

FIVE FOOT THREE



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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 Banteer on the second day of the Mount Brandon railtour, 15th May 1989. (N. Poots)

EDITORIAL

Those who read the Editorial in the last Five Foot Three will remember Janus. Some may have seen him as a pessimist, even a prophet of doom; others, hopefully, as a realist. It gives no pleasure to note that certain predictions made then have been more than fulfilled. We now find ourselves in the embarrassing position of having, especially in the Republic, an expanding market for our product at a time when there is uncertainty as to our ability to supply it. The current ban on our wooden-bodied coaches over much of Irish Rail's system is the most obvious external factor and it is to be hoped that current negotiations will result in a satisfactory resolution of this problem.

It was suggested by a previous contributor that the Editor was a locomotive person not unduly concerned with what was coupled on behind. This is true insofar as locomotive working is concerned but does not imply a lack of awareness of the commercial necessity of carrying passengers in suitable accommodation. Such awareness must obviously include appreciation of the work of those whose interest is in coaches. However, it is undeniable that, unless we are to become a static museum, a yard (or shed) full of beautiful coaches is of no commercial value without locomotives to pull them - assuming that the railway company will permit them in the first place.

This begs the question, posed elsewhere by Messrs Beaumont and W.T. Scott; have we got our

priorities right? We have committed ourselves to the Carriage Shed project which alone, despite its 50% grant, will require the generation of large amounts of income over the next few years.

What of our steam locomotives - in more senses than one the motive power of the Society? Here one can do no better than study the report of Peter Scott. His report, informative rather than entertaining, will convey to the interested reader some idea of the enormous amount of work required on the Society's engines, while saying little of the dearth of men and money. Mr Scott is not by nature an alarmist and takes the view that there is little point in having a hobby and paying someone else to work at it. However, the potential costs of the work on boilers and particularly fireboxes which is beyond the capability of our volunteers is certainly alarming.

This brings us back to the Catch 22 situation - we can make money by running trains but we need money to get them running! Some time ago the Society purchased expert advice on how to acquire funds. The most obvious result of this was the Carriage Shed grant but this was by no means all - the members were also advised that they should think up ways of raising money! One can only guess at what research must have preceded this gem.

There has been a certain amount of success in the field of commercial sponsorship but surely there is scope for more. The old question arises: who will do it? There must be quite a few Society members in the business or professional world who, though unwilling or unable to join in the labours of Whitehead or Mullingar, could nevertheless make use of their contacts and expertise to the financial benefit of the Society. One stipulation - whilst such contributions could be publicised in a variety of ways there is no way that Merlin will be re-named Mitsubishi!

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

Sullivan Boomer

By now you will all know that we have potential problems operating on Irish Rail next year, but that a Working Party has been formed to investigate the problem and enter into appropriate negotiations to solve it. The situation is very fluid at present and until we have a clearer view I can't say any more.

On a more positive tack, we have had a successful season, both out of Belfast and Dublin, culminating in a private charter in November. In spite of the problems which have beset train services crossing the Border, our Steam Enterprise train loadings were good, as were the Portrush Flyers. The Dublin based operations were a resounding success, with all trains showing high loadings. The experimental marketing of the first Wexford train exclusively to the English market was very successful, the train was completely filled, and our passengers, when questioned on the way home, expressed the view that we gave good value for money. The biggest complaint, which was totally outside our control, was the lack of connections north from Crewe in the early hours of a Sunday morning.

As you will read elsewhere, there is a large amount of work going on at Whitehead on our locomotive fleet. Major work will be needed on No.85 and is currently going ahead on No.461 and No.171. All boilers will eventually have to be removed from the frames for examination and refurbishment.

Other locomotives will have to wait until these priority jobs are completed, and it is essential that this work programme be completed if we are going to continue operating over the next few years.

Similarly, major work programmes are going ahead, in the Carriage Department, with the restoration of 87, 1097 and 861, and in the Site Department with the stage works in connection with the Whitehead Carriage Shed.

We, as a Society, have two major priorities which we must face up to and achieve now, or we will have a very bleak future. One is the funding of the Carriage Shed, which has not so far attracted the level of member involvement which the Council would like to see; the other is more practical involvement by members in the restoration and work projects at Whitehead and Mullingar. The latter problem is easily

solved - every member who can help doing so - make a commitment to attend even once a month! The former is equally easy, but requires active co-ordination. There is no spare capacity amongst the present Council membership we are all heavily indeed over committed, so additional help is required. Is there anyone out there, please, who would consider acting as Appeal Co-ordinator for the Carriage Shed?

We must be an active Society - can you be part of it?



Membership Secretary Paul McCann presents Jim Crozier, director of Wm Mullan & Son Ltd, with a gift to mark the conferring on him of life membership of the RPSI on 8th November 1989. Sadly, Mullan's shop, which provided the Society with a valuable city centre outlet, closed in August. (Belfast Telegraph)

NEWS FROM COUNCIL

Robin Morton

The Whitehead carriage shed project was high on the agenda at the Council meetings during the year with the decision being taken in May to go ahead with the £90,000 scheme. The Council agreed to take up the offer of a 50% grant from the International Fund for Ireland based on a three-phase programme to be carried out over three years. Phase one, which cost £42,500, included earthworks, fencing and

laying of hardcore for foundations, as well as design fees and planning/building control approval. The work was completed in October and paying the Society's half of the bill has virtually cleaned out our capital projects fund. Our thanks to Carrickfergus Literary and Historic Trust Fund for a grant of £1,500. In November the Council set the ball rolling for phase two with a fresh appeal to the membership to raise funds for the next part of the work. A members' open day at Whitehead was also planned for the end of January.



The other side of this gentleman is better known. The RPSI's new Vice-President, Dr Garret FitzGerald, watches No.4 arrive at Dun Laoghaire on 24th June 1989. (Matt Kavanagh, Irish Times)

In May of 1989, the RPSI's silver jubilee year, the Society signed a new operating agreement with NIR which assured the future of mainline steam operation on the company's metals. The Society had to increase its public liability insurance cover from £5m to £15m and also had to take out accidental damage cover of £1.5m. In connection with this, the RPSI had to arrange insurance company inspections of its tour train. The Society is also now responsible for employing the NIR crew which operates the train, and this has also meant a higher employers liability insurance premium. The Society's annual insurance bill is now in the region of £12,000. As against all this, the NIR charges for operations were significantly reduced and it was possible to keep fares at largely the same level.



A press reception was held at Bord Failte premises to publicise the commemoration of 150 years of railways in Ulster. Present were: Michael McMahon, RPSI publicity officer; Sir Myles Humphreys, chairman of NIR; Trevor Caughey, manager of Bord Failte. A touch of glamour was added by NIR personality girls Ruth Davies and Paula Hughes. (Belfast Telegraph)

Having got over one problem, it was disappointing to find another just round the corner. In the autumn the Society was recoiling from the decision by the Republic's Minister for Transport and Tourism to extend the ban on wooden-bodied stock to the lines between Dublin and Waterford, Galway and Westport. A committee was set up to arrange negotiations aimed at heaving the RPSI train excluded from the restrictions, and we were awaiting developments at the time of writing.



Pictured at the sod-cutting ceremony for the Whitehead carriage shed on 4th October 1989. Front row (left to right): Michael McMahon, RPSI Publicity Officer, Joe Knox, Northern Ireland Tourist Board (who performed the ceremony) and Ernie Gilmore, RPSI Operations Officer. Back row (left to right): Stephen McKittrick, McKittrick Contracts, David Roulston, NITB, and Dan McQuillan, Kirk McClure & Morton. (Belfast Telegraph)

The news of the ban came as a particularly bitter blow as 1989 had seen a further expansion of the Society's highly successful day trip operations in the Republic. A season of steam trips from Dublin attracted excellent support and also produced some most useful income. Everything seemed set for this to become a key part of the Society's annual programme but now a question mark hangs over the venture. A crumb of comfort, however, was that despite the new measure it looked likely that a worthwhile season of steam operation throughout the country could take place in 1990, at least.

At the AGM our long-serving Treasurer John Richardson, who was standing down after 24 years, was made a Life member of the Society. During the year the same honour was bestowed on Brian Ham, who was retiring as our legal adviser after more than 15 years and to Jim Crozier, a director of Mullans

Bookshop which had served as an RPSI ticket outlet and information centre from the early days of the Society through to August 1989, when the Donegall Place premises were closed. It was nice to be able to say thanks to three such faithful servants of the Society. Our new legal adviser, incidentally, is member John Creaner.

The new Council had a full complement at the start of the year and a new Vice-President - Dr Garret Fitzgerald, the former Taoiseach and a lifelong railway enthusiast. It is hoped his involvement will help raise the RPSI's profile in the Republic.

At the end of the financial year in October, Bill Scott resigned as Treasurer and John Richardson kindly agreed to be co-opted back on to the Council to see us through the 1990 AGM.

At the EGM in November the Council's proposal of a subscription increase was passed unanimously and this will come into effect in 1990.

The RPSI membership topped the 900 mark at the end of 1989 for the first time and it would be gratifying if we could reach four figures. Every penny of the income from members' subs is needed, and there could be an even greater benefit if more UK taxpaying members decided to covenant their subscriptions. This means the Society can re-coup the tax members have already paid on the money they send in for their sub.

Whitehead Railway Project, the Government-funded youth training scheme, has continued to provide essential administrative and publicity back-up to the Society, as well as continuing its valuable coach restoration work. Our thanks to all concerned.

The Society was delighted to be a part of the celebrations organised by Northern Ireland Railways to mark the 150th anniversary of the Ulster Railway in August. The RPSI steam train operated a series of trips on the NIR system, culminating in a day-long shuttle on the Belfast-Lisburn line on 12th August, the precise anniversary. Many tributes were paid to the Society.

In the season the Society organised film shows in Belfast, Dublin and London and these once again helped keep members informed of developments in the close season.

The Council was able to spread its workload to the most effective Operations Committees - one based in Belfast and the other in Dublin. The Council itself held one meeting in Dublin in September and in November an emergency meeting to discuss concerns over wooden-bodied stock took place in Dundalk.

The Council was grateful to those members who helped by taking up positions of special responsibility.

SOUTHERN STEAM

Rory McNamee

May 1989 brought an early but unusual start to the Dublin operating season. Filming for a TV mini-series "The Real Charlotte" was booked to take place at Moate on the 3rd May with the studio people insisting on using No.184. The J15 would have needed a new set of tubes and a new front tube plate fitted to regain a boiler certificate. Imminent work due on the motion, boxes and journals would have made such boiler work uneconomical at this time so the special effect department were let loose on this problem! The solution consisted of an industrial boiler being transported on a flat car behind the engine, a flexible steam pipe delivered steam to the smokebox where solenoids operated by switch gear in the cab suitably choreographed provided a reasonable facsimile of an engine starting from a station although being propelled by a diesel. To minimise damage the connecting rods were taken down. The 'actors' on the footplate were P.N. O'Brien driving and Gary Brennan firing. The running department are now content in the knowledge that if they have to run a dead engine they have an experienced crew.

As No.85 was to feature on the two day tour to Tralee the Mullingar representative was pressed to

escort Inspector Bernard Curtis and Driver Michael McGuinness (both Inchicore) to meet the locomotive, for footplate and general familiarisation. On Wednesday 10th May we waited at Portadown, in vain, for the engine to arrive but concern with some running heat on the recently turned tender axleboxes meant a deferment to the following day where, at Newry, both IR and NIR crews were finally introduced.



No.85 heads north over the River Bann at Portadown on 18th June 1989. This was the return leg of a “Mystery Tour” arranged around a locomotive exchange at Dundalk in which No.4 was going to Dublin for summer duties after attention at Whitehead. (C.P. Friel)

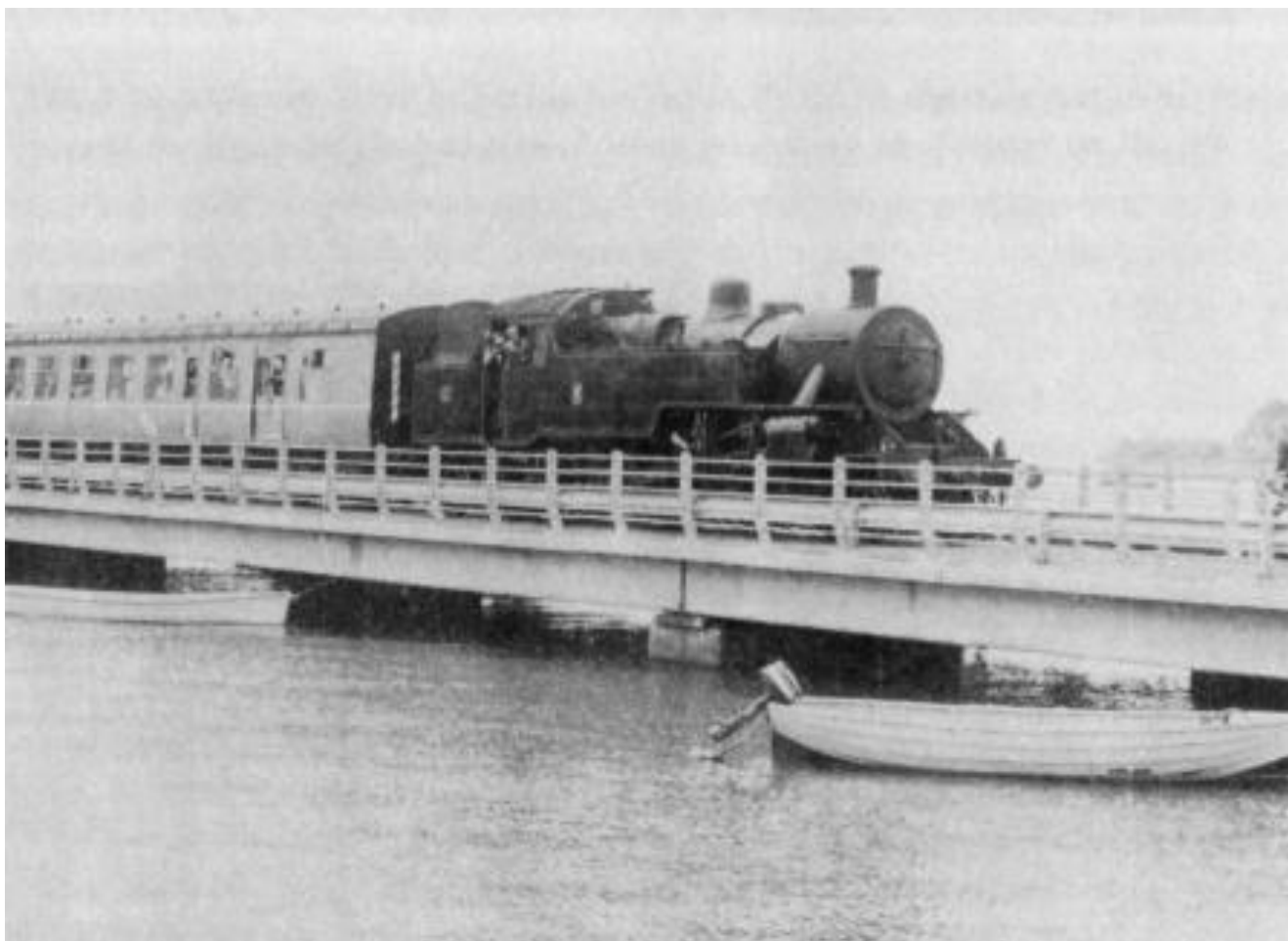
A problem with a large tube on No.4 caused worry during the two day tour and meant that the engine had to return to Whitehead for attention. So it was on Saturday 20th May that No.4, with an IR crew in charge as far as Portadown, returned the engine and three film coaches with some spirited running on the way. A 7-man Dublin work-party travelled to Whitehead the following weekend, returning only when No.4 had been successfully steamed on the Sunday.

28th May saw No.85 reappearing in Dublin for the 3rd June outing - the first of the Dublin based revenue earning trips.

A capacity crowd travelled to Dundalk in celebration of its Heritage Year. A large contingent - six bus loads - enjoyed a tour of the Cooley mountains. A disappointing number accompanied us to Mosney in

the afternoon. The engine and crew were surrounded by camp hostesses in sparkling white, dressed for publicity shots, just as well the engine was clean! On returning to Dublin the disposal crew found out at first hand why No.85 is sometimes lovingly referred to as a 'porker' or are we spoiled by drop grates?

A mystery trip advertised for 18th June was an opportunity to exchange No.85 and No.4 at Dundalk. Over-interest in the dining car (contents) combined with a smart exchange of locomotives deemed it necessary for the Dublin locomotive representatives to make an undignified exit via a door window of the mysteriously locked dining car. Fortunately the escape was completed before the train got going. After taking water No.4 continued light to Dublin only to be held at Mosney as a permanent way party had possession further up the line. After an hour's delay the road was re-opened but an IR special from Mosney to Cork was allowed to proceed before us. The result of this delay was that we had to return to Drogheda for water from where we set out again for Amiens Street.



A tranquil scene at Wexford Quay, giving no indication of the probable traffic jam behind the photographer as No.4 leaves for Rosslare Harbour on 12th August 1989 excursion from Dublin. The number of persons apparently occupying the footplate must be a matter of conjecture and, indeed, concern. (W.T. Scott)

An interesting venture for the Society was to take place on the 24th June. For the first time No.4 was passed to run on the DSER to Rosslare Harbour where a strategically placed turntable earned a reprieve from the scrapper's torch to facilitate this and subsequent runs. We were also advertising this trip to the UK market where an all-in ticket covered return BR/Sealink, breakfast at the Royal Marine Hotel in Dun Laoghaire and the steam run to Wexford. A prompt departure from platform 5 got us to our first

scheduled stop at Dun Laoghaire where we were to pick up our VIP party who, at the instigation of Dave Humphries, had been entertained by the RPSI at Restaurant na Mara. The main purpose of this reception was to welcome aboard our new Vice-President Dr Garret FitzGerald who travelled with us as far as Greystones where greetings were exchanged with the locomotive crew who exposed their political allegiances to the amusement of all.

Water was taken at the recently repaired tank at Rathdrum after the fine run up Glenealy bank allayed any concern about the water or climbing capacities of the locomotive. Good progress allowed us to put in an unscheduled run-past at Gorey to the delight of our 260+ UK participants and a large turnout from the town.



No.4 makes a vigorous start from Kingsbridge on 14th May 1989 with the Mullingar carriage set, working empty to Mallow, on the Mount Brandon Railtour. (C.P. Friel)

At Wexford our VIP party detrained to receive a musical welcome from a local traditional folk group before proceeding on to White's Hotel for lunch. Meanwhile we 'exchanged' some of our customers for locals for our run to the Harbour. Difficulty in getting back to the pier from the turntable led to problems in watering the engine. The main cause was the presence of two large ferries disembarking and reloading their passengers and vehicles. As the boats have priority of water intake, a lower pressure had us leaving without a full tank. A hydrant on Wexford quay finished the job although we brought the main street to a complete standstill. Expert running had us back to Dun Laoghaire in time to connect with the Sealink ferry to take our English friends back home. A highly successful day all round and undoubtedly a worthwhile venture for future seasons.

Sligo was our next destination on 15th July. It was necessary to fill both the tanks at Enfield but this did not prevent a minor panic. During the week before the trip an urgent telephone call informed us that one tank had been emptied and a leak had developed in the base of the balloon tank. A temporary repair and a garden hose under the supervision of the cabin staff ensured supplies on the day. At Mullingar our good friends Eamonn Lacken and Sean Nally from Athlone joined Paddy Perry (Dublin) - all now enjoying their retirement - for the trip to the Yeats county. By coincidence Bobby Horan of Mullingar was working out his last day on the railway but an invitation to join us was turned down with the comment that we were “not going to kill him” on his final day! Johnny Dynes took over the regulator from here for his last day on steam as he was retiring later that month. Our Dublin passengers detrained at Carrick-on-Shannon and we proceeded to Sligo, filling the train well out of Carrick, Boyle and Ballymote. Sligo was unusual in steam days for the fact that the engines of three different companies - GS&WR, MGWR and SL&NCR - used its facilities. A fourth company was represented when the SL&NCR acquired GNR(I) 0-6-0s. Our trip added a fifth dimension by adding the NCC to the list. Coal was taken on board at Sligo quay and by the time we had turned, watered and cleaned the fire, at the site of the recently demolished shed, it was time to head back for Dublin. When disposing of the engine at Connolly sections of the rocking grate were found to have broken. Difficulties in operating services to Dublin led to a few anxious moments before replacement bars were delivered from Whitehead but eventually they arrived and were successfully fitted in time for our next run.



No.4 at Killarney, prior to leaving for Tralee. To do so, the train had to be reversed beyond the bridge in the background before proceeding up the bank on the left. (C.P. Friel)

The 12th August saw our second “Sea Breeze” to Rosslare. The water tank at Gorey took its turn to give cause for concern as insufficient water remained after the previous trip. The problem was overcome by taking a new supply from the station toilet one hundred yards distant and fitting a ball valve to the tank. This allowed the trip to run without a hitch which was just as well as it had been sold out a fortnight in advance. On this trip we were accompanied by a party of pensioners and management from the Irish Times, the former representing a generation that grew up when steam was commonplace and it was great to see them enjoying ‘going back’. So much so that we look forward to their company again. A feature of this and the previous “Sea Breeze” was the provision of special catering facilities for private

parties ably provided by Tim Moriarty and his team.

At the Harbour new watering arrangements enabled a quicker turn round this time and also eliminated the previous mid-town entertainment on Wexford quays. The dining car staff, using the firebox as a waste disposal unit, caused some headaches on the return run but a quick fire cleaning job by David Carse at Gorey transformed the performance of the locomotive, allowing us into Dublin on time.

The 9th September had us operating our three local Dublin trips to Maynooth and back. While acknowledging the excellent value for money of the provincial trips the Maynooth Shuttles are an opportunity to cater for the larger and/or young families. A routine check of the water tank at the Boston sidings on the Thursday before the runs brought the shock knowledge of an empty tank with its normally dependable ball valve removed and the supply blanked off. A quick visit to Peter Cuffe of the Signal and Electric Department at Pearse resulted in the supply being rapidly reinstated. Many thanks to Peter for his quick response.



This pause at Limerick Junction enabled several tour participants to gallop through the rain to the Bit and Bridle in an effort to offset the effects of the impounding by Irish Customs of certain commodities from the southbound 'empty stock' working. (C.P. Friel)

Once again our trips could not have run without the co-operation of the Irish Rail crews especially Inspectors Jack Ahern and Brendan Flynn along with drivers Nicky Moore, Tommy Blackwell, Dick Mileagh and indeed Dan Renehan showing us that the young fellows can do it too! To this list must be added all our members who helped in one way or another to make the season another very successful one. At the risk of offending by omission I am taking the easy way out and not listing all.

Finally, it is my sad duty to report the death of locomotive inspector Edward Madigan of Limerick. Anybody who knew Eddie will know that his generosity and co-operation made tour operating a joy. Let me take this opportunity to offer our sincere condolences to his family.

No.3 “R H Smyth” ex-LP&HC 0-6-0ST

The “Derry Engine” was returned to traffic in August after retubing and temporary repairs to the smokebox and ashpan. However, there are three firebox patches which are in a wasted condition and the boiler inspector requires these to be replaced within a year. The work will require removal of the boiler since stays in the way of the patches must be replaced and access is not possible with the boiler in the frames of the locomotive. At the same time the smokebox will require complete renewal.



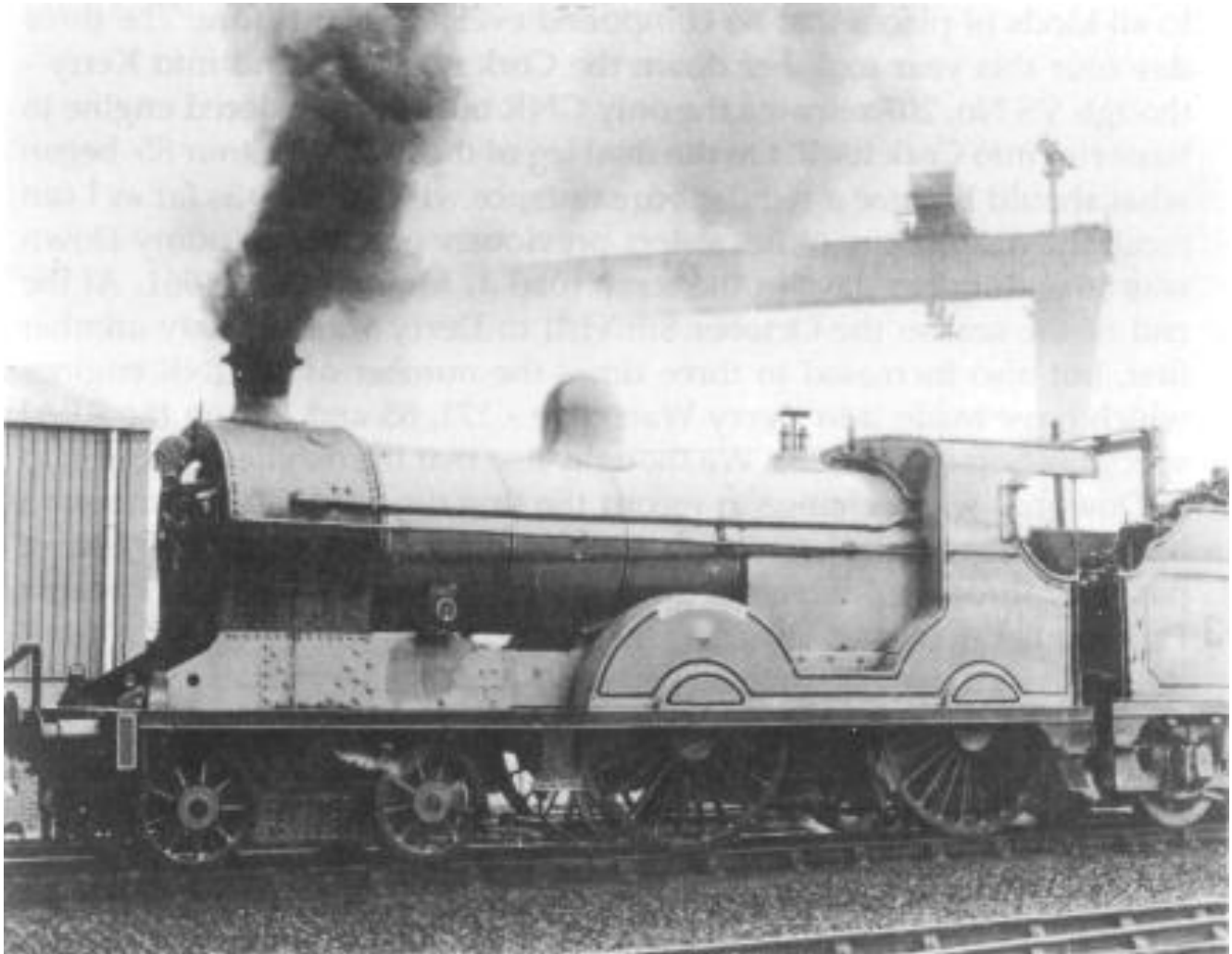
Day two of the Mount Brandon, and No.85 crosses the Limerick-Waterford line at Limerick Junction en route to Dublin. (I.C. Pryce)

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

The tank engine finished up its season of Dublin-based excursions with six broken driving springs and a hot crankpin bearing which appeared during the light engine working back from Dublin. The springs have been dismantled for renewal, revealing fractures of from one to eight of the ten leaves in each. As yet there is no obvious reason for their premature failure - they have certainly not seen service consistent with breakage of leaves on such a scale. Once the springs and bearing have been attended to the locomotive should be available for a further year's service before withdrawal from traffic for major boiler work. The tubes are already approaching their renewal date and leakage round the foundation ring is symptomatic of corrosion in areas where access is impossible with the boiler in the frames.

Removal of boilers for inspection and repairs is now required on all our locomotives. All the boilers are

showing signs of age in the shape of wasted tubeplates, stay heads, firebox plates and rivets, and are prone to leakage which of course impairs efficiency and accelerates corrosion. Boiler refurbishment looks like being a major item on the locomotive maintenance agenda for the next few years, the order probably being No.461, No.171, No.3 and No.4, with No.184, No.186 and No.27 receiving attention during heavy overhaul whenever they are required back into traffic at some future date. The cost of materials and the employment of skilled labour for this work will increase the maintenance expenditure considerably.



On one of her last appearances before withdrawal No.171 shunts the Portrush Flyer stock at Bridge End prior to taking the train over to Central Station on 6th August 1988. Today the locomotive stands naked and unadorned at Whitehead, ready for boiler lifting. (Eric Langhammer)

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

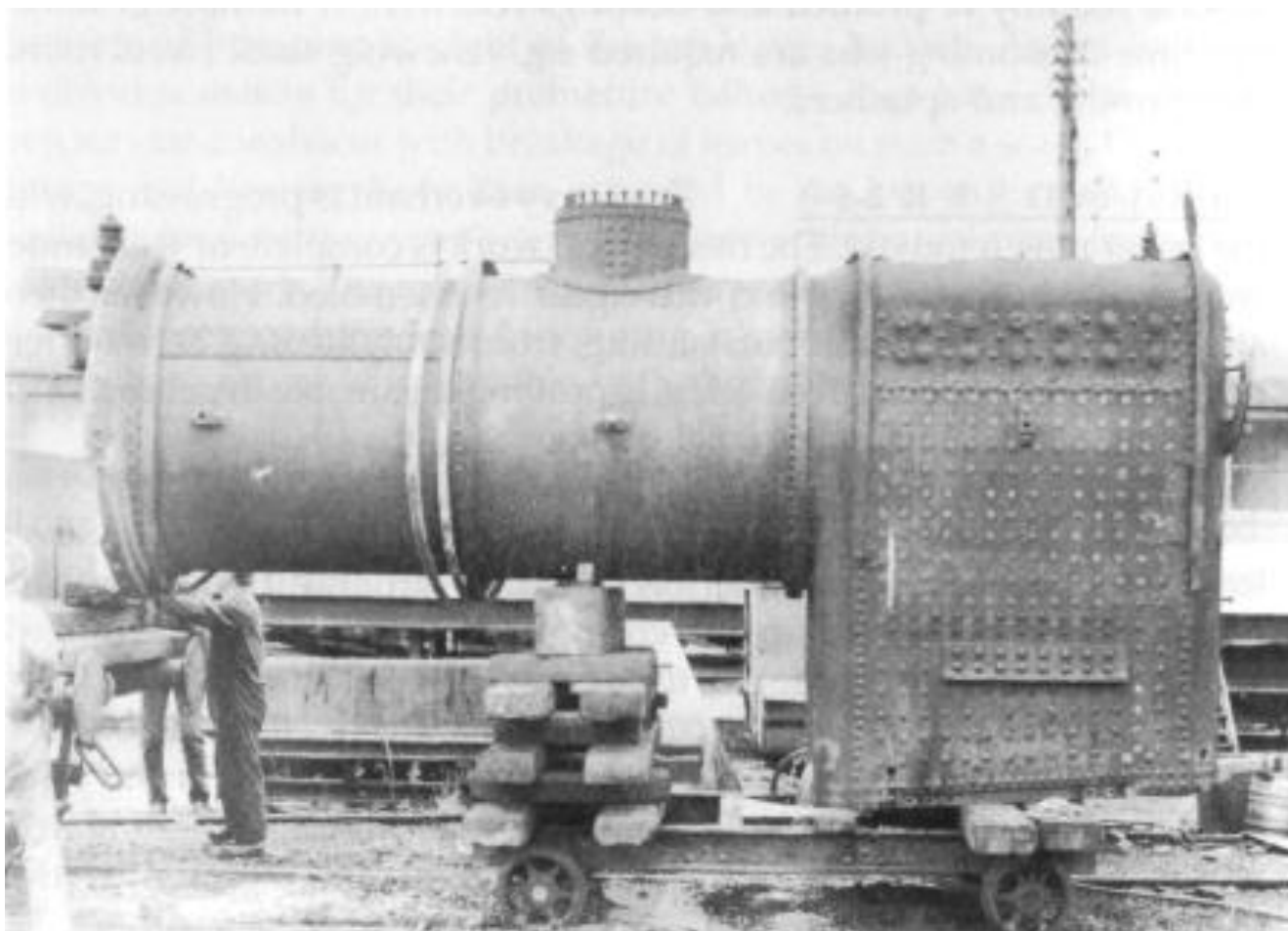
After the 1989 operating season the compound was taken out of traffic for annual boiler inspection and minor repairs, still operating with the tender from No.171, which received overhaul of the running gear and framing earlier in 1989. The result of the boiler inspection was both unexpected and disturbing in that it revealed severe wasting of the plates on both sides of the inner firebox. In short, this means that that locomotive is out of traffic for the time being and heavy expenditure of time and money will be required to rectify this situation.

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

Work had been progressing, as time permitted, to prepare the boiler for removal for a full examination. As this work was well advanced, it was decided that the programme should be accelerated in order to return this locomotive to traffic at the earliest possible date as a standby to No.4. It is hoped that by the time this report goes to press the boiler will have been removed. The full extent of repairs will only become apparent when it is opened up for examination. In addition the smokebox and steam pipes require to be renewed. Mechanically, the locomotive is in good condition with wheels recently re-profiled and bearings renewed. A number of minor but time-consuming jobs are required, e.g. renewing slack rivets round the framing and splashers.

No.461 ex-DSER 2-6-0

The heavy overhaul is progressing, with the boiler now removed. The mechanical work is complete or well under way with wheels, pistons and valve gear re-assembled. However there are many minor jobs still outstanding, from straightening bent buffers to applying paint. The ‘Tech’ class is proving invaluable in getting small machining jobs done at minimal outlay.



Our first boiler lift. The enfeebled diesel (see loco report) prepares to propel No.461's boiler back into the shed on 7th September 1989. Much work has been done since then and the boiler is now being re-tubed. (C.P. Friel)

When the boiler was lifted out, the first job was to remove the eleven long stays for access. The interior, especially around the firebox, was found to be badly scaled up and chemical descaling is being arranged. The floor of the barrel was found to be badly pitted and has been repaired by electric

welding. Several circumferential seam rivets were found to have heads missing and have been replaced. Examination of the water space round the firebox revealed that the heads were also missing from most of the lower seam rivets, even though a good head presented itself on the fire side of the plates.

These rivets are being renewed or replaced by patch screws, as appropriate. Any reader who is not quite clear as to what is actually involved is very welcome to come to Whitehead and see for himself or, better still, lend a hand since we are always short of volunteers!

As well as the firebox seams, it was judged wise to renew all the foundation ring rivets since access to these will not be possible after the boiler is refitted to the locomotive. Although many of these did not require immediate renewal, their likely condition after 5 or 10 years had to be taken into account. The worst part of this job is removal of the old rivet whenever the plates are slightly out of line thus preventing the rivet from driving out cleanly. The new rivets are made from $\frac{7}{8}$ " diameter steel bar, the first head being formed using a die and pneumatic hammer.

No.461's boiler has a copper patch round the firehole ring and this is secured to the original plate by a series of patch screws and stays. The last inspection report available states that this patch was leaking badly, so the screws were removed for renewal. Many of the holes were found to be out of line so they had to be re-tapped to a larger size. Riveting was considered impossible here since there was no access for the rivet jammer.

The new long stays are being made by forging up the ends of the $1\frac{1}{8}$ " diameter steel bars and threading them to the GSR standard boiler stay thread of 10 tpi. Washout plugs are being renewed where necessary, with the holes tapped out to the next size up. The front tubeplate has been built up where corroded and the flange partly renewed. A new smokebox is to be made, retaining only the chimney and door from the original.

The only concession to modern practice is the addition of a hopper type ashpan, similar to the NCC tank engine. This is only possible because the N class boiler with which No.461 is now fitted is not so deep in the frames as the original. A drop grate similar to No.186 is being fitted. This involved making patterns for six different types of firebars and more than once I was tempted to stick to the simplicity of the original Beyer Peacock design and make a couple of extra clinker shovels instead!

No.23 Ex-Irish Shell Planet Diesel Mechanical Shunter

The Whitehead shunter requires repairs to the engine following the breaking of a tappet. In order to renew the tappet the cylinder block must be removed and at this stage the block and head will be faced up to try and cure the recurring blown gasket problem. At present the locomotive is operating rather lopsidedly on two out of three cylinders and is restricted to light duties.

Ex-CSÉ Ruston & Hornsby Diesel Mechanical Shunter

The "Carlow" locomotive has had its diesel engine overhauled and at present the wheels are being re-profiled, one set having been completed. A curious feature of this locomotive was the pronounced groove on the tread of the wheels. When examined it was found that no two wheels were of the same diameter and the discrepancy between the leading and trailing wheels was nearly one inch! How the loco worked at all was a mystery since full adhesion would have been impossible and the strain on the drive chains and gearbox must have been colossal. No less mysterious was one of the springs, in which the two halves of the broken bottom leaf did not match! Information recently received suggests that this locomotive was numbered "4" - can anyone throw definite light on this since even the Carlow sugar factory could not help?

Stored Locomotives

No.186 and No.27 are at Whitehead; No.184 is at Mullingar.

Plant and Machinery

When NIR's smithy was closed the equipment was purchased and is now in store awaiting the provision of a workshop. It consists of a forge, hammer, heat treatment furnace and work table, together with anvils and hand tools. A horizontal boring machine was also acquired and this has now been installed. Its first job is likely to be boring out No.461's brake hangers for re-bushing.

1989: SOME NOTABLE ULSTER ANNIVERSARIES

J.A. Cassells

Our steam programme this year has certainly been dominated by anniversaries, most notably the 21st of Northern Ireland Railways, the 25th of the RPSI and the 150th of the Ulster Railway. We have been closely involved in celebrating all three, and it is interesting to delve a little deeper into this year's tour programme and highlight a few other - lesser known - anniversaries, coincidences and comparisons.



With No.4 based in Dublin for the summer, No.85 worked a second season of Portrush Flyer excursions seen here arriving at Ballymena on the outward journey. (W.T. Scott)

First of all, a first ever. Since coming into RPSI use No.85 has been to all kinds of places that no compound ever visited before. The three day tour this year took her down the Cork main line and into Kerry - though VS No.207 remains the only GNR outside-cylindere engine to have run into Cork itself. On the final leg of the three-day tour No.85 began what should become a regular acquaintance with Bangor; as far as I can recall the nearest any of her sisters previously got to the County Down was No.86 ending her days in the scrap road at Maysfields in 1961. At the end of the season the 8th October visit to Derry was not only another first, but also increased to three times the number of ex-GNR engines which have made it to Derry Waterside - No.171, No.85 and No.174 on the RBAI special of

September 1963. We thought also that the excellent photo stop at Downhill was a chance to record the first time any GNR compound had ever been through a tunnel - but then we remembered her frequent passages through Whitehead tunnel, and her run through the Phoenix Park tunnel earlier this year.

From a first to a welcome return. Passengers on “The Cooley” of 3rd June and the 19th August “Enterprise” had the chance to get a photograph of a steam train in the platform at Mosney. Belfast-Mosney steam specials were reasonably common in the 1960s: on 16th August Michael McMahon was kind enough to help NIR out with a party which had missed the 09:00 ordinary service and would otherwise have been stuck until 11:00. On the same day many of us went to Malahide to see the Fry layout. How many visitors were aware (I certainly wasn’t until told!) that the model of the massive Watson 4-8-0T No.901 was in fact built for C.L. Fry by his equally well-known modeller friend Drew Donaldson?

We come next to a combination of first and last. The “Flyer” of 6th August was the last steam train to use the NCC electric signals at Coleraine - and the diverted “Enterprise” of 2nd September the first to use the new ones. Also - and rather embarrassingly - the August Flyer was probably the only northbound steam train ever to drop the tablet at Ballymoney!



More of the 150th anniversary. No.85 prepares to leave Portadown on the 08:15 special to Belfast Central on 10th August 1989. (W.T. Scott)

The diverted “Enterprise” on 2nd September deserves a word of its own - not least of our thanks to Ernie Gilmore, Michael McMahon and NIR for saving what turned out to be a very pleasant day in a town which to the mind of this (prejudiced) writer has at least as much attraction as Dublin! Seriously,

we were all reminded of the much more disappointing Saturday 13th September 1980 when the first-ever “Enterprise” was postponed by one week after a similar bomb scare.

An early September trip down the NCC fell neatly between two anniversary dates. The first Saturday in September 1965 was the day of one of the most exciting runs since the 1930s on the NCC, and readers can savour the details of Alan Robinson’s mighty effort with No.4 in the pages of Mac Arnold’s “NCC Saga”. The following Saturday, 11th September 1965, was of course the day of the first RPSI steam tour to Portrush with GNR UG No.149, followed by a run from Lisburn to Portadown and back with No.171 double-heading VS No.207. Although No.85’s crew on 2nd September 1989 was disappointed not to be able to show her paces on the Dublin Road, driver Jimmy Donnelly had no trouble recognising the NCC. His possibly unique range of footplate experience extended not only to Enniskillen, Portadown and Adelaide, but also to York Road, Belfast for a time after steam finished on the GNR in the late 1960s.



Passing Adelaide goods yard. No.85 on the 16th September 1989 “Steam Enterprise”. (C.P. Friel)

On now to the final two “Enterprise” trips which did get to Dublin, and to the 16th September train which collected a large party at Poyntzpass. This set me thinking about the last time a steam train would have called to collect a party of the general public. Several RPSI outings, including one film contract, have called here, and after the end of regular steam there was a regular ballast working from York Road and one occasion (13th July 1968) when a steam set borrowed for the Scarva specials ran on to Poyntzpass to reverse. None of these trains, of course, picked up a public party - so we have to go back to 28th October 1966.

The screening of that perennial tear-jerker “Gone with the Wind” generated a school children’s special

from Poyntzpass and stations north to Belfast. Some of us travelled on the evening return working from Great Victoria Street, and had the rare bonus of a propelled empty carriage working from Poyntzpass to Portadown after the passengers had been set down. The engine was No.51, and the train ran the night before the UTA's last official steam train to Dublin(!). Little over a fortnight later the GN section bade its final farewell to regular steam. The very last passenger working was a Portadown football special on 5th November 1966 and the crew, again on engine No.51, were driver Roy Stanfield and fireman Willie McCaughley. How nice that in 1989 both these men are regular - and much appreciated - handlers of our engines on main line tours.



As the tide is out the photographer can keep his feet dry while No.85 crosses one of the causeways at Glynn with the 08:07 Larne Harbour-York Road special of 7th August 1989. (Eric Langhammer)

In terms of footplate men, a word would not be out of place about the 8th October tour. Happily installed on No.4's footplate that day was driver Tom Crymble of York Road, making his last steam run before retirement in the near future. Tom belonged to a an exceptionally talented link of younger

steam drivers on the NCC in the mid sixties, and our pleasure to see him on the footplate in October was mixed with surprise that such a fresh-looking man should be anywhere near retirement!

So, finally, to the week of Steam on NIR in August. For the first time since 1970 it was possible to use a NIR runabout (now greatly increased from the original 'fifty bob' - i.e. £2.50) to travel by steam train, and readers of a recent news-sheet will have been interested to note that NIR conductors don't turn a hair at being asked for a single from Belfast to Belfast at half past five in the morning!



On 12th August 1989, the final day of the anniversary specials, eight return trains ran between Central and Lisburn. No.85 is seen here near Botanic station with the second train of the day. (C.P. Friel)

Monday 7th August was almost 20 years to the day since the last time steam appeared on the 08:00 ex Larne (No.10 with driver R.J. "Batman" Simpson and fireman Aubrey Ryans on 4th August 1969). This year's run kept the diesel timings which NIR had sportingly laid down in almost every section. The highlight was a run from Carrickfergus to Greenisland the like of which has rarely been equalled by

any steam locomotive.

The next morning's trip began at 05:50 from Whitehead. Only those hardy souls in the 1960s who frequented the news train from Dublin (advertised to the public at 04:50 ex Portadown) would ever have timed an earlier steam departure in recent years. This train followed the 06:20 ex Derry, and the nearest thing to it in steam days would have been the 07:45 Ballymena-Belfast which until the (first) closure of the Antrim branch was regularly worked by the GNR locomotive which had brought the Antrim goods in from Grosvenor Street.

The final two runs from Bangor and Portadown took place on two contrasting days of pouring rain and bright sunshine, but were marked by excellent running. On each day there was some quite outstanding acceleration in the short sections between stops, and gratifyingly large numbers of people travelling. The Saturday shuttle to Lisburn was a fitting climax to the week, and featured some of the best Belfast-Lisburn performances with a heavy train recorded for many years.

May I finish with a brief 'commercial'? To mark the Society's 25th anniversary I have prepared an illustrated history of the RPSI's main line activities which is being published by Leslie McAllister's London "Syndicate" of supporters. Every penny of profit made from this book, will go to keep RPSI trains running into the 21st century - so please make sure you get your copy, and don't just look at someone else's!

THE IRISH CHANNEL TUNNEL

W.T. Scott

Much time recently has been given to discussion of the rail link from London to the Channel Tunnel but not many realise that an Irish Channel tunnel was proposed at the International Engineering Congress in Glasgow in 1901.

Three possible routes were suggested:

- (a) Mull of Kintyre to Antrim coast 12½ miles
- (b) Wigtownshire to Larne or Donaghadee 23 miles
- (c) Holyhead to Howth 62 miles

(a) was abandoned, despite the attraction of the shortest length, because of the remoteness of the Mull of Kintyre from the rest of Scotland. Its maximum depth would have been 462 feet.

(c) was abandoned as financially impracticable because of its length. Its maximum depth would have been 432 feet.

(b) was the alternative favoured, either from Portpatrick to Donaghadee or Stranraer to Larne. The problem with the former route was Beaufort's Dyke, a deep trench seven miles from the Scottish coast. The trench ran for 30 miles south from the Corsewall Point and varied in depth from 600 to 900 feet. The geology of the dyke made tunnelling difficult and draining of the tunnel would also have been a problem.

The tunnel route as chosen made a dog-leg north of the dyke on a one mile radius, on this route the variation in depth was only 75 feet. The line was to leave Stranraer station and cover 5 miles to the tunnel entrance down a gradient of 1 in 75, leaving the coast at the Ebbstone beacon. It reached the Antrim coast at the Gobbins after 34 miles and climbed at 1 in 75 to join the BNCR north of Carrickfergus. The total run would have been 51½ miles; 34 in the tunnel, 25 of which would have been under the sea. Minimum depth below the sea floor was 150 feet. The tunnel was to be double track, built to generous clearances and the estimated construction time was 10 to 12 years.

This was the period when the great Alpine tunnels were being built; Simplon, St. Gotthard and the Arlberg. The Arlberg cost £107 per yard and 12 yards per day was dug.

The principal problem with such a tunnel would have been drainage. Water leakage has always been a problem with the Severn Tunnel, a mere pygmy compared with the proposed Irish one. If the drainage could have been solved the tunnel, given the genius and persistence of Victorian engineers, was technically possible. Financially, it might have been another story.

The question of gauge was not specified but extra lines were to be laid from Carrickfergus to York Road which would suggest 4' 8½" gauge. Electric traction was proposed, with speeds in the range of 60-70 mph and a Belfast-Stranraer journey time of one hour. Ventilation was to have been by electric fan.

The only work done on the tunnel appears to have been a trial shaft sunk to a depth of 950 feet on the Co. Antrim side. Railway enthusiasts can only regret that the work was never carried out.

The information given here comes from the "Railway Engineer" for 1902; if any member can amplify or correct it I should be very grateful. Incidentally a supporter of the 1901 scheme was the then Prime Minister, Balfour.

A CONVERSATION WITH HARRY WILSON - PART 1

Charles P. Friel

Harry Wilson was the last Chief Mechanical Engineer of the Great Northern Railway. After his retirement, Harry and his wife went to live with his wife's widowed sister, Mrs McGahey, near Markethill. It was there that Johnny Glendinning came in contact with him. As a result, several RPSI members had the pleasure of visiting this remarkable man in Mrs McGahey's home where we were always made most welcome and treated to a generous tea, however many we were. Harry was a real gentleman who could recall his Dundalk days with great clarity and enthusiasm and yet was never bitter nor even cynical about the demise of so much that he had worked for. He always had time to talk and to listen - even to green amateurs like ourselves. He gave us a lot of help in our early struggles with No.171's lubrication, for instance, and many of his ideas have now become part of our own locomotive maintenance practice.

One Sunday afternoon in November 1973, Johnny, my brother John and I went to see Harry. As on previous occasions, the visit was most enlightening and helped us to get in touch with an era we had only glimpsed the tail end of. Leaving Harry, we resolved to get as much of the afternoon on paper as we could. Once back at Johnny's house, I grabbed his father's typewriter and we noted all that we could, in as much detail as we could manage, using Harry's own words where possible.

What follows is based on those notes, though it must be said that the original may well have been written with some naivety or lack of understanding on my part. Any errors are totally mine. I would greatly welcome discussion on what follows; only in that way can we all learn.

This then is our memorial to Harry, engineer and gentleman, who died in August of the following year.

Perhaps the most competent driver I knew of was Davy Ryans and he had a fireman with the unusual name of Venus. They were the finest combination of driver and fireman imaginable and it was no fluke that they worked the 9 o'clock from Dublin for years and years. Of course the 9 o'clock was an important train for more reasons than one but from our point of view it was important for it was on the 9 o'clock engine that all our coal testing was done.

You see the coal contract was a very big item in our expenditure and it was a crucial one too for everything ultimately depended on good coal. Each year the various collieries were invited to tender for the contract and each sent a batch of perhaps 15 or 20 tons to Dublin. There the 9 o'clock engine was carefully kept in peak mechanical condition and, by keeping the crew and the load the same throughout, a fair comparison could be made between one coal and another.

What happened was this. An amount of coal was carefully weighed on to the tender in Dublin and the

Coal Inspector kept an eye on how it was supplied, how it handled, its steaming abilities, how much clinker and ash it produced, etc. At the same time a sample was sent off to the chemist in Sheffield, and he analysed it for sulphur and ash content and for its calorific value. Later we had our own chemist, of course.



The fireman starts the injector on his side as S class 4-4-0 No.173 “Galtee More” gets away from Dublin (Amiens Street) with the 9 am to Belfast - the coal testing train mentioned in the article - on 20th July 1914. The loco is just 17 months old and is in lined green livery; note the bogie splasher, the burnished smokebox door straps and handles and the jack alongside the smokebox. Note too the three lamps; in addition to the usual express lamps over each buffer, the lamp at the chimney indicates that a slip portion is attached. The date was a Sunday so this is not the normal weekday composition and one can only speculate what was to be slipped before the first stop. Here the train’s normal set of five bogies has an extra third marshalled next the locomotive and three extra six-wheelers on the tail. On a summer weekday the train left Dublin made up to 11 bogies, slipped one at Drogheda for Oldcastle, detached two at Dundalk for Bundoran and one at Goraghwood for Newcastle and slipped another coach at Lisburn for Portrush. Of the remaining six bogies, one was a through coach for Bangor which worked through to Great Victoria Street. (Ken Nunn collection, courtesy LCGB)

Then the chemist’s report and the Inspector’s report were brought together and a Figure of Merit was arrived at for each sample. It was on this Figure that the contract was placed. Very often the contract

went to a comparatively dear coal and the Secretary couldn't understand this "lack of economy", as he saw it.

Then, when the first consignment arrived, it too was subjected to the same close inspection and if it wasn't up to scratch we got on to the colliery and raised hell. A careful eye was kept on the quality of the coal and testing went on throughout the year. The contract usually went to a Welsh colliery, very often Tredegar.

Over the years, the Coal Inspector and the crew had the thing down to a fine art and they introduced a board across the tender near the back and carefully weighed in the coal in front of this board. They judged the thing so finely that they seldom had anything left in the bunk when they got down to Adelaide. If the calculations had gone wrong for some reason, then they would use some of the reserve carried behind the board. In this case the Inspector would count the number of extra shovelfuls used.

There was a time when we had to burn American coal. It was alright in steel fireboxes, but we hadn't many of them. It played hell with copper fireboxes and we were left with a lot of leaking boxes. Fortunately, we didn't have to use it for very long.

What we did have to use for a long time was briquetted coal and briquetted turf. With the turf the fireman had to be shovelling the whole time and the engine threw out a continuous stream of glowing embers. I well remember coming down to Dundalk on the last train from Dublin one night and the engine was burning nothing but turf. As we ran alongside the minor road at Ardmillan, south of Drogheda, there was a man driving a donkey cart. He got off and drew his long coat over himself and the donkey's head as the trail of fire spread around him and his cart.

We transported tons and tons of turf from Donegal to Dublin during the Second War and it was stockpiled in the Phoenix Park. It came from all over Donegal to Strabane, though we had some turf traffic from our Bundoran branch as well. We designed and built a special conveyer belt to transfer the turf from Donegal wagons into our own high-sided, purpose-built vehicles. One load of turf that I saw being loaded, shortly after the conveyer belt went into operation, was very heavy. The turf was hardly 'saved' at all - it was 95% water! The Donegal Inspector wisecracked that it would make good firing after it had had a winter in the Park.

During the times of fuel shortage just after the War, we had to make coal briquettes from coal slurry and pitch and produced a fuel slightly larger than the present-day Furnacite. It was fairly successful but oil firing was the most successful emergency fuel of them all.

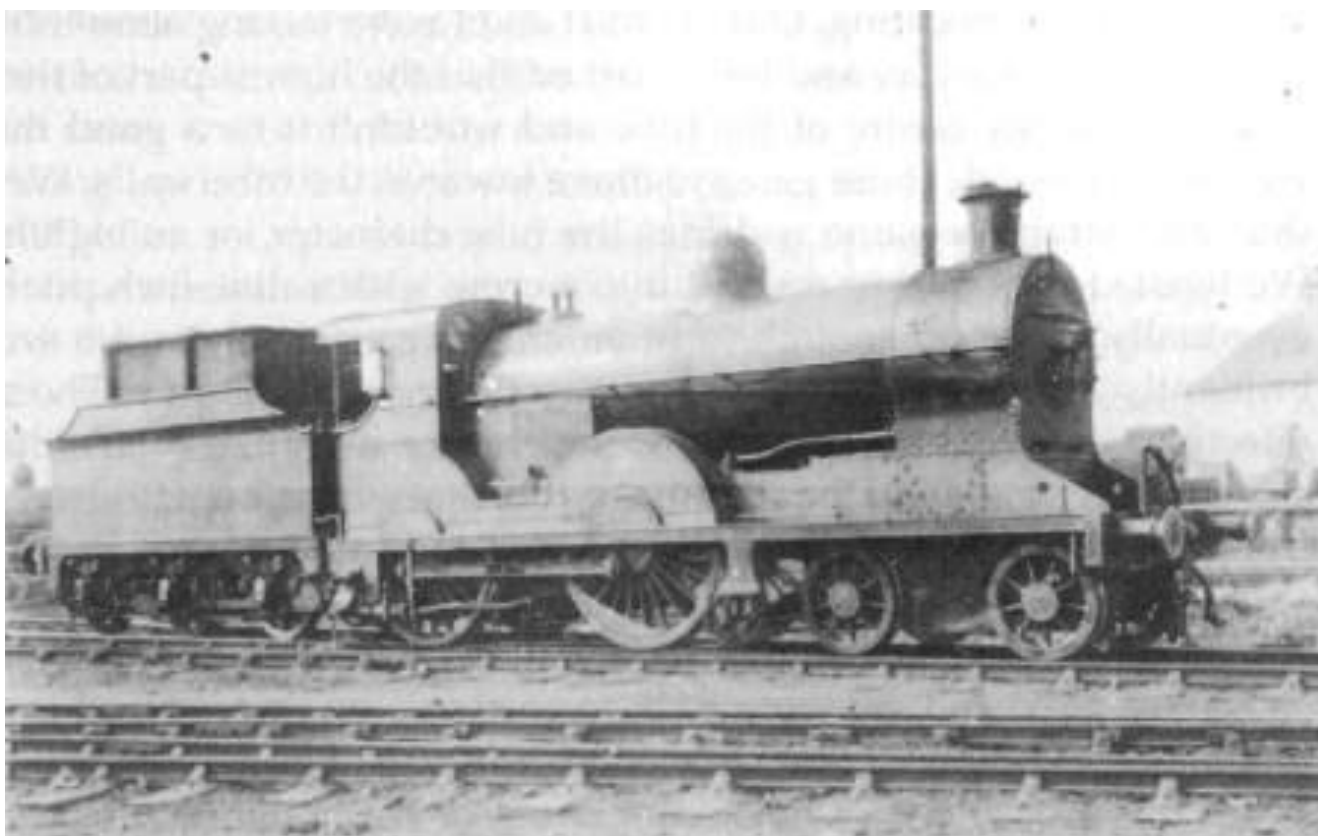
We used the Laidlaw-Drew burner. It had the practical advantage that the fireman could open the firebox door and look in, to see how things were without the risk of an explosion as in some of the other burners. Our burner swirled the flame in the firebox and this produced a very even heat which had little or no adverse effect on the firebox. The oil used was a heavy bunker oil, 200-second grade, and we had steam heating coils in the tender to keep it liquid. Now while oil remained at one and five-eighths pence (old money) per gallon and coal at 50 shillings per ton, the oil firing was cheaper. But once the oil began to move up faster than the coal, then the coal came back into its own.

I will tell you about the only time that I deliberately disobeyed orders. Mr McIntosh was very taken with the good work we were getting from the oil burners and told me to order up parts to fit a further forty engines.

I could see that in the near future the price of oil would go up in leaps and bounds, so I did nothing. Sure enough, just about the time that the parts were falling due for delivery. McIntosh came to me in a great fluster and asked if the oil equipment could be stopped as the price of oil was getting beyond bounds. At that time the price of oil had risen to four (old) pence per gallon while coal had moved up much less, to £3 per ton. You can see for yourself that the oil burning was getting too expensive and

even today I doubt if there is such a terrible lot to be gained financially from oil firing.

The oil burner had a great disadvantage. You couldn't force it the way you could coal; you couldn't increase your steaming rate for heavy loads or that. You could certainly turn up the oil supply but all you got was black smoke from the unburnt fuel and no increase in the amount of steam available. Superheating was, of course, the greatest single step forward in steam locomotive design in my day - it brought about great changes. The first superheater we had was the Phoenix and it was only a cod of a thing. It consisted of a great set of pipes which wound their way round the smokebox, picking up whatever heat there was going to waste down there. It made life very difficult; you couldn't get at the tubes to clean them and it cluttered up the smokebox so that the chimney had to perch perilously close to the front rim of the smokebox ring. The later Schmidt or Robinson patterns were much more successful in every way.



S class 4-4-0 No.172 "Slieve Donard" sports a functional-looking oil tank in the tender space, at Adelaide c. 1945. The steam pipe for the exhaust injector formerly fitted to these locomotives may be seen snaking its way from the back of the smokebox and around the trailing driving wheel. It takes a more discreet and probably less accessible, route on No.173 in the previous picture. (Kelland Collection)

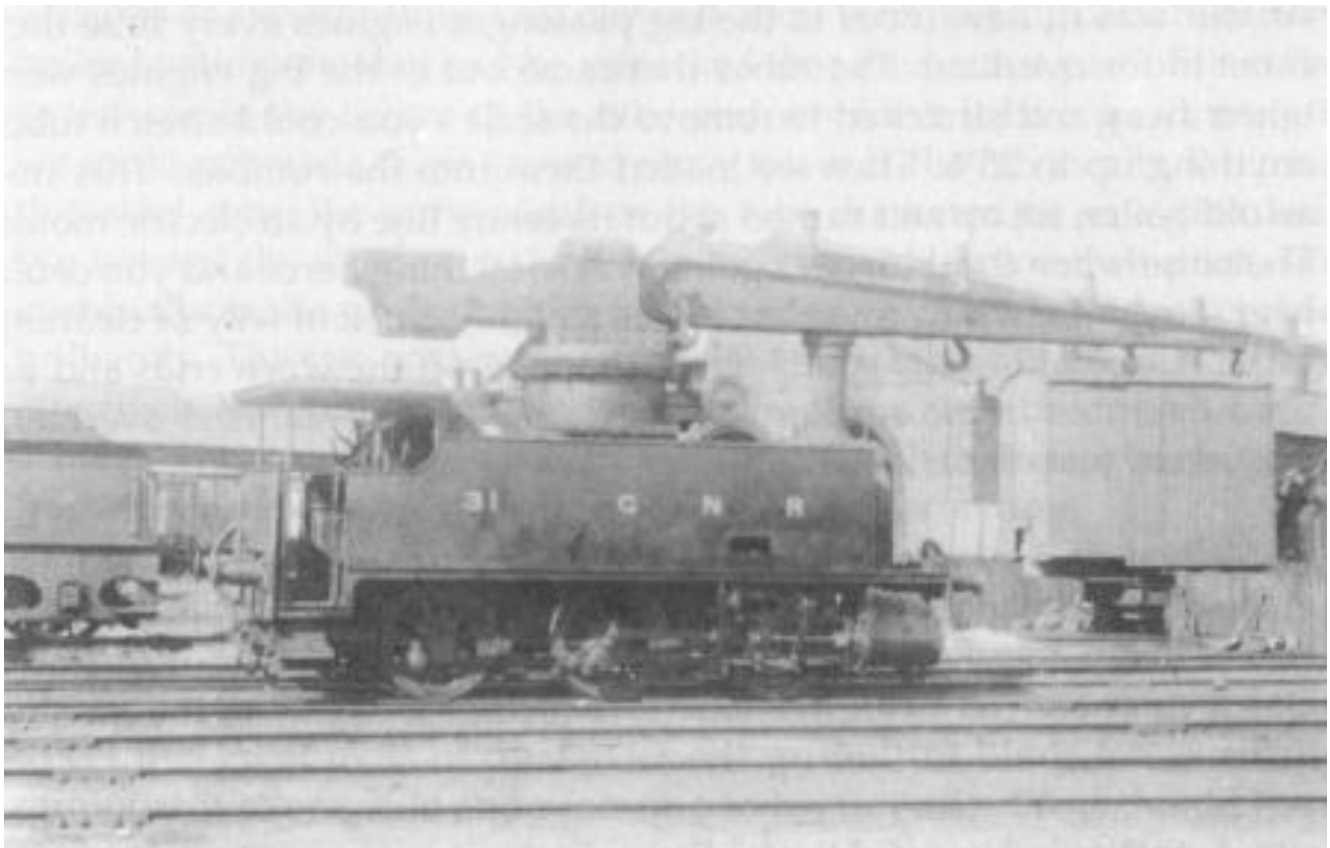
There was one interesting experiment we carried out which gave a degree of superheating. Our chemist and I were talking about efficient boiler heating one day and he remarked that the hottest part of the tube gases was in the centre of the tube and wouldn't it be a good thing if we could persuade those gases to move towards the tube walls. We used thin steel strap the same width as the tube diameter, or an eighth less. We twisted the strap to make it into a screw with a nine-inch pitch. We eventually made up enough to fit an engine completely and it worked brilliantly. The rate of steaming increased very considerably. The straps effectively lowered the smokebox temperature, a very desirable thing to achieve. The straps had the advantage, too, that when you withdrew them from the boiler they cleaned

the tubes at the same time.

Unfortunately, the engine went out and when we got her back the strap had gone and we were back to the basic engine again. I can just imagine a steam raiser or a boiler-maker in one of our sheds struggling to get this great mass of twisted steel out of the boiler before carefully dumping it to one side and reporting to his foreman, "You should have seen what came out of the boiler - a big load of scrap metal! Sure they know nothing about steam engines in Dundalk anyway!" Like many another innovation on the Northern it was discarded, used wrongly or simply condemned.

We introduced a self-cleaning smokebox with the VS engines, but it didn't last long either.

A more successful innovation on the VSs was the rocking grate. The grate had two strokes - a short stroke which was ideal for rocking the fire to clean it, and a long stroke used only for dropping the fire. We deliberately made the stop between the short and heavy strokes as awkward to move as possible; a great heavy casting we had. One day the fireman of an Up train decided that he could do with cleaning his fire at Goraghwood. He set to work with the rocker but he thought things weren't going well enough. The heavy casting didn't deter him one bit, so away came the stop and he gave her the full stroke. We had an engine failure on our hands right away!



Crane tank No.31 seen in 1930, soon after delivery. Later, it became standard practice to run with an open wagon coupled in front to help shunting and avoid impaling things with the jib! Much later, Dundalk (in the shape of RPSI members Paddy Mallon and Pearse McKeown) fitted a coal bunk one Bank Holiday weekend - carefully making a drawing of their handiwork after it was done! (Loco & General Railway Photographs)

Still staying with boilers, I'd like to mention something about tubes. The Northern ordered its tubes in two standard lengths, 10 foot 2 inches and 11 foot 4 and a half inches. These covered the vast majority of our boilers which had been more or less standardised over the years. What we did was fit new tubes

to the big passenger engines every time they came in for overhaul. The tubes that came out of the big engines were taken away and stretched to remove the scale - you could stretch tubes anything up to 25%. Then we loaded them into the rumbler. This was an old boiler, set up and turned about its centre line by an electric motor. The noise when the thing was going was something fierce and you could hear it over the whole town but it was a highly efficient way of cleaning tubes. Once out of the rumbler, we chopped off the worn ends and reused the tubes in the smaller boilers. By the time of the next overhaul, they were just about done.

When designing a new boiler, we deliberately left out a few tubes at the bottom where they could get blocked by ash at the front end. The loss of heating surface was only a minor thing, but the loss of flue area was greater and, as a result, we tried to include as many of the missing tubes as we could further up the tubeplate.

A particularly useful tip for fitting new superheater flue tubes was this. We found that when expanding in the new tube the expander would come tight but when you released the expander, the tube tended to contract a little and come off the tubeplate. To get over this we cut three grooves in the tube on the face to be expanded into the copper; each groove was an eighth of an inch wide and a sixteenth deep. It gave the copper something to bite into and it helped make a better joint. Of course, you made sure of your joint by hammering in a ferrule.

The Northern had phenomenally clean water, except for Dublin where we used Canal water for years and Drogheda wasn't a whole lot better. Apart from those two we were very fortunate indeed. Every time we got a Dublin shunting engine in for repairs the boiler shop foreman would ring up and report, "One and a half tons of scale in boiler number so and so." At first we thought that the Dublin men were missing their washouts but the trouble was entirely due to the water. We counteracted the build-up of dirt by adding a chemical to the boiler water and it was fairly successful. Before that, I sometimes saw the scale built right up to within a few rows of the top of the boiler - it was unbelievable.

Mention of grooving reminds me, did you know that we deliberately set up a weak spot in cylinder covers? We cut a groove, not too deep, on the outside face of the cover in the hope that if the cover was blown off by water pressure, the weakness round the face would encourage the middle of the cover to go first. This, we hoped, would help save the studs in the cylinder casting from being torn out and it would probably protect the rods and pistons from severe damage or bending.

Fortunately this sort of trouble seldom arose though we did have one peculiar accident with a piston head. It happened that an engine was sent to us for overhaul in the dead of winter and she had to lie about the yard for a few days before we were ready for her. When the shunting engine, most likely the crane tank, coupled up to her and gave her the first pluck there was a most unusual noise. When we got the engine into the shop and routinely set about inspecting the cylinders, we found that the piston head on one side had a D-shaped piece broken off at the bottom of the head and as neat as anything. The cylinder had water in it which had frozen and seized the head. Then the ice made the metal brittle enough for the shunt to break it off as if it were cut.

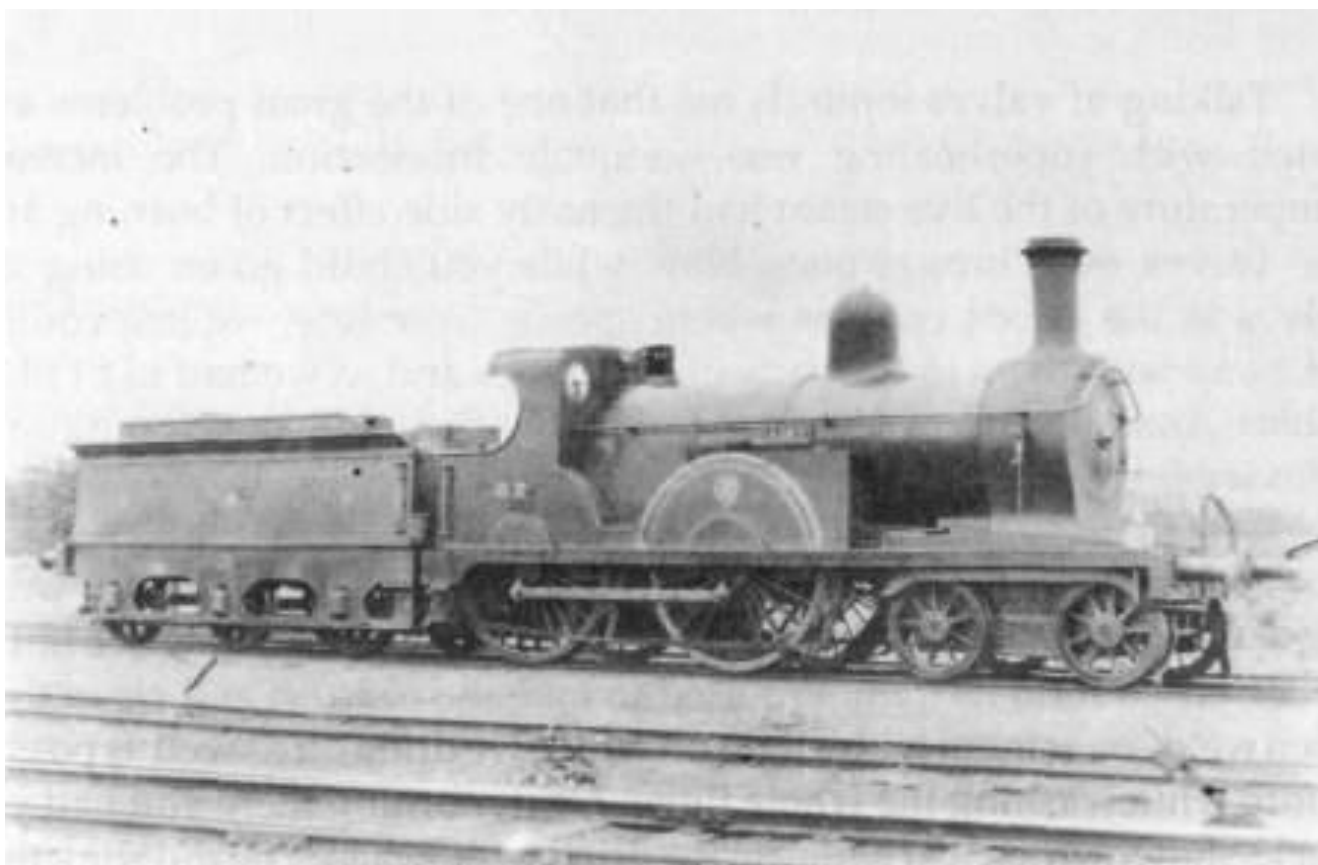
Talking of valves reminds me that one of the great problems associated with superheating was adequate lubrication. The increased temperature of the live steam had the nasty side effect of burning away the valves, even bronze ones. Now while you could go on using slide valves in the goods engines where speeds were low, we just couldn't get away with them in the passenger engines and so we had to fit piston valves. And of course we had our difficulties then with developing a new cylinder oil.

Perhaps one of the more important jobs during an overhaul was to test the rods for signs of cracking. For this we had a sonic tester but we seldom used it on its own. We used to take the rods off and clean them. Then we'd cover them with a light oil which we dried off as well as possible before whitewashing the whole thing. Next morning there you had your cracks shown up as clear as day in the

dried whitewash. You did sometimes get a phantom crack but the whitewash never missed a crack. We used the sonic tester to confirm the whitewash test.

Now there was an incident with connecting rods which I thought reflected badly on Dundalk Works and it concerned a 6' 6" P class 4-4-0. Just before one spell of holidays we discovered a crack in the connecting rod of one of these engines and we put it to one side. For some reason it was left there; we should of course have put the fire through it there and then but we didn't. As luck would have it, something happened to a 6' 6" P on the system and they came to Dundalk to seek help. In the unattended Works didn't they find the very thing they were after, a 6' 6" P connecting rod - and away they went with it. Some time later that same rod broke and killed a man. It should never have happened.

Was there serious thought given to putting anything bigger than a 4-4-0 on the road? Yes, of course. But the whole nub of the problem lay in the size of the Works. To handle anything bigger than a Compound would have meant extending the erecting shop into part of the machine shop and smithy behind the erecting shop. And to have a wider traverser would have interfered with the engine paint shop at the least, if not the pattern shop and the boiler shop as well. The layout was very restricted and there was a lot of bogland around so you couldn't really expand.



P 6' 6" class 4-4-0 No. 82 "Daisy" seen at Dundalk soon after rebuilding in 1913. The locomotive was superheated and renumbered No. 27 in May 1932. (Watson collection)

We were firmly set against having a leading pony wheel, so a 2-6-0 wasn't possible. Maybe it was just prejudice. We thought that the leading pony might have contributed to the Sevenoaks derailment, on the Southern in England. On the other hand, though, the NCC had used leading ponies for years without bother.

But in our book anything bigger than a 4-4-0 had to be a 4-6-0. In fact I produced a sketch of this 4-6-0 but it was only to prove that the shops couldn't handle such an engine. A bigger engine would have been a great asset but it wasn't to be.

So we decided that the new big engines in 1948 would be the traditional 4-4-0. We were able to persuade the Civil Engineer that a heavier three-cylinder engine, with no hammer-blow, wouldn't damage his track. So we increased the weight of the engine to bring the adhesion up to something like that of a six-coupled engine.

(To be continued)

ENTERPRISE, ETC.

W.T. Scott

To reply to Laurence's informative and welcome response to my "Enterprise" article; I think a two hour service pre-war would have been perfectly possible. A schedule of:

Dublin-Drogheda 32

Drogheda-Dundalk 22

Dundalk-Portadown 37

Portadown-Belfast 29

120 minutes would have done, given a seven bogie train. All the above times have been kept by steam. One slight question mark would have been water and the compounds would have been better with the later 4,000 gallon tender for the driver's peace of mind. When No.85 made her run two years ago some 700 gallons remained out of 4,000 but with the smaller tender only 200 gallons would have been left - a slender safety margin. The above times represented the limit for reliable steam working.

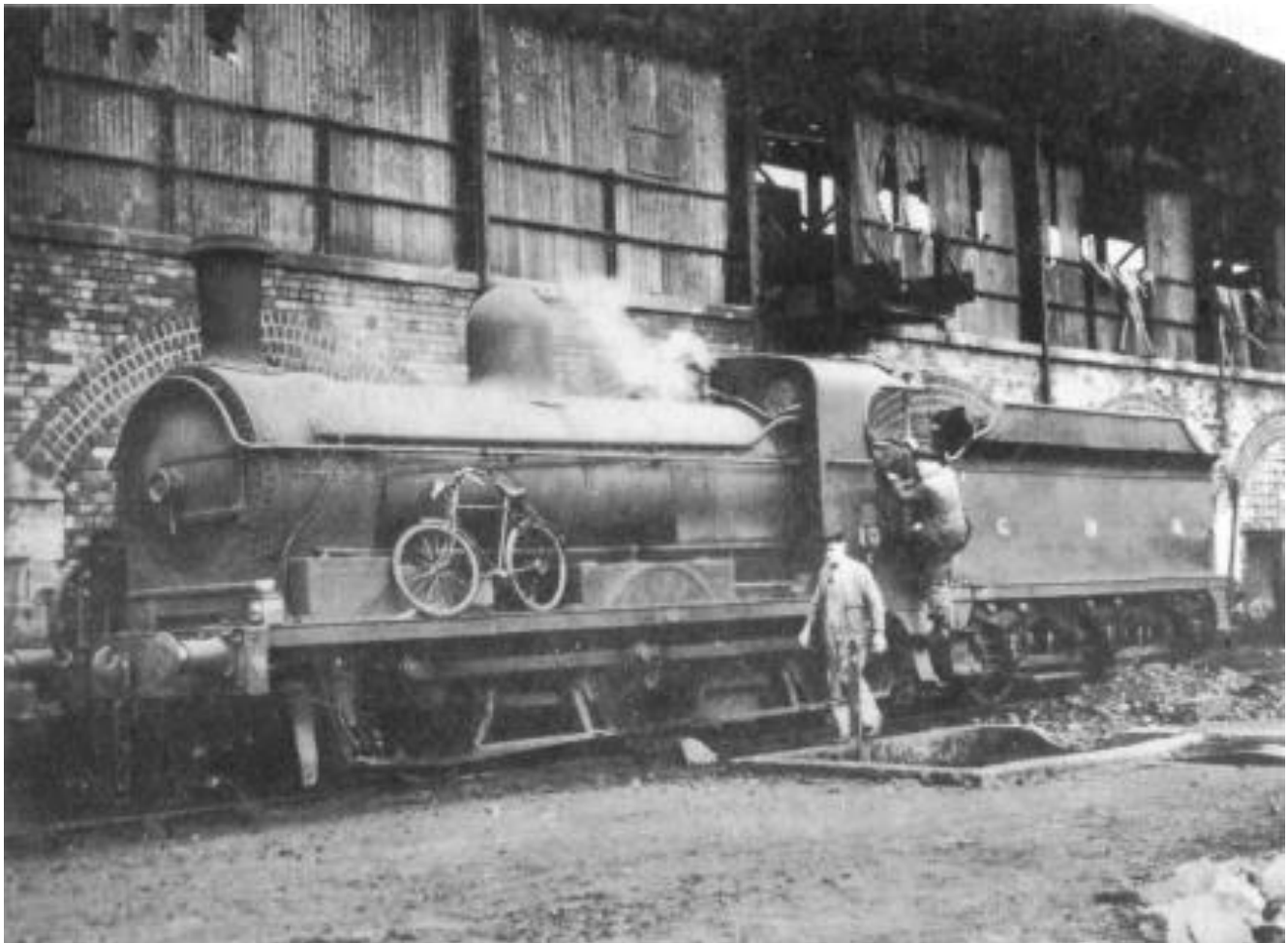
Lord Dunleath has suggested that a speeding up of the Dublin-Belfast trains is overdue, though given the present state of the permanent way north of Dundalk it is hard to imagine this. Could anything better have been done in 1932 by steam? Well, even time runs were frequent to stop in Drogheda so a compound could certainly have passed in 30 minutes, 22 minutes to Dundalk could hardly have been bettered. The 37 minutes over the bank and round the slacks to Portadown was extremely tight and so any further saving must come between Portadown and Belfast and here I believe a pass to stop time of 25 minutes. could be run giving a total time of 114 minutes. This is 1½ minutes outside even time and I don't see where these could be recovered, given the 8¼ mile climb to Adavoyle where they were lost in the first place. Even now, with diesel engines of twice the power of a compound, the time is still 115 minutes. It was a great shame that the later VS class engines never had the chance to try the pre-war schedules. They certainly could have kept time up the banks but could they have run fast enough down them? 80 mph seemed about the VS limit whereas the 250 lb compounds were timed at 85 mph and not only on the descent from Adavoyle.

With regard to the Dublin-based Enterprise I certainly saw it once with the trailer at the rear but I may have been guilty of generalising from this one particular instance. Being diesel it was not a train I gave much attention to and it would have been unlike the GNR to have made up a train in such an unsuitable way as a regular working. I remember the Kingsbridge-Waterford working referred to by Laurence, having frequently hoped for a steam substitution to strengthen the train.

The Glover tank which went to the NCC was an outstanding engine according to Harold Houston but I feel that he was not thinking of the "Castles" when he made his remark but rather the small "Glen" class 4-4-0s which had just arrived and were never as good as the Scotch engines. I feel that Harry Wilson's lukewarm attitude to the Glover tanks was due to the difficulties with them at the works - see Paddy Mallon's article - rather than their performance. They always seemed to me to be entirely

masters of their work.

To digress, the GNR(I) 4-6-0 project is an old story, very well told by Paddy, but one question never asked is: did the GNR need a 4-6-0? Such a machine would have had a higher first cost and additional maintenance costs throughout its life. In addition, experience in England with 4-6-0s which were really elongated 4-4-0s showed that nothing like a proportionate increase in power was obtained - for instance the C.R. Cardeans as compared to the brilliant Dunallastair IVs. The GNR trains were not beyond the capacity of a good 4-4-0 which Clifford must have realised. Prestige always plays a part in the railway company and I would suggest that Clifford had no real enthusiasm for the project but was pushed into it by his directors, on the lookout for the increased prestige which a large new engine would bring. From the diagram it seems certain that it was only a weight diagram from the civil engineer to show what he would accept and I doubt if any serious design work was done. The diagram does not show the firebox and grate but with a trailing wheelbase of 7'6", as compared to the 8'8" of the Qs, the deep firebox with flat grate of the 4-4-0s could not have been used. A shallower firebox with a sloping grate would have been needed which in turn would have meant a different firing technique and probably this would not have been received by a small class of engine among so many on the system. The ashpan would also have presented difficulty.



PG No.10 at Adelaide coaling plant c. 1959. (J. Patience)

[FOOTNOTE: Messrs Scott and Friel were not aware of each other's articles but, whilst not mentioned in the latter's recollections, the problems of getting the Glover tanks through Dundalk are on record elsewhere. Thus it would appear that however desirable a 4-6-0 might have been it simply

would not fit without either the locomotive or the works through which it must pass undergoing major surgery!

Incidentally, Mr Liddle hopes to publish a book covering his railway reminiscences from the 1920s onwards which will no doubt be interesting and may well generate another round of correspondence. - Ed.]

TOM'S LAST TRIP

“Larne Man”

On 8th October 1989 Driver Tom Crymble of Belfast York Road worked his last steam turn before retiring at the end of that month. Chroniclers of the stone train era will be familiar with his work on these and also the passenger trains on which the ‘stone engines’ and their crews occasionally found themselves. Since then, however, Tom’s appearances on steam were few and far between.

It was therefore not inappropriate that he should have charge of Jeep No.4 on what was to have been her first visit to Derry for ten years. Unfortunately, things did not work out that way as the defects accumulated by No.4 during her summer activities meant that she had to be relegated to the more lowly task of piloting No.85 to Antrim before taking two surplus coaches to York Road, then light engine to Whitehead.



Driver Tom Crymble on No.4 at a crossing stop at Ballinderry on 8th October 1989. (W.T. Scott)

For a man on his final appearance this was a somewhat unglamorous exit though not, as it turned out, an uneventful one. Neither the engine’s condition nor the timing of the train warranted fast running and indeed none was done. However, whilst some drivers have their departure marked by exploding detonators, the passing of Thomas in his tank engine was marked by other means. Though less spectacular than other similar happenings I had read about it was nonetheless a first for me and something which changing railway technology is making increasingly difficult for any driver to accomplish. No less a person than Inspector Dunlop, returning from Derry on No.85, was heard to express his amazement at Driver Crymble’s achievement!

But Tom was a man of many talents, not least of which was the management of resources - a field in which his colleagues acknowledged him to be a leader. Of deceptively quiet appearance, he is reputed to be the author of several poetic contributions to NIR's "Signal" magazine and was eloquent in his thanks when presented with a photograph of himself on his last run on No.4. He is also said to be proficient on the organ, which may explain the little bursts of song on the footplate where no such instrument is available.



Nos. 53 & 51 at Magheramorne sidings between spoil train workings c. 1969. (J. Patience)

Leaving all that aside, what remained in my mind after Tom's last trip is something very simple - a piece of wood. This was a small wedge which he produced from his pocket when he got on to the engine and made sure to take with him when he left in some haste to catch the service train back to York Road. It was inserted in the slot between the hand lever and the piston of the steam brake application valve. That NCC fitting tends to be an 'all or nothing' device and the wedge was to counteract this. Nothing out of the ordinary; just something that he obviously found useful in times past but to me an indication that he would not readily forget his years on steam. I don't know if he had made it for that day or had had it for years; it looked quite fresh but then so did its owner. Anyway Tom and his wee wedge are now in retirement - may it be a long and happy one.

BOOK REVIEWS

Atlas showing Navigable Rivers, Mineral Tramroads, Railways and Street Tramways - Volume 9 Ireland. Author: G.L. Crowther, Published by G.L. Crowther, 224 South Meadow Lane, Preston, PR1 8JP.

The overall initial impression of this spiral bound volume is quite good, but there it ends. Upon closer examination it is obviously an atlas published long before it should have been. Many closing dates have been left blank, e.g. Clonakilty (1886-). Information on closing is easily available - more easily than opening dates. There are many layout errors, for example, according to this book there is now a triangular junction at Killarney but never at Charleville or Moyasta! The Ballinacourty branch never existed and Westport Quay is still open! Many spelling mistakes are evident that could have been corrected with simple research - Donamon is spelt Dunamon, Gormanston is spelt Gormanstown. Many major sidings have been omitted, but triumph of all mistakes is Dublin's GNR Station - "Amiens Street, later Connolly (terminal part closed)", need I say more? After all, the author has quoted "150 years of Irish Railways" by Fergus Mulligan in his Bibliography. **MMcM**

Hard Lines (A Damned Close Run Thing) by Bob Alexander

For us, the obvious purchasing point of this book is the photograph on the front cover of a signalman holding aloft a large train staff at Ballinderry, perhaps the most interesting railway item in the book! The author writes rather haphazardly, jumping from a railway topic to a long dissertation on gas lighting and trade unions in Lisburn, interspersed with photographs of a candle with some books and a rather attractive snap of a bullock.

Chapters titled "OMELETTE, without the Prince of Denmark" ensure captive reading only to find marginal railway interest. I am sure if the book was read aloud in a local Ballinderry dialect, it could only improve. **MMcM**

Railway Atlas of Great Britain and Ireland by Alan Jowett. Published by Patrick Stephens Ltd

Sorry to have to write a third negative Irish Book review, but needs must. This book is a work of art - there is not one letter or numeral in it that is not hand drawn, even the ISBN is hand written! A foreword by David Shepherd is nicely presented but that's all the support I can see for it. If you intend to take it on the 1990 RPSI tour make sure you book your Sherpa's seat as well - at 354 pages, larger than A4, it slips into the breast pocket a real treat. Its very obvious hand drawings tend to obscure detail in junctions, and smaller maps, but there are many fewer mistakes than Mr Crowther's effort which proves that Mr Jowett was at least awake. An obvious error is the absence of the loop line at Greenisland, and fudged detail at other junctions where the reader is puzzled as to the exact layout. In my opinion your £30 would be better in the carriage shed fund. **MMcM**

The Fateful Day - A Commemorative Book Of The Armagh Railway Disaster, 12th June 1889 by Damien Woods. Published by Armagh District Council.

This book is a model of how a book should be presented, bright and clear with an exceptional selection of photographs, maps and illustrations. The material is well researched and is presented in a very easily digestible form.

The use of sources is exemplary; personal photographs, newspapers, letters, burial records, etc., combine to make the book very factual and readable. The author, at a recent RPSI meeting in St Jude's Hall, backed the book up with more information and detail, all of which was excellent and well researched. Perhaps Armagh District Council and the Museum could be persuaded to publish another book as a companion, on the railways of Armagh for example. If it was of the same standard, it would be excellent.

MMcM



No sign of the surprise in store as No.85 runs into Antrim on the way back from Derry on 8th October 1989. (W.T. Scott)

Railways In Ulster By Grenfell Morton. Published By Friar's Bush Press

It is difficult to know at which type of reader this book - consisting of photographs, with an historical introduction - is aimed. Those whose interest is simply in old photographs will probably find this collection, mostly between 1890 and 1920, quite satisfactory although one feels that several could have been better reproduced. Quite a few have already appeared elsewhere, e.g. page 30, in the "Clogher Valley" book from the same press.

For those who wish to delve more deeply into railway history, whilst the introductory notes have been

carefully researched, the same cannot be said of the captions which in many cases are less informative than they could have been and occasionally quite inaccurate. Examples: the loco depicted on page 30 would appear to be the 2-6-2T bought from the C&VBT on the closure of that line in 1934 and therefore unlikely to have been shunting Ballygawley in rebuilt form circa 1920. A major blunder occurs on page 59 where, at Larne Harbour, what is described as the narrow gauge express for Ballymena is almost certainly an arrival from Belfast - and broad gauge to boot, as a glance at the locomotive and train will reveal!

Whilst, in fairness, such shortcomings are probably the result of misinformation they highlight the necessity for high standards of accuracy so that errors are not perpetuated in a book which might well be used as a source of reference in years to come. **NP**



S class No.190 at Dundalk in the late thirties. On the extreme right is Fireman Jack Hynes - does anyone know any of the others? The photo was contributed by Mr R. Holland of Stockport.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Dear Sir,

I rarely write letters but I feel the time has now come to offer a few suggestions on the RPSI of the 1990s. The RPSI began 25 years ago in an attempt to save something of the steam railway we knew and loved. From these humble beginnings we have grown in stature to a highly professional organisation, respected in Britain and Europe for the quality and variety of our rail tours and the efficient running of our public trains.

This is a proud record of steam operating over 25 years begun by Craig Robb, carried on by Drew Donaldson and now by Ernie Gilmore. It is a record we must not jeopardise by misuse of our resources.

Our first priority must be our fleet of steam locomotives; these are our life blood and without them we cannot survive in any meaningful way. The bulk of the Society's financial resources must therefore go to maintaining as many engines as we can in working order. The engines are getting older and despite its appearance of massive permanence a steam locomotive does not last forever without attention.

Expensive boiler work is already upon us and we must have the money to meet it even to the extent of sending boilers to England for re-building. Without our engines the Society collapses and Irish steam is gone forever.

The question of carriages needs realistic consideration. We own probably in the region of 35 coaches, many more than we need and far more than we have the manpower or economic resources to repair - many of the vehicles are beyond economic repair anyway. A severe pruning is required, especially in view of the ban on wooden bodied stock over 75% of the rail system, a ban which will soon be 100%. We need a rake of 7-9 historically interesting vehicles, examples being the North Atlantic brake, 861, a Bredin and a GNR centre corridor. This would suffice to run a vintage demonstration train or fulfil a film contract if the ban is ever relaxed. The vast surplus collection of vehicles should be sold or leased to preservation lines in Ireland and those that cannot be found good homes in this way should be sold for scrap. Of course if any members feel strongly about any particular vehicle not retained by the Society it should be open to them to adopt it, maintain it and, should the Society need it, then lease it to them at a fair rent.

The volunteers who work on carriages would be better employed keeping seven vehicles in pristine condition rather than dissipating their efforts over unnecessary carriages. The money saved from carriage maintenance and obtained from the disposal of surplus items would then be available for locomotive maintenance and the hire and ultimate purchase of steel stock. We owe it to the safety and comfort of our members and visitors to use the best stock compatible with steam traction and in this context remember that the Cravens were the last steam stock in Ireland and are in no sense unrealistic for our purposes. Before I am criticised for being anti carriage preservation I should state that I have no objection to carriages in principle and indeed have travelled a bigger mileage than most other members, using our coaches both in Company and Society trains. This, however, has made me realise their limitations and convinces me that running historic vehicles on public trains is not the way to preserve them. Much better to do as many English lines do and produce their historic vehicles only for certain gala days.

We have two choices for carriages:

- (a) Hire and ultimately buy steel vacuum braked stock from Irish Rail.
- (b) Fit air brakes to the engines. I feel it is time the Council investigated this and contacted for example DR about purchasing equipment. Both alternatives are expensive but either guarantees a more secure future than fighting a lost cause over wooden stock and trying to maintain 35 examples of this.

The site is a major drain on funds and a rethink of its function is long overdue. Three years ago £11,000 was spent on digging a hole in the ground and filling it in again. Last year we embarked on a carriage shed to hold 16 coaches - at least twice what we need - which will cost £45,000 and probably more before it is finished. The site is a workshop for our locomotive maintenance programme and for necessary repairs to special items of rolling stock, not a full sized model railway for people to play with. We do not have the money or manpower to develop a heritage centre, and other centres in Ireland, e.g. Foyle Road or Downpatrick, are more suitable for this anyway. The site should be regarded as an engine shed/small works of the steam era, not an entertainment or educational centre.

The foregoing is a fairly narrow view of preservation, this I fully realise, but it is the only way forward. We are a unique society in Ireland. We exist to run trains; we have never been a preservation group in the English sense of the word. It would be fatal for us now at the last minute to try to copy such activities as those at Downpatrick or Tuam. Our nearest parallels are SLOA in England and IGE in West Germany which also exist to run trains and do so very successfully. We have gone too far down this road to turn back now, we do not have the resources to maintain vast amounts of rolling stock to main line standards or operate heritage centres such as some members whose hearts, I fear, rule their heads would like to. A German statesman who had a great influence on the rebuilding of his own country's railways once said "Die Politik ist die Lehre von Moglichen" (politics is the art of the possible). The remark admirably sums up our situation if one substitutes Erhaltung (Preservation) for Politik.

Yours faithfully,

W.T. Scott

Dear Sir,

I am provoked to respond to your editorial comment, i.e. "Does no-one write letters to the Editor nowadays"! A challenge that I for one cannot resist despite my poor literary standards, however I will attempt a little indulgence in 'vituperation' - yes, I did have to reach for my 'Concise Oxford'!

Michael H.C. Baker, as one would expect, contributed a most interesting and well written article on "The Last GSWR Carriages" and mentions the RPSI's preservation projects such as 12 wheeler 861 and GSWR 1142. He includes on page 52 a photograph of corridor third 1297 but no mention of the fact that this vehicle is still in existence at the WestRail depot in Tuam, Co Galway. 1297 was purchased by the now defunct West of Ireland Steam Railway Association in 1983 whilst it languished at Mullingar scrap yard in the guise of departmental 521A. It was moved from Mullingar to Attymon Junction on the 28th January 1984 together with 15 other items of stock in what must have been one of the strangest trains ever to run on CIÉ metals (WISRA's Circus ???). It was later transferred to Tuam Station with the rest of the WestRail stock on the abandonment of the Attymon-Loughrea project. Regrettably, since removal to Tuam, lack of covered accommodation and funds has resulted in the condition of this vehicle deteriorating to some considerable extent (vandalism hasn't helped either!). Also at Tuam depot are GSWR 802 (50 ft bogie third, built 1900), 892 (bogie third, built 1907) and 247 (bogie full brake, built 1899). In my mind these vehicles are all most worthy of preservation and should really be in a covered National Museum and fully restored - but usual story - money, money money! Also at Tuam, for the record, is possibly the last remaining item of MGWR rolling stock - a ballast wagon of 1880's vintage. My personal connection with the Tuam site is via ex-GSWR 12 ton brake van 8678 of 1911 vintage.

Apart from the operational stock of the RPSI, and that at Tuam awaiting funds for restoration, some vintage items are also stored at the GSRPS depot at Mallow. Of particular note here is the ex Waterford, Limerick and Western Railway family saloon - surely another candidate for inclusion in an officially recognised collection of 5' 3" stock!

With such valuable vehicles rapidly deteriorating across Ireland I would urge for a central committee to be formed that includes representatives of all groups currently holding vintage rolling stock items. The purpose: to co-ordinate restoration projects and determine the most urgent cases. A joint voice, I believe, would also be in a better position to lobby for funding for specific projects from bodies such as tourist boards and educational departments. Remember, a locomotive can stand around for several years with its condition remaining fairly static - a vintage wooden carriage with a leaky gutter can all but vanish within a couple of years. I already hear mutterings of "What ... speak to that load of

cowboys!”), but I am certain that the destruction of the “preservation ostrich” is preferable to the destruction by neglect of Ireland’s vintage rolling stock. So how about it ladies and gents?

Yours faithfully,

Tim Casterton

Luton

PS: I did enjoy Jack O’Neill’s article on No.461 - Thanks.

Dear Sir,

The Editorial in the Winter 1988/9 Five Foot Three sets out very clearly a number of difficult problems which the Society must solve in the next year or two if main line running is to continue on its present scale towards and beyond 2000 AD.

There is a reference to past correspondence which is rather ominous. Never having seen the letters I cannot say if the relevant journals have yet cooled to room temperature! This letter is an attempt to look impartially at what seem to be fundamental issues which may give guidance for the future. It is to be hoped that other members will have submitted letters to you on the same topics which are so important for the continuance of the Society’s activities in their present form, bearing in mind that what can be done must be almost entirely what is self-financing and not merely desirable.

The Society’s greatest asset, in the eyes of its passengers which keep it in existence financially, is its steam locomotives. This would indicate that they should be allocated the greatest share of money available for maintenance. If the only way to continue to operate as widely as possible will be with air-braked stock there is surely a case for starting now to set aside money to equip the locomotives for this purpose.

The coaching stock running today is unique and illustrates the development of passenger vehicles in Ireland over the last 80 years. The restrictions which already apply to its use in passenger service have reduced its earning capacity and, if this trend continues, especially on the GNR(I) main line, surely indicate that no further large scale rebuilds should be carried out because the vehicles will not have a sufficiently large sphere of operation to enable them to recover the substantial costs involved. A programme of essential repairs to the existing running fleet, investigation of ways to preserve at least one example of each type of coach on a basis which would not impose a financial burden on the Society and the setting up of a fund for acquiring stock which could be run on as many lines as possible in the future would appear to be the logical requirements.

The difficulties about help can only be solved by the members. The problem is not unique to the RPSI. Lack of such support must make the task of deciding the scale of future operations even more difficult, especially when advertising details need to be agreed over 9 months in advance. The Society, compared with many in England, is operating in a very small market and failure, through lack of help, could quickly destroy the favourable reputation which has been built up.

The steady reduction in spending power which has been very clear over the last few years has had drastic effects on some of the Society’s activities and by far the larger part of the income comes from fares. This points to the need to allocate resources and confine activities to those which will have the best chance to produce the cash needed for equipment and stock which can operate on main lines in the future rather than schemes which, however desirable, will have little or no chance of paying for themselves before the end of the transition period.

Yours faithfully,

H.C. Beaumont

[Note: Mr Beaumont's letter was written several months ago, i.e. before the IÉ ban was extended. - Ed.]

Dear Sir,

The question of headboards has always been a vexed one which the RPSI has kept well clear of. The Enterprise has some claim to authenticity as has the Portrush Flyer, though at a further remove.

There can however be no excuse for the exercise in puerility which disfigured No.85 on the run to Dundalk and Drogheda last year. This excrescence totally ruined what should have been a pleasant day out and must have been the product of a diseased mind. The quality of the board was tawdry and its position on the engine ridiculous. Let us hope that the RPSI will now revert to its policy of no headboards at all. I was glad to see that the second Rosslare train carried none. The time put into making headboards in Dublin might have been better spent in cleaning the engine as anyone who saw No.4 on her return from Dublin might agree.

Yours faithfully,

W.T. Scott



Wearing the headboard which displeased. No.85 heads for the turntable at Drogheda on 3rd June 1989. (W.T. Scott)

SAM CARSE

Nelson Poots

Sadly, just as we went to press news came of the death of Sam Carse. For many years the Society's Dublin area representative, Sam with his wide knowledge of Irish railways and their personnel had unobtrusively busied himself on our behalf despite being in poor health in recent times.

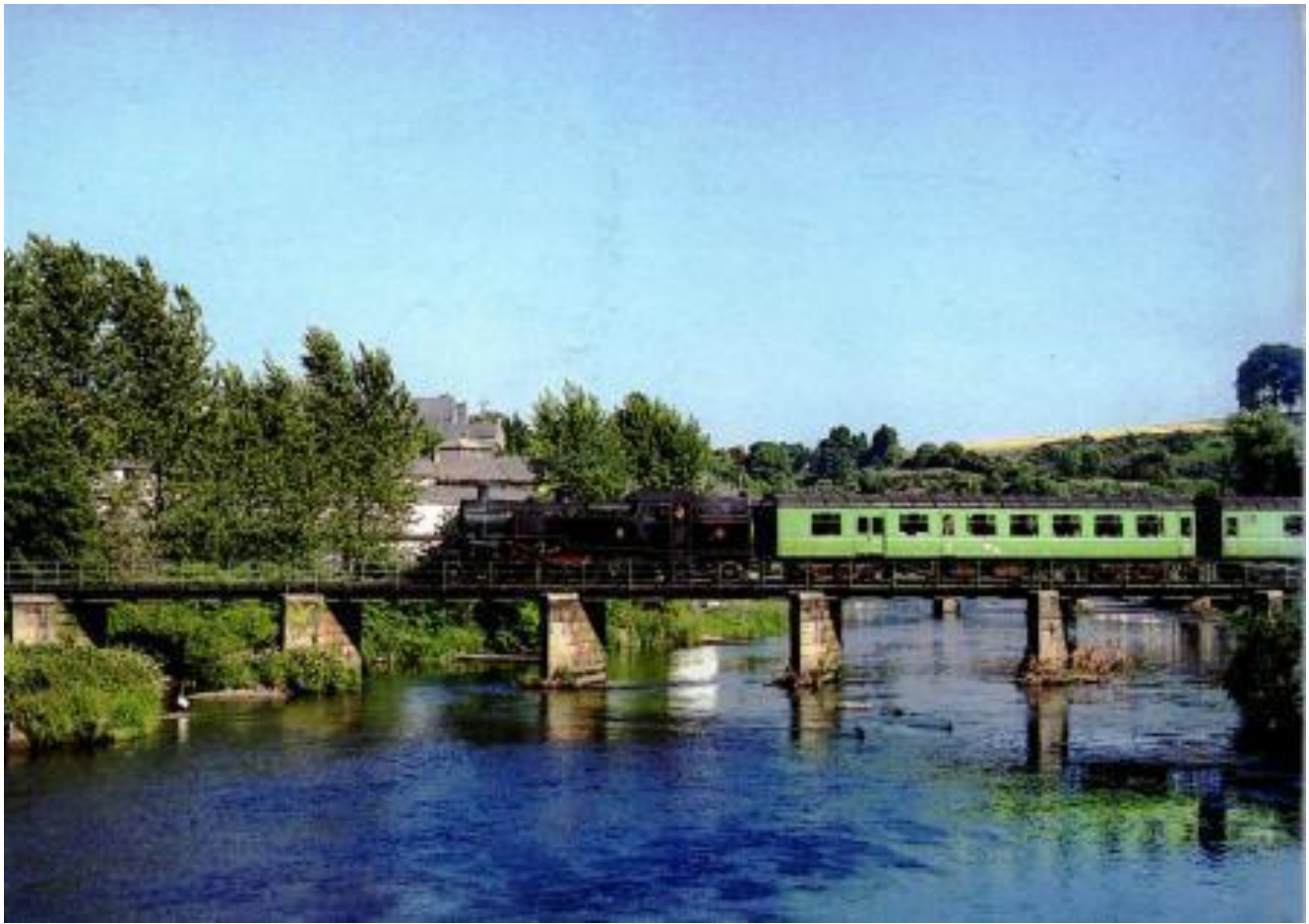
Chief among his interests was the County Donegal Railways, upon which he was an authority, and his

model layout with its painstaking attention to detail of buildings and stock was a memorial to that system.

Sam will be sorely missed and we offer our sympathy to his sons, David and Barry.



On 2nd September 1989 the Steam Enterprise was diverted at short notice to Coleraine due to a bomb alert on the Dublin line. In his article Mr Cassells has modestly omitted to describe how, once the train was on the move, he and one or two others retired to a quiet corner to work out its destination and timings! A by-product of the diversion was an extra opportunity to get a final picture of steam under Ballymena's somersault signals. (C.P. Friel)



No.4 crosses the River Slaney at Enniscorthy on the Dublin-Rosslare Harbour excursion, 24th June 1989. (C.P. Friel)