No.4 - the first by a Mullingar crew - go alright; would the coaches arrive complete and on time from Mullingar; would the loco coal turn up? Everything did and at 10am, amid flag-waving, whistle-blowing and general excitement, we got under way for Dundalk where a local trip ran to Drogheda and back before we returned to Dublin, very pleased with our successful debut.

After that promising start the next event, a series of four runs to Clonsilla on 18th June, was rather disappointing. The reason for this was that Ireland was playing in the European soccer championship that day and the population appeared to be glued to TV sets. Neither Ireland nor the RPSI won that day though both gave a good account of themselves. *[The day was brightened for the Editor by an egg entering the cab of No.4 near Blanchardstown and mingling with the beard of the Mullingar loco rep - not because he wished Mac any harm but because they had only just changed places! - Ed.]*

Spirited running was the order of the day on the next trip, to Carrick-on-Shannon. It had originally been intended to run the local trip from Carrick to Longford but rationalisation had removed the loop from Carrick (and left an inconvenient kink at one end of the station) so we went on to Boyle instead. The train was well filled and the outing was featured on RTE's "The Long Acre" programme.

A fortnight later Athlone was the destination. Block bookings included one young lady's birthday party, dressed as Vikings to commemorate the year 988. This produced the alarming spectacle of Dave Humphries in a helmet with horns and long blond hair! American members of the McNamee family were also to travel but arrived too late. Shouts of, "But I'm your man's sister!" seemed to cause the train to accelerate and it was only caught after a high-speed car chase to Mullingar. Here Frank Shine achieved a life-long ambition by driving into his home town on steam - on No.4, that is, not the high-speed car. The local trip to Ballinasloe was lightly loaded, perhaps due to the tour train having covered that ground in May.

On the next run, to Navan, leaving people behind took a more serious turn as this time it was Tim Moriarty and his stock for the buffet car who failed to catch the train despite departure being delayed

for 15 minutes. It was with great relief that we saw him appear at Navan in time to cater for the needs of a capacity train on the local trip to Mosney.

The Millennium programme concluded with another visit to Drogheda and a local trip to Navan to round off a very successful season. The engine had performed excellently throughout, the only problem being a leaking firebox seam which became apparent on the Clonsilla day but gave no further trouble after attention by a specialist welder.

On 3rd September No.4 returned to her northern home, running light ahead of the Steam Enterprise, on which No.171 was having a late-season outing, and double-heading for the rest of the journey to Belfast.



No.4 crosses the Malahide viaduct on the outward leg of the Dublin-Navan Millennium train, 13th August 1988. (Barry Pickup)

Thanks are due to all the Irish Rail staff whose assistance and encouragement enabled us to run the trains and to the many volunteers who helped us to clean and prepare them.

1988 was a year of firsts for us but there was one which we would have gladly have done without. Over the years we have become firm friends with train crews which made it all the harder to accept that our good friend and supporter Driver Johnny O'Driscoll had died on 11th June 1988 after a short illness. On the railway Johnny was revered everywhere and was a man whose opinion was sought and respected. We have lost many friends through the years due to retirement but this was the first time we had lost one through death. To his wife and daughters we offer our deepest sympathy.

No.3 “R.H. Smyth” (Londonderry Port & Harbour Commissioners 0-6-0ST)

In traffic until Easter 1989, when boiler insurance certificate expires. Is likely to require boiler repairs and attention to slack bearings, in addition to various other minor repairs.

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

In traffic. Requires replacement of boiler tube ferrules, some firebox repairs and various minor boiler repairs.

No.23 (Irish Shell 4-w DM)

Stopped for repairs to cylinder head.

No.27 “Lough Erne” (SL&NCR 0-6-4T)

In store at Whitehead. Requires extensive overhaul which will be a long term project.



*Mark Fletcher intent on getting the holes in the right places on No.461's new hornblock.
(C.P. Friel)*

No.85 “Merlin” (GNR(I) 4-4-0)

In traffic. Repairs have been carried out to drawbar and tender brake rodding, damaged when tender derailed in August 1988. Bogie stretcher bolts require to be replaced.

No.171 “Slieve Gullion” (GNR(I) 4-4-0)

Stopped for extensive repairs which include complete re-tubing, replacement of main steam pipes, re-profiling of bogie wheels and renewal of platework on tender, in addition to various smaller repairs.

No.184 (GS&WR 0-6-0)

In store at Mullingar, boiler insurance certificate having expired in May 1988. Re-tubing and repairs to smokebox tubeplate required.

No.186 (GS&WR 0-6-0)

In store at Whitehead. No work planned.



The main engine of the “Carlow Diesel” at Felden, with a forest of cylinder head studs surrounding the holes which cost £173 each to fill - see Loco Report. (I.C. Pryce)

No.461 (D&SER 2-6-0)

General overhaul. Restoration of the tender is complete, apart from painting. On the locomotive, work on hornblocks, axleboxes and pony truck has been completed and the locomotive is once again on its wheels, although so far without springs. The dragbox has been rebuilt and the front headstock and running plates straightened and repaired. Steam ports have been decarbonised and valve liners have been replaced, as have the slide bars.

A considerable programme of work remains, including the following:

Boiler: Re-tube, renew and re-fit superheater elements, renew and re-fit main steam pipes, re-fit

regulator valve, replace smokebox replace blast pipe (a new one has been cast), overhaul and re-fit boiler attachments and replace missing parts.

Motion: Overhaul and re-fit valve gear, make new piston rods and one new piston, re-metal and fit big ends, renew big end bolts, renew side rod bushes.

Brakes: Renew vacuum pipework and steam brake equipment, overhaul brake linkages. General Re-fit springs, overhaul buffers and drawgear.

Carlow diesel (Irish Sugar Company 4-wDM)

General overhaul. The main engine overhaul is being undertaken as a training project by the Government Training Centre, Felden and it is hoped that this may be extended to deal with other mechanical parts. We still have to pay for any replacement parts required and these will be expensive, e.g. one piston costs £173, so now is the chance for our diesel enthusiasts to dip into their pockets!

THE GREAT NORTHERN Q CLASS

Fred Graham

In September/October 1899 there arrived at the Dundalk works of the GNR(I) four new engines from Neilson Reid & Co. of Glasgow, numbered 133, 134, 135 and 136. They were larger versions of the 1898 P class and had the same frames, but longer, and were the first to be built for the railway by this company.

Their chief dimensions were as follows: bogie wheelbase 5' 9", driving wheels 6' 7", coupled wheelbase 8' 8", boiler 11' x 4' 6" with its centre 7' 6" above rail level. Working pressure was 175 psi, with 18½" x 26" cylinders and the weight of the loco was 45 ton 15 cwt.

Three more arrived in January/February 1901, numbered 130, 131 and 132; followed the next year by Nos. 124 and 125 - all from the same company. By then Neilson Reid and the Glasgow Locomotive Works had amalgamated to form the North British Locomotive Co. and this company turned out Nos. 122 and 123. Strangely, the final two. Nos. 120 and 121 were products of Beyer Peacock of Manchester.

All the class carried names as follows:

120 Venus, 121 Pluto, 122 Vulcan, 123 Lucifer, 124 Cerberus, 125 Daphne, 130 Saturn, 131 Uranus, 132 Mercury, 133 Apollo, 134 Adonis, 135 Cyclops, 136 Minerva.

The engines were restricted to the Dublin and Clones lines until 1912 when they were allowed over the Derry line.

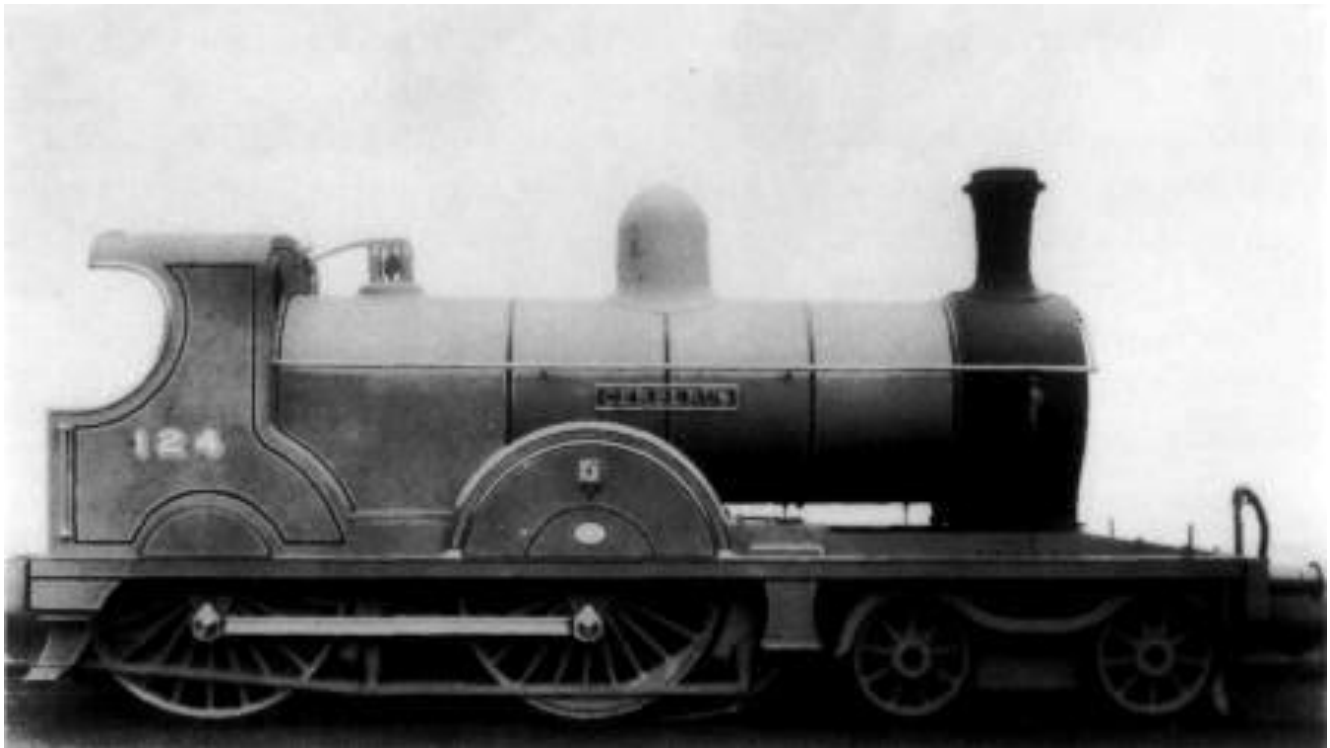
They appeared to be over-cylindered and these were reduced in diameter to 17½" between 1914 and 1916 but by then it had been decided to rebuild the class with superheated boilers. A start was made with No.133 which was turned out of Dundalk Works in time for the Christmas traffic in 1919.

As originally built the engines had very light and shallow frames and it was realised that these would require strengthening if they were to be used in the rebuilds so steel plates were bolted to the main frames, extending from the front of the smokebox to just forward of the leading splashers. The boiler centre was raised to 8' 4" and new fireboxes were fitted. Cylinders were again 18½" x 26" with the old slide valves replaced by 8" inside admission piston valves actuated by rocking shafts. A very heavy motion plate also helped towards stronger frames and the weight in working order increased to 49 ton 4 cwt.

Rebuilding completely transformed them in appearance and efficiency and they soon began working all the Belfast-Derry trains. The first three to be rebuilt, Nos. 133, 134 and 136, ran with 2,500 gallon tenders until the larger 3,500 gallon type, mostly taken from the SG3 0-6-0s, became available which improved their appearance still further.

I can only recollect seeing one of the class before rebuilding; this was No.124 which I remember being derailed twice when leaving Adelaide shed. The next time was when she was chosen to work the Duke and Duchess of York's train to Newtownstewart in July 1924, just three months out of the shops. This five-coach train which included coach 50, the Directors' Saloon, was beautifully turned out in "golden teak" with white roofs. I remember on this occasion I was wheeling my young brother in his pram and, in my excitement to see the train, overturned the pram, tipping him out - happily without any injuries!

By now all the class had been rebuilt and Adelaide engines worked the 8:25am which was six-coach set plus a TPO from Portadown, the 10:45am and the 4:25pm. The 1:30pm was the turn of the engine coming in on the 7:20am ex-Derry. The Derry loco was usually No.125, driven by Wallace of Omagh who had a reputation for fast running - perhaps too fast for she once broke a driving wheel tyre at Balmoral.



No.124, photographed when new, Neilson Reid maker's plate on the splasher. (Photographer unknown)

Each driver had his own engine: J, Hobson had No.122, McBennett had No.133 or No.135 and T. Jest No.131 or 132. The last-mentioned told me than on one Armistice Day he was working the 8:25am, due in Derry at 11:00am, when the Derry stationmaster, who was a member of the British Legion, arranged with him to run two minutes late so that he could hold a service at the station War Memorial. All these engines were exceptionally clean but No.122 excelled them all. She was the pride of Adelaide; the whole engine just gleamed, buffers, smokebox door hinges, handrails, footplate and even tender fittings were highly polished. She was very fortunate in not being completely wrecked during the 1933 strike when her train divided while passing over facing points at the Omagh Markets branch.

In 1932 No.136 was fitted with TAB (Trofinoff Auto-Bypass) valves. Adelaide men called them 'Soviet' valves - probably because Trofinoff sounded Russian. This was an inside admission piston valve in which the two heads were free to slide on the valve spindle. When the regulator was open the valve heads were held by steam pressure against collars on the spindle and the valve functioned normally. When the regulator was closed the heads slid towards each other along the spindle, leaving

the cylinder ports fully open to exhaust and giving a bypass of ample cross-section from end to end of the cylinder via the exhaust passages and of smaller cross-section through central holes in the valve heads which were larger than the central portion of the spindle. I remember having a short run on this engine and reading the instructions which were displayed on the footplate. The experiment was not a success as carbonised oil on the valve spindle seriously interfered with its operation.

Those engines which were not required on the Derry Road or were spare could be seen on YMCA or rugby specials to Dublin. No.125, which was reputed to be the strongest of the class, was quite often on the 7:00pm to the southern capital (she had been transferred to Belfast after the Balmoral accident). This was the return of the 3:00pm ex-Dublin and was a heavy train composed of six bogies for the South and four and a van for Clones, usually headed by an S Class locomotive. For some reason Nos. 120 and 121, the Beyer Peacock engines, were not often seen on the Derry trains - one driver told me it was because they had "square wheels"! After the 1933 footplatemen's strike things were never the same on the Portadown-Derry section. Through running on the 8:25am and 11:15am was abolished, with Belfast crews changing footplates with Derry crews at Dungannon, and Portadown for the first time getting a couple of turns with their locomotives.



No.135 at Portrush in the summer of 1960 with a Sunday School special off the GN section. The device on the cab-side was for exchanging tablets on the NCC lines and was lowered into position by a lever in the cab. Also on the cab-side is the 'X' applied by the UTA to ex-GN locos to be withdrawn when they next fell due for overhaul and this fate befell the long-lived No.135 in the following year. (W.T. Scott)

In 1936 the Great Northern began working special trains into Portrush and Nos. 122, 125, 133 and, later on, 134 were fitted with NCC tablet catchers for this purpose. These trains were usually made up of 10 bogies and the Qs had no trouble climbing Dhu Warren bank.

I can only remember one of the class being stationed in Dublin - No.123 was there during the summer of 1939 working the 11:30am express to Belfast. They must have thought a lot of her for she was kept in excellent condition.

During the war years traffic on the Derry Road increased enormously and there was much piloting. If the load leaving Portadown exceeded seven bogies a PP class loco was usually employed and I always thought this was an ideal combination, their soft beat contrasting with the heavier exhaust of the Q class. Another job which the Q class often performed was handling many of the "Mystery Trains" which travelled south to Dundalk, Drogheda, Clones, etc., packed with shoppers looking for food normally rationed in the North. I remember going to Clones, then on to Enniskillen and home via Omagh, all for 3/6d (17½p), on one of these trips, the engine being the famous No.125. This engine came to our rescue on another trip when No.190 failed at Glaslough coming home from Clones. The war years took their toll of the class. Some of them developed broken frames, others required new fireboxes and in 1951 the first to be withdrawn was No.134, followed shortly by Nos. 120, 124 and 133.

At the date of the Great Northern Railway Board dissolution on 30th September 1958 the remaining engines were divided between CIÉ and the UTA. CIÉ received Nos. 123, 130, 136, 131 and 132 but only the last two were in working order, the scrapping of the other three having been authorised. Nos. 121, 122, 125 and 135 went to the UTA and the last-mentioned was used for a couple of years on Sunday School specials. I had two trips to Portrush with this engine and she performed well although the Glarryford signalman said she was an old tub because she missed his tablet and had to reverse. No.131 did some running on the Dublin-Bray line and was also seen on excursion trains to Warrenpoint before being withdrawn and placed on a plinth at Dundalk, subsequently being removed to Mallow where hopefully she will be put into running order and perhaps visit Whitehead in the near future.

For forty years the engines of the Q class bore the brunt of the passenger traffic and were more popular on the Derry line than the S class which superseded them in the last few years until the line was closed on 14th February 1965.

Q CLASS PERFORMANCE

W.T. Scott

The chances of running with a Q Class over the main line were poor, with ten 3-cylinder engines and eight S Class available after the war. They remained, however, very much to the fore over the Derry Road and the Cavan lines. They were rated to take seven bogies over the Derry Road and with this load the larger S Class showed little improvement on their work. The Qs were claimed to be less stiff on the numerous curves though the engines' frames suffered because of their long spell on this line. The first two logs show them at work over the most difficult stretch, between Portadown and Strabane.

	No.124		No.122	
	6, 172/195 tons		6, 179/200 tons	
	A. Donaldson		W.T. Scott	
	minutes	mph	minutes	mph
Portadown	0:00		0:00	
Annaghmore	10:28	58	10:03	57
Verner's Bridge	13:20	50	12:50	51½
Trew & Moy	15:38	23 (staff)	15:26	25 (staff)

Dungannon	<u>24:03</u>		<u>23:13</u>	
Donaghmore	5:12	50½	5:23	51
Pomeroy	15:52	24½ (staff)	14:40	32 (staff)
MP 26½	20:16	34½/48	19:12	35/54½
Carrickmore	23:32	44/60	22:34	39/62
Sixmilecross	27:57	57½	27:13	56½
Beragh	29:52	40/62	29:15	38/62
		65		66
Omagh	<u>39:10</u>		<u>38:46</u>	
Newtownstewart	12:09	30/61 (staff)	12:18	28/62 (staff)
		65		63½
Victoria Bridge	18:36		17:39	42
				57
Sion Mills	21:16	54	19:39	58½
		61		60
Strabane	<u>25:42</u>		<u>24:06</u>	



No.123 passing Omagh South cabin with a train from Enniskillen, May 1950. Note the hand-wheel control on the water column arm, enabling one man to carry out what was usually a two-man job. (C.P. Friel collection)

The two runs illustrate the principal difficulty of non-stop trains on the Derry Road - slowing for the staff. Both engines were fitted with the net but, even with this, exchanges could only be made up to 30 mph as the loops were not laid out for fast running. The climbs to MP 26½ show the sure-footed

quality of the Qs whose rasping bark on the last mile of Carrickmore bank was quite unmistakable.

The class symbolised all that was best about the old Great Northern, a railway whose engines were robust and simple, without frills but extremely competent. I recall once standing at the end of Portrush platform with a group of NCC enginemmen who were waiting their turn to depart with return specials. No.135, the last Q to work in the North, was the first to depart, with a train for the GNR consisting of eight fully laden bogies, some 265 tons. Opinions among the NCC men varied from doubts if she would clear the platform to certainty that she would stick on the Dhu Varren bank. All were wrong; No.135 pounded up the bank without a slip and as she bashed her way round Dhu Varren curve one man said, "That's a strong engine," and another replied, "Our Scotch engines could'nae hae done it!" However, after a lifetime spent pounding up through Carrickmore in all weathers, a mile of 1/76 on a summer evening was pretty small beer.

The third example of "Q" Class performance gives the opportunity to sample a line largely forgotten; Portadown - Clones - Enniskillen - Omagh.

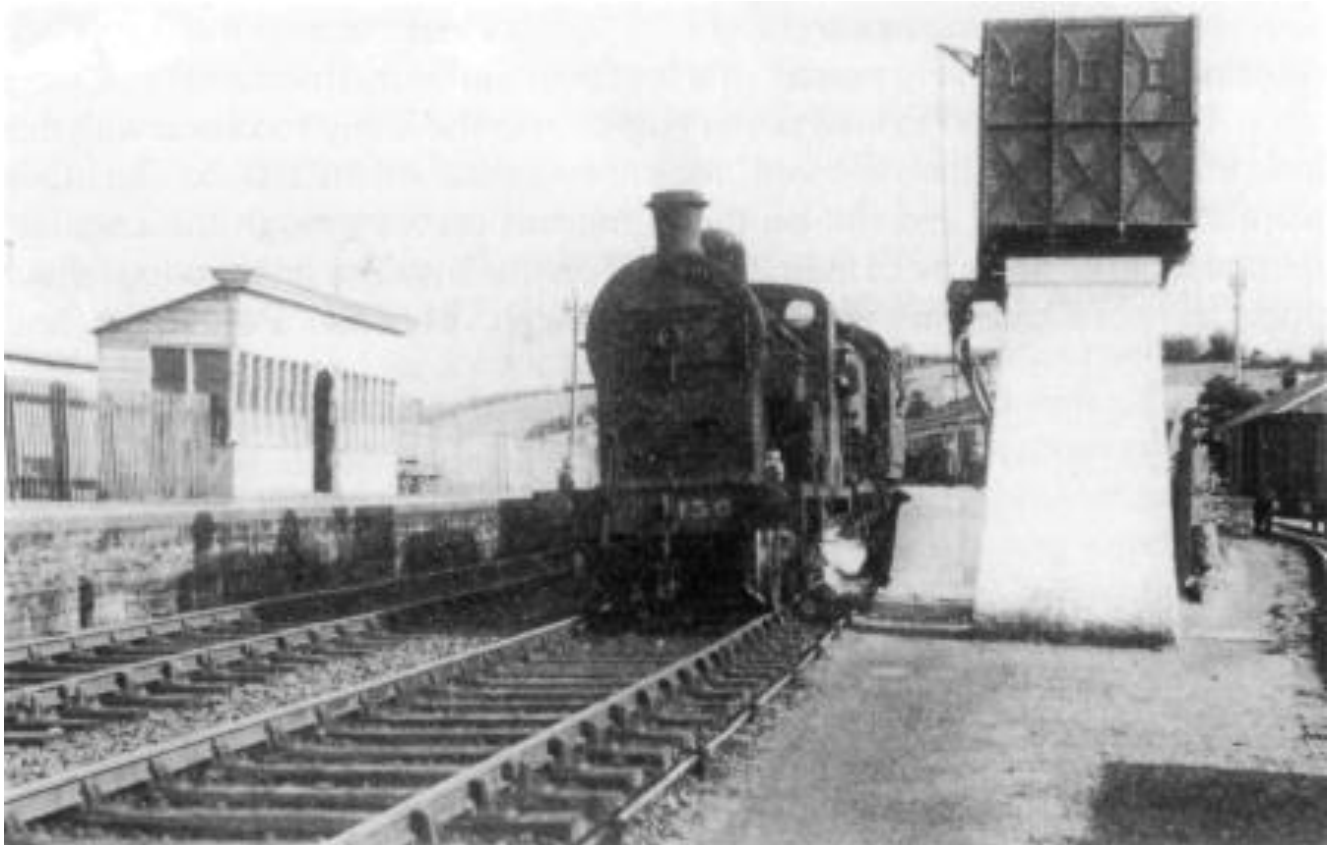
No.125, 4 bogies, 120/125 tons, A. Donaldson

	minutes	mph		minutes	mph
Belfast (GVS)	0:00		Newtownbutler	0:00	
Balmoral	5:15				42
Dunmurry	8:00		Lisnaskea	9:23	
Lambeg	10:45		Maguiresbridge	<u>14:00</u>	
Lisburn	<u>13:45</u>		Lisbellaw	5:33	
Knockmore Junction	3:19				59
Maze	4:18		Enniskillen	<u>8:52</u>	
Moria	8:53				51
MP 96	11:00		Ballinamallard	9:10	
Lurgan	<u>15:00</u>				50
		64	Bundoran Junction	14:10	
Portadown	<u>6:51</u>		Trillick	15:47	45/52½
Richill	8:00	63½	Dromore Road	20:45	
Armagh	<u>15:25</u>				53
Killylea	5:55	58	Fintona Junction	28:40	
Tynan	<u>11:15</u>				63
		53	Omagh	<u>38:38</u>	
Glaslough	<u>6:52</u>				
		60			
Monaghan	<u>8:37</u>		The train was a circular tour returning via		
		59/60	Dungannon but unfortunately the recorder,		
Smithborough	8:43		Drew Donaldson, gives no further information		
		61½	about it. Even with such a light train the		
			smartness of the Q between stations is evident.		

Clones	16:50	A non-stop run through Clones was certainly rare.
	55	

Newtownbutler	<u>23:20</u>
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At a much later period Nos. 131 and 132, the Qs surviving in CIÉ hands, enjoyed a new spell of work on the GN main line. The first snippet shows No.132 working a 1961 IRRS special which had been to Kingscourt and Oldcastle, attaining 55 before Kells and 50 after Navan on her return. The main line work from Drogheda was outstanding, the start from there to Mosney being quite exceptional for such a small engine and only the check at Skerries preventing No.132 from attaining even time. For comparison a section of No.171's 1988 Enterprise run is included, albeit with a much heavier train.

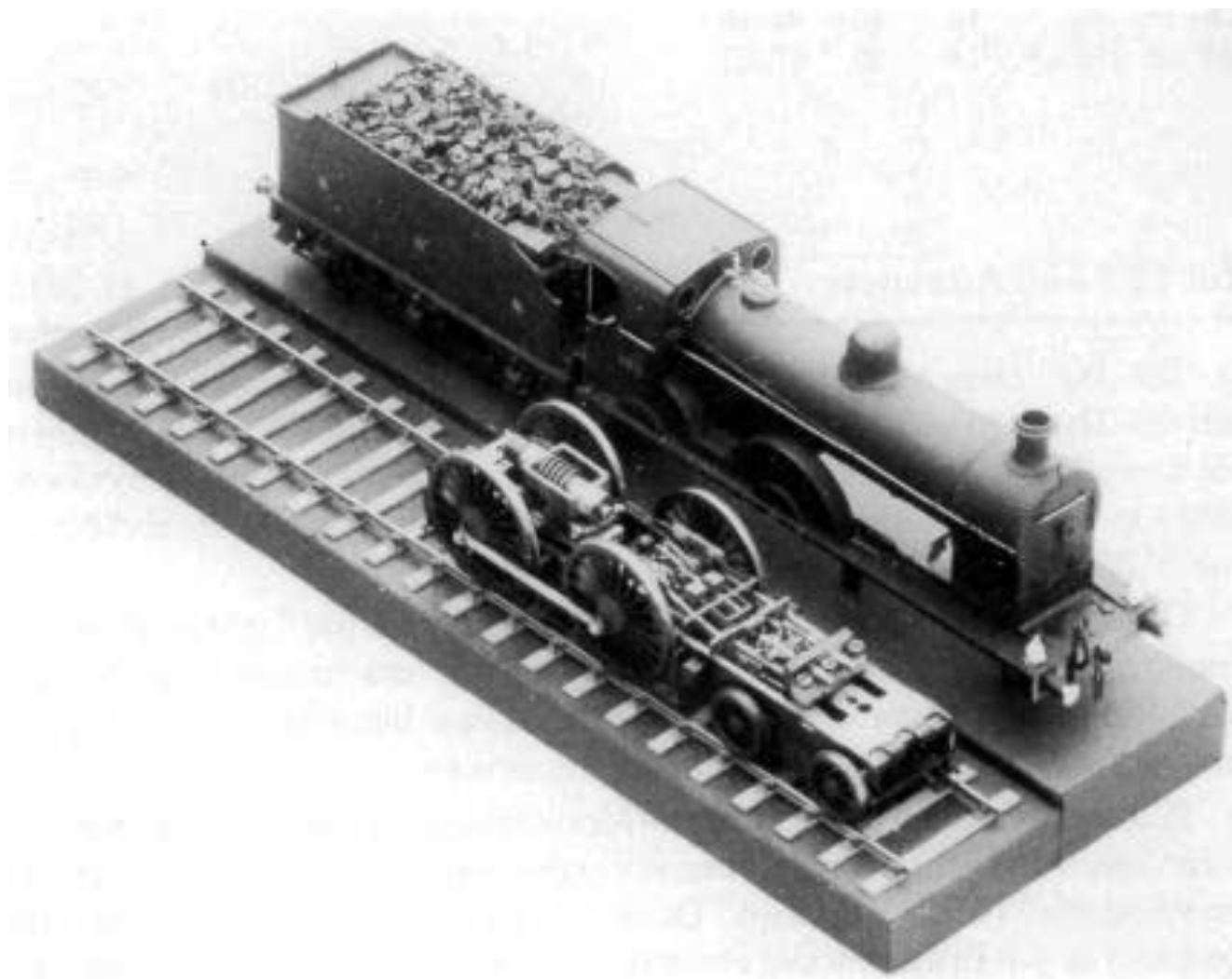


No.136 at Victoria Bridge with the down Derry Mail. The net for picking up staffs can be seen on the tender. (W.T. Scott)

	No.132		No.171	
	6 bogies + van, 160/175 tons		8 bogies, 240/255 tons	
Drogheda	0:00		0:00	
MP 30	3:19	50/60	3:20	49/52
MP 28	5:21	65/67	5:30	54
Laytown	6:17	68	6:30	57
Mosney	7:20	67/64	8:50	27 (check)
Gormanston	8:57	64½	11:59	49½
Balbriggan	11:03	63/60	14:40	56

Skerries	15:05	34½/39 (check)	18:34	60
MP 16	18:14	40/46/50	20:44	55/56
Rush & Lusk	20:35	66½	<u>24:46</u>	
MP 13	21:25	67		
Donabate	22:51	65/64		
Malahide	25:38	46/54		
Portmarnock	26:52	59½		
Howth Junction	30:49	60		
Amiens Street	<u>42:24</u>	(checks)		

The MGWR main line was not noted for high speed running - heavy trains and moderate speeds being the norm. No.132, however, worked a special up from Athlone in 1962 and gave a foretaste of what was to come a quarter of a century later with No.4. Members can compare this run of No.132 with No.4's numerous runs on the MGWR main line from their own notes.



The model. Dismantled to show the remarkable detail of the inside motion. The driving axle carries two cranks, four balance weights and four eccentrics in a width of less than one inch! Also note how the wheels differ from those on commercial models. (Jeremy D. Hall)



The original. No.123 photographed at Adelaide shed in 1947. (A.H. Miles)

No.132, 3 bogies + 2 vans, 120/130 tons

	minutes	mph		minutes	mph
Athlone	0:00		MP 38	16:59	61/63
73 rd Mile Box	10:20	46/47	Hill of Down	18:55	57
		52/55			60/59
Moate	16:22	34/37	Moyvalley	26:13	30/47
MP 66	21:10	55	Enfield	31:30	36/44
MP 64	22:14	58	MP 24	34:50	52/53
MP 62	25:53	53½	MP 23	36:00	52/55
Streamstown	26:14	50/47	Ferns Lock	<u>39:00</u>	
MP 61	27:07	50/48	Kilcock	3:34	33/39
Castletown	26:14	25 (tablet)	MP 18	5:20	50/53
MP 57	33:50	53/58	MP 17	6:27	58/56
MP 55	35:56	60/61	MP 16	8:29	58/59
MP 53	37:45	65/66	Maynooth	9:40	44
MP 52	38:42	62 (check)	MP 13	12:10	44/45

Mullingar	<u>43:12</u>		Leixlip	13:55	27/32
MP 48	3:40	44/48	Lucan	17:40	48/52
MP 47	4:54	51½/50	Clonsilla	19:47	46
46 th Mile Box	7:10	21/30	MP 6	21:07	54
MP 43	11:12	53/54	MP 5	22:18	59/60
Killucan	12:45	42/46	MP 4	23:20	59 (check)
MP 39	16:00	60/62	Liffey Junction	<u>28:50</u>	(check)
			Amiens Street		

No.123 AND ADAVOYLE

A.H. Miles

The Q class model No.123 runs on the “Adavoyle Junction” model railway. The loco is constructed to 4 mm scale ‘Protofour’ which, if you are not a modeller, means that it is the same size as a OO Hornby model but differs in having dead scale wheel thicknesses and flange depths and runs on true 5’ 3” track, i.e. 21 mm gauge.

The loco is sprung and picks up its current through the ‘split axle’ system. Briefly, each pair of current collecting wheels are mounted on an axle insulated in the centre and running on insulated bearings, so there are no unreliable wiper collectors scraping on the wheels.

No.123 was exhibited at the National Model Engineer Exhibition at Wembley in January 1988 and was fortunate enough to be awarded a gold medal in its class and the “Model Railways” Bowl. Otherwise its only other appearance has been at the Bristol Model Railway Exhibition in the spring of 1988; here it was awarded the Swindon Cup for the best model locomotive and the Pendon Award for the best exhibit in any class.

“Adavoyle Junction” is a large (24’ x 12’) P4 layout with a double track main line, two branches - both distinctly imaginary - and a narrow gauge section. The main emphasis is on GNR but some NCC and CIÉ appear. The layout replaces an earlier one titled “Adavoyle” and still lacks much scenery. While the junction is imaginary, the buildings are modelled on real ones which actually existed on various parts of the GNR. There is still a deal of work to do here and I would be happy to hear of anyone in the Society who would care to join in - the Editor has my address and telephone number. “Adavoyle Junction”, by the way, is an exhibition layout so it will get out and about.

TRANSPORT IN THE 21st CENTURY

Lord Dunleath

A new dimension and a new element of urgency have entered into the whole question of transport in Western Europe and these factors should be to the forefront in the thinking of Ministers whose responsibility it is to devise future strategy.

The railway enthusiast, rather like the vintage motorist or the architectural historian, has traditionally been associated with preservation of things from the past because of their unique personality and for the nostalgic pleasure that can be derived from their maintenance.

Now however the railway enthusiast, if he has any social conscience at all, has another campaign to address apart from the preservation of steam locomotion which has been so outstandingly successful over the last twenty years. This is to persuade the public and the Government that it is in all our interests, both environmentally, economically and socially, to encourage more traffic to travel by rail.

I have never driven on the M25 which encircles London and I sincerely hope that I never shall. As an

outer ring it was supposed to solve traffic problems in the Greater London area but in the event it has earned notoriety for its frequent 5-mile tailbacks.

Ring road motorways do not seem to have solved the problem and in cities such as Liverpool and Glasgow urban motorways have torn the heart out of the community leaving the city centres dead after 6pm when the office workers have gone home. In the days before the drive on drive off ferry, when you had to present your car 4 hours before the boat sailed, I can remember the bustle of Central Liverpool at 7 o'clock in the evening with the Empire Theatre and Yates Wine Lodge firing on all cylinders. Now you only hear the rumble of the heavy lorries on the urban motorway.

Similarly an ideal of twenty-five years ago was that air travel would reduce the congestion in surface transport but now air space round the major airports has become so congested that Air Traffic Control is on the margin of viability. Aspiring travellers face long delays and there are frequent press reports of near misses in the air due to overcrowding (though I am still not sure what the difference is between a near miss and a near hit).

So it seems that the philosophy of twenty-five years ago that more motorways and more runways would be the answer to our transportation problems as we approach the 21st Century has already proved to be flawed. Furthermore the environment has suffered significantly in the last quarter century as a result of vastly increased road and air traffic.

Of course it would be unrealistic to have expected the full rail network as it existed in the British Isles at the start of the 20th Century still to be in existence nearly 100 years later. Some sort of a Beeching Axe was inevitable sooner or later, much as one regretted the closure of many attractive rural lines during the 1960s. I guess that the advent of country bus services between the Wars had probably rendered many branch lines unprofitable more than fifty years ago and the big four British railway companies before nationalisation (the War years were perhaps an exception) relied on their inter-city and freight services to maintain profitability in their operations.

Having said that, however, I nonetheless believe that in certain cases the Axe was swung indiscriminately. In Northern Ireland for instance I was convinced at the time and remain convinced that it was an error to close the BCDR line from Queen's Quay to Comber. I clearly remember in 1950 lobbying Lord Brookeborough, the Northern Ireland Prime Minister of the day, who was also my godfather and nominal uncle. I suggested to him that if good station car parks were provided at Comber, Dundonald and Knock commuters would find it to their advantage to travel by rail to the city centre making use of the Belfast Central Railway link to take them to Oxford Street or Ormeau Road. He said however that the Government must abide by the findings of the Transport Tribunal.

Much more recently I urged both in the Northern Ireland Assembly and in Ards Borough Council that the Comber line should be re-opened before the existing track bed is further eroded. More recently still there has been a proposal to build a road on what remains of the track bed which is strongly resisted by residents in the area.

In England the London Docklands light railway is already in existence and several other similar projects are underway or proposed in conurbations there. In my view such a transportation system would be the answer for commuters travelling from the South-East of Belfast and when the new cross-river rail link is provided (which I have urged on four occasions in the House of Lords) a direct connection could be made with York Road station and thus to the NCC line.

The latter, I believe could provide a much needed facility for transport to Aldergrove Airport. It would only take a short spur to be built from the Knockmore to Antrim line which would enable passengers from Comber, Bangor, Lisburn, Ballymena and of course Belfast to have a fast reliable means of transport to the Airport without the hazard of traffic delays or car parking problems.

I certainly know that the Tube connection to Heathrow Airport has greatly facilitated travel to Belfast from Central London as there is no longer the worry of traffic delays on the M4.

Dublin, in fact, is now ahead of us with its fast and frequent DART commuter service and this is an example which we ought to follow. Though preferable, it would not even be necessary to go to the expense of electrification as suitable diesel sets could well service the commuter lines in and around greater Belfast.

Turning to the overall transport strategy I spoke in the House of Lords on 27th January commending Her Majesty's Government for having in collaboration with the French Government decided to use the Channel Tunnel for a rail rather than a road link. I said that this would provide an ideal opportunity to encourage more long distance traffic and in particular freight to use the rail rather than the road network. I recalled that when I was in New Zealand the roads were delightfully free of heavy goods traffic because it was compulsory for all loads above a certain weight (except for perishables for which a special licence was required) to be conveyed by rail. Similarly in South Africa the enormous freight trains contrasted with the pleasantly uncluttered roads. On the same occasion I also took the opportunity to urge that passenger traffic on British Rail should not be priced out of the market in an endeavour to make the service financially self-supporting. I suggested that such a policy would be counter-productive as it would only drive more traffic on to the roads thus necessitating further heavy capital expenditure on motorway development and further detriment to the environment through pressure on requirement for car parking space.

In winding up the debate the Minister agreed that the environment would benefit from the likely switch from road to rail freight transport and said that British Rail expected a three-fold increase in their International freight traffic when the Channel Tunnel opens keeping an estimated 1,500 lorries off UK roads every day.

If this challenge is addressed seriously I believe that British Rail are in a strong position to take advantage of it. Fortunately the railways in Great Britain have always been competitive unlike those in America and Australia where the advent of air travel has virtually wiped out Trans-Continental passenger services on the railways. A fine example of the competitive potential of passenger traffic by rail was the way in which 1947 Enterprise Express was able to beat the newly introduced challenge of flights between Belfast and Dublin. 40 years on it is still worth travelling by rail from London to Birmingham, Manchester, Liverpool or Newcastle-upon-Tyne. The aeroplane certainly covers the ground more quickly but by the time that you have travelled to the Airport, checked in 20 minutes in advance, listened to the announcement that the flight has regrettably been delayed and then at the other end waited to collect your baggage you would still be waiting for the airport bus while the train traveller would already be at the central station in his city of destination.

British Rail however cannot afford to rest on their laurels as the opening of the Channel Tunnel may otherwise show up in sharp relief the difference between their services and those available in France. It was eight years ago that I travelled from Paris to Lyon when only part of the track bed had been relaid to enable the 155 mph electric train to operate but even so the suspension of the rolling stock and the sound proofing provided a completely new experience in travel. It is so immeasurably superior to air or motor travel that there is a wide open market here if we can just take advantage of it. It is so much more civilised in that you can either relax or stretch your legs with a walk down the corridor, have a drink at the bar or a meal in the dining car.

Here again there is a lesson to be learnt both by British Rail and by Northern Ireland Railways. The criterion is a civilised environment so that travel is an enjoyment rather than an endurance. This is the way that it used to be when those who could afford it travelled for pleasure rather than from necessity. A new philosophy however seems to have developed which can best be summed up in the slogan "Whatever you do make them queue". At Airports you have to line up to have your luggage checked in

and quite properly be examined for any suspicious metallic objects. You then have to wait in an uncongenial environment until the flight is called when you file slowly towards the departure gate. One of the advantages of rail travel used to be that you could arrive at the terminus ten minutes before the train was due to leave, select a seat of your choice and then relax in anticipation of the journey. Now however passengers are frequently not allowed access to the train until three minutes before it is due to leave so that they are kept standing in a queue at the barrier. This, I can only assume, is to beat them down into such a state of submission that they will be so grateful to have got on to the train at all that they will no longer complain about any shortcomings in the service.

As has been recognised in France speed is another criterion which the railways cannot afford to overlook. For inter-city journeys in England the motorway network now presents serious competition with uncivilised but cheaper express coaches dangerously averaging some 60 mph and the private car averaging 70 mph or more if the driver belongs to the majority who ignore the speed limit. Northern Ireland Railways cannot afford to overlook this criterion either. Even though there is not yet a motorway from Belfast to Dublin much of the road has recently been improved to an extent that I understand the journey can now be completed in less than two hours. When No.85 was hauling the Enterprise in 1947 to Dublin in 2 hours 15 minutes you would have had to be driving hard to make it by car in much less than 3 hours. Now however if British Rail Inter-City can, with three intermediate stops, do the 118 miles from London to Birmingham in 1 hour 40 minutes surely NIR ought to be aiming for something similar when covering the 113 miles from Belfast to Dublin. It would probably require some realignment of the permanent way at Scarva and maybe elsewhere but if so it must be done to keep the railway competitive.

A more glaring example where rail has already fallen well behind road is the Belfast to Londonderry journey. Admittedly in this instance the rail route going round by Coleraine is considerably longer but even so on my last trip the train was slow, dirty, noisy and uncomfortable, without any catering service whatever.

So I am convinced that if they try hard enough the railways can not only remain competitive but indeed make a come back. The service must however be fast, comfortable and reliable so that it contrasts in the passenger's mind with the strain of long distance car travel and the hassle of air terminals. This would not only be good for the railways but good for the country as well.

No.461 - A DRIVER REMEMBERS

Jack O'Neill

The early life and mechanical details of No.461 and her sister, No.462, (formerly Dublin & South Eastern Railway Nos. 15 & 16) are probably familiar by now to all readers of Five Foot Three, although exactly what they did at the very outset of their careers is something of a mystery. At the time they were delivered the Civil War was at its height, particularly so in the south-eastern counties of Waterford, Wexford and Wicklow. My own impression is that the locos were removed to what was then the safety of Belfast at the earliest opportunity and that they probably received their running-in on pilot work on the GNR as on their return to the DSER they immediately took up work on the heavy night goods trains between Wexford and Dublin.

When Dublin's Canal Street shed closed in 1954 all locos and staff were transferred to the MGWR shed at Broadstone where both No.461 and No.462 subsequently spent some time. It has been suggested that they were sometimes used on the Midland but I cannot confirm this and indeed I would be inclined to doubt it. After the move from Canal Street we were a DSER republic in Midland territory. We were allocated our own roads in the shed and the foremen, Jack Lee and Paddy Clarke, had their own office. The Midland men never bothered with our side of the shed or moved one of the locos. Unfamiliar locos were trouble for crews who didn't know them and management were aware of this and avoided such difficulties as much as possible. This state of affairs existed when I was

transferred to Waterford in 1955 and I have no reason to believe that it changed after that.

One major problem with 461/2 was the oiling of the radial wheels. There was an open oil box on top of the wheel with two tail trimmings but this only oiled the horn plates, not the bearing. The main oil box was under the running plate beneath the smokebox door and the plate had to be lifted to get at the two brass oil boxes which could get full of ash from the smokebox and had to be cleaned out and the trimming cleaned before a journey. Failure to do this meant a hot box and the loco out of service for weeks. As the locos were so easy to work on no one wanted to be responsible for having them out of commission so drivers took particular care to supervise an inexperienced fireman when he was oiling them.

Another feature, not found on any other locos in the south, was back and front sand boxes controlled by a single lever on the footplate. The lever was drawn back towards the tender for front sanding and pushed forwards for back sanding, sand being shut off when the lever was vertical. Everything on the footplate was easily accessible. The damper was operated by a screw contained in a barrel, unlike the Southern screw dampers which allowed the screw and its sharp end to leave the barrel, so causing many a cut hand. As a footplatemen I cannot find adequate words to praise these locos, particularly preserved No.461.

At around the same time that I was transferred No.461 was also moved to Waterford, the diesels having taken over the Wexford goods on which she and No.462 spent the greater part of their working lives. Here, until the end of steam in 1963, No.461 worked the beet trains to Thurles via Limerick Junction or over the now-closed branch from Clonmel through Fethard. For the remainder of the year she never seemed to be idle, being employed on livestock specials, passenger specials and any other job available. During the summer period if traffic requirements were not too demanding she would return to Broadstone and work over her native DSER territory.

Because of the variation in the weight of loaded beet wagons special loads had to be arranged for each engine class. A J15 took 28 wagons of goods on the heavily graded Clonmel-Thurles branch but its beet load was reduced to 23 wagons. No.461 could take a load equal to 45 wagons of goods on the same branch but only 32 wagons of beet. Such a load of beet was child's play to this engine and Limerick and Waterford crews counted themselves lucky when No.461 was rostered on their beet train. On the return journey from Thurles No.461 had a load of 70 empty coal trucks and only a stop at Clonmel to shunt the van and take water. The 70 trucks were for distribution on the Rosslare line and, after fire cleaning at Waterford, she took the train on to Rosslare.

Here is a typical beet roster for No.461, starting on Monday: Crew on duty at 01:00 to prepare the locomotive. Leave Waterford with 70 wagons, first stop Duncormick to detach 28 wagons, distance 22 miles, running time 59 minutes. From there all stops, which were: Bridgetown, 23 wagons; Killinick, 20 wagons; Rosslare Strand, 3 wagons and the remainder for the now-vanished Kilrane. The crew returned to Waterford working the 07:10 passenger and the loco spent the day on the pilot at Rosslare. An evening Waterford crew worked the 18:00 passenger to Rosslare and returned with No.461 on a 20:30 beet, picking up at Kilrane, Bridgetown and Duncormick, to arrive in Waterford at 23:20 and depart for Thurles at 00:15. For the entire 13 weeks of the beet workings No.461 would be so engaged, stopped only for a boiler wash and running repairs. The beet season was a demanding period for locos but I never knew No.461 to be missing from the roster for her five beet seasons in Waterford.

Let me take you on a footplate run on No.461 to illustrate how well she could perform. Join me at Waterford locomotive shed on a lovely Saturday morning in 1956. It is the month of June, the time is 05:00 and the sun is rising, a ball of fire over the River Suir. Birds compete with each other in song; it is good to be alive. The shed is a hive of activity. On one road No.306 is having her boiler washed out, the three boiler washers busy with their scaling rods at the mud plug holes. A fitter hammers at the large nuts of her marine big end and he is singing a popular melody, keeping time with his hammer

blows. Four cleaners are engaged in cleaning the boilers of J15s No.186 and No.116 which will later work the Mallow and Portlaoise goods. The gland packer is packing the glands of No.116 and the steam-raiser is lighting the fire in No.702. In the goods yard "Jumbo" is shunting a long rake of assorted wagons and at the Jetty the SS Carnalea is discharging her cargo of locomotive coal into the waiting trucks. She has docked at 04:00 and is due to sail on the evening tide so an early start has been made on her discharge. She is the reason for my early start for I am to work a train of locomotive coal to Rosslare Harbour and Wexford. Standing at the water column, a feather of steam at her safety valves, is No.461 and behind her is No.257. Either loco I hope is mine for the day as they are both beautiful engines.

"You have 461," the foreman greets me as I sign on duty. "You'll be working back an auxiliary off the second boat," he adds. "She's due in about 10am so you should leave Rosslare at the latest 11:30. Having imparted this information to me he returns to his study of the day's racing calendar and the comfort of his pipe.



No.461 between duties at Waterford shed c. 1956. (Photographer unknown)

My next job is to read the repair book and see what jobs have been recorded for No.461. They are all minor ones: "Left sand box not working" - the morning is dry so even if the sand box isn't working I don't have to worry. "Right front slide bar bolt slack" - that will have to be done if not already attended to. "Tubes need cleaning" - there was a cleaner blowing the tubes as I passed the engine but better check. "Slight running heat in left radial wheel" - better check the trimmings of both boxes, a hot box I can do without. "Knock in left big end" - probably needs to be cotted, better check the set screws. "All nuts on footplate and regulator gland to be packed and outside rods to be re-metalled" - that is why she is here from Wexford for an overhaul, so I can be sure all these jobs are done. All of the listed jobs have been signed off by the evening fitter and the shed driver has signed off both the footplate nuts and

the regulator gland. In Waterford loco only a driver was allowed to do these jobs and was also responsible for trimmings and tender axlebox packing and the renewal of gauge glasses and lubricator feed glasses.

A quick examination assured me that all repairs had been properly carried out and there was no worry about the oiling; the fireman had worked on her many times for he had spent two years in Wexford. The fire hadn't yet been made on so, putting on the blower, I was able to view the tubes and crown stays, using the shovel as a deflector. The tubes were clean and the stays dry; she was fit for the road.

As my mate oiled her I made on the fire with large lumps, taking care to have it very light and shallow under the arch. On this occasion No.461 had the Inchicore boiler and No.462 the original DSE one so at 160 lbs/sq. in. her safety valves popped. Tank full, we were ready for the road and slowly backed out to the waiting train of 30 wagons of coal, 15 for Rosslare and 15 for Wexford. A wave from the guard and No.461 moved slowly ahead, picking up the slack couplings and stretching the chains. The fireman closed the fire with the pricker as we proceeded down the mile-long goods yard and over the numerous crossings of the station. There, a set of railcars was being prepared for the early Dublin train as were the Victorian style coaches of the Wexford train which were being cleaned and watered in preparation for their run via Macmine Junction. At the busy wharf three ships were moored while the pilot engine, No.351, was pushing a long rake of wagons on to the rails at the ships' sides.

We collected the Campile staff at Abbey Junction cabin, it was now 06:05 and at 06:00 the boat train was due to leave Rosslare Harbour for Cork. We would probably be blocked at Campile, thus spoiling our chance of a run for the bank from that station. He was due to pass Campile at 06:46 so it was unlikely that I could race him to Ballycullane.

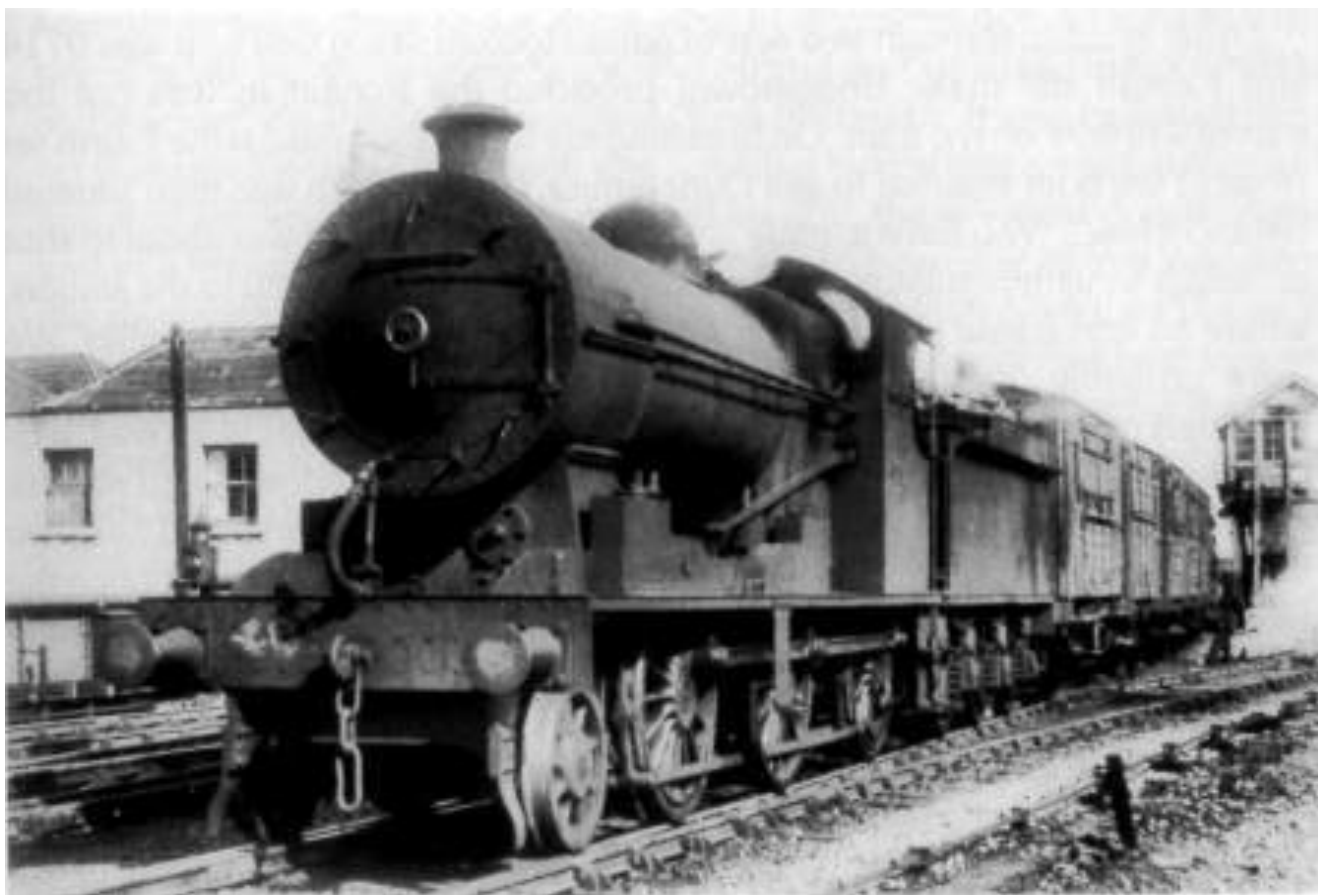
No.461 gradually increased her speed on the easy stretch along the bank of the river and with half-regulator and 25% cut-off she was soon running at 35 mph. She laid down on her pressure and my mate screwed the damper to the half-way mark. Five miles out and he still hadn't fired her, she didn't need coal as yet. On the short climb to Snowhill tunnel and on to the Barrow Bridge I eased her to 50% and opened her to $\frac{3}{4}$ regulator, she never slackened speed much and we were on to the bridge at a steady 30 mph. This is Ireland's longest bridge, road or rail. It spans the meeting of three mighty rivers, the Suir, the Nore and the Barrow, and is signalled at both ends. Midway on the bridge is the loneliest cabin on the railway, manned 7 days a week, 24 hours a day. The signalman operates the opening span for shipping on the Barrow to New Ross port. This morning the water reflected our loco and train and from his perch high above the signalman waved to us.

Campile distant was against us so, shut off, we gently eased into the loop and handed up the staff. She had done the section in 18 minutes, 2 less than the allotted time and it was with regret that we got down on to the platform, unable to storm the bank ahead. The running time allowed for the Ballycullane section was 15 minutes on a non-stop train but most signalmen were cautious of blocking the boat train and rarely let a train out of Campile that didn't have double the allotted time. A few minutes ahead of time, an 8-piece railcar set tore through Campile, the mechanical snatcher operated by the guard exchanging staffs. In a cloud of dust it was gone, its hooter sounding for an accommodation crossing. Hard on his heels was following the 07:10 passenger but, all going well, I should reach Bridgetown. As the signalman handed me the staff I asked him to "wire the road to give us a clear run", and we began our assault on the bank.

This is a curving grade ranging from 1 in 120 to 1 in 80 so when the train was properly stretched and the wagons moving at about 10 mph. I eased the regulator into the full open position and set the cut-off at 65%. She bounded ahead, bouncing on her volute springs, her exhaust sending echoes into the deep cuttings of the grade. The firebed glared white-hot as my mate fed it coal, lightly and often, the way she liked it. She showed her approval of his method by holding her pressure between 140 and 160, only dropping when coal was placed on the bed but recovering rapidly as it lighted. Nearing the top of the

bank she was down to 10 mph and the injector was winning the battle for the gauge showed $\frac{3}{4}$ glass of water. With a triumphant bark from her exhaust she breasted the top of the grade and the signals for both sets of gates on the slightly falling grade showed off. I eased back the lever to 20% and she rapidly gathered speed and flashed through the open crossings. The distant for Ballycullane was off and I let her rip, the fireman taking the staff at about 45 mph.

She coasted down Taylorstown bank to Wellingtonbridge, the hand brake screwed on to keep the couplings from jerking and occasional application of the steam brake, assisted by the 30-ton brake van in rear, kept her speed at a modest but safe 25 mph. Again the distant showed a clear road so the hand brake was slowly released and two short whistles alerted the guard that we had a clear run through the station. With a gentle opening of the regulator the couplings were stretched and we headed for Duncormick over an up-graded section containing four sets of gates, including a set at the station. After we had collected the Duncormick staff the regulator was set at $\frac{3}{4}$ open and the lever at $33\frac{1}{3}\%$ cut-off. I expected not to have to change this position for the entire section provided all the gates were open. There is a slight fall from Wellingtonbridge for about 1 mile and in that distance her speed rose to a pleasant 35 mph. I reckoned she would drop to about 25 mph. and hold that to the top of the climb. There were no worries about steam and her consumption of water was light. If I could get a clear run through Duncormick I'd not bother to take water for her tank should bring the train to Rosslare.



No.461 with a train of horse-boxes from the North Wall sidings, bound for the Royal Dublin Showgrounds, Ballsbridge, c. 1948. The dogs around the smokebox door, fitted to cope with the problems caused by low quality fuel, were later removed, probably as part of the 'prettifying' process when the loco was put on display after withdrawal, and are unlikely to reappear. (S. Kennedy)

After passing through two sets of gates I looked at my watch. It was 07:14 and I could still make

Bridgetown, provided the signalman was not too nervous to take on my train. On breasting the top of the grade at the fourth set of gates we both strained to see Duncormick distant which was then situated behind a tree! "You have it, mate", shouted the fireman as I was about to shut off steam so with regulator untouched we ran down the 1 in 80 to the station, where an immediate climb of 1 in 78 begins and continues for 1½ miles. We were probably over the 50 mph as the fireman took the staff and No.461 bounded up that hill, reaching the top at about 20 mph. This is, or was, a 5-mile section that resembles a ploughed field with ups and downs and reverse curves. It's best to set the regulator and lever and leave her to find her own way over the humps. This we did, with very little variation in speed once the major bank had been overcome. The sun was now riding high and to our right the sun shimmered and a heat haze hung over the Saltee Islands. There was a fine bed of fire in the box so we both sat and allowed the air to cool our sweaty foreheads. You could smell the tang of the sea in the cooling breeze.

The distant for Bridgetown came into view as I shut off for the descent into that station but the home was off and I caught a glimpse of the starter also in the off position. The 07:10 was in the station so, taking a chance, I let No.461 run unbraked into the platform. My glimpse had been correct; the road was clear. We collected the Killinick staff and passed No.390 at the head of six heavily laden bogies and so off into the section, a dead level run for 3½ miles including a perfectly straight 3 miles followed by 1½ miles of lightly down-graded country through rich agricultural land. The run from Waterford to Rosslare is entirely of tillage and the best farmers in Ireland occupy the lands of Co. Wexford. For the 13 weeks of the beet season no less than five beet trains per day feed the Thurles factory from this strip of Co. Wexford. In addition, potatoes and soft fruits are grown and cattle reared. It's a revenue-earning line for CIÉ, though cattle are no longer carried by rail.

Killinick, once a junction for Wexford, used to be a lovely station and on this day as we ran through it, the platform was a riot of colour from the many flower beds, there was even one at each side of the signal cabin. Light firing was now all that was needed as the line is level from Killinick for the remaining 7 miles to Rosslare Harbour. No.461 was running fast on a half-open regulator and 30% cut-off. We ran over the junction points at Rosslare Strand and on to the Harbour, skirting the sea which had now transferred itself to the left hand side of the locomotive.

The mail boat sat at the harbour wall and, out in the bay, fishing trawlers were busy hauling in their catches of mackerel which the sunshine always seemed to bring close to the shore. Our train was brought to a stand at the signal cabin and the shunter hooked us off and sent us ahead to the turntable at the rear of the shed and a few yards from the beach. A loco balanced better on Rosslare turntable if the tank was not filled before entering on to the table and this we did. Our train was grabbed by No.252, the Wexford goods engine, and in a few minutes fifteen wagons of coal had been placed in a siding near the shed with the van attached and the remaining fifteen wagons placed on the loop at the side of the shed ready for discharge. As we filled our tank and examined the bearings No.252 was already on the way to Wexford. Five of the wagons on that train would be dispatched to Enniscorthy that night on the goods that No.461 had headed for more than 30 years.

We made tea and sat on the grassy slope at the side of the loco shed. It was 09:30. From the foreman we learned that British Railways had put on an extra boat to cater for the many tourists visiting the country and our ship was due in about an hour. We were taking passengers for Waterford and for stations to Limerick, stopping at Carrick-on-Suir, Clonmel, Cahir, Limerick Junction and so on to Limerick. All trains on the line were to be shunted and we were assured of a non-stop run to Waterford.

We oiled No.461, ran a bar through the firebed to search for clinker; there was none, she was fit to return. We backed out on to the long pier as the SS Saint David set sail, her funnel belching black smoke from her oil burners. Far out to sea, near the Tuskar lighthouse, we could see her sister racing towards Rosslare. The sea was like glass, not a ripple stirred, the only disturbance being the wake of

the Saint David. At 10:45 the SS Saint Andrew tied up at the pier, accompanied by a host of screaming seagulls who swooped and rose over the ship, waiting for a chance to snatch any dropped food. Customs examination was brief and our train began to fill as we returned to the footplate and began to answer questions about connections. People always seemed to approach the locomotive for information; they appeared to trust the loco men more than other grades. There were the usual boys from 7 to 70 who were curious about the engine with questions like, "How old is she? What speed can she do? How much coal does she use? Is she an Irish engine? We answered all of them and, like all Irishmen, added pieces of fiction to make it more interesting.

At 11:20 our train was full and ten minutes later, with her whistle shrieking at the strollers on the pier, we set out for home. The running time for this non-stop run was 58 minutes and that was hard flogging, made out for locos of the 334, 379-390 and 311 class, all with a higher wheel than No.461. Leaving the pier, with its permanent speed restriction of 5 mph, I opened her full for the climb to Kilrane Halt. Breasting the short sharp climb, she quickly gathered speed but soon I had to shut off for the permanent 40 mph round the curve leading to the Waterford line at Rosslare Strand.

The section from Rosslare Strand to Killinick is lightly graded in favour of the train and I left her at $\frac{3}{4}$ regulator and 20% cut-off. We passed Killinick at a good 50 mph, taking the staff by hand for No.461 never carried mechanical staff exchanging. All the signalmen on this line were fearless in giving staffs and were used to fast-running trains. The exchange is done from a raised platform at the side of the cabin, the fireman throwing out his staff and taking the next one on his arm. Misses were infrequent.

The regulator and reverser remained unchanged for the next twelve miles and her speed varied between 45 and 55 mph as she negotiated the up and down section which is Bridgetown to Duncormick. Shut off at milepost 95, she fell into Wellington bridge and on full regulator she assaulted Taylorstown bank in fine style and reached the 60 mph down Campile bank from Ballycullane.

Along the lonely river Suir, her exhaust echoing from the banks, she ran to arrive at Waterford exactly 58 minutes from Pier departure. She had performed the same running as the larger 334 class locos, gaining time on the uphill sections. She set off for Limerick with a fresh crew. Later that evening she would work the 17:50 goods to Wexford and there take up on the following day her old job on the DSER section.

A hard-working locomotive, very worthy of preservation. Long may she haul RPSI trains.

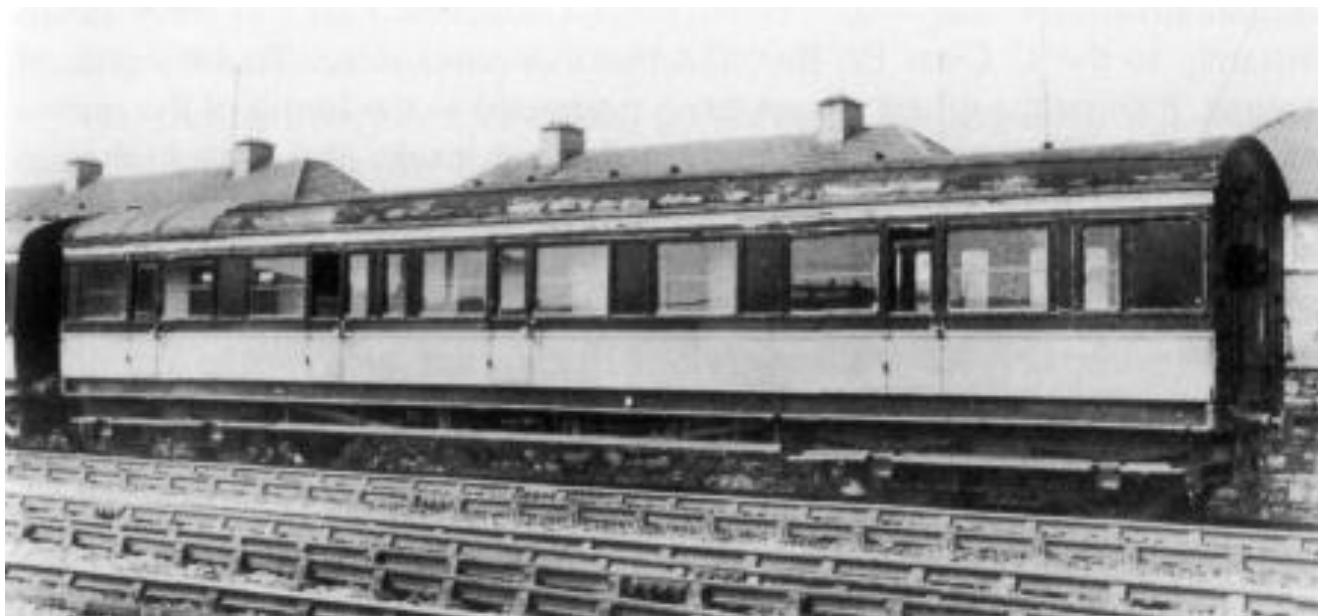
THE LAST GSWR CARRIAGES

Michael H.C. Baker

You may well find this hard to believe but the editor of a well-known preservation society magazine recently confessed to me that "I have hitherto tended to look on carriages as multiples of 30 tons hung on the back of engines." However, the saving grace of this heretical statement is the adverb 'hitherto'; there is hope for us all. He probably won't print this now but on the assumption that he is a forgiving soul I will continue. *[Correct in parts, but I'm not saying which! - Ed.]*

When I first came to Ireland in 1959 as a second year art student it was as much to visit and find out about the country as to look at the railways - I certainly had no idea I should be married in Dublin nine years later. However, I was not going to ignore the railway scene, even though dieselisation in the Republic had progressed a good deal further than on British Railways, and in those days of immaturity I scorned just about everything which did not belch out steam and smoke - by those criteria I suppose I should have taken instantly to the C Class Bo-Bos, but that's another story. Traditionally, of course, Irish railways had always been portrayed as the home of the quaint and antique. There was some truth in this but it was also a monumental injustice, not least to the Great Southern 800 Class 4-6-0s, the whole glorious tribe of big Great Northern 4-4-0s, and perhaps most of all to the pioneering diesel efforts on both the narrow and broad gauge in the northern counties.

On that first visit I did not venture further north than the Midlands and although there was a good deal of steam about, if one looked for it, what especially caught my eye was the variety and, sometimes, the antiquity of the coaching stock. From then I sought out and made something of a study of Irish railway carriages and your editor has suggested that a few random thoughts on the subject might be of interest to readers of Five Foot Three.



Corridor third 1297, built 1915, photographed in 1967. (M.H.C. Baker)

At Waterford I was much intrigued to come across a number of withdrawn, but complete, six-wheelers. I had never seen examples of this venerable type before, except in departmental service. But the Waterford experience was only a prelude to Cork where I discovered an entire rake still at work. All were of MGWR origin. I have written of the six-wheelers and other antiquities I encountered on that first visit before so I won't dwell on that but move on to the 1960s and 1970s when I was visiting Ireland regularly and got to travel over almost the entire rail network.

By 1967 steam had vanished from the Republic and practically all coaching stock was painted black and gold - a colour scheme for which I've never been able to raise much enthusiasm. The Cravens were the newest vehicles then at work, indeed they were still in production, and my first journey in one was on an excursion to Belfast Great Victoria Street just before Christmas 1967. It rode nicely but I found the decor rather cold and uninspiring, although the fact that the heating was far from effective probably prejudiced my feelings. Certainly, I thought the Cravens handsome-looking carriages, better than BR Mark 1s.

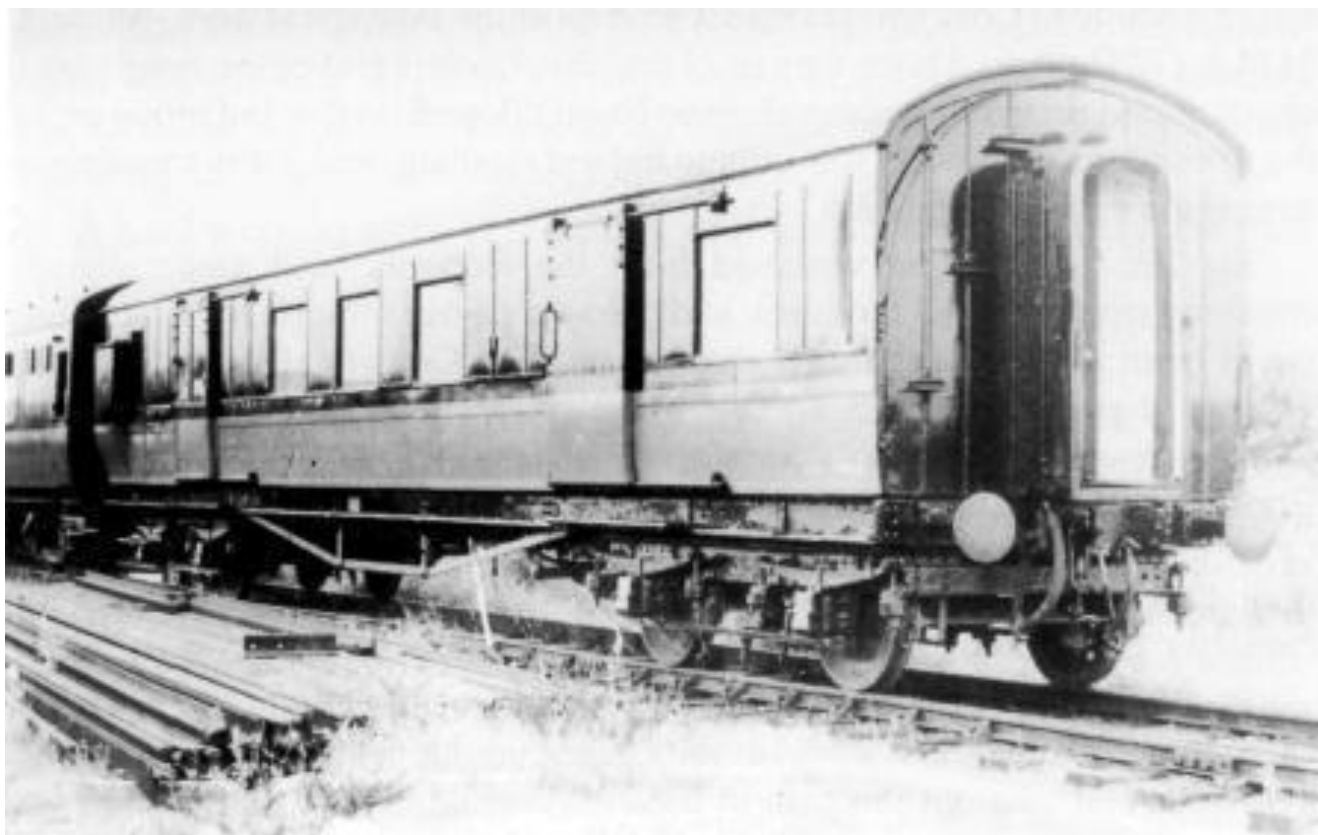
By this date no pre-War carriages, apart from a handful of Gresley buffet cars, were in ordinary service on long-distance workings in England, Wales or Scotland. This was not the case in Ireland. Despite Ireland's reputation for railway antiquities the average age of CIÉ's carriages was not exceptional, being roughly equal to that of mainland Europe where one could still find many carriages dating from before 1939 at work in France, for example; they were commonplace on some very fast electrically-hauled Rapides well into the 1970s.

On CIÉ a number of elliptical-roofed, wooden-bodied corridor carriages dating from the last days of the GSWR and the early GSR period were regularly used to strengthen long-distance trains at peak periods whilst I came across others on the Cobh to Cork line and working between Wexford and Rosslare Harbour. However the greatest concentration of elderly carriages was to be found on the

Dublin suburban services.

First the corridor vehicles. 33 carriages of a basically similar design were built at Inchicore between 1915 and 1926, of which Whitehead's 1142 is the sole survivor. Inchicore carried on in the mid-1920s as though amalgamation had never happened, cheerfully turning out carriages of pure GSWR design, even down to the livery. The earliest elliptical roofed GSWR carriages had sported elaborate and attractive mouldings, but these were abandoned some time before 1925, although the lining which had been applied to them was retained. The standard GSWR and early GSR underframe was 57ft long, the bodies of the coaches being 9ft wide and 13ft 2 ins high from rail level to the top of the roof ventilators.

The GSR, like the Irish Free State itself, was hardly born with a silver spoon in its mouth and consequently its carriages were far from luxurious. They had low seat backs, which got lower as the money got tighter, no arm rests were provided in the third class, and their spartan interiors lacked any pictures or mirrors upon the walls of plain planking which was varnished a yellow-brown. The white painted roof beams were left exposed in some carriages but in others were covered over with a white ceiling, the surface of which had a slightly bubbly texture. Access from compartments to the corridor was by way of swing doors, a rather odd and inconvenient arrangement. The thirds seated 64 passengers in the classic manner of corridor carriages of the 1920s and early 1930s in eight compartments; there was a lavatory at each end of the coach. There were eight doors on the compartment side, four on the corridor. Naturally the most luxurious were the four first class vehicles, 1140-43, built in 1920/1. All but 1142 had gone by 1967; it lasted until 1972.



Corridor brake 2541, built 1920, at Inchicore after overhaul, August 1969. (M.H.C. Baker)

My journeys in the RPSI vintage train have, regrettably, been few but when I was over three years ago staying with Charles and Christine Friel I made the most, both of their hospitality, and of a run from Whitehead to York Road, Antrim and Belfast Central to sample each coach. Despite being somewhat sparing in my praise of the late GSWR carriages I found 1142 with its deep, comfortable cushions, and

its handsome original livery, which suits it vastly better than those it wore in CIÉ days, a most attractive vehicle. It's presence in the vintage train is a reminder of a generation of far from outstanding but nevertheless perfectly decent, workmanlike vehicles which gave great value for some 50 years. Plenty of glamorous carriages of all shapes and descriptions have survived in the British Isles, but their ordinary, less aristocratic cousins, the sort of carriage that most of us travelled in, have not done so well, and of those which have been preserved only a handful have been restored to passenger carrying service. 1142 is thus an important bit of history.

The non-corridor counterparts of the corridor vehicles were, I suppose, even more ordinary. They too gave great service and some still around at the end of the 1960s were remarkably ancient. One particular train which ran during the summer of 1969 was an absolute collectors piece. This was the 17:52 from Connolly to Bray. It was usually made up of five, sometimes six, vehicles in the charge of an unrebuilt A Class, and none of the carriages was less than 45 years old. At this time CIÉ still maintained a fleet of secondary stock. This had been distinguished by an S prefix but in 1969 all those surviving were renumbered in a series running from 4001 to 4053. Not all 53 actually saw any further service. In the make-up of the 17:52 from Connolly was 4002. This had originally been 898 and had first seen the light of day as long ago as 1907. It had a low, arc roof and was quite the most ancient carriage in ordinary service in the British Isles. I, naturally, made sure I got a ride in it and with its plethora of beading, curly door handles to its ten compartments and gas light fittings looked every one of its 62 years.



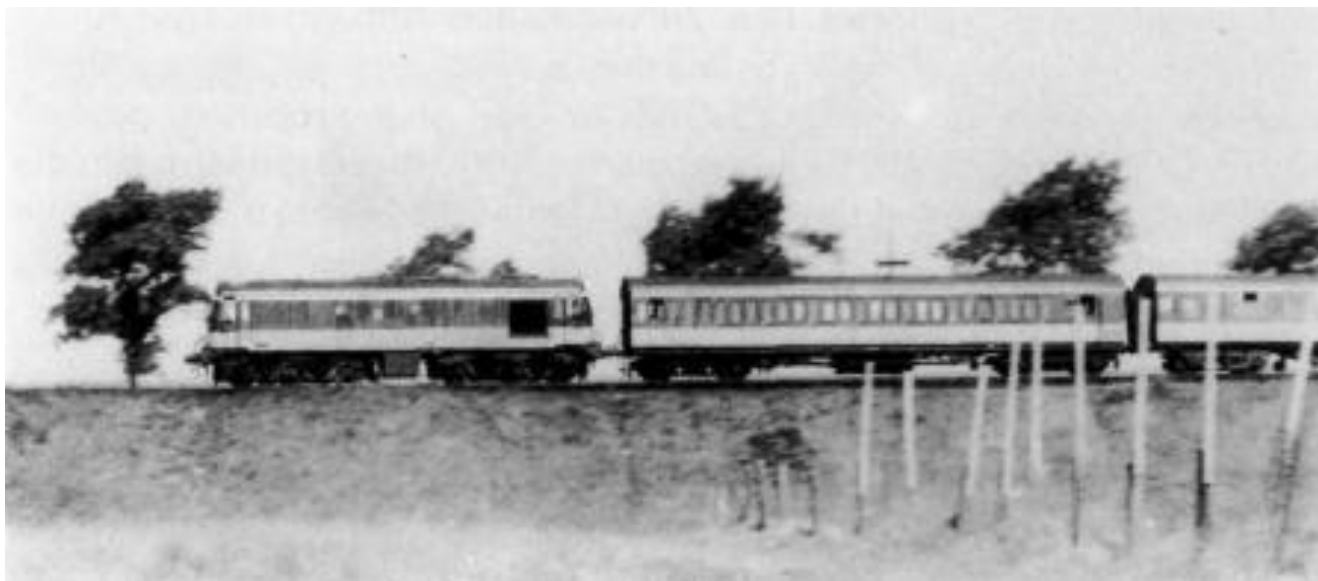
Bray-Connolly train, August 1969. Note arc-roofed third coach. (M.H.C. Baker)

Two former GNR vehicles, 24N and 74N, were put into the 4001-4053 series but were withdrawn before they actually received their numbers. All other secondary stock was of GSWR or GSR origin, relatively modern MGWR, DSR and GNR built carriages having gone to the scrapheap whilst the Inchicore-built veterans of the Edwardian era soldiered on. This could be taken either as a tribute to Inchicore's workmanship or as evidence of its prejudice against anyone's designs but its own.

4002 lasted until the summer of 1972. That year the wooden bodied set running on the coast lines north and south of Dublin contained a couple of corridor vehicles, there being insufficient non-corridors left, and in the early autumn all were taken down to Mullingar for breaking up. 1972 was the year the first air-conditioned BREL carriages, the Supertrains, were introduced, and they virtually finished off all the most ancient veterans.

Four other arc roofed vehicles survived into 1972. These were GSWR (of course) built bogie vans, 1114-7, dating from 1912. Pearse seemed to be a favourite haunt of theirs; 1115 could be found there until the Spring of 1973. By a clerical oversight it was not withdrawn with the others at the end of 1972 and was still regularly working through Pearse on the Dun Laoghaire to Connolly Holyhead Mails in April 1973.

I have said that all the later wooden bodied survivors were of Inchicore design but this is not wholly accurate. Near the end of its separate existence the MGWR had bought a number of 60ft long underframes from Belgium. It never got round to mounting any bodies on them so after the amalgamation Inchicore took them over and turned them out as a series of high capacity, non-corridor vehicles. Nos. 1893-99 were brake thirds, whilst 2107-13 were composites. They served the Dublin suburban lines well and one, 1893 had the honour of being the very last non-corridor carriage at work on CIÉ. It was a bit of a dubious honour for although it lasted until the end of the 1973 summer timetable by that time it was long overdue for Mullingar for it squeaked and groaned its way up and down the coast, a dreadful old thing with bare, matchboarded partitions, low seat backs and foam rubber bursting forth from its torn upholstery. You will understand I write from first hand experience for I couldn't resist a ride in it - just once.



The “dreadful old thing”, brake third 1893, passing Fairview in its final summer. (M.H.C. Baker)

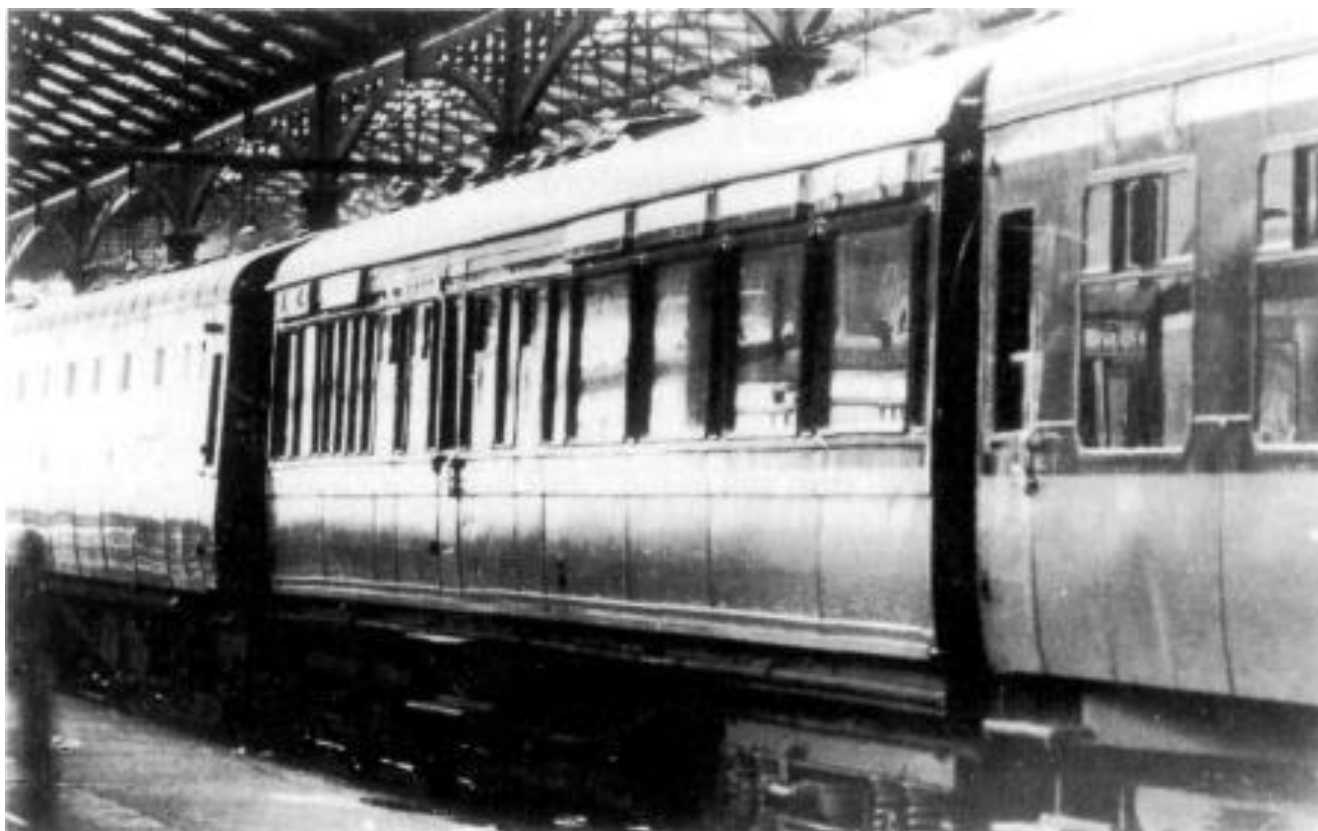
There were two very long-lived restaurant cars which were still at work in the 1970s. These were 2092/3. They had been built at Inchicore in 1915/6 and, somewhat modified over the years, notably with B4 bogies, continued to perform top link duties for over 50 years. One of them was regularly employed on the heavy Cork to Dublin day mail, being detached at Heuston whilst the rest of the train was worked round to Dun Laoghaire pier.

2092/3 were further victims of the Supertrains, being taken out of service in 1972. Some thought was given to preserving one but the modern bogies, which CIÉ needed, proved an insuperable problem and they were broken up at Mullingar. I wonder if the bogies ever were re-used? I remember seeing 2093 at

North Wall looking very sorry for itself with most of its windows smashed awaiting its final journey.

If ever I found myself on a desert island with an assortment of eight favourite carriages and a wave came along and washed seven of them away the one I should hang on to would be 861. If we're honest the clerestory was a far from perfect appendage to fit to a carriage roof. It added to the building costs, it tended to weaken the structure - although it has to be said that clerestory carriages were often long lived - and its windows were the very devil to keep clean. But, my word, didn't it look fine? I suppose the best known users of the clerestory were the Great Western, the North Eastern and the Midland Railways. But it's not often realised how extensively the GSWR used this feature. It built one six-wheel and 42 bogie clerestory roof carriages, the first, the six-wheeler, in 1878, the last, of several types, in 1907. One of them, 351, was rebuilt with an elliptical roof and became the State Saloon. It was often used by President De Valera and I once saw him alight from it at Heuston one evening on his return from the West. I attempted to take some pictures but the light was fading and they were not fit for reproduction. It was not until the mid-1970s that 351 was replaced by an air-conditioned vehicle.

There were some clerestory carriages still working on the London Underground at the beginning of the 1970s but they had all gone from British Railways by 1960; the last I saw was a former Midland Railway restaurant car at Gloucester in 1956. Therefore you may imagine my delight when that first visit to Ireland in 1959 produced a clerestory composite providing the entire passenger accommodation on the Waterford to New Ross and Macmine Junction branch line train. One end of it was attached to a J15 the other, most incongruously, to a bulbous, unpainted four-wheel 'tin van'.

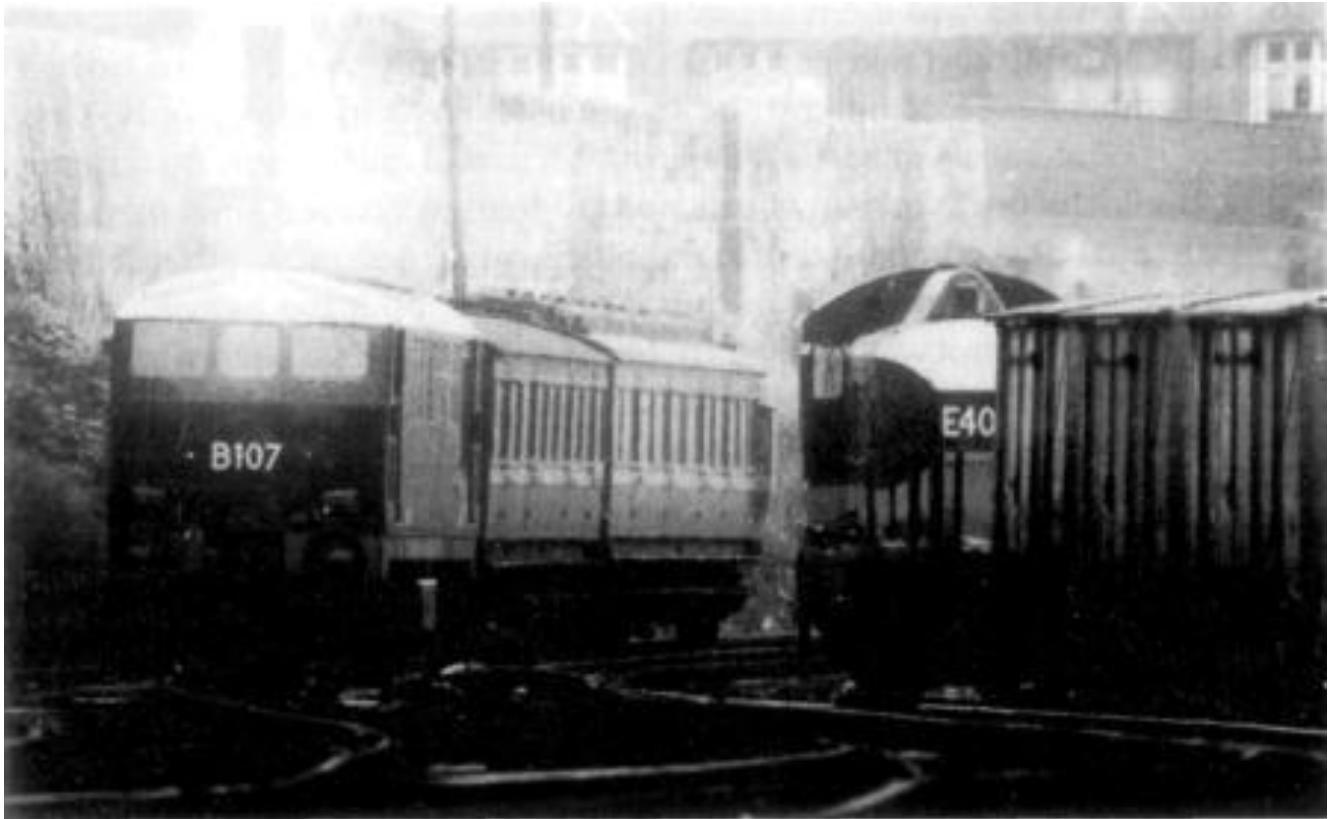


1915-built restaurant car 2093 at Heuston station. (M.H.C. Baker)

Two years later when I travelled on the branch, just before it closed, the clerestory was resting in the sidings at New Ross and had been replaced by a slightly more modern GSWR arc roof vehicle. I did find one or two clerestories elsewhere, notably a GNR one still in full GNR livery at Great Victoria Street, Belfast, but after that it seemed realistic to suppose that my chance of riding in one had gone for

good. Not so, for I had forgotten the famous Inchicore Staff Train.

Being on holiday I never got up early enough to see it set off from Heuston in the morning but on my visits to the CIÉ works in the late 1960s it was on view, stabled in a siding between the up line and the council houses. Its livery was sombre in the extreme, black with an orange strip, but nothing could detract from the splendid outlines of its two carriages.



The Inchicore works train, somewhat distorted by telephoto lens, in August 1969. 861 is the only survivor of this assortment of vehicles. (M.H.C. Baker)

One, 896, was an arc roofed corridor third built by the Metropolitan Amalgamated Railway carriage and Wagon Company for the GSWR in 1907. The other, and this was the real piece de resistance, was a truly magnificent vehicle, a 66 foot long brake composite with a clerestory roof, 861 no less. RPSI members will not need to be told the origins and history of 861 but probably not many ever rode in her before her preservation days. By the early 1970s the Inchicore Works train was pretty lightly patronised and I managed to secure a first class compartment to myself. She was, naturally, rather shabby, her upholstery exuding clouds of dust if one sat upon it too heavily, and in some compartments it was badly torn. Some of it must have been very nearly original and the floral pattern, although faded, was still easily discernible. The toilets were out of use, the windows in the clerestory covered over and in wet weather water collected in the light globes and dripped upon one from the ceiling. Nevertheless she rode easily at the gentle pace of 10-15 mph which was all that was required of her on her short run between Inchicore and Heuston, the triple tap of each set of wheels a distinctive touch. Being provided solely for CIÉ workers, and the odd visitor, I suppose it is not strictly accurate to claim that 861 was the last clerestory (the official GSWR term was ‘elevator’) roof carriage in public service in the British Isles but she was certainly the last to regularly carry passengers whilst still owned by a main line company.

In 1972 861 and 896 were replaced by a couple of later GSWR corridor carriages - the Inchicore Works

train ceased to run altogether shortly afterwards - and were sent to Sallins, the usual dumping ground for withdrawn carriages on their way to be broken up at Mullingar. Of course CIÉ should have realised the historical importance of 861. I dropped one or two hints to various CIÉ acquaintances at the time but although individuals were sympathetic it has to be said that Dublin for many decades lagged behind official attitudes in the North. Thank goodness the RPSI stepped in at the last minute and saved what has surely become the gem in its collection. Today, of course, 896 would have been saved too for although she was said to be structurally rather poor she was quite complete and carriages in far worse condition and severely butchered have been rescued from departmental service in recent years.

Mention of such vehicles opens up another complete chapter, for carriages from a great many pre-amalgamation companies were to be found in departmental service at various parts of the CIÉ system, in various states of decay or repair, some drastically altered from their passenger carrying days, others less so, but we had best leave them for another time.

COMMENTS AND RECOLLECTIONS

Laurence Liddle

Stimulated by the Editor's exhortation to readers in the last number of Five Foot Three to produce material to help keep the covers of the next number apart, I offer the following comments and recollections, inspired by some items that appeared in Volume 34. Should any reader feel that what I have to say is disjointed, unconnected, illogical or even plain uninteresting, and writes to the Editor to that effect, no offence will be taken. Moreover, I stress that what is written here is in every case, comment or recollection and never criticism.

First as regards W.T. Scott's "Enterprise" article:

The 1932 timings of the GN Up Mail did not last for long, as it was found that the costs of boiler and track maintenance arising from 250 lbs per square inch on the one hand and very high speeds on the other, were economically unjustifiable and so the schedules were revised to the following: Belfast-Portadown 30 minutes, Portadown-Dundalk 38 minutes (an acceleration here, due no doubt to the withdrawal of the Warrenpoint slip coach), Dundalk-Drogheda 25 minutes and Drogheda-Dublin 34 minutes. The total time standing at stations was unaltered at eighteen minutes but one extra minute was allowed at Dundalk and one less at Drogheda. Hence the overall running time became 2 hours and 7 minutes and the overall time including stops two hours and twenty five minutes. Two interesting points may be noted here; first, the total running time including that spent in slowing for and accelerating from stops was 8 minutes less than the 2¼ hours allowed for the 1947 non-stop train: second, as soon as rebuilt locos became available in the summer/autumn of 1938 the Down and Up mails became regular S class jobs and not Compound turns. The almost invariable load of the up train was 7 bogies Belfast-Dundalk and 8 Dundalk-Dublin. And time was kept, the tight connection into the evening mail steamer ex-Dun Laoghaire saw to that.

The above is not to decry the 1947 performance, the best that could be expected at a time of heavy arrears of maintenance and very variable coal, but is just meant to show that 50 years ago a regular 2 hour non-stop inter-city service could probably have been feasible from the mechanical and operating points of view. Considering that non-stop trains were (and are) subject to severe speed restrictions through Drogheda and Portadown, and to a moderate but significant one through Dundalk, it would not have been unreasonable to have allowed just one minute extra for stopping and one for starting at each intermediate station, thus reducing running time to two hours and one minute. If at the same time either the Belfast/Portadown or the Drogheda/Dublin times was reduced by one minute the even two hours would have been achieved. I have indeed in the past heard talk in Amiens Street (as it then was) to the effect that, "We could do it in an hour and three quarters". However for a reliable and reasonably economic service two hours would seem to be about the limit for steam working. Seven bogie trains could have been worked by the Ss, with the Vs locos available for times of very heavy traffic.

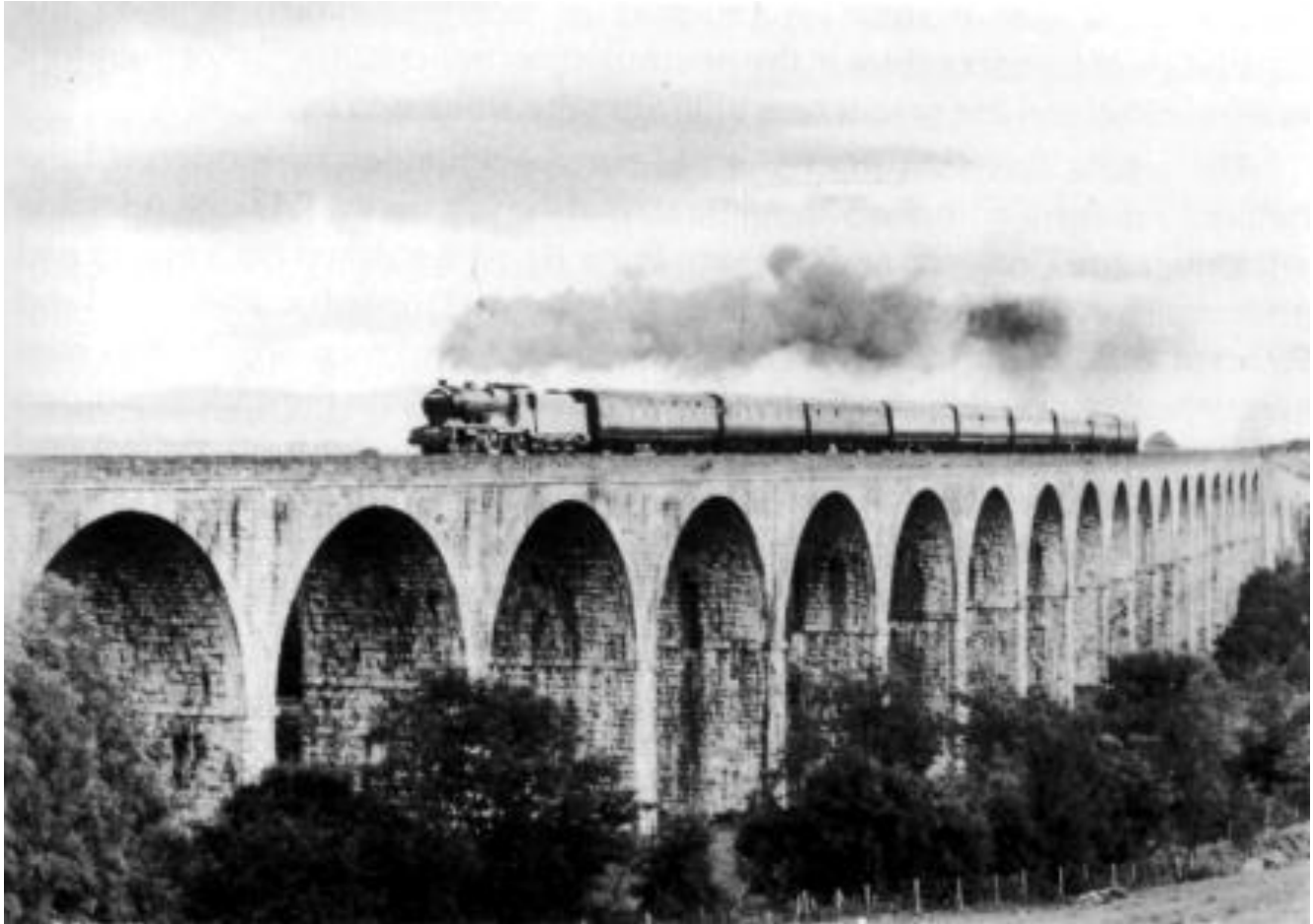
As regards loading, W.T. Scott's article refers to the inaugural "Enterprise" being of 7 vehicles; at times however up to nine were conveyed. The article mentions that the Dublin based train in steam days was frequently of four bogies; my recollection is that it was more often five (of course strengthened at busy periods). A minor point of interest for Society members: the first time that I travelled on this train, 11:00 ex Dublin, the locomotive was No.171; I was disappointed! I had hoped for No.173, generally regarded as the best of that outstanding quintet, 170-174.

I was surprised to read in the "Enterprise" article that when the Dublin-based train went over to operation by AEC railcars the trailer of the three-piece set travelled behind the railcars. I never saw this happen with any AEC set anywhere on the Great Northern; right from the introduction of the AEC cars the trailers were, so far as I am aware, always centrally marshalled. During one summer a through Bundoran-Belfast coach travelled at the back of a three piece railcar set north of Clones, but that is another story. Could W.T.S. be remembering a situation that arose on CIÉ when some Dublin-Waterford trains were dieselised, using railcars? At the time of the inauguration of that service there was a strike in progress at Inchicore which delayed the installation of jumper cables in the new buffet car trailers; these latter therefore had to travel behind the power cars until after the strike was over.

The article mentions the names of some enginemen who operated the Belfast "Enterprise" in the 1950s. At the start of the service in 1947 one Adelaide set, Driver Joe Donnelly and Fireman Peter Rogers, worked both the up and down trains every weekday. Before long, however, Driver Joe Young and Fireman Dick Greer joined this small link. Each set of men now had its own engine, one worked the up Enterprise and came back on the early afternoon express from Dublin; the other brought up the 12 noon from Belfast and returned with the down "Enterprise". However a further increase in the size of the link was made by bringing in Drivers Billy Deane and Grey (Christian name unfortunately forgotten), with the result that the Adelaide top link's duties were no longer exclusively confined to Belfast-Dublin through workings. I think that Newry and Clones turns were now involved, but at a distance of 40 years I will not dogmatise about this. Another consequence of the change was that a driver and fireman no longer had exclusive 'possession' of a specific engine. Billy Deane was an uncle of Herbie Deane, a driver at Omagh and later at Belfast, who was tragically killed in the end-on collision at Hilden in 1985. Joe Donnelly, as befitted a man who joined the railway in 1899, retired in 1948 or 1949 and died not long afterwards. Peter Rogers, the senior Adelaide Fireman, naturally soon progressed to appointment as a driver, but died at a relatively early age, many years before he would normally have retired. Joe Young went out about 1950, but Dick Greer (never appointed a driver on account of his eyesight), was a familiar figure on the main line for many years, firing to a succession of "Enterprise" drivers and, after dieselisation, to those working other trains. A final note on "Enterprise" manning - the Belfast guard's turn included a trip from Dublin to Howth and back between arrival and departure of the mainline train: from 7/9 bogies to an articulated railcar.

My next comment concerns the Great Northern 4-4-2 tanks, briefly referred to in the obituary notice of the late Harold Houston. In the notice H.H. is credited with having said of the locomotive which came over to the NCC in 1924, "We had nothing that could get within a minute of her to Carrickfergus". This is a most interesting statement, whether it refers more particularly to the merits of the tank engine or to the lack of reasonable motive power on the NCC. Whatever about the early "Castles", how about the three V class 0-6-0s, only a year old in 1924? However, Harold's remark does not surprise me. The 20 locomotives of Class T2, and also the 5 T1s after superheating and other improvements, were identical in all mechanical and steam generating aspects with the five U class 4-4-0s of 1915, and of the abilities of the latter on various roads from Belfast-Newcastle to the Irish North there was never any doubt. All of these engines (tank and tender) were small, with 18" x 24" cylinders and only 4' 3" boilers, with grate areas of 18.3 square feet. (Broadstone enthusiasts please note that the very much larger class F engines of the MGWR, CIÉ/GSR 623 class, with their 19"x 26" cylinders had only 17.3 square feet.) But, and to my mind a very important but, the Us and Ts had 8" piston valves which gave ample

passage for exhaust as well as live steam. How many otherwise sound designs of steam locomotive have been prevented from realising their full potential by valve and steam passage design which choked exhaust I do not know, but the number is certainly large. How much better the GN QLs would have been with the larger valves for instance. The U class, with 18" x 24" cylinders and 175 lbs pressure, had the same sized valves as the Ss with their 19" x 26" cylinders and, after rebuilding, 200 lbs pressure.



Little time for admiring the view from the Craigmore Viaduct as No.85 makes a vigorous re-start from Newry on the homeward leg of the 26th September 1987 Steam Enterprise. (C.P. Friel)

Interestingly however, whilst the Us were everywhere highly regarded the tanks were more often considered to be useful rather than outstanding engines. I well remember a conversation I had with the late Harry Wilson, the last Great Northern Mechanical Engineer, when during the course of exhaustive comments (from both sides) on just about every extant type of GN loco the Glover tanks came under review. Somewhat to my surprise H.W. was not all that enthusiastic about them although he acknowledged that they performed their duties perfectly adequately. A drawback with the T1s and T2s, although not in any way related to performance, was of course the time-consuming rigmarole necessary to get these relatively long machines into the erecting shop at Dundalk, as vividly described by Paddy Mallon in Volume 25 of Five Foot Three. (Not the first case of the interests of the Works and of the Running Department failing to coincide.)

After the second series of U 4-4-0s was introduced in 1947 it was said by more than one driver that these five were weak on the first regulator valve. Was there perhaps some modification of the regulator design as compared to that of the earlier engines, similar to the regulator variation between NCC

Moguls and Jeeps? I never heard anything to this effect, either in Dundalk or anywhere else on the Northern. Apart from the obvious external differences the only variations that I know of between the first and second series of Us (and UGs), was that 201/205 and 145/148 had wider axle journals, leading to closer spacing of cylinders and hence higher pitched boilers and improved tyre fastenings.

My final comment concerns No.461, the subject of Charlie Friel's article. If only one out of 54 standard gauge Irish Moguls was fated to survive no better example could be chosen. The Woolwichs and the NCC Moguls were basically cross-channel types; the former, despite having been designed under the auspices of an ex-Inchicore CME, were largely a cross between Swindon and Derby practice, the latter owed much to the LMS Fowler 2-6-4 tanks. The big GSWR K3s started life as 0-6-0s and the K4s, though built as 2-6-0s, were similar to the K3s. The DSE engines however, despite having been built in Manchester, may be regarded as the most genuinely native and original Mogul design, even though they were in the direct line of descent from earlier South Eastern 0-6-0s. Then too, No.461 is an example of a relatively rare type of locomotive, though paradoxically one fairly common in Ireland - the inside cylindered 2-6-0. There were of course the grotesque looking "Aberdares" on the Great Western, and I believe that the Caledonian had some at one time. There were some Swiss-built ones on the Danish State Railways, one at least of which has been preserved. Nevertheless, this was not a common type. Hence on the two grounds of native origin and rarity as a type, as well as her own merits the renaissance of No.461 is to be welcomed.

I have mentioned one of many journeys behind Great Northern No.171. Only once did I travel in a train hauled by No.461, but the occasion was an interesting one. I had come from Belfast to Dublin on an 11 bogie 'All in' Rugby special, (8 K15s, 2 kitchen cars and a brake first) - Vs hauled between the two cities. However, as older readers will remember, these specials ran through to Lansdowne Road and for this particular trip the Vs was replaced by No.461 for the final two miles, neither a long nor a rapid journey, but one which today I am pleased to have made and to remember. I number it among my more unusual Irish railway trips, which include such items as footplating on a 'Big D', hauling one coach from Derry to Omagh; a non-stop footplate journey tender-first on a U between Bangor and Portadown; travelling from Farranfore to Valentia in a four-wheeled coach; a spirited run on the up morning boat train (6 bogies) from Rosslare to Dublin behind a J15; another 'Big D' journey, (this time as a passenger), when the loco of the 8:15 main line express ex-Belfast failed at Drogheda and an SG3 took us forward to Dublin; a Goraghwood-Dublin Sunday journey double-headed throughout by two Compounds, and several more which I will not mention for fear of boring such readers as have staggered through to the end of these random comments and recollections.

One final point - purely of information. In issue No.28 there appeared a letter from myself to the editor, in which it was stated among other matters that the GNR S class locos were all based in Dundalk in the late nineteen twenties and early thirties. There is an obvious misprint here, for Dundalk one should read Dublin.

BOOK REVIEW

The Lartigue, Listowel & Ballybunion Railway

1988 saw the centenary of the opening of what was described as "The World's Most Unique Railway". This book is the work of Michael Guerin, a Listowel councillor and chairman of the Lartigue Centenary Committee to whom the proceeds will be donated.

As many people probably know, this 10-mile line was a monorail supported on trestles. The designer, Charles Francois Lartigue, was, despite his name, a Spaniard and had derived the principle of his monorail from the manner in which camels carried loads in the Algerian desert, where he had worked. Not surprisingly, attention had to be given to the question of balance and the book contains amusing

descriptions of the combinations of people, freight and livestock required to achieve this.

The permanent way was constructed in Belgium while the locomotives were designed by the French-Swiss Anatole Mallet and built by Hunslet of Leeds. When the line opened the General Manager was a German and the Locomotive Engineer was English. The first train was driven by a Cornishman, whose grandson drove the last one on 14th October 1924, so, with the assistance of about 150 Kerry men, the line could be called truly international.

The book is liberally illustrated with photographs, maps, track diagrams, mechanical drawings and details of timetables, etc. Not only has Mr. Guerin resurrected these but he has also painstakingly unearthed many personal recollections from local residents, one of whom, at the age of ninety-six, is the last living employee of the Lartigue. He has done this generation and future generations a great service by his enthusiastic research and publication of this most interesting and enjoyable book.

TMcD



No.85 climbing Ballyboyland bank on 16th May 1988 in the final stages of the 3-day tour. (N. Poots)



No.184 and five of the Mullingar coaches, resplendent in their new liveries, leaving Athenry for Athlone, 15th May 1988. (N. Poots)