

# ***FIVE FOOT THREE***



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## **No.39**

### **Winter 1992/3**

**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.

***Cover Photograph: First in the current boiler overhaul programme, No.171 was returned to traffic in April 1992 and is seen here on a return Portrush Flyer at Ballyboyland. (C.P. Friel)***

#### **EDITORIAL**

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Might as well say it now and get it over with - we're still looking for money! How can this be, with all that ERDF money coming in? The problem is that we have to spend money before we can reclaim the 75% and although our Treasurer can perform considerable feats of juggling he has not yet managed to produce money out of the air. As Peter Scott points out elsewhere, the ERDF grant is a perhaps unique opportunity to attend to things which really need to be done and it may have come just in the nick of time. For years we managed to put off the evil hour but now we are up to our necks in boiler work. Once attended to, our boilers should be good for many years to come, enabling future work to be phased - instead of landing on us all at once as it is now - and to be financed from revenue. It's probably the worst possible time to be asking, but, if you can spare it, please consider making a

donation or loan to ensure that the good work is completed.

1992 has been an eventful year for the Society: formal steam crew training begun by Irish Rail, the rapid erection of the Whitehead carriage shed, more major locomotive overhauls than ever before, the first Northern main line Santa trains and finally the visit by Mr Robert Atkins, Minister for the Environment in connection with the Whitehead conservation project. Elsewhere, as anyone passing through the Docks area of Belfast will have seen, exciting developments are taking place, with concrete structures sprouting everywhere in preparation for the link between York Road and Central.



***On 6<sup>th</sup> September 1992 the RPSI provided a train at Downhill for a Tourist Board publicity film. Movie-makers' penchant for dirty drivers runs against the grain of self-respecting enginemen but here NIR's Willie Graham has received the treatment and somewhat apprehensively awaits the next move. A suggestion that the locomotive should pass through the tunnels with its out-of-gauge attachment was firmly turned down! (C.P. Friel)***

Many readers will probably have seen publications which included photographs briefly credited 'W. Robb' and dating from the 1930s. Happily, Mr Robb is still with us and has kindly offered Five Foot Three the use of a number of historical articles prepared by him at various times in the past, the first of which appears in this issue. While some of the earlier parts make sad reading, the article goes on to point to a more hopeful future.

The RPSI has already sampled a little of this, when No.171 introduced steam to the new Yorkgate station on 6<sup>th</sup> December, and should benefit further when the completion of the new link enables Central to be reached from York Road in minutes rather than hours. With the potential to run direct

from Whitehead to Dublin with freshly overhauled locomotives rapidly approaching, wouldn't it be nice if we could get the carriage situation sorted out in the meantime!

## CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN

Sullivan Boomer

Since my last column a year ago a great deal has happened. We have had another satisfactory year of operations, with many of our trains either full to capacity, or at least very well supported. A couple of new ventures were tried, and these are showing enough promise to be repeated in 1993. The saga of wooden bodied coaches continues, but it should be reported that a number of trains were operated by Westrail between Athenry and Galway using timbered vehicles. They were limited to 25 mph, but whether this was for the coaches or the locomotive, the diminutive 0-6-0T No.90, was not clear. For 1993 we will be seeking a derogation for at least one train on a single line section.



*Not quite the first steam in Yorkgate - Santa was there two days earlier. Here No.171 prepares to leave with the Department of Environment VIP charter train to Whitehead on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1992. (C.P. Friel)*

Two 'failures' during the year were not really our fault. The hurriedly redesigned "Gráinne Uaile" International Railtour was brought about not just by a breakdown of communications within Irish Rail, but also by a large bomb crater near Milepost 66 above Newry, which closed the GNR main line for about a fortnight, and trapped our train on the wrong side. The Monday was similarly affected by a bomb scare, which turned out not to be a bomb, but not a hoax call either, as terrorist items were discovered by the authorities. On occasions, members have suggested at the AGM that the train be

moved earlier, but this is not always possible for a variety of technical reasons; sometimes the railway companies have no room to store either locomotive or train, and we must respect their decision in these matters.

This was one of the causes of our second ‘failure’, the failure to run a “Steam Enterprise” train. With the increasing tempo of work in connection with the Cross Harbour Link in Belfast, a large part of Central Service Depot has disappeared under embankments and bridge approaches. NIR has barely enough space for its own equipment, and could not accommodate our train at all. In any case, we could not turn a locomotive; the CSD turntable came to Whitehead a year ago, when its site vanished under an embankment, and Cultra Museum cannot be used because the contractor is currently erecting the new Museum Gallery over it, and there is no access at this time.



*Santa II day, 20<sup>th</sup> December, began with appropriate weather - once a frozen injector had been thawed out. No.171 approaches Greenisland with the first train of the day. (C.P. Friel)*

On a different tack, you will be aware of the steady progress of the ERDF projects, in spite of some escalation of costs and the concurrent cash flow hiatus which it threatened. The financial management of the scheme has been reviewed, and the cash flow problem resolved. My thanks to those members who responded to the appeal for assistance, as you gave us the vital breathing space while ERDF repayments were adjusted from quarterly to monthly. This frequency is working better, but tight control and careful recording of costs assigned to projects is still necessary. My thanks also to the couple of Council members who took on the task of preparing the claims, and for doing so professional a job.

We have erected the Carriage Shed in the past year, albeit a little shorter than we had hoped it might be, and our running coaches are now protected from the ravages of the elements when not in use. This building has also allowed increased maintenance work to be carried out on the traffic vehicles, and the improvements in heating, lighting and paintwork bear testimony to the efforts of a small team of dedicated workers. It is a pity they are so small in number, as this limits the speed with which the necessary improvements to the running train can be effected. Plumbing is next to receive attention, along with further bodywork refurbishment and mechanical renewals where required. The team hope to turn out a high quality product for the 1993 season, and would ask for your support if you can easily

get to Whitehead on a weekend. Some week nights are also used for working parties, so contact the Carriage Department with your phone number if you want to be advised.

The most significant change in the coming year is a restructuring of the Society management system with the aim of streamlining the day to day operation of the Society and clarifying some of the previous 'grey' areas where the responsibilities of various Council members were not clearly defined. Although the final structure has not yet been agreed, the proposals have been published in the November 1992 Newsletter.

We are moving steadily forward, with the computerising of our accounts being organised, revised record keeping systems being implemented, an improved management structure, and an ever hopeful scene on the railways of our island, where enlightened managements seem to be selling the long term future of the railways to their political masters and the European paymasters. The next few years will not be easy for us, but I am sure that we have a long and satisfying future ahead.

## **NEWS FROM COUNCIL**

**Paul McCann**

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The three major topics which dominated Council this year were the ERDF projects and how to fund the Society's share of the costs, the continued ban on our wooden-bodied stock and how we were let down on the International Railtour at the last minute by Irish Rail, and thirdly our Extraordinary Council Meeting in October to set out clear policies for the future of the Society.

The long awaited completion of our carriage shed in March was welcomed but unfortunately heralded the arrival of a major bill. This in turn depleted our funds to such an extent that some of our ERDF projects were threatened, and the funding of our 25% of these has been a major headache throughout the year, necessitating a £15,000 overdraft facility of which substantial use has been made. A mid-term review of the various projects has highlighted the need for a re-allocation of some of the funds. The need for all the appeals to members during the year becomes clearer in the light of such drastic measures.

We thought we had cleared a major hurdle when Irish Rail agreed to let us run our own stock for the duration of the International Railtour in May, with the exception of the Dublin to Dundalk section. However, this was not to be, and nine days before the tour arrangements were thrown into turmoil when we learned of the continued ban. Our difficulties were compounded when No.171 was stranded north of the border due to an explosion on the line at Newry. In the event No.461 struggled on manfully and the tour was still a great success. Discussions with Irish Rail have continued throughout the year to try to get a clearer view of what the future holds for wooden stock.

It has become obvious that Council time was increasingly being spent on the minutiae of everyday occurrences in the Society to the detriment of major policy decisions. The Council took the bull by the horns and arranged a special meeting in Dundalk in October to discuss this topic fully. The main outcome of the meeting was an agreed policy for the Society's future and various steps that would be taken to implement that policy. As a result it was recommended that a new Council structure be put in place, to become active from the 1993 AGM. The new Council will be much reduced in size with more of the everyday operational and publicity decisions being devolved to parallel expanded Operations committees in Belfast and Dublin. Attracting new, and especially younger, members to join is seen as a problem along with the continued, but generally unsuccessful, appeals to existing members to help out.

February saw our first AGM to be held in Dublin and our thanks go to the Society's vice-president Dr Garret FitzGerald who chaired a very successful meeting. Of the 978 members in 1992, 289 are from the Republic of Ireland, only 50 less than the Northern Irish membership, so there is no reason why further AGMs should not be held in Dublin.



Health and safety matters are becoming increasingly important from a legal aspect and, while this is no bad thing, it imposes a greater burden on those Council members and PSRs who are involved in the relevant areas of Society operation. For this reason a sub-committee has been set up to formulate a Society policy on the subject and this work is continuing.

Both Dublin and Belfast had successful operating seasons, with several charters being run in addition. A promising start was made in the training of new steam crews with 8 Irish Rail drivers attending official classroom and footplate sessions. Footplate training of Northern Ireland Railways drivers continued during the year.

Other notable occurrences during the year were the Society's application, and provisional acceptance, as a member of the Museum and Galleries Commission; the donation of ex-LMS/NCC railcar No.1 to the Society by the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum; attendance by 3 Council members at separate seminars hosted by the Association of Railway Preservation Societies, where much useful information was obtained; the return to traffic of locomotive No.171 with the northern portion of the International Railtour and subsequently on the "Hills of Donegal" and "Portrush Flyer" operations.

On 6<sup>th</sup> December Whitehead followed Dublin's lead and operated its first main line Santa trains which also brought steam into Belfast's new Yorkgate station for the first time.

Two days later No.171 was back again, this time with a three-coach train chartered by the Department of the Environment to take VIPs to Whitehead, which had been declared a conservation area. Among the dignitaries on board were Mr William Smyth, chairman of Northern Ireland Railways, and Sir Myles Humphreys, chairman of the Transport Holding Company. At Carrickfergus they were joined by several members of Carrickfergus Borough Council led by the Mayor, Councillor Stewart Dickson, and, at Whitehead, by the Minister for the Environment, Mr Robert Atkins.

At the designation ceremony in Whitehead Primary School tributes were paid to the RPSI for having provided the train and for having kept alive the railway tradition in the town. Mr Smyth announced that NIR was to refurbish Whitehead station building, which has been listed by the DOE, along with upgrading the platforms.

The Minister then made a beeline for the RPSI site where he was escorted round the locomotive shed and carriage shed before making his way to No.171. Mr Atkins travelled on the locomotive to Whitehead NIR where he was replaced by Mr Smyth who sampled the rigours of tender-first running along the shore to Carrickfergus before re-joining the remaining VIPs in more comfortable surroundings for the return to Yorkgate.

All concerned were agreed that it had been a very satisfactory operation which reflected creditably on the RPSI.

As usual thanks must go to the two railway companies for the use of their premises as venues for Council meetings, in Dundalk this year as well as in Belfast and Dublin. The PSRs must also get a mention, especially Charles Friel who over the 1991/2 season of Belfast area meetings managed to attract our two largest ever audiences.

## **CONTRACTS, SPONSORSHIP & ALL THAT**

**David Humphries**

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The 1992 Summer Steam season has been noteworthy for the amount of 'outside' interest shown in the activities of our Society. In the six years I have occupied the post of Honorary Marketing & Publicity Officer I have learned to live with the disappointment of enquiries which, for one reason or another, come to nothing. In this regard it has to be said that price tends to be the major obstacle. Unfortunately many people have little concept of what it takes to turn out a vintage train and in particular the cost. However, the season just past has been very satisfying and we saw three direct hires and one major

sponsorship.

I recounted in the last issue of Five Foot Three how the Dublin Area Operations Committee has the bones of the summer season in place by the end of the preceding year. By January 1992 therefore we knew our dates when the enquiry from Robert Guinness arrived on my doormat! Could he please have a train as part of the festivities to celebrate the marriage of his daughter Clare to Hugo Jacob. Billed as the society wedding of the year, it proved indeed to be a gala weekend in which the RPSI played a significant part. The weekend began with a ball at Lodge Park, Straffan, on the Saturday night. The wedding ceremony was in St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin on the Monday with the reception afterwards held at Robert's Steam Museum at Straffan (well worth a visit in its own right). Sandwiched in between was the "Steam Museum Train Ride" and "Musical Picnic" on Sunday 3<sup>rd</sup> May 1992.

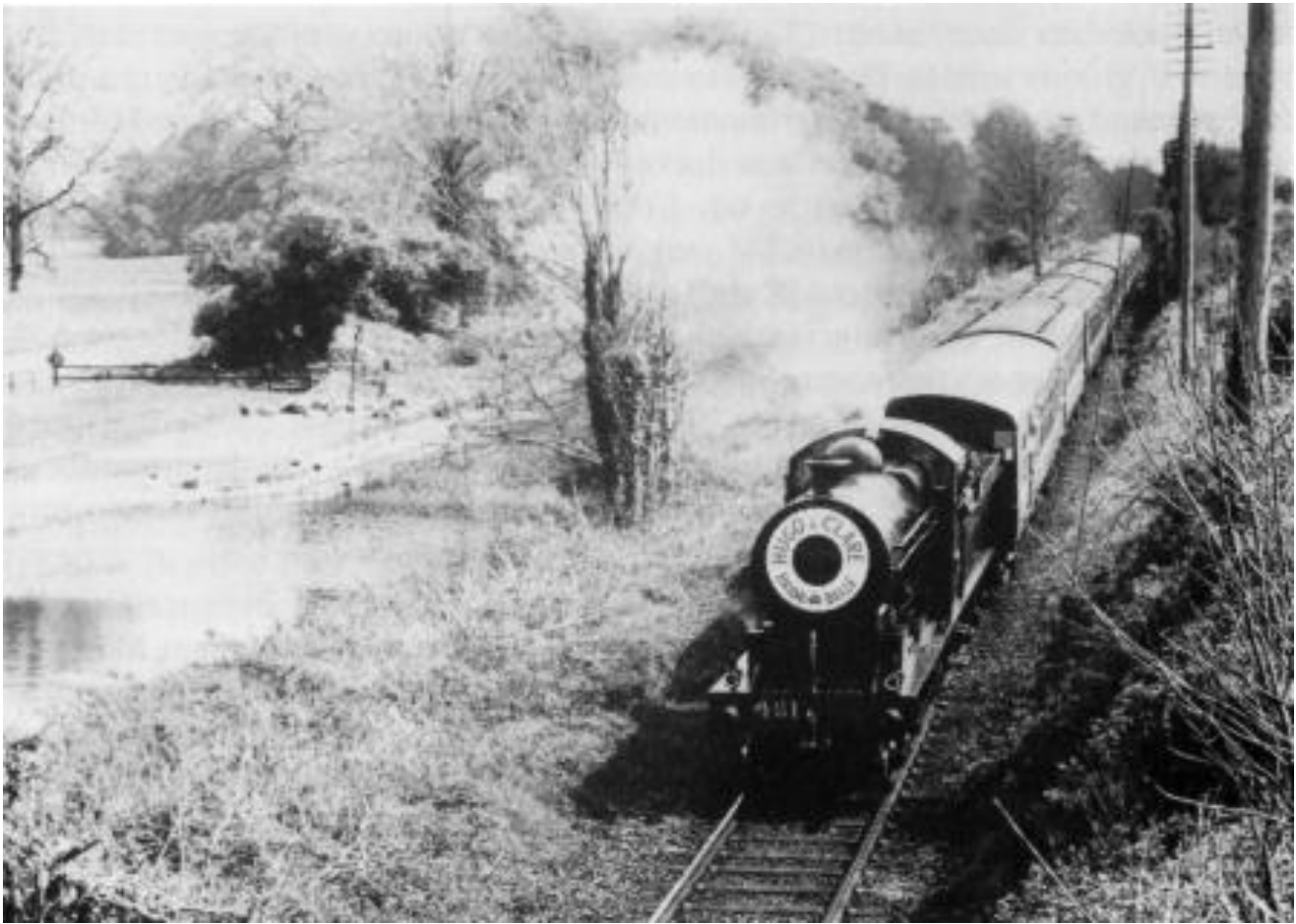
We picked up our passengers at Maynooth at 13:00 and proceeded to Mullingar. In excess of 200 guests joined the train - some in fancy dress and many struggling to keep awake having, I suspect, come directly from the ball without having gone to bed at all! Oh to be young(er). All were suitably revived however by the complimentary drinks ably provided by the Moriarty machine. The fare included Bloody Marys to a secret recipe of the bride's mother Sarah Guinness! There were also copious supplies of Guinness and Harp and, for the few, orange juice and mineral water. I should mention that on our outward journey we stopped at Leixlip where a special headboard was fitted to No.461. The said headboard will forever be remembered as the Polo Mint because of its circular wheel shape, the full diameter of the smokebox door, about 12" wide and painted white with the names of the bride and groom written thereon. On our arrival at Mullingar a barbeque style meal awaited us while the entertainment was provided by the Cluskey-Hopkins band. The up Galway platform was decked out in greenery and backdrops - the whole place resembling a theatre set. I don't believe Mullingar station has ever experienced anything like it in its 144 year history. A word of thanks here to Stationmaster Frank Harkin and all the IR staff at Mullingar for their excellent co-operation and support. With some reluctance the festivities came to an end (I forget now how many last dances there were) and we returned to Maynooth where our guests detrained at about 17:00. An event like the wedding train just does not happen and a big debt of gratitude is due to our Dublin based team - all departments - who made a herculean effort both on the day and for weeks in advance to turn out a train of which the Society can be justifiably proud.

While all the preparations were in full swing for the Guinness special yours truly got a telephone call from Jerry Mooney - Business Development Manager Passenger of Iarnród Éireann. He wished to launch the "Rail Breaks 92" programme with a steam run, Pearse to Dun Laoghaire, on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> March - notice period EIGHT DAYS!!! The locomotive was in bits (not literally) at Mullingar shed and the coaching stock was also in disarray as all were being prepared for the wedding train. Eight days and the beleaguered Dublin/Mullingar team swung into top gear (or was it into overdrive?) and ensured that we delivered our product to order. I counted 17 (I think) working like mad - men, women (and children) pulling out all the stops - at Mullingar on the Sunday evening and the operation itself went very well. Our passengers (all guests of Iarnród Éireann) included the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Communications Mrs Máire Geoghegan-Quinn TD. A much more sedate affair than the subsequent Guinness special turned out to be, i.e. no dancing in the aisles and gangway ends for example. Mr Mooney expressed his complete satisfaction with the success of the event and this was further, tangibly, expressed when all RPSI workers associated with the event were entertained at a later date to a very enjoyable meal and a few drinks at the Footplate Brasserie at Heuston Station - a much appreciated gesture. By the time this record goes to print Mr Mooney will have retired from IR - a very happy retirement Jerry from all your friends in the RPSI.

Contract number three came as a consequence of Radio Telefís Éireann hosting the annual European Broadcasting Union conference in September. This week-long event saw representatives from all the



major broadcasting organisations of Europe and the European representatives of US, Middle East, and further afield stations attending a series of seminars and cultural/social events, etc. Our train was engaged for the evening of Wednesday 2<sup>nd</sup> September. The day began with an early evening departure (16:30) from Pearse to Wicklow and back to Greystones where all guests detrained to partake of a meal and cabaret at a local hotel. Our intended return from Greystones was booked for 21:30 but in the event the festivities went so well that we did not get away for another hour. In a subsequent letter received from Joe Mulholland, Director of News at RTÉ, he commented that, "It was truly a memorable occasion which was obviously enjoyed by all. The attention to detail given by the Railway Preservation Society was most impressive and made this event the highlight of the week." A special word of thanks is due to members Brian and Laura Gillen who were instrumental in getting this valuable contract for the Society.



***No.461 with 'Polo Mint' in position, heads the Guinness Wedding special beside the Royal Canal.  
(C.P. Friel)***

Before I conclude on contracts it is timely to comment on their value to the Society. There is of course the obvious financial benefit. In addition the profile of our Society is greatly enhanced both in terms of the additional 'markets' in which we find ourselves and the quality of our reputation in respect of what we have to offer. To return to the EBU event for a moment it is worth recounting that many of the foreign visitors to whom I spoke just could not believe that the whole show was being done on a purely voluntary basis.

Turning now to sponsorship I first want to record the Society's appreciation to C  ras Beostoc Feola (CBF) - the Irish Meat and Livestock Board - for their help and support of our Mid-Summer Night's

Steam on 20<sup>th</sup> June. The idea of a barbeque event first came to me while experiencing something similar on a steam-hauled train from Durban to Kelso in late 1991. In the event my South African experience was a lot more modest than the ultimate 'show' which our operation turned out to be. Readers may be interested to know that demand for tickets was so great that we probably could have filled a second and maybe even a third train. In all, 470 steaks were consumed and if I tell you that, in contrast, the train in South Africa had, at most, 40 passengers you can easily appreciate the contrast. A word of thanks also to the Army Catering Corps at Mullingar who agreed to handle all food preparation and the cooking of the steaks. This train marked the first time that draught Guinness and Harp lager were available on the Mullingar set. Guinness Ireland are due a word of appreciation as they were very supportive of this venture - which included a donation of 'product' and the Guinness Jazz Band at the barbeque. It has been mentioned to me on numerous occasions since that we should make the event an annual one. While I do not disagree with the sentiment I must state that it will only be possible with continuing sponsorship and professional catering - there are limits to what our willing volunteers can take on. No promises therefore, for 1993.

Before I leave the subject of sponsorship I want to take this opportunity to acknowledge the Society's appreciation of all the commercial support which we receive over the season. All who have travelled on any of the Summer Steam trains will be familiar with the free "Welcome Aboard" brochure given to all our patrons. This can only be done by virtue of the advertising space taken by numerous companies - please do remember them when next you make a purchase of paint, petrol, film or whatever. Our 1991 Santa trains at Mullingar enjoyed the support of Avonmore Co-op. I must not forget also the Irish Life Building Society who have acted as our ticket sales outlet for the past five years. On the publicity front I must not let another season go by and forget to mention the fulsome support given to us by our valued contacts in the media. I will not embarrass my many good friends by mentioning names; I just hope they will recognise themselves when they read this and know that I do appreciate their continued support.

In conclusion therefore I would like to say that while certain of the commercial events with which we become involved may not be seen as 'pure steam operations' - they may fit more comfortably under a 'showbiz' heading - they are essential to broaden our public appeal and raise the necessary income to enable your society to continue with its valuable work.

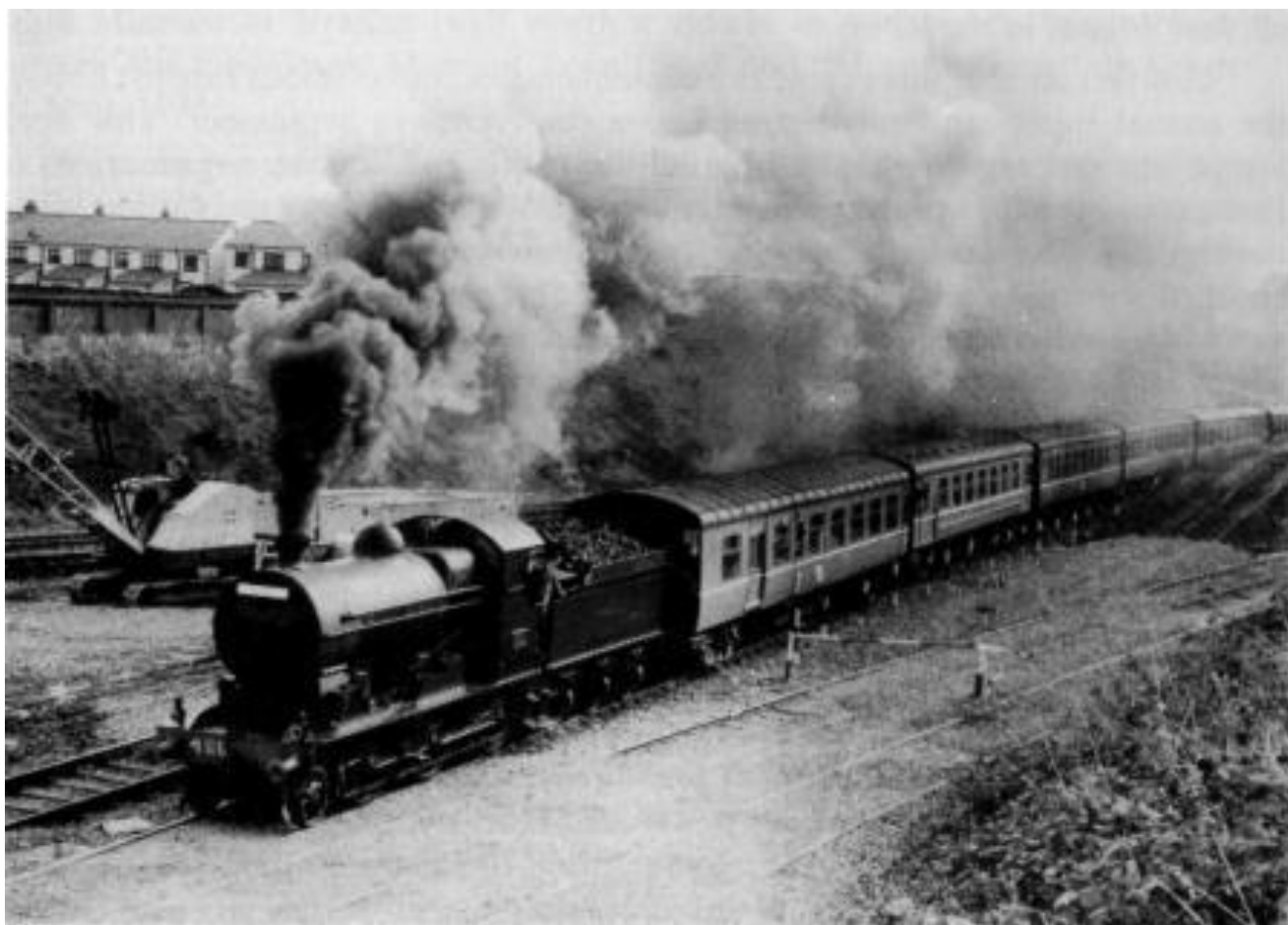
#### **OTHER OPERATIONS: A brief review of the remainder of the Dublin Programme**

7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> December 1991 were the two days of Santa trains at Mullingar. It was about ten years since we last had a Christmas event so in many ways it was a 'first' for a number of the present work-team. Over the two days we carried 700 children and 450 adults. The Saturday was quite slow but by the Sunday afternoon we were running with a full payload. Our Vice-President, Dr. Garret FitzGerald, travelled with his grandchildren on the first day. The layout and facilities at Mullingar station are excellent for such an operation as we had the Galway platforms to ourselves. In 1992 our Santa trains will be out of Dublin - it is unlikely that the greater Mullingar catchment area could support such an event two years running. As we have an important link with Mullingar for quite some time now it was nice to involve the station in no less than three major Society events starting with the Santa trains.

"The Royal Canal Festival Shuttles" on 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> June saw us renew our link with the local festival committee in Maynooth. We value any opportunity for the RPSI to work with other voluntary groups. The two day event saw us carry about 2,300 passengers in total. In 1993 we are likely to repeat the Shuttles but on one day only as we found that the two days were rather tough going.

A week later and "A Midsummer Night's Steam" saw us make a brief return visit to Mullingar. I have already mentioned this event above. Two weeks later and we made the first of two visits this year to Rosslare Harbour. 4<sup>th</sup> July was the date and "The Strawberry Fair" was the event. A full train left Dublin for Enniscorthy. We made a special stop at Arklow to pick up six Strawberry princesses who

distributed the delicious berries to all our passengers. This train also linked in with Bray Seaside Festival and over 70 boarded at Bray for the day. Returning to the subject of involving the Society with other groups this was the third year in a row that we were associated with the Bray festival. Operationally it was just a slight adjustment to our tried and trusted DSER path but from a marketing point of view we were promoting a new destination out of Dublin. Loadings out of Enniscorthy itself were very encouraging. In recent years we have enjoyed tremendous support from Dan Walshe of South East Radio for our Wexford trips and it was Dan who planted the seed of “The Strawberry Fair” in my mind. I am sure we may well repeat this formula also in a future programme - in 1993 indeed if the dates suit.



*No.461 passes Glasnevin Junction with the first of the 13<sup>th</sup> September 1992 Maynooth Shuttle trains. (I.C. Pryce)*

A long gap of six weeks now intervened before we ran our only “Sea Breeze” of 1992. When planning the season it was felt by the committee that the four operations between the 13<sup>th</sup> June and 4<sup>th</sup> July would be very exhausting and that a rest would be in order. This turned out to be a correct assumption. However, gifted with hindsight, we now feel that for future seasons a gap of six weeks is too long between trains but also we should allow a minimum of three weeks between any two operations unless an outside contract was to present itself. Returning to the “Sea Breeze” on 22<sup>nd</sup> August we again enjoyed the satisfaction of a full train. The Parnell Society again (second year) added colour to the day by taking a full coach to Rathdrum. To my surprise we again filled the said carriage out of Rathdrum so a full train all the way to Wexford. Loadings out of Wexford for the local trip to the Harbour were very satisfactory with in excess of 200 making the trip. Thanks must be recorded to Vincent Byrne (IR

Rathdrum), Michael Kelly (IR Wexford) and Michael Curran of Wexford Model Railway Club for their help and support.

The 'Summer Steam 92' programme ended with a very successful Sunday of "Maynooth Shuttles" on 13<sup>th</sup> September. Three full trains (1,000 passengers) and we had to disappoint about 150 who will have to wait for another day!

I expect that FFT will have gone to press before our 1992 Santa season so hopefully I will be able to report on a successful event next time around.

I shall round off by acknowledging the hard work of both the members of the Dublin Area Operations Committee and also those other members who willingly give of their time to render assistance - across all the various departments which go to make up our team. Our greatest asset is our volunteers. Just imagine what it would cost if we had to pay commercial rates for the 1,000s of man-hours it takes to run a season. The trains just would not run. Thank you, one and all.

## **SOUTHERN STEAM**

**Rory McNamee**

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You will have read in David Humphries' article of the trials and triumphs of our 1992 season. However, as David can't be everywhere, it doesn't tell the whole story.

For example, there is no mention of the '461 Grill' on 5<sup>th</sup> March. While the reception was going on elsewhere Inspector Jack Ahern provided a clean shovel and an attractive young lady chef provided culinary skills. The product of this liaison vanished very quickly and with no trace apart from the smiles on the faces of all participants.

Since our first trips both this year and last had seen us rubbing shoulders with the rich and famous it was decided that, in order to blend in, the RPSI support crew should improve their standard of dress. This went all wrong on the Guinness barbecue and disco trip. The RPSI crew weren't to know that the guests' invitation had suggested that they come suitably attired for a 'Stokers and Pokers' party. So on the big day our newly-elegant crew were shocked to find themselves confronted by crowds of people with sooty faces, wearing boiler suits and carrying spanners to complete their ensembles.

For many years the problem of providing crews for steam operations had been looming larger. After much discussion and planning a programme of steam training got under way when eight men - Ray Kearns, Don McLoughlin, Robbie Walsh and Kieran White from Dublin and Pat Lenihan, Jim and Tom Ryan (not related) and Hilary Twomey of Cork - were selected to attend the course at the training block at Inchicore commencing on 13<sup>th</sup> April 1992.

The course began in the classroom when several videos, both professional and handmade, were viewed. Then a day was spent on locomotive No.461 - not in steam - to familiarise the trainees with footplate fittings, motion and oiling points. The next three days were spent in the classroom where sketches, diagrams and other printed material were provided for further study. Our gratitude must go to Dundalk's Paddy Mallon and John Minogue for provision of the ex-GNR sectioned injector for the students' perusal. It should be pointed out that these were not raw recruits - all are already passed out on diesels - so they are already competent in all aspects of locomotive driving except for those peculiar to steam; different driving technique, firing and the operation of the various fittings.

Advantage was taken of the Easter weekend to send our scholars home to reflect on the week's course.

Tuesday 21<sup>st</sup> April dawned with No.461 in steam. Inspector Jack Ahern led in the Dubliners while the Cork team had two captains in the shape of our old friends Charlie Cogan and Aidan Ridgeway.

The original plan was simply to run between Greystones and Wicklow but, with Glenealy and Rathdrum banks just beyond, this was like taking a man to the door of a pub and then sending him

home dry so it was arranged that we would go on to Rathdrum. This created problems for the RPSI locomotive rep who had to go and organise extra coal and water supplies and so wasn't included in the class photograph - was this a plot?

Dubliners Ray Kearns had a worrying start to his day as a staff shortage led to him being pressed into working to Maynooth but he made it back in time to get round to Heuston station where we collected some of the Mullingar coach set.

With the old master, Nicky Moore, at the regulator, the Dublin men were the first to get their hands on the shovel. It seemed that either the shovel was too big or the firehole door was too small [*wait till they see a GN one! - Ed.*] as Robbie Walsh was first to discover, but the pain of hitting the door a few times aided concentration and gradually things improved. A drop in steam pressure called for a demonstration in the use of the picker. The consternation caused by getting this implement from tender to fire through a crowded cab was nothing compared to when it was returned, red hot!



***Trainers and trainees pose with No.461 at Connolly station. (Left to Right): Ronnie Gough, executive in charge; J. Ryan, K. White, C. O'Mahony, Frank McGee, Irish Rail Training Centre; J. Ahern, Joe Walsh, operations manager; R. Walsh, D. McLoughlin, R. Kearns, C. Cogan, P. Lenihan, T. Ryan, Mary Linehan, media and PR; H. Twomey and D. Humphries, RPSI. Seated is Nicky Moore. (Lensmen, Dublin)***

On the way back it was the turn of the Cork men who, after some early panel-beating efforts, began to master the shovel and the injector.

On the first day the trainee firemen had simply passed the shovel on to the next man after a firing and this led to problems as it could not be established whether individuals were doing well or badly. Fortunately the route from Dublin contains four banks: from Dun Laoghaire to Dalkey, Killiney to Shanganagh and from Wicklow to Glenealy followed by the final climb to Rathdrum. Since we had four trainees each way each man was given a section to himself, with instructions as to when and where to place coal on the fire. This worked well and confidence grew despite some initial confusion as to which end of the firebox was the back.

After two days on the road it was back to the classroom for the written examination, with one of the Cork men sacrificing a wedding (not his own) in order to attend and all were passed out as firemen.

On the International three-day tour in May No.461 had to manage the first two days unaided as No.171 was marooned in the North due to terrorist damage to the line. Nicky Moore and Dan Renehan, old hands on No.461, were not too familiar with parts of our route but it was familiar territory for retired Inspector Eamonn Lacken who joined us from Athlone to Westport. At the banquet there that evening he was presented with Honorary Life Membership of the Society and other tokens of our appreciation of his help over the years.

Our approach to Westport had been unusually quiet due to a broken whistle pipe. A local garage assisted with repairs, although they didn't know this until later. They now pay more attention to the security of their premises!



*A drunken telegraph pole threatens the signal cabin as No.461 arrives at Rosslare Strand with the "Sea Breeze" of 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1992. The Waterford line can be seen curving away to the left.  
(C.P. Friel)*

A surprise steam survivor in Westport was Paddy Cassidy who worked our train from Manulla Junction to Ballina in another day of very mixed weather. On the way back to Dublin the snow-capped crown of Mount Nephin was in sharp contrast to the heat which had developed in one of No.461's driving axleboxes and by the time we reached Maynooth it was obvious that full investigation of the source would involve lifting the engine. Over the next few weeks the driving axleboxes were removed, repaired at Whitehead and refitted in time for No.461 to work three trouble-free trips to Maynooth on 10<sup>th</sup> June.

During the summer operations all our newly passed Dublin firemen got outings on No.461.

Last year I was fortunate in not having to record the loss of any friends but on 4<sup>th</sup> November we had to accept the sad news of the death of youthful member and regular attender Brian O'Suilleabhain, while words can hardly express our sadness on the death of Ray Kearns' wife, Ann.

Two people without whose help the crew training programme would never have got off the ground retired in 1992 - Christy O'Mahony of Irish Rail Resource Schedule & Control and Inspector Eamonn Lacken, our footplate companion of many years. To both, we wish you a long and happy retirement.

## **LOCOMOTIVE REPORT**

**Peter Scott**

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### **No.3 "R.H. Smyth" (Avonside 0-6-0ST, ex Londonderry Port & Harbour Commissioners)**

Boiler repairs continuing; funding 75% ERDF, 25% RPSI.

The bottom half of the firebox has been replaced by riveting in new copper plates and the foundation ring is now being fitted. A new smokebox is being constructed and the saddle tank is to be repaired.

This locomotive would be capable of service on the Larne line but would require attention to axlebox bearings and other repairs before venturing beyond the RPSI yard.

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

Major boiler repairs required; funding 75% ERDF, 25% RPSI.

All boiler tubes have been removed and the boiler has been lifted out of the frames. The side tanks and cab roof have also been removed. The outer firebox plates are known to be in poor order - grooving has taken place at the foundation ring and radiographs taken of the door plate and wrapper indicate grooving and star cracks between stays. The inner copper firebox is in reasonable condition with none of the severe wasting evident on No.85. No copper platework actually has to be replaced. However, seam rivets and stays are in poor order and this together with the outer firebox defects means that the firebox will probably have to be removed to carry out effective repairs. It may well be the simplest and cheapest repair to fit a steel firebox. This decision will be taken after the boiler has been de-scaled and inspected. (Regarding historical accuracy, no NCC tank engine ever had a steel firebox but several GNR(I) locomotives did and they seem to have performed satisfactorily.)

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

Major firebox repairs; funding 75% ERDF, 25% Lord Dunleath.

The inner copper firebox was severely wasted in the fire area. This necessitated the renewal of the bottom half of the tubeplate, two half sides and the complete doorplate. The doorplate was the most awkward to form since it required to be flanged all round as well as having a 'bell mouth' type of firehole door. The flanging was done by hand, using large hardwood mallets and a built-up steel flanging block. Since No.85's firebox is of the 'keyhole' shape, i.e. wider at the top, further complications arose in that the flange at one side had to be bent round further than its final shape and then pressed out once the plates had been assembled.

When the old platework was removed, serious grooving and pitting was revealed on the inside of the outer wrapper and throat plate. This was repaired by welding. So much time was spent on this work that it would nearly have been worth renewing the bottom half of the outer firebox as well as the inner and on future boiler work this may well be the way to proceed. Once the outer shell was repaired, the new copper sides and lower tubeplate were welded in and the doorplate fitted. The seams are being drilled for riveting or fitting of patch screws where access for riveting is impossible. After this the foundation ring will be riveted in place, and then approximately 1,100 copper stays will be made and



fitted.

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

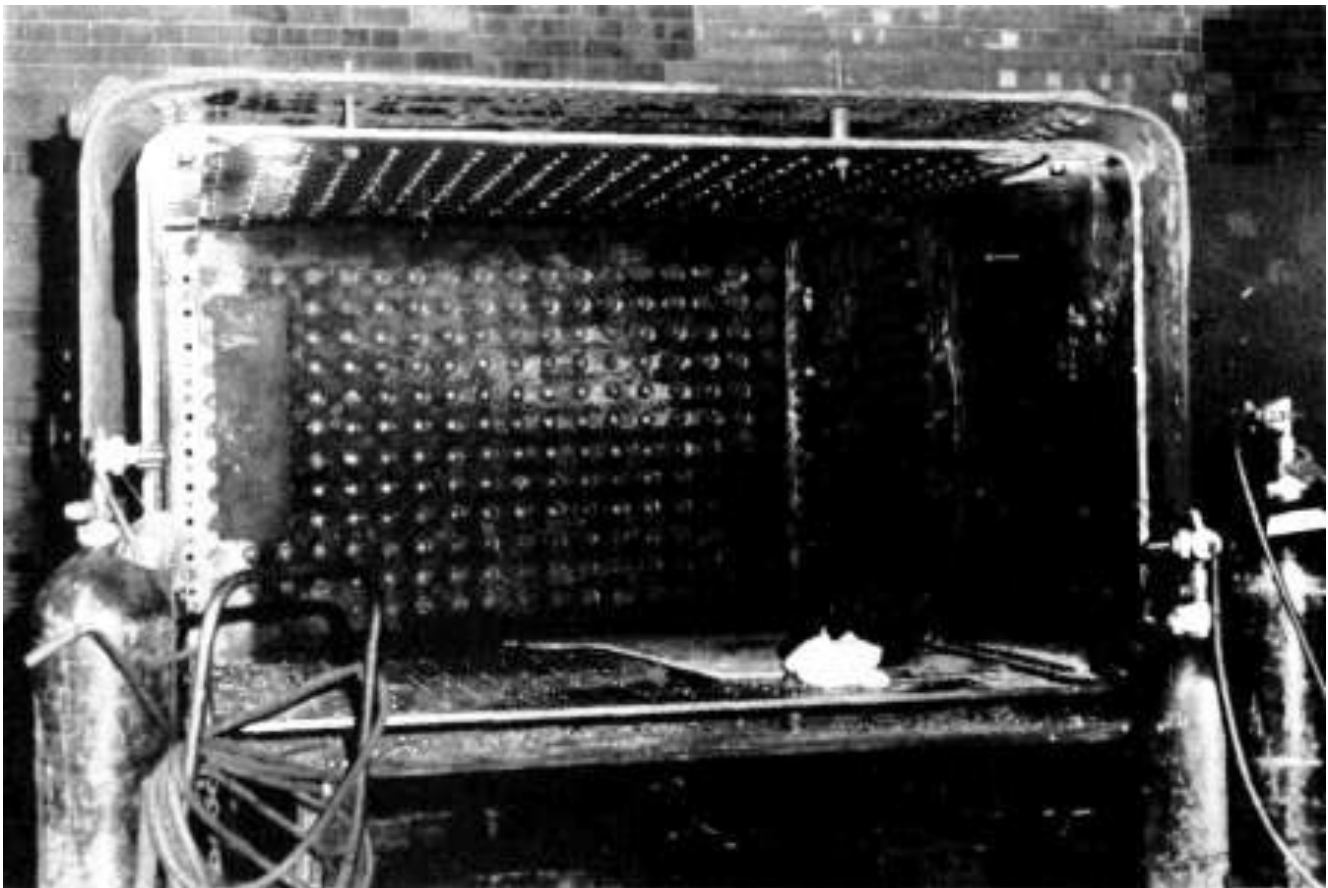
In traffic, based in Whitehead.

Returned to traffic after major boiler repairs and has operated the “Portrush Flyer” and various other Londonderry line operations, the only serious occurrence being the encountering of a herd of cows at Ballyboyland. The locomotive requires renewal of expansion link rivets and valve rings, and the tender tank could do with complete rebuilding.

**No.184 (ex GSWR 0-6-0)**

At Mullingar; funding of repairs 75% ERDF, 25% RPSI.

This locomotive has been stripped down for removal of its boiler. As with No.4, full assessment of the repairs necessary must await the removal of the boiler from the frames. The boiler definitely needs a new front tubeplate and the inner firebox doorplate is wasted, so also is the outer wrapper at foundation ring level and renewal may be necessary here. The inner firebox is generally serviceable.



*No.85's firebox, with all the replacement sections of copper plate installed. The inner firebox is held in position by temporary bolts and spacers pending the fitting of new stays and rivets, while the new door plate and lower tube plate have still to be drilled. (C.P. Friel)*

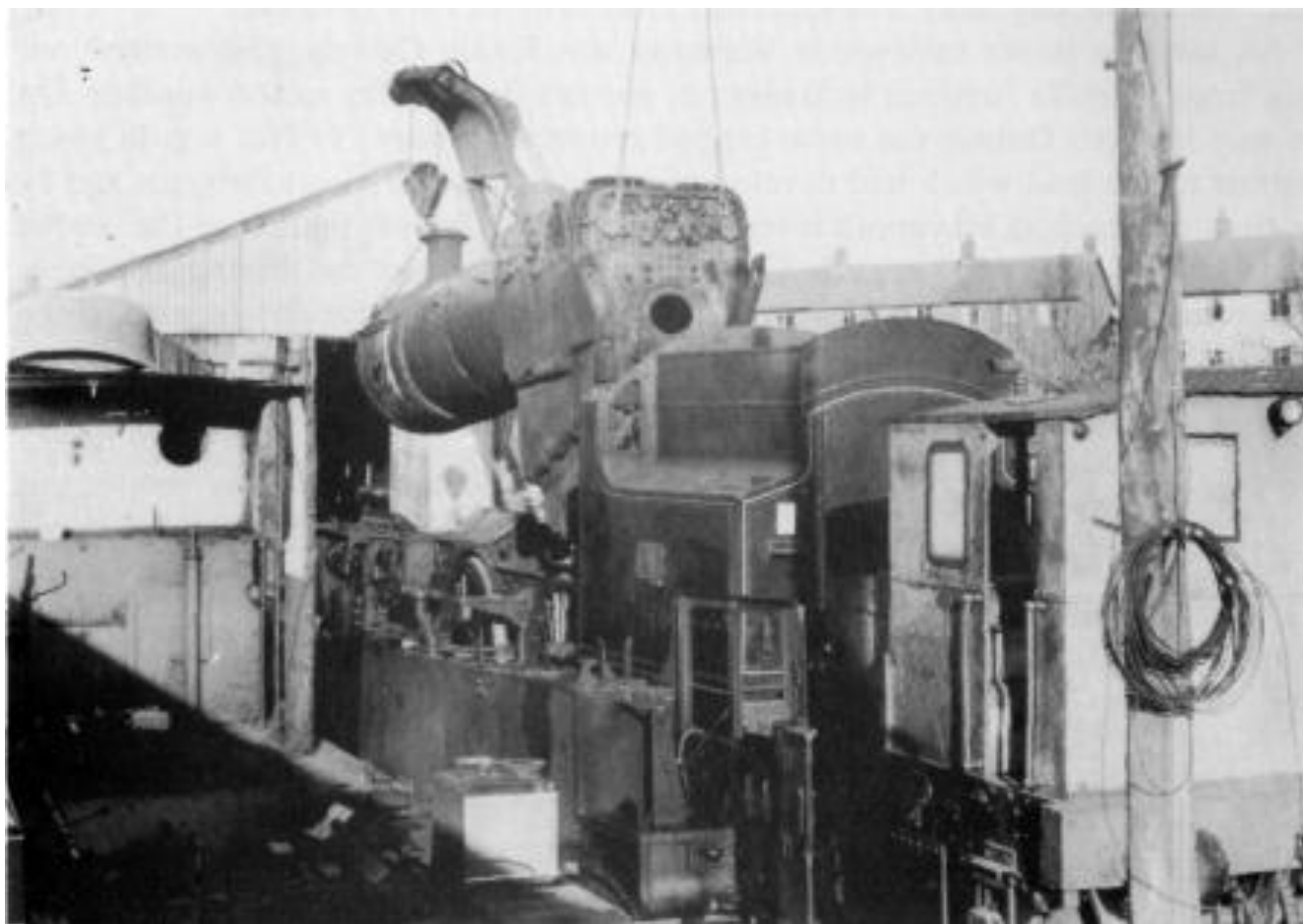
**No.461 (ex DSER 2-6-0)**

In traffic, based in Dublin.

Trouble has been experienced with driving axleboxes running hot. This was blamed on inadequate side clearance, which was eased slightly. Further attention may be necessary.

This locomotive suddenly developed a serious rash of leaking stays in the fire area - the sudden nature of this fault suggests some occurrence other than natural deterioration. Gradual steam raising, gradual filling of the boiler and avoidance of sudden dumping of the fire would appear to be good advice.

In spite of the above, No.461 has slogged her way valiantly round the countryside and has operated the entire Dublin Area tour programme including the Westport tour when locomotive No.171 was unfortunately stranded north of the Border.



*The Planet diesel waits to move the frames and bunker of No.4 into the shed at Whitehead after the hand crane and an unseen mobile crane lift out the boiler in November 1992. Also in the picture are the cab and frames of "R.H. Smyth" and No.4's tanks. (C.P. Friel)*

#### **Carlow Diesel (Ruston & Hornsby 4-wD, ex Irish Sugar Co.)**

General overhaul; funding, RPSI (main engine overhauled by Felden House and sheet metal repairs by Crumlin Road Opportunities training schemes). The diesel engine has now been successfully started, in November, largely as a result of the endeavours of several new members who sorted out teething problems with the timing.

#### **No.23 (Planet 4-wD, ex Irish Shell)**

In traffic at Whitehead.

A worn coupling between the clutch and gearbox was causing severe backlash in the transmission. A new coupling was made at the Metalwork Class at the College of Technology, Belfast, and will hopefully cure the problem.

## **Locomotive Workshop**

The major single project in the 'Plan 2000' developments is a workshop designed for handling the heavier parts of the locomotives, i.e. boilers, bogies, tanks, etc. At present these items have to be lifted out in the open by a mobile crane and then either worked at in the open or else wheeled into the running shed on a bogie. The running shed suffers from cramped floor space and insufficient headroom without any overhead craneage. It is of course possible to work under such spartan conditions and many railway centres produce excellent work with similar limited facilities. However, much valuable time and energy is wasted in combating these conditions and there is always the temptation to make do with a less than perfect job because it is too costly to hire a crane, or too awkward to move something that is in the way. All this, together with the health and safety angle, makes a suitable workshop highly desirable.

The original proposal was for a building 150 ft. by 50 ft. with a good floor, an inspection pit and a 30-ton overhead travelling crane. One railway track would run through it, offset to one side, and the remaining floor space would be working area plus some space given up to the heavier machines like the wheel lathe, wheel press and blacksmith's hammer, etc.

Unfortunately, a high specification building suitable for grant aid of this size would have been considerably beyond the original estimates. In addition it was soon realised that the ERDF assisted payments were using up all the available Society money and leaving nothing for ordinary maintenance. An adjustment therefore had to be made to include ordinary maintenance work under ERDF and also to increase the allocation to ERDF locomotive projects, principally the boiler repairs to No.4 and No.184, so that paid staff could be retained to carry out this work. Since the total ERDF funding remains unchanged this unfortunately means a trimming of the proposed workshop to 70 ft. by 50 ft. There is always the option to increase the length of the building at a later date. At present the design is being finalised and submitted for planning approval, so that work can hopefully start some time in 1993.

PS: Have you any money you don't want? Silly question, but the fact of the matter is that the Society is having extreme difficulty in funding the 25% of the ERDF projects. This is a golden opportunity for the Society to multiply every pound by four - it may never be repeated and it would be a tragedy if we had to abandon projects because our own proportion could not be raised within the time limit of May 1994. Accordingly, several members have assisted with donations and loans towards locomotive projects. But we need much more over the next year. Can YOU help? Now is the time and either myself or Treasurer John Beaumont would be delighted to hear from you.

## **WHITEHEAD SITE REPORT**

**Dermot Mackie**

Problem - how do you move 300 concrete sleepers, each weighing more than 5 cwt. and 1500 ft. of steel rails?

Solution - with the help of good friends such as Johnny Glendinning, David and Paul Henderson, Stephen Glass, Simon Marsh, Alan McRobert, Trevor Mounstephen, Johnny, Philip and Tim Lockett, Drew and Trevor Wood and Albert Sage.

It wasn't easy, the elements were often against us but the camaraderie was superb and the results have been very rewarding - a new carriage shed laid throughout with two roads of concrete sleepered track.

In January it began with the mass clearance of all the old timbered track from No.1 road and the re-alignment of 2 and 3 sidings to allow the contractors to start the shed in the first week of February. By the end of the month, when the steel fabric was almost complete, we were inside the structure, laying the first three 60 ft. lengths of concrete sleepered track with the aid of an improvised extension bar on the front bucket of the JCB. After this we made up complete panels on our flat wagon, four at a time,

which we could lift off inside the shed in half-sections using our refurbished hand crane.

With the completion of the shed before Easter we were in a position to remove the old No.2 road and start replacing it. At this stage the contractors, MSM of Portadown, for whom I have nothing but praise, moved the gate post in front of the new shed and used their very powerful tracked digger to slew and re-align both 1 and 2 roads which greatly eased the curve approaches to the shed. They also poured the concrete base for the new heavy lift area.

Much of the work on No.2 road took place on Wednesday evenings in the summer months and was completed by the end of July. Unfortunately I had my leg broken by a bull (not at Whitehead) at this time and so it was the end of September before we got to the back of the site with this siding.

It was only now that the long suffering clutch on the JCB finally expired. Replacement was possible, thankfully without removal of the engine, by dint of hard work and the liberal use of hand cleanser.



***The new carriage shed at Whitehead, shortly after completion. Between it and the locomotive shed the pit and concrete apron for the carriage lifting area can be seen. (C.P. Friel)***

And so it was on a wet and stormy November Saturday that we mixed and poured the concrete sills to complete the back of the new shed. The shuttering had been skilfully prepared by David Marcus who had also made a great job of the wooden back doors earlier in the year. We had done it and I think we can be justifiably proud of our achievement.

If you like a challenge and enjoy the good company that is generated by hard work then why not come and join us. You will be very welcome. We have plenty more to do.

*[This article is an updated version of an article which originally appeared in the IRRS Journal in 1978.]*

The golden age of railways in Ulster, as in most European countries, was in the years from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century up to the outbreak of the First World War. The major systems had been completed and the railways had an almost complete monopoly of land transport, although statutory control ensured that this monopoly was not misused. The only sphere in which railways had to face competition was in the large cities, where electric street tramways captured a large share of short-distance suburban traffic.

The winds of change first began to blow strongly in the immediate post-war years. The needs of the War had caused a rapid advancement in the techniques of road vehicle building, and a surplus of these was soon thrown on the market.



***GNR QL class No.127 attaches the through coaches from Enniskillen to the 9:25am Londonderry-Belfast at Omagh, probably 1952. (W. Robb)***

It was about 1923 that omnibuses first began regular services in Northern Ireland, but these were mainly provided by small operators based in provincial towns and were run unsystematically and in competition with each other as well as with the railways.

The recently-established Government of Northern Ireland appointed in 1922 a Commission to review the railways in the Province but its report did not recommend any drastic changes. The first step to regularise the position took place in 1926 when a licensing system was introduced for omnibus

services. In 1927 a further act gave the railway companies the powers, which they previously lacked, to provide their own road services, and over the next few years they acquired from existing owners a number of services in their own areas.

While to a limited degree the railways were able to co-ordinate their bus and train services, the take-overs did little to solve the problem of competition with the many road transport operators working independently. The financial condition of the railways continued to deteriorate, and the Government realised that some further action was called for if the railways, still regarded as occupying an essential position in the transport field, were to be saved. They accordingly in 1934 called in Sir Felix J.C. Pole, general manager of the Great Western Railway, to study transport conditions in Northern Ireland and to recommend what should be done.

Sir Felix presented his report the same year, and his recommendations were embodied in the Road and Railway Transport Act (NI) 1935. This act set up a Northern Ireland Road Transport Board whose duties were to take over all existing public road transport services, passenger and freight, including those of the railways, and to provide, in conjunction with the railways, a properly co-ordinated, efficient, economic and convenient transport service to the public. Receipts were to be pooled and re-allocated according to an elaborate formula.



***BCDR Nos. 18 and 30 pause at Comber with the 4:45pm Belfast-Newcastle on 11<sup>th</sup> April 1939. Double-heading was rare on the County Down and No.18, a long-time resident of Newcastle, would have been the regular engine on this train so No.30 was probably going to or from some other job. (W. Robb)***

When the railways handed over their road services to the Board, they naturally expected the latter to co-operate with them in providing a shared and co-ordinated transport service. While there were a few minor measures of co-ordination, such as the issue of a combined timetable, and the transfer of a few road depots to railway yards, there were no real efforts to co-ordinate services, and the Board began to

compete with the railways on a more widespread and better organised basis than ever. Notwithstanding this, they lost money heavily, and the pooling system was never operated. The failure of the Government to take firm action to implement the intentions of Parliament is one of the mysteries of the transport world and one of the significant mileposts in the decline of the railways in the Province, when it might instead have become the turning point it was intended to be.

Two further enquiries were held in 1938, and reports, commonly called the Thompson and McClintock Reports, were examined by a Joint Select Committee of Parliament which issued a further report in 1939. However, before any action could be decided, the Second World War broke out in September and the situation changed radically for the time being.

At this point it is worth noting that, despite the deteriorating financial position of the railways, closures of lines up to the War were not serious. The Keady-Castleblaney line was the first to go, in 1923, being killed by the border. The Portstewart Tramway, closed in 1926, the Ballyclare-Doagh line, closed 1933, the Castlederg and Victoria Bridge Tramway, closed 1933, and the Rathkenny-Retreat line, closed 1937, were all narrow gauge, and so the most vulnerable to road transport. Some were victims of the 1933 strike. The Armagh-Markethill line closed in 1934.

It was indeed fortunate that, despite the lean times they had experienced, the railways had maintained their efficiency to a remarkably high degree. This had been achieved not only by skilled management and sound engineering, but by the forbearance of shareholders who went without dividends and of staff who worked on at existing wages. The War brought a new lease of life to all public transport. The road-rail problem receded into the background, for there was now enough business for everyone. Petrol rationing, the expansion of agricultural and industrial production and the transport of troops and military stores, all led to a rapid increase in traffic which the railways were able to handle with efficiency, although before the War ended their resources were strained to the utmost.

Closures during the War years were few, and were mostly a continuation of the natural process which started before the War. The Ballymena-Rathkenny narrow gauge line finally went in 1940 and the Ballyoley-Ballymena narrow gauge line in 1942. The narrow gauge Clogher Valley Railway also closed at the end of 1941. Two other closures which took place just after the War were the Newry-Bessbrook Tramway in 1948 and the Portrush-Giant's Causeway Tramway in 1949. Both were narrow gauge and of purely local significance. So far, the main broad-gauge systems had survived almost intact.

When the War ended, traffic rapidly fell back to normal, and the road-rail problem again began to loom, but the railways found themselves exhausted by six years of all-out effort during which their equipment had been over-worked and under-maintained. Notwithstanding their again worsening position, they were able to carry out a number of major developments, such as the NCC's new fleet of 2-6-4 tank locomotives, the GNR's "River" class 4-4-0s and mainline diesel trains, and the inception of the non-stop Belfast-Dublin "Enterprise".

In 1946 the Government issued a White Paper which admitted the failure of the system of co-ordination established by the 1935 Act and, re-affirming that rail transport for some classes of freight and for passengers was still essential to the community, concluded that only the merger into a single undertaking of the railways and the NIRTB would offer any reasonable prospect of obtaining an efficient and solvent system of public transport. The new system was enacted in the Transport Act (NI) 1948. A new body, known as the Ulster Transport Authority, was set up with effect from 1<sup>st</sup> October 1948 and took over the undertakings of the NIRTB and B&CDR. The NCC was purchased from the recently nationalised British Railways and incorporated with the UTA on 1<sup>st</sup> April 1949. Although it had been promised in the White Paper that the NI portion of the GNR should also be taken over, the Company's dual nationality proved a stumbling block and it was left alone for the time being.



The birth of the UTA was accompanied by high hopes that the disastrous failure of 1935 would not be repeated. If road transport and the railways could not work together under separate management, they could surely do so under a single management. The new Authority certainly made some initial adjustments which seemed sound business. They recruited a number of their chief officers from railway staff, and they disposed of surplus and duplicate premises.

However, their true colour was soon to be shown. In literal terms, the colour was green. Being the colour of the buses of the NIRTB, it was naturally continued by the UTA. But the latter had no sooner got their hands on the railways than they began, with unseemly haste and regardless of need, to rush their railway carriages through their paint shops to emerge in green. The spread of green across the railways was soon seen to be but a symbol of their almost complete road-mindedness, and they were not long in showing their hand. Less than six months after their birth, they gave notice of their intention to close the entire B&CDR system except the Bangor line. Objections were, of course, made, and the proposal was bitterly fought out before the new Transport Tribunal which had been set up under the 1948 Act, but the Tribunal authorised the closure. The Comber-Newcastle section (including the Ballynahinch and Ardglass branches) was closed in January 1950 and the Belfast-Donaghadee section in the April following.



***The last part of the BCDR to be closed was the Donaghadee branch, running through the now heavily populated areas of Comber and Newtownards. Here No.15 waits to depart with the 1:25pm Donaghadee-Belfast on 7<sup>th</sup> June 1937. (W. Robb)***

The Authority were not long in turning their attention to the NCC. In 1950, before the B&CDR had even been decently buried, they published a staggering list of proposed closures. With the B&CDR decision fresh in mind, would-be opponents saw little point in lodging formal objections and the Tribunal did not have to adjudicate. As a result, the following lines were closed, although goods services continued on some for a few years: Limavady-Dungiven, Ballymoney-Ballycastle, Magherafelt-Draperstown, Ballyoley-Ballyclare, Larne Harbour-Ballyoley, Kingsbog Junction-Ballyclare, Kilrea-Macfin, Limavady Junction-Limavady, Magherafelt-Cookstown and Cookstown

## Junction-Kilrea.

In 1951 the Dundalk, Newry and Greenore Railway was closed, although this was by decision of the British Transport Commission and not the UTA. In 1953 the independent GNR, which was facing bankruptcy, was purchased jointly by the Northern Ireland and Republic of Ireland Governments and placed under the management of a joint Board.

The optimism which surrounded the inauguration of the UTA did not last long, and criticism soon began to be voiced. The savage onslaught on the railways caused much dissatisfaction. In fairness to the Authority, it must be admitted that some of the less-used branch lines would undoubtedly have been closed sooner or later in any event, but if the Authority had tried for even a few years to keep them going and to give them a fair chance, and then demonstrated equitably that some of them were clearly uneconomic, the position would have been accepted by the public. Instead, they tried to close every line they thought they could get away with, even a double-track suburban line like Belfast-Comber which was not losing money too badly. Today it would be admitted that this closure was a mistake, but it is easier to close a railway line than to re-open it.



*The 3 ft. gauge Ballymoney-Ballycastle line was another 1950 casualty. Overlooked by a typical NCC somersault signal, passengers board the 6:40pm from Ballycastle. The engine is compound 2-4-2T No.102. (W. Robb)*

Two further errors made by the UTA were the assumptions that traffic previously handled by a closed railway line would automatically fall to their road services and that branch line traffic would remain on the main line. In both cases, of course, the result was a total diversion to private transport.

Once again the Government failed to take action to stem the drift towards road transport. They did indeed in 1952 ask the Transport Tribunal to investigate the whole matter, but the report of the enquiry contained no serious criticism of the UTA, although it continued to give a half-hearted degree of support to the continuance of the railways.

The GNR Board continued to manage its concern as best it could. It did not adopt an unrealistic policy of retaining all its lines at any cost, and in 1955 closed the Banbridge-Newcastle, Banbridge-Scarva and Goraghowood-Markethill branches. The Knockmore Junction-Banbridge line survived until 1956 in which year passenger services were also withdrawn between Dungannon and Cookstown. But the Board's activities generally were much too rail-minded for the UTA-dominated NI Government, and in 1957 the latter forced through, in the teeth of opposition from the Board, the closure of the lines from Omagh to Newtownbutler (including the Fintona branch), Portadown to Tynan (including the Keady branch and Bundoran Junction to Belleek, a total of 115 miles, which automatically killed the corresponding lines in the Republic, as well as bringing to an end the independent SL&NCR. The result was the end in 1958 of the GNR Board and the division of its remaining assets between CIÉ and the UTA. The latter withdrew the passenger service from the Knockmore Junction-Antrim line in 1960.

In 1960 the UTA began closing the Coleraine-Portrush branch during winter seasons. In 1962 the Belfast Central Railway was closed from East Bridge Street Junction to Donegall Quay in anticipation of the Queen Elizabeth Bridge scheme, and in 1965 the Central Railway was finally severed by the demolition of the Middlepath Street bridge.

By the year 1962 the outlook for railways in Northern Ireland seemed to have reached its nadir. But there remained a still, small voice of conscience in the Government which decided, before passing the point of no return, to have one further thorough investigation into the problem of the railways and for this purpose engaged Sir Henry Benson, a London accountant. His report, published in 1963, made drastic recommendations regarding the railways, but stopped short of complete closure. It proposed that all the remaining railways should be closed except Belfast-Banger, Belfast-Larne Harbour and Belfast-Portadown, which should be kept as commuter lines, together with the remainder of the main line to Dublin.

Accordingly the Goraghowood-Warrenpoint line was closed in January 1965 and the Portadown-Londonderry line in February 1965, but here the Government paused and had second thoughts, and the NCC line to Londonderry and Portrush and the Knockmore Junction-Antrim lines were saved.

The Benson Report, despite its initial drastic recommendations, can now be seen in retrospect as the turning point in the history of the railways, for it set out some new principles in public transport operation which were then only beginning to appear, but which in more recent times have been recognised as of increasing importance in all advanced countries. The modern concept of re-planning envisaged new residential and industrial areas. The growth of privately owned motor vehicles might in due course be stemmed by road congestion. The old panacea of "co-ordination", which might well have succeeded if it had been genuinely applied, had ceased to attract and in its place came the concept that each type of transport had a sphere in which it had its own advantages and could operate more or less independently. The inevitable conclusion was therefore reached that there was no longer a case for continuing such a monolithic organisation as the UTA, and during 1966 and 1967, its functions were transferred to three new undertakings, Northern Ireland Carriers Ltd., Ulsterbus Ltd. and the Northern Ireland Railways Company Ltd. The supervisory skeleton of the Authority was replaced by a Transport Holding Company.

The birth of Northern Ireland Railways was not greeted with undue optimism. The railways had passed through many difficult years and had recently suffered both in their public image and in their internal morale by a serious management problem, the real truth of which has never been revealed. But there was a sense of relief that, even if the railways might still have to fight for their lives, at least they would

not have to do it with their hands tied behind their backs. The new Company soon began to show vigorous signs of life. In 1967 the war-damaged York Road station was given a new look and at its opening the Minister of Development made the astounding pledge that the Government intended to “maintain and improve the railway system”.



*NCC U2 class No.81 “Carrickfergus Castle” crosses the viaduct at Randalstown with a Cookstown-Belfast train. (W. Robb)*

In 1967 Mr. R.P. Beattie, the recently retired Chief Executive of NIR, was appointed Civil Engineer and introduced the first of several modern track-lining machines. In 1968 the New University of Ulster was opened at Coleraine and the Portrush branch reverted to year-round working. In 1969 the Company introduced one of the most radical changes in traditional railway working - the issue of tickets on the trains by conductor guards. This led to the sweeping away of many obsolete buildings at unstaffed halts and their replacement by utilitarian vandal-proof shelters.

In 1969 NIR obtained their first Diesel locomotives - three small 0-6-0 shunters, but the most striking evidence of the new age came in 1970 when an entirely new “Enterprise” train was put into service, comprising three new diesel-electric locomotives and a fleet of standard British Rail coaches. In the 1970s a number of new features appeared on the railways as a result of road construction schemes, in contrast to earlier years when railway facilities were thoughtlessly sacrificed if they stood in the way of road improvements. Instances are the new stations at Portadown and Larne, realignments at Holywood and Seagoe, the new workshops at York Road, the new Guinness depot and general freight yard at Adelaide, and the replacement of a number of level-crossings by bridges. Major renovations were also made at Larne Harbour, Coleraine, Londonderry, Bangor, Lisburn and Lurgan stations.

But the most significant development of all was the decision to reconstruct the Belfast Central Railway and to provide a central station to replace the old GNR and B&CDR termini, accompanied by the unification of Bangor - Belfast - Lisburn - Portadown trains as a through service. The principles which influenced the Government to approve this major railway improvement may be summarised as follows:

- (1) The Belfast Urban Area Plan and the associated Belfast Transportation Plan, which were being prepared by consultants, provided for an urban motorway and other extensive road improvements. The Transportation Plan supported, as an integral feature of overall transport strategy, the re-opening of the Central Railway.
- (2) Apart from its intrinsic merits, a factor which weighed heavily in its favour was the substantial savings which would accrue in proposed road schemes - a factor which had already inspired the removal of the goods facilities to Adelaide.
- (3) Traffic congestion, the mounting cost of road schemes, oil crises of one sort or another and the need to protect the environment had led to a realisation that railways were a national asset which should not lightly be cast aside.
- (4) The scheme would provide Belfast with its first regular cross-town train service.
- (5) The re-joining of the Bangor line and the operation of through train services would result in fuller utilisation of rolling stock and save expenditure on the provision of separate rolling stock for the Bangor line which would otherwise have been necessary.
- (6) The disposal of property at Queen's Quay and Great Victoria Street would offset to a considerable extent the capital cost.
- (7) An associated feature - the diversion of Londonderry trains to the Lisburn-Antrim line - would bring these into a more central terminus in Belfast and would restore the possibility of through Londonderry-Dublin travel, a facility lost in 1965.

The first fruits of the project were, in fact, achieved in January 1974 when the Lisburn-Antrim line was re-opened for local traffic. York Road station, which had been practically wrecked again by terrorists, was replaced in December 1975 by a small modern station suited only to the needs of the Larne trains. The Central Railway itself was opened in April 1976. The re-routing of the Londonderry trains, for which a third line was laid from Knockmore Junction to Lisburn, was finalised in January 1978.

The general pattern of railway working in Northern Ireland has remained unchanged since 1978 but has been subjected to a continuous process of improvement. Space would not permit the description of these improvements in detail (many have been recorded in both "Five Foot Three" and the IRRS Journal) but they may be summarised as follows:

- (1) New and more powerful diesel locomotives and rolling stock have been placed in service on the main line to Dublin.
- (2) Further modern DEMU sets (including reconstructions of earlier UTA sets) have been placed in service on the suburban lines. These have been recently redecorated and improved.
- (3) Major station reconstruction or modernisation schemes have been carried out at Londonderry, Ballymoney, Ballymena, Lurgan, Portadown and Larne Harbour, while unstaffed halts have been improved with new shelters, lighting, etc. Belfast Central has also been refurbished.
- (4) Track has been improved, modern signalling schemes extended and level-crossings converted to automatic working.

The major development in the near future will be the linking-up of the Larne line at York Road with Central Station by a new bridge over the River Lagan to be constructed as part of a new cross-river road scheme. Some preliminary work has already been carried out. This project will result in the most

radical changes in working since 1978 and will complete the integration of the NIR system and its connection to all parts of the Irish railway network.

## COMMENTS AND RECOLLECTIONS

Laurence Liddle

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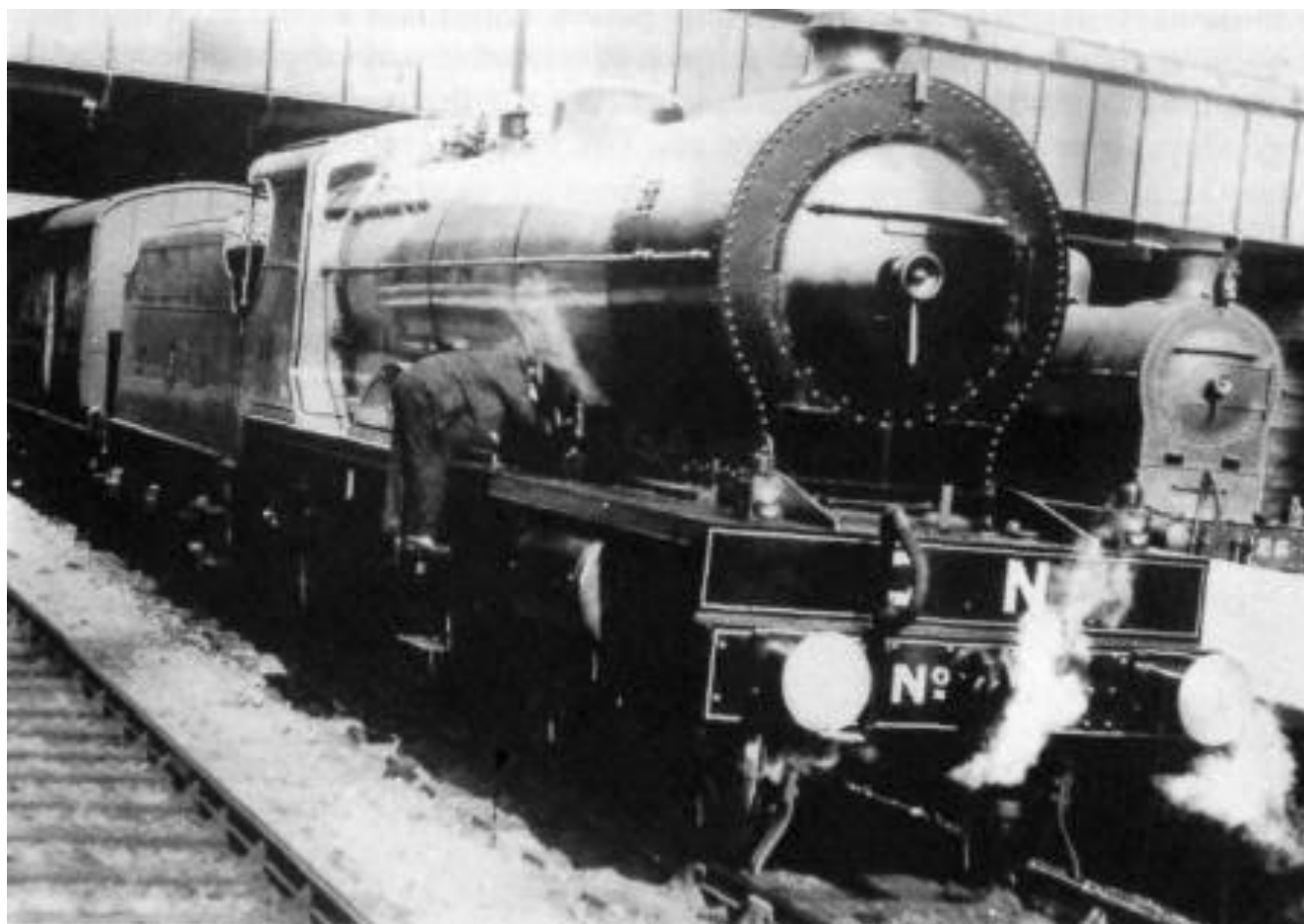
The illustrations in the last issue of Five Foot Three brought back many happy memories to a reader in Australia; the three bridges and the River Barrow at Monasterevan, through which I have so often passed by rail, more rarely by road, and once even as far as, though not through, this Midland village, by canal; that superb example of nineteenth century civil engineering, Bessbrook Viaduct, which, at a conservative estimate I have crossed at least five hundred times; and the impressive shot of No.461 (just remembered at Bray in DSER livery as No.15) climbing Dhu Varren Bank, under which I have driven at least as often as I have crossed the Barrow, I was pleased too to see No.461 on her home ground, rounding Bray Head, the scene of many a childhood walk, and I was delighted to note from page 20 that Jimmy Donnelly is still going strong.

Almost thirty years ago, in his firing days, I made several trips with Jimmy on 'Big Ds' and 'Moguls' working goods trains between Portadown and Dundalk, and soon learned to appreciate his professional expertise. I particularly recall one occasion when, firing to the late Fred Moore, he nursed a badly run down No.104 (the ex NCC Mogul, not the GNR P 5'6"), which started out with a dead fire which looked as if it was composed of just one enormous mass of clinker, all the way from Portadown to Dundalk - worked away during the lie-over at the latter town, and had the battered old Northern Counties machine fighting fit to hammer back again across the Wellington Bank as impressively as I ever saw a Mogul carry out that task. My last journey with Jimmy was something of a contrast, on a 111 class GM from Dublin to Dundalk, but that is another story and perhaps one that has no place in the magazine of a society concerned largely with steam locomotives.

However, it was not No.461 or No.4, the Barrow or Bessbrook Viaduct that made my day on my first inspection of Five Foot Three Number 38. If the reader has a copy of that issue handy let him/her turn to page 27, on which there appears what is to me the most memorable picture of the entire twenty eight in the book. Like many other Great Northern devotees I had a high regard for the 'Big Ds', locomotives which, when I was a lot younger than I am now, and measured by Irish standards, were most impressive machines. Many years after I saw my first example of the type (I cannot remember when or where that was) I was fortunate in being privileged to travel many miles on the footplates of SG3s, to give these big goods engines their correct designation. I soon learned that these 0-6-0s, the largest of their kind in Ireland, were as highly esteemed by the men who drove and fired them for their sterling practical qualities as they had been by me as a youngster for their appearance. I have seen and travelled on 'Big Ds' hauling both goods and passenger trains, I have seen them at work as bankers and shunters, I have seen them stripped down in the works and have even, again in my youthful days, expended more than one penny to set moving the wheels and motion of the showcase half model of the erstwhile No.202 which exhibited in the booking office areas of first Amiens Street, and subsequently Great Victoria Street stations. However, to paraphrase an old rhyme, "A goods train with two Big Ds on, I never saw before". I never saw such a double headed train anywhere, let alone on Carrickmore Bank, that epitome of all that was both difficult and typical of the Derry Road. What a picture that would have been in colour.

In the very early days of our Society's existence, when I was first of all Treasurer and then Chairman, we used to hold our Committee meetings in the Belfast Transport Museum, sometimes in the Curator's office, but if this was not available we would foregather in the CDR Directors' saloon. Many and long were our discussions, often did these turn into arguments - What exactly were the objects of the Society? Whose interests should have priority, those of the running enthusiasts or those of the more historically minded? How would we go about setting up a headquarters and where should it be? Those

who knew him will need no telling that on those occasions Drew Donaldson was never one who kept his views to himself - strong views, sincerely and passionately held, views expressed in trenchant terms which were frequently unsuitable for reproduction in a family magazine. Often I would arrive home, my head reeling after a two hour session during which Drew, and others with equally strong but opposing convictions, would have been at it hammer and tongs, whilst poor LHL in his Chairman's seat endeavoured to hold a balance and keep the peace. But now, all that is forgotten and forgiven, I offer my sincere thanks to the spirit of that honest, cantankerous, gifted, totally impossible and never to be forgotten photographer and former editor of this magazine for having, by means of a simple photograph, brought back for me so many memories of 'Big Ds' and the Derry Road.



***With Q class No.125 in the background, GNR compound No.84 "Falcon" gets last minute attention before leaving Belfast's Great Victoria Street with the Dublin Mail on 4<sup>th</sup> June 1936. (W. Robb)***

Now for a few septuagenarian comments on some items in our last issue - first Sammy Adams's reminiscences.

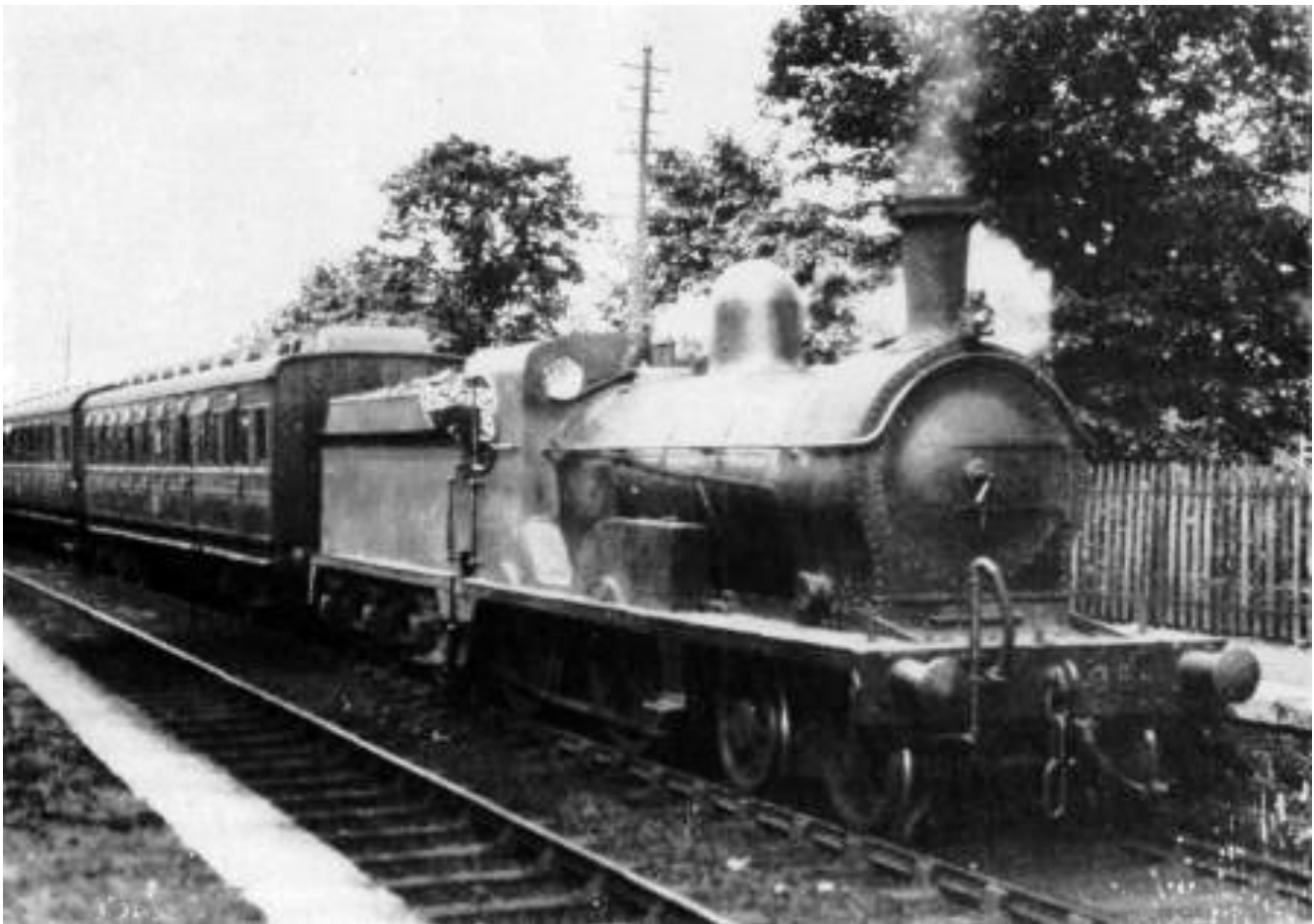
Sammy refers to the two one-hour meal breaks in the pre-1919 cleaners' long working day; the first of these breaks would have been for breakfast, probably from 08:00 to 09:00. An interesting piece of evidence of the existence of this breakfast break was the large Dining Room at Dundalk Works, which I remember being told in 1949 had been regularly used for breakfast as well as for the midday meal. Needless to say although the apartment was called a dining room no meals were ever provided in it, you brought your own or you went hungry.

My next comment refers to the illustration of A class 0-6-0 No.68 on page 24, and the query as to the location of the picture. The engine is standing on the siding which paralleled the up main line for some



distance south of where the branch from Dundalk Barrack Street trailed into that line, more or less opposite to the old Dundalk South Cabin. I have noted two items on page 28; first of all the photo of relaying in progress at Portadown Junction; I think the date of this relaying was 1944 and not 1932. Next, Sammy mentions often stopping with a 'Jeep' on the passenger train for a blow up when climbing the Wellington Bank. I never experienced such a stoppage but I well remember coming up through Mount Pleasant with a 'Big D' on a heavy down goods when we stopped to make some steam alongside the narrow minor road on the down side of the line just north of the border. There was a small camp of travellers, though we called them tinkers in those days, at the road side. The only person visible was an old man who got into conversation with the driver and myself (the fireman was otherwise occupied). As we moved off with gauge needle once more at 175 lbs the old fellow said, "Well - goodbye, it was nice of you to stop and talk to me."

At the top of page 29 there is a reference to Polish coal being used "just after the strike". I presume that Sammy would be referring to the 1933 railway strike and not the 1926 British coal strike. In 1933 the so-called "Economic War" between Britain and the then Irish Free State was in progress and continental coal was being imported into the latter country. I am as surprised as Charlie Friel that this coal is remembered as being "the best we ever had".



***GNR P 5'6" class No.105 with an Up local train at Balmoral in 1936. (W. Robb)***

To turn now to the article on the SL&NCR - at the top of page 36 there is a reference to the Sligo Leitrim and the Great Northern being refused permission to operate bus services north of the border. This assertion is not strictly true. Certainly once the Northern Ireland Road Transport Board was established the Northern and the Swilly were precluded from running cross border services for long

distances in to Northern Ireland, but they were empowered to operate from the Free State to the nearest suitable town in the North. Examples of such services were the various L&LSR routes based on Derry, and the GN Derry to Sligo, Newry to Dublin and Cavan to Enniskillen through services. My second point as regards the SL&NCR article concerns the note on the first class compartments in the clerestory bogie coaches. How many readers remember that these single compartments were each divided into two by a partition and a sliding door which moved in the fore and aft direction of the vehicle? This arrangement allowed for separate smoking and non-smoking sections, with four seats in each. My recollection is that the glass in the partition and the sliding door was a rough obscure glass of a brownish orange colour.

I was interested to read the contribution from my old acquaintance Geoffrey Wigham, whom I first met in 1942 when we were fellow members of the same unit of the Saint John Ambulance Brigade in Dublin. In page 39 Geoffrey states that in Northern Ireland during the second world war there were only skeleton bus services. This is true to the extent that long distance services were severely curtailed and what local services were available were often hard pressed to cater for the traffic. However, the total number of people conveyed by road passenger services, including those employed in factories operating two and three shifts per day on war work, increased so greatly that buses had to be brought in from England, and were also hired from the GNR and the GSR. It was common to see on the Newry - Warrenpoint - Kilkeel route for example, vehicles from each of the two last mentioned concerns as well as those of the West Yorkshire bus company.

Still on page 39 - in his list of cabins between Belfast and Portadown Geoffrey omits Bell's Row, just north of Lurgan. Strictly perhaps this was a level crossing control building rather than a full cabin, but it had a small lever frame, which operated distant and home signals for the gates. On page forty there surfaces once more the hoary old inference that the class P 5'6" locos Nos. 88 and 89 were rebuilds of the single driver engines which had borne the same numbers. Surely it is generally realised nowadays that if any parts of the singles were used in the 4-4-0 these must have been extremely few in number and small in size. This brings us to the question of the meaning of the term rebuilding as applied to a steam locomotive. The use of the term 'rebuild' was common because whilst the cost of a rebuild could be charged to revenue, new construction entailed capital expenditure which, if strict accounting standards were to be adhered to, meant either a charge against the depreciation fund or the raising of new capital.

How much one hundred year old material is there in No.186? A locomotive could be rebuilt, entailing the provision of new frames, a new boiler and firebox and a new crank axle, together with new cylinders, pistons, valves and motion, in such a case surely it was a new machine? It is interesting that although there was an opinion held in the Accountant's Office of the GNR that a locomotive had eternal life, in that it could go on having heavy repairs and 'rebuilt' indefinitely, nevertheless when the S and S2 classes were renewed in 1938 and 1939 the small oval plates on the valances read "Built Dundalk" and not "Rebuilt".

I am puzzled by the last sentence of the third paragraph on page 40. Geoffrey is talking about the P 5'6" class of 4-4-0, and then says that No.11 lasted until 1960. No.11 was a PG 0-6-0. Still on page 40 - it is true that some of the Dublin line trains ex-Belfast were worked by 130s (Q Class), however such engines would have been working to Warrenpoint and Clones/Cavan, as well as of course to Derry. It was extremely rare for a Q to get south of Goragwood on the main line.

Looking at the impressive list of late afternoon departures from Belfast on page 41 I note "5:15 Dublin express, first stop Goragwood, 8 or 9 bogies". Except at weekends seven or eight bogies was a more normal load. Likewise with the 5:40 to Warrenpoint, on which I often travelled in 1944 and 1945, six was a more usual load than seven. This train was commonly worked by a Q from Adelaide shed.

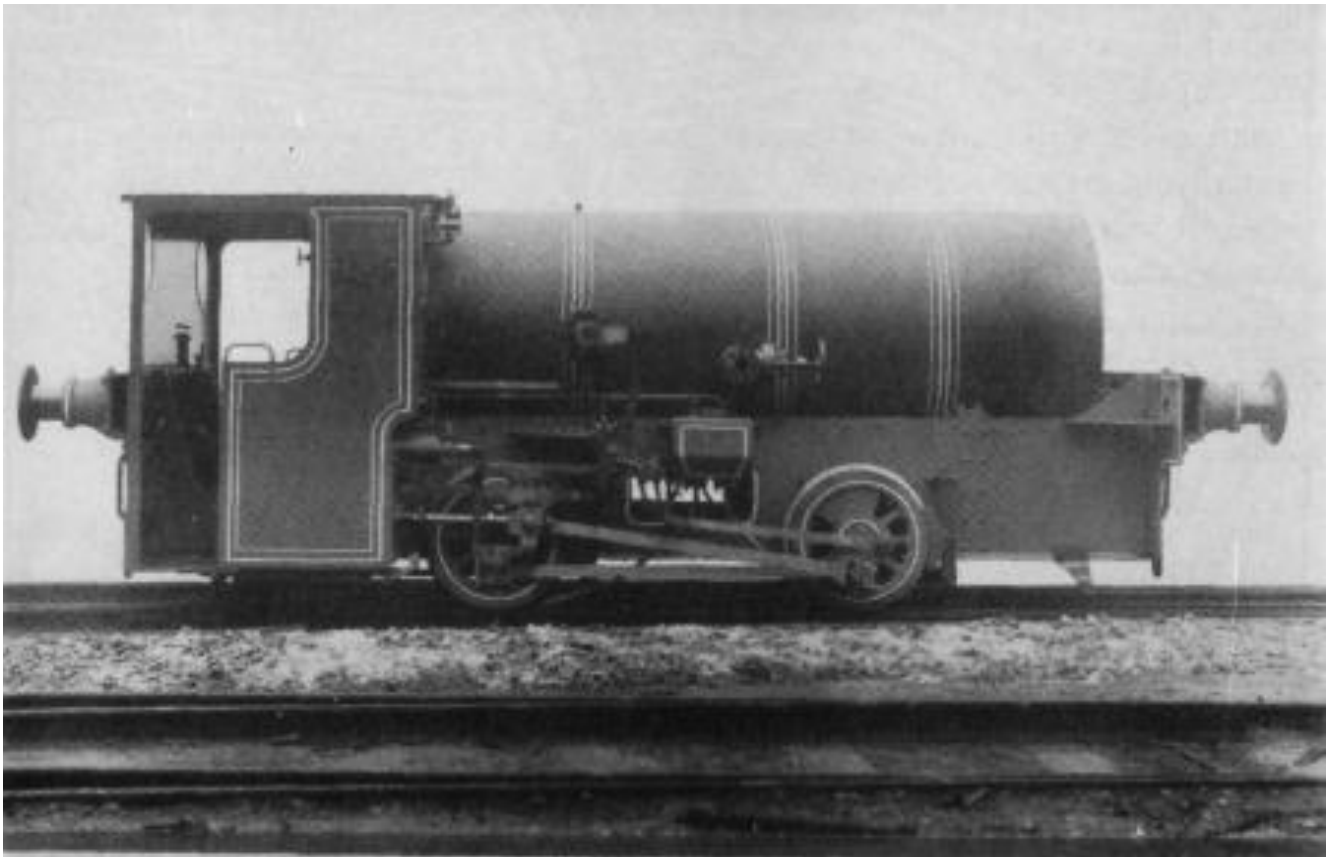
Finally, in my article in issue No.38 I mentioned some GN drivers' nicknames. However, it was not

only in the locomotive department that such names could be found, there were also a few in the 'traffic'. No doubt many older readers will remember that dedicated railwaymen "Spitfire", (the late Guard Alec Young, originally from Derry, later stationed in Belfast) who died at a tragically early age. Perhaps, however, there are not so many Society members who know that about twenty years ago there was a signman at East Wall Junction, Dublin, who was known as "Forever Amber". Does the inference need to be explained?

## STEAM WITHOUT FIRE

W.T. Scott

Lack of heavy industry in Ireland meant that industrial locomotives were few and widely scattered. The largest user was the Guinness brewery in Dublin with 24 narrow and 2 broad-gauge engines. Irish Sugar had around a dozen of Belgian or German construction at its various factories. Industrial engines were used by contractors on two large dam-building projects - at the Silent Valley reservoir in the Mourne Mountains, which had ten 4'8½" gauge locomotives; while ten of 900 mm gauge were employed on the Ardnacrusha hydro-electric power scheme near Limerick. All of the latter engines went back to Germany when their work was finished; the Silent Valley engines returned to England where they were disposed of to various collieries and steel works. No other concern ever had more than three at a time so Ireland was not a mecca for the industrial locomotive enthusiast.



*Maker's photograph of the Hudswell Clarke fireless locomotive. The charging valve can be seen above the sandbox, ahead of the rather unusual reverser linkage. The intrusive frames are visible inside the cab. (R. Redman collection)*

One Irish industrial engine, however, was unique in several respects. This was the fireless locomotive of Magheramorne Cement Works, near Larne. Built by Hudswell, Clarke & Company of Leeds in

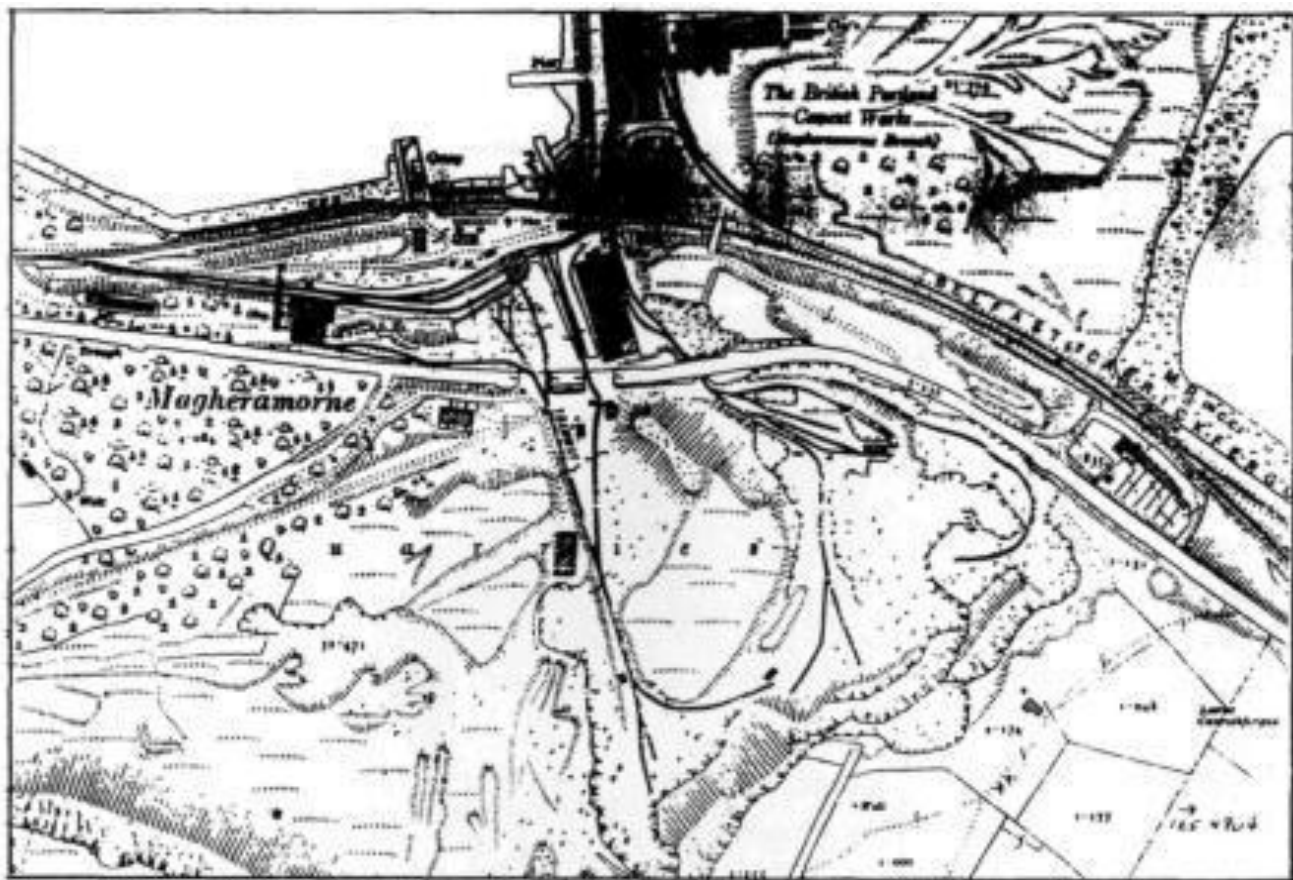
1915, this 0-4-0, Works No.1094, lasted until the early 1930s and was the only fireless locomotive ever to work in Ireland.

No. <u>1094</u>	
Description	<u>Fireless Locomotive (Steam)</u>
Type	<u>14 + 12 cwt. 4 coupled wheels</u>
Gauge of Railway	<u>5' 3"</u>
Order Received	<u>Aug. 18<sup>th</sup> 1914</u>
Diameter of Coupled Wheels	<u>2' 3" dia</u>
" Bogie Wheels	<u>4</u>
Delivery promised	<u>14 weeks</u>
Actual date of delivery	<u>Jan. 12<sup>th</sup> 1915</u>
Cost	<u>£535.</u>
Inspection	<u>Martindale &amp; Knott &amp; Co. Hull</u>
Locomotive Number	<u>1345</u>
Price	<u>£25 for fitting apparatus</u>
Terms of Payment	<u>90% on delivery 10% 3 mos afterwards</u>
Purchaser's Name and Address	<u>British Portland Cement Manufacturers Ltd</u> <u>Maghera Road</u> <u>via Manchester to Belfast Quay</u>
Destination	<u>Hand</u>
Brake	<u>Spring-buffers</u>
Tubes	<u>Fitting apparatus for abutment</u>
Buffers	
Specialties	
Weight empty	<u>10, 18</u>
" packed	<u>0</u>

Not only was it the sole example of its type in Ireland but it was also the first fireless locomotive built

by Hudswell Clarke and the only one they supplied to a customer in the British Isles. Their second - and final - venture into the fireless market was in 1931 when they supplied three 3'0" gauge locomotives to the Anglo Persian Oil Company at Abadan.

Without access to the records of the British Portland Cement Co. one can only speculate as to how they chose Hudswell Clarke to construct this curious machine for them since it was the only steam locomotive purchased by them from that maker. Andrew Barclay & Co. of Kilmarnock became the leading makers of fireless engines, eventually turning out more than the combined output of the rest of the British manufacturers. However, they only began in 1912 and for the next five years concentrated on Government work, mainly for explosives factories, before commencing construction for industrial users so this order may well have been placed simply on the basis of availability and price, both of which would have been adversely affected by the continuation of World War I.



Fireless engines were designed for working in situations where the combustion process of a conventional locomotive might cause a fire or explosion, or where smoke pollution was not acceptable. They could also be used at locations where the above criteria did not apply but which had an abundance of high-pressure steam, such as power stations. The boiler and firebox of a conventional locomotive were replaced by what was, essentially, a well-insulated pressure vessel. This was filled with hot water to about  $\frac{3}{4}$  capacity and was then charged to its working pressure with steam from an external source. As it passed through, the steam gave up some of its heat to the water which would not boil because it was under pressure. When the regulator was opened steam passed to the cylinders through a reducing valve. This started a cycle whereby, as steam was used, pressure in the vessel dropped and, because of this reduced pressure, the water boiled, replenishing the supply of steam. This process continued until the pressure dropped to the stage where the engine had to go back for a fresh charge. Depending on the nature of its work, an engine of this type could last for up to 6 hours between chargings.

Although many carried a steam dome, the lack of the conventional locomotive chimney gave all fireless engines a peculiar appearance. The Magheramorne engine was even stranger in appearance, having been built to work under very limited headroom and was certainly the ugliest engine ever to appear from Hudswell Clarke!

Although no drawings are known to have survived, its principal dimensions were as follows:

<b>Cylinders:</b>	<b>14<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub>" x 11<sup>3</sup>/<sub>16</sub>"</b>	<b>Weight (empty):</b>	<b>10 ton 18 cwt</b>
<b>Wheelbase:</b>	<b>6'0<sup>7</sup>/<sub>8</sub>"</b>	<b>Pressure:</b>	<b>180 psi</b>
<b>Wheels:</b>	<b>2'3<sup>9</sup>/<sub>16</sub>"</b>	<b>Tractive effort:</b>	<b>12,500 lbs</b>

For some reason the engine was built to metric dimensions, hence the odd fractions in cylinder and wheel measurements. Presumably to achieve a favourable weight distribution, the cylinders on fireless locomotives were commonly mounted behind the driving wheels although it was not common for the driver to have them for company in the cab as was the case with this engine. Steam was normally exhausted at roof level via a pipe outside the back sheet of the cab. As can be seen from the photograph, the cab floor was level with the bottom of the frames of the Magheramorne engine which must have been something of a trial to the driver when he wished to cross the cab.

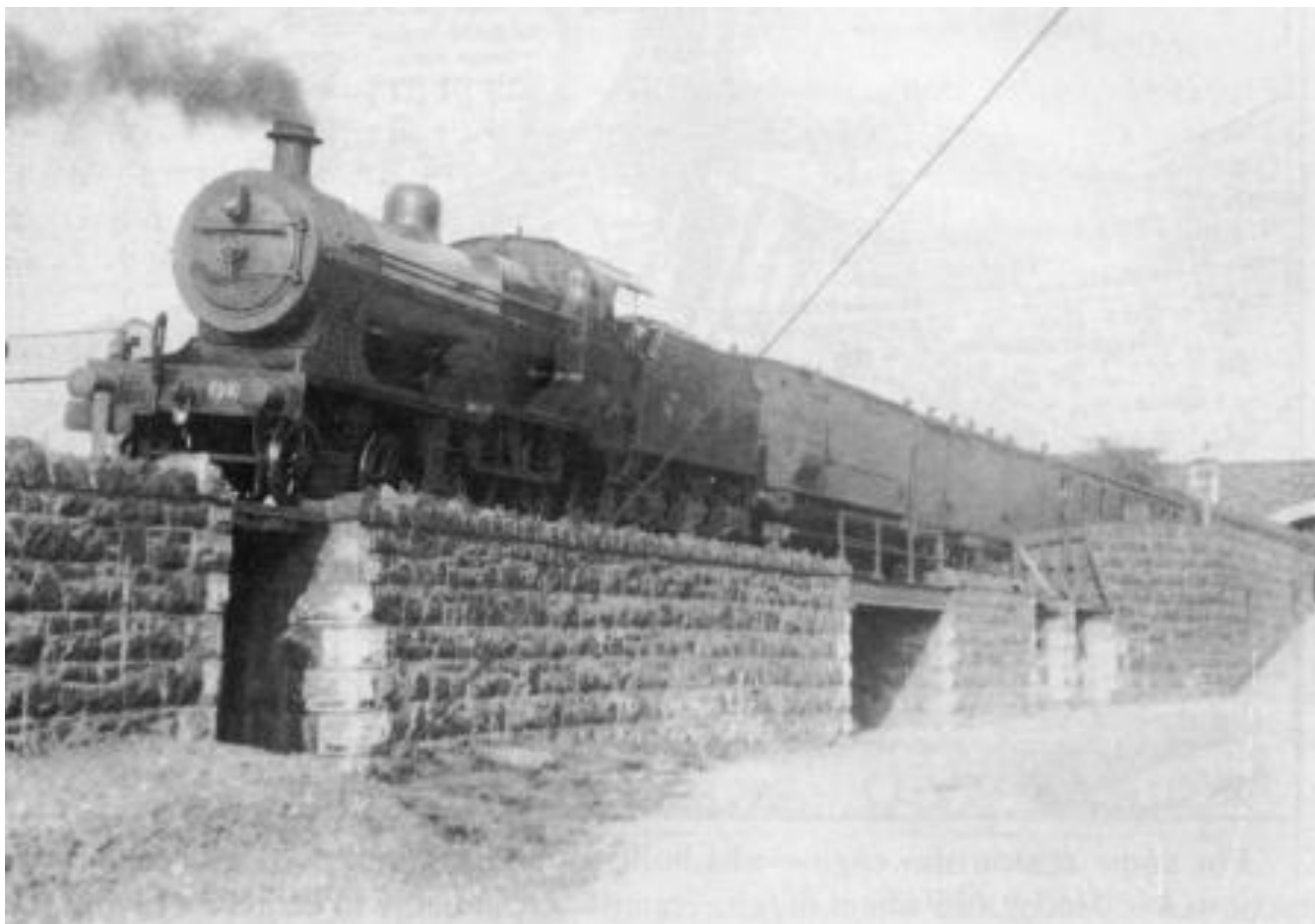
Curiously, Hudswell Clarke quoted an extra £25 for filling apparatus - one would have thought that a fireless locomotive would have been rather useless without it.

However, 12,500 lbs of tractive effort for only £535 - or even £560 - must rate this as the cheapest power unit ever to run in Ireland, although, transmitted through a weight of only 12½ tons, it must have given the driver some lively bouts of slipping!

The accompanying section of a 1928 Ordnance Survey map shows the layout of railways at Magheramorne at that time. The Works siding diverged from the Larne line just before the north end of the Magheramorne Loop. After giving off a couple of spurs which ran straight into the Works the siding swung sharply underneath the Larne line before splitting into loops, etc., at what appears to have been a loading and marshalling area. This area has long been occupied by offices and a car park although some of the old lime kilns are still standing and traces of where the siding rejoined the Larne line can still be found. As recently as the 1960s the siding into the main Works, possibly re-aligned, was used to bring in gypsum and to take out bagged cement. Magheramorne station, which used to boast a substantial building, is at the top of a short sharp rise. As there is no other obvious reason why the line should not have remained at sea level it can be assumed that it was so constructed in order that Works traffic could pass underneath. Although no trace of broad gauge track remains at this bridge the levels of the ground in the surrounding area would indicate that headroom was originally so restricted as to allow the passage of nothing higher than an open wagon and it was presumably this bridge - and possibly other restricted clearances within the Works - which enforced the unusual design of the fireless engine. Despite its substantial tractive effort the lightweight locomotive would have had difficulty in moving much traffic up the steep gradient from the under-bridge to the lime kiln area and it may well be that wagons were propelled in from the Larne end by a main line engine, leaving the Works locomotive and gravity to sort wagons and get them to the level Belfast end. Another possibility is that the parts on each side of the main line were worked separately, with only the locomotive actually passing under the line.

Nor does the speculation end there. As can be seen from the map, narrow gauge tramways ran from various parts of the quarry to the Works and kilns. The extremities in the quarry would probably have been moved around to be convenient to the face being worked. It will be noted that one tramway ran under the Larne line between the broad gauge bridge and the north end of Magheramorne station before splitting into several short sidings.

A recent exploration revealed that a few yards of narrow gauge track are still in place under the bridge. During a conversation with an elderly caretaker he was asked if he knew anything about the fireless engine. He did not appear to recall it but said that a small steam engine had worked there, that he remembered the driver firing it with 'blocks', that he thought it had been scrapped in the 1950s and was emphatic that it had worked on the narrow gauge lines!



*No.80 "Dunseverick Castle" at Magheramorne with the 5:20pm Belfast-Larne Harbour on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1933, i.e. when it is believed that the fireless locomotive had ceased to be used. What appear to be narrow gauge lines run under the largest bridge so had the broad gauge track been lifted by then? All the bridges now have concrete decks and the road level under the largest was lowered many years ago to permit access by lorries. (W. Robb)*

Thus, having started with a puzzle, our story ends with a mystery. Can anyone in that area, or elsewhere, shed any more light on what went on at Magheramorne some half a century ago?

I am indebted to Ronald Redman, formerly of the Railway Foundry, Leeds, for notes on the engine and the maker's photograph. The page from Hudswell Clarke's order book is by courtesy of the National Railway Museum and the map by courtesy of the Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland.

## **ANOTHER DRIVER REMEMBERS - PADDY HOEY**

**Charles P. Friel**

In an article in Five Foot Three No.38, I recounted a conversation I had with Sammy Adams. In similar vein I would now like to record a chat I had the following evening with Paddy Hoey.

The two conversations provided many contrasts - Sammy lonely and on his own, Paddy in the midst of



a busy family home with his wife contributing almost as much as him at times.

The great sadness is that despite invitations to revisit both Sammy and Paddy I never did. The equally great sadness is that, in re-reading my notes, I have many, many questions for each of them - questions that cannot now be answered, at least in this life.

Again, Mac Arnold used only a glimpse or two of the things Paddy told me so I have set out all that I noted when I got home that evening. As before, Paddy's story is retold in his own words ...

The engines in Portadown at the time of the building of the new shed (about 1923) included No.14 - a D engine and Lowry Kyle was her driver; No.141; No.136 - she only did one turn each day, the 7:45am to Belfast and back on the 10:30am and that was that; No.115 - a tank engine I well remember cleaning; No.96 - a D engine that worked the Dundalk goods; No.97 - another D based in Dublin; No.184 - a C engine from Dublin that worked the Dublin goods into Portadown at 3:35am, got coaled and that and worked back to Dublin at 8:17am.

Other Dublin engines were the 170s; they worked down on the 6:45am out of Dublin and lay over here to work the 11 o'clock back to Dublin. I remember Davy Ryan on that, with Billy Keegan firing to him. Billy Keegan met a sad end; he was driving on the Dublin passenger link and he stopped the train at Portmarnock. Billy got off the engine, sat down on the bank and died. The other Dublin drivers I remember in my early cleaning days were Micky Russell, whose fireman was by the name of Venus, and Mick O'Farrell. The main line drivers had a special cap badge, a sewn cloth affair, and a serge jacket.

Then we had old numbers 201 and 202 lying overnight; they were Dundalk engines and worked goods trains into Portadown in the small hours of the night and worked home about 7 or 8am.

Tank No.115 had one regular turn - she went out on the 10:14am to Belfast and worked the 12 noon to Tynan and was back through Portadown about 4pm. I well remember Billy Frazer firing on this turn and every day he would do a handstand on the top of the engine as she went through the Junction.

The Portadown shunting engines were No.40 and No.69.

In Portadown at that time Bob Fenton fired to a driver by the name of Leake, Fred Lyttle fired to Andy Barbour and Jimmy Stewart fired to my father. In later years I was firing to Jimmy Stewart, he was a North of England man and used to make soda bread on the footplate when working a goods to Derry.

When I was a driver myself, I had Alan Adair and Harry Dickson firing to me at various times. Indeed I remember well one night I went out piloting the 2:30am Cookstown goods and Alan was firing to me. Harry Dickson was firing the train engine; I forget who was driving. Things were going well and I was looking over the side and not taking much notice of what was going on. I looked round eventually to say something to Alan and found Harry sitting on the other side of the cab. The two boys had swapped over while we were in motion and neither driver knew a thing about it.

There was one Portadown driver and they had to put him off altogether for he wrecked every engine about the place. He once put the shunting engine into the Newry Basin - he was that busy yarning away with the boys on the footplate that he forgot where he was going. He was involved in a collision just at the Ballinamallard end of Enniskillen station on the sharp curve there and the local paper printed his obituary. Your man thought this was a great thing and carried the newspaper cutting round with him for years after.

He used to keep a couple of greyhounds and one of them got him into a lot of bother. He was out walking her one day when she caught a hare which was very much against the law. Unfortunately Head Constable Gosnell happened to see him putting the hare under his coat and eventually he was fined something like twenty pounds - a lot of money in those days. So he got a sweetie tin, put a label on it "The ----- Benevolent Fund" and put it in a prominent place in the enginemens' room. Every

now and again he would give it a rattle and remark, "There's not much in it yet!" And there never was either.

I well remember seeing him at Lurgan one day with the same dog and it was the day of a flapper meeting at the old Celtic Park in Lurgan. He never let on he saw me coming in on a Belfast train but he stood up and pulled his empty trouser pockets inside out, gave the owl dog a sideways glance and aimed a terrific pile driver with his hobnail boots at the unfortunate animal.



***T2 class 4-4-2T No.115 at Gormanston with the 5:45pm Drogheda-Dublin on 8<sup>th</sup> August 1956.  
(A. Donaldson)***

During the last War, there was an American army camp up at Tynan and a British army one at Keady. One of our jobs was to work a train of six-wheelers up to Tynan for a load of soldiers on Saturday evening and bring them into Armagh for a night's boozing. Then we did the same to Keady and back. Now it was all right doing this part of the turn for it was daylight and you could see the banks and my driver, Jack Campbell, wasn't sure of the road. But going back again after the pubs shut was another thing altogether. We could manage the Tynan run all right but the Keady trip was tough going. Anyway the wee engine was pounding away one night and making her way up to Keady and the driver was peering over the side for it was the time of the blackout and you could see nothing. In the glow from the cab he could make out what he took to be a platform and, after running along it for a bit, he applied the brake. He stepped off the engine onto the platform and says, "This is a fine bloody station and not a light about it," and climbed back into the cab. But on my side I could just make out a light, very feeble, a long way down from us. We had stopped on top of the Tassagh Viaduct!

But there was one turn I worked in the spring of 1944 that hasn't been recorded anywhere as far as I

know. The engine involved was No.82 and she had a creel built up on her tender to take the fuel we were burning. The driver was Sam Hutchinson and we left Portadown at 5pm and ran light to Tynan where we picked up a train of American tanks. The train consisted of thirty low-loaders with a tank on each one and we were told that our top speed was to be 15 mph. The train was loose coupled, of course, so keeping the speed down took some doing.

We had no idea where we were going but we stopped at Portadown for water. This army captain came up and told us we were going too fast. We explained that there wasn't a lot we could do with the big weight pushing us on. Anyway we got into Maysfields and this County Down driver got up and introduced himself as "Old Moore" - he was to be our pilotman. Old Moore drove and I fired away. Now the UG was too wide for the County Down main line and the first platform we came to took the lids off the axleboxes and every bridge we came to the owl creel was scraping it. Away in the middle of the night we arrived at Crossgar and there the tanks were unloaded. Coming back in the early hours of the morning we got blocked coming into Belfast and we saw a barrage balloon going up from the aircraft factory. I says to Sam, "There's going to be a raid or something." "Well, do you know, Paddy," he says, "if there was a bomb to go off in front of me I wouldn't care, I am that fed up."



*UG No.82 on a less exciting duty, the Armagh-Tynan goods, leaving Armagh on 15<sup>th</sup> June 1957. The line in the right foreground ran via Keady to join the Irish North Western at Castleblayney.*  
(A. Donaldson)

Another man I fired to at that time was known as "Burn the Banks" and an awful nosey man. There was a Belfast driver that time called Johnny Nelson and he had the top two joints of his right index finger missing. He used to cause great annoyance by sitting in the tarry with his stumpy finger at the bottom of one of his nostrils. This would put "Burn the Banks" daft and he'd nudge me in great excitement, whispering "Look, he's going to put his eye out!"

I can remember about that time too the big blitz in Belfast. I was working with Walter Gillespie on, I think, the 4:15am to Belfast - it brought men from around here to work in the yard, the aircraft factory or Mackies in time for a 6am start. Our engine was No.72 - what we called a "wee bouncer" for she had coil springing on the drivers. Word came through that there was a raid still going on in Belfast but Walter said he'd go, in God's name, and go as far as he could. We could see the sky lit up away to the east before we left at all. We went on and it was only when we got to Lisburn that the all-clear was given. I remember vividly we stopped at Finaghy and the whole city from the Falls away round to the Castlereagh hills was just a solid ring of fire.

Anyway we had a few minutes in Belfast to spare and I went down Amelia Street and round to the back of the City Hall and down Donegall Place and everywhere was blazing furiously. The streets were littered with big fat fire hoses and I remember seeing the Dublin fire brigade there too. Thornton's had received a direct hit but that was as far as I got before the police and air-raid wardens chased everyone away. Anyway we got our train shunted eventually and we were turning the engine on the table when a land mine went off somewhere near the Tech and we were surrounded with burning paper. The engine shook on the table with the force of the blast. We worked back with the 7:15am and I was never as glad to get out of anywhere in all my life.

I had one close shave with the Luftwaffe on the Derry Road. You might not believe this but it was in the early morning just after a raid on Derry. This big German plane with a red and white swastika on the side of it flew over me up above Carrickmore. I think they were using the line as a route guide.

There was a different sort of fight that was always the cause of much leg-pulling on the railway and that was the Orangemen's sham fight at Scarva. I remember one year I was driving and coming back from Dundalk in the late afternoon all the people from the fight were packing the platforms. So I slowed down well in case any of them were too near the edge and we passed slowly along the platform. Just beyond the cabin I called out, "Who won?" and then put on steam again to get away pretty quick!

We usually had at least one good laugh working those trains. I can remember one fella from Markethill, just after the war, and I knew by the look of him that he was greatly taken with the engine - he was a big gangly fella and it might have only been his second time to see an engine. You can imagine a big slow kind of awkward country fella with none of the corners knocked off him. He had an enormous accordion over one shoulder. Anyhow, we worked the train to Goraghwood and were taking water before running round when this fella appeared again and wandered up to watch us. "Give us your box and I'll play you a tune," says I, and I can neither hum nor damn all. "What'll you play?" he asks. I asked, "Do you know the Boys of Wexford?" "I do," says he, "and you'll not play it on this accordion," and heaves the box back onto his shoulder again.

*[For the uninitiated: The sham fight, held each 13<sup>th</sup> July, commemorates the victory of William of Orange over James II at the Battle of the Boyne. Predictably, William has maintained a 100% success rate at Scarva. An Orange band featuring "The Boys of Wexford" in its repertoire might well find itself short of engagements! - Ed.]*

If I could go back to my cleaning days for a while. I'm sure you know that cleaners were terrible ones for playing practical jokes. There was one night we discovered there was a new laxative on the market that looked like chewing gum. My mate and I sat there, all innocent, supposedly chewing something. This driver came in and promptly asked us what we were chewing. We told him it was a new chewing gum. He asked for a bit, so my mate gave him two bits and he started chewing away. Soon we had given him nearly the whole packet of ten bits.

In the old shed in Portadown the toilets were primitive, just one seat and an owl door that didn't close properly. What you did was to throw your coat or jacket over the door - that was the signal that the place was being used - and pull the door to. Now we had thrown an owl coat over the door before all

this started and our poor driver was in terrible straits waiting for the man inside to finish. I thought we would die laughing. The poor man was shouting at the unseen occupant, "If you can't; come out and let a man in that has to!"



***Far from Belfast and the blitz, P 6'6" class No.72 heads a passenger train at Cavan in the 1950s.  
(A. Donaldson)***

Then when Frazer was driving, he used to claim that the cleaners never did a hand's turn. So my mate and I were in Belfast one Thursday and we bought a wee tin clockwork engine and a couple of carriages. We knew when Frazer would be about so my mate and I got down on the floor of the tarry with this toy. I wound up the engine and coupled her up and sent her down the floor to my mate and he would repeat the performance. Well, Frazer thought he had us well caught and he got everyone round to watch the two eejits on the floor going "toot toot" and so on. To his great annoyance, far from laughing, everyone joined in shouting "toot toot" as well and giving us instructions on how to wind up the engine and couple her up and so on. Frazer was mad.

At that time the foreman was Ben Willis, the father of Ted. He was round the shed every night at 8 o'clock with his Scotch terrier. The dog used to make a bolt for the tarry, I suppose the wee thing was half-starved. But anyway its arrival gave us the tip-off that himself was about and we'd hide the cards and pile out through the window of the tarry and sneak into the shed.

But he did catch me out once. It was a Sunday night and it was the day the R101, the airship, was lost. I heard a newsboy up in West Street shouting "Telly". [*The Belfast Telegraph, which very rarely printed on a Sunday. - CPF*] So I went up and got a paper and I had it spread out in the tarry when in walked Willis and asked me what I was reading. "Oh I never saw that," he says and lifted the paper and walked out and I never saw it again.

I worked with his son Ted in Derry for a while. He was known as "Socks" for he had a fashion of wearing yellow socks. When he was coming into the shed he would give a little cough and that was

enough for the card schools and so on to get well hidden.

You know those big containers that Guinness use? Well there was a bottling firm in Derry the name of Carlin's and whatever way they worked, they never emptied those big tanks fully. The Derry men would get a couple of these back from the Waterside and on the ramp up to the Craigavon bridge there was one spot where they could stop the wagon in such a way that the tank could be drained properly. They used to use artificial cream containers, and each one held about a gallon. We had an old carriage for sleeping in there and it was well stocked with Guinness.

Then we had the stationmaster's house and there were seven of us lodging in it. But the house was infested with fleas and you'd be lying there at night and they'd be playing football on your back and you could never catch them. However, Peter Doyle hit on the solution.

When I was working out to Strabane in the morning with the goods I'd cross Peter somewhere coming in. One morning he greeted me with a loud cheer and he swung out of his cab waving an enormous container of DDT - about the size of a packet of Ajax. "I'll get those b-----s tonight!" he shouted. He left fully intent on committing mass murder.

The Derry Road was a powerful place. If you felt like running like hell, you could run like hell. And then you could stop for a chat someplace. There weren't many places you could do that.

I was cleaning in Belfast in 1926 and I suppose you know that the cleaners' tables in the dining room were painted black while the drivers' tables were scoured clean. Anyway, one day this new fireman from Clones appeared firing to Sammy Lee and he brought his piece into the dining room and went over to wash his hands. Some of the cleaners were curious about your man's piece and one of them marched over to the parcel and opened it. "Corned beef sandwiches," he announced to everyone - I thought the Clones man was going to kill him.

I was firing on the engine the night the two wagons of onions were smuggled into the North. You see this fella the name of ----- organised it so that the wagon of onions were dispatched from Dublin to Dundalk; the wagons for Dundalk were at the front of the train.

We came in from Dublin as usual. We saw the engine that was going to bank us to Goragwood sitting on the Irish North, waiting to come in behind us. We stopped at the down passenger platform and as usual we lifted the Dundalk wagons off the front of the train and hit them up the loop. Meanwhile the Customs were examining the rest of the train.

We knew nothing about the thing at all but what happened was this. This fellow ----- had everyone squared that the banking engine would come onto the tail of our train and lift the van. When we hit the wagons into the loop, the banking engine came into the loop to catch the wagons of onions in front of the van. Then, when the Customs had done their job, they would put the wagons and van on the tail of our train and away we went. I forget how the extra wagons were accounted for at the Wood but somehow the onions landed in Belfast. You could have named your own price for onions then. Your man had to get a job south of the border after that for he was a wanted man here.

I can remember working the MAK when we had her. One of the engineers with her used to put a dozen stout on the engine leaving Dublin and gradually work his way through the lot. He was a former U-boat engineer and told me he was often chased out of Belfast Lough. The MAK was a strong machine but not speedy nor had she good brakes. This engineer's wife used to drive round after him with a set of brake blocks in the boot of the car. And one run to Derry with a C class load was enough to go through a set of brake blocks. The signalmen at Carrickmore and Sixmilecross used to hold the goods coming the other way at the outer home in hopes that the extra space available would be enough to get the MAK stopped.

Like most drivers I was very fond of the Jeeps but couldn't think well of the Moguls. One Jeep did give

me a rough time though and that was No.6. I had her on a Newry-Dublin special and she steamed so poorly that we had to stop for a blow-up on the way home. We couldn't blame the coal for we got three tubs of good Polish coal in Dublin and it helped us along. But once we got down to our own coal again the steaming fell away again. When we got to Newry the bunk was empty. We got as much coal there as we could but even so the fireman was scraping the bunk clean as we were passing Moneypennie's gates.

*[Subsequent correspondence with Paddy, son of Paddy, revealed one or two items omitted by his father. - CPF.]*

Your letter brought back many memories. You have caught my father's speech rhythms exactly. It is quite uncanny to read his thoughts more than six years after his death.



***Paddy Hoey on 2-6-4T No.56 leaving Goragewood on the steam-worked Belfast-Dundalk leg of the 8:15am to Dublin. (A. Donaldson)***

What do I remember? Well, someone once said of him that the three great loves of his life were the GNR, the St. Vincent de Paul Society - of which he was a lifetime member - and Tír na nÓg Gaelic Football Club, and they could never quite work out which was the most important in his life. I strongly suspect that it was the railway. On more than one occasion he was able to combine two of these loves and to serve them adequately at the same time! He was treasurer of Tír na nÓg for more than thirty years and in the early 1950s the club was going through a lean time. One night in particular a crisis committee meeting was essential. The only trouble was that the treasurer - Paddy Hoey - was driving a railcar (probably C3) to Dungannon that night. The committee meeting took place that night. Yes, but not in the committee room but on the last railcar from Portadown to Dungannon and back again with

the treasurer's report being given through the open communication door between the cab and the saloon! I often travelled in the cab of those railcars and I'm sure that there was much shouting necessary above the din of the engine. On another occasion, possibly in 1956, another committee meeting took place on a shunting engine in Portadown Goods yard. As you know, the night shunting turn really only required one man on the engine and a shunter to do the work so quite often the fireman or the driver would warm themselves up in the legendary flea-ridden shunter's hut. But for a period of time that night while my father was making up trains, there were four men on the engine. You see they needed four to make up a quorum so the chairman, secretary, treasurer and another committee member held their meeting in the only logical place! I would suspect that there haven't been too many football club meetings held on engines.

Still in the realms of the GAA, Nelson Hall claims that the heaviest passenger train ever lifted out of Portadown was crewed by my father and himself. As you know, Nelson fired to my father for quite a while. The occasion was the Down & Offaly All-Ireland semi-final replay of either 1960 or 1961. I recall that the engine was a compound but you would need to cross-check the details with Nelson to verify the story.

Nelson tells me that when they were on the Derry Goods my father would regularly fall asleep and Nelson would do the driving. A good system, you would imagine, except that one night he was awakened somewhere in the vicinity of Newtownstewart by my father's snores. Don't you pity the poor guard working away blissfully unaware that he was the only one awake!



***The MAK 0-8-0 diesel shunts passenger stock at Great Victoria Street on 5<sup>th</sup> August 1955 thereby making less demands on brake blocks and drivers' nerves. (Kelland collection No.22115, courtesy Bournemouth locomotive Club)***

His thoughts on the MAK bring back a flood of memories. I remember one morning when he arrived home quite shaken after a very close encounter with something, caused by the awful brakes on the diesel. Both German engineers on the footplate were about to jump when the bold Paddy, still at the controls, managed to get it stopped. In hindsight, he claimed that the Germans were right and in his



own inimitable way laughed and said, "After all, having built the bloody thing, they should know best when it's going to crash!" I still have one of the original colour postcards which the engineers gave him at the time. It shows the MAK in red livery outside the works in Kiel and bearing the number 800-010. He thought that it was a fairly comfortable machine and quite warm. I remember that he came home very clean! You will remember, I'm sure, that he was never able to keep clean on an engine.

I've taken up enough of your time but I'll finish by mentioning the time that Chipperfield's circus came to Portadown by train. My father drove them from Dublin, I think. At Portadown the animals were unloaded and walked through the town to the Fair Green. I seem to remember a specially strengthened wagon for the elephants. I would be very interested in finding out more details of that particular job.

*Sadly to say, none of the crew of the GAA train can now be consulted as Nelson Hall passed away in April 1992 after only a short retirement - yet another reminder of how much has gone from the railway which many of us recall from the 1950s and 1960s. Not least is the comradeship and co-operation essential to the successful operation of a steam locomotive, including a variety of practices of which officialdom dare not be made aware and few of which would be possible nowadays anyway. By organising film shows with Fred Cooper, when old hands and some younger ones could get together for an enjoyable evening, Nelson did his best to keep the spirit alive in the Portadown area. May both Paddy and Nelson rest in peace.*

## **SLAG HEAPS BY THE SHANNON**

**R.G. Morton**

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*The Cavan & Leitrim Railway closed on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1959. In the following article the writer describes a visit to a little-known coal mining area two months before closure of the line which served it. It is reproduced by kind permission of the Belfast Telegraph.*

Crossing the border at Swanlinbar can be quite an experience. A splendid new Customs building has been erected recently, complete with freshly-laid cobble stones for the heavy cattle trucks from the West to stand on.

Inside a uniformed official waved one politely to a small door. This led to a tiny back room in which several men in trench coats looked up suspiciously from their tea and endless chat, and courteously stamped one's triptique.

An old countryman begged a lift as far as "Swad." He told us he worked in that remote country, and added with a wink that he was just going to replenish his stock of stout.

He got out and waved an intimate farewell, as if to some old friends, and disappeared into one of Swanlinbar's many pubs. We drove on over the rolling drumlins to Ballinamore. Had it not been for the great whaleback of Cuilcagh behind us, standing guard over the infant Shannon, we might have been in parts of South Down or Armagh.

Ballinamore is a fairly typical Co. Leitrim village of some 700 inhabitants. Its main attraction for us lay in the fact that it is the working centre of the Cavan and Leitrim Railway, which forms part of the CIÉ system.

It was remarkable to find in such a village the pleasant whiff of steam, to hear the clanking and wheezing as a long freight train rumbles through, and to see the American-style bogie coaches with end-platforms standing in a bay, waiting to be made up into the down mail.

But it is an experience not to be enjoyed much longer, for the Cavan and Leitrim Line will go the way of the Clogher Valley and so many other railway systems on 1<sup>st</sup> April.

The Cavan & Leitrim Railway was incorporated under the Tramways Act, 1883. This Act enabled the company to follow the common practice, particularly in Belgium, of running trains along the course of

the public road. The line was wholly open for traffic by 1888. Three lines radiated from Ballinamore, which housed the engine sheds and Emmett-like repair shops.

One line ran north-eastwards past the beautiful Lough Garadice and across the Erne to Belturbet. A second linked Ballinamore with the Dublin to Sligo main line of the Midland and Great Western Railway at Dromod. The third ran westwards to Drumshambo and Arigna on the far shore of Lough Allen.

The line proved a moderate success up to 1914. It provided a practical and efficient means of transport for the country folk, and in those far-off Edwardian times ran trains which connected with passenger steamers on the Shannon at Rooskey.



*Ex-Tralee and Dingle No.6T climbing Creagh bank with an Arigna-Belturbet coal special on 6<sup>th</sup> August 1957. (A. Donaldson)*

One of the reasons it has survived so long is the development of the coal and iron-ore mines at Arigna. Three miles west of Ballinamore, the train whistles round a bend and steams splendidly on to the tramway which runs alongside the road nearly all the way into Drumshambo. The track is well maintained, and there is neither rust nor weeds.

The steam locomotive is fitted with a cow catcher, though it is probably meant, in fact, to protect it from stray donkeys. One of the bogie coaches, running empty, and a couple of goods vans make up the train.

On the tramway there is a speed restriction of 12 miles an hour. In practice, the speed varies between eight miles an hour on the many uphill sections, and 15 down!

Periodically, the motorist sees what is perhaps the most unusual road sign in Ireland. It is a yellow circle enclosing a black locomotive belching forth clouds of smoke. This indicates that, like the famous Blessington steam tram, the train line will cross the road for no very apparent reason. On one occasion the engine-driver was fined under a Road Traffic Act for failing to signal his intention clearly enough to an oncoming motorist!

At Drumshambo, a lively little village, prosperous enough in its own way, we watched the station-

master deal with the points, and saw the sole porter wheel away a consignment of Aberdeen ‘smokies’. The station itself is solidly built of grey stone. From the platform one could glimpse the cold blueness of Lough Allen and the Iron Mountains through the pine trees.

Suddenly a coal-miner appeared behind us. We gazed, in astonishment, for he might have come from Barnsley or Glenrothes! He stalked away, helmet perched at a jaunty angle, tin under his ‘oxter’, along the Arigna Road.



*The wagon loading point at the end of the aerial ropeway from one of the mines at Arigna. (Real Photographs No. X5461)*

On the way to the mines the railway crosses the broad, brown torrent of the Shannon as it leaves Lough Allen, already a substantial river, in spate with the autumn rains. The line climbs into the hills. There is a marshalling yard - another surprise - and the line terminates at the pithead, where a grimy shift of miners squatted, waiting for the evening train home.

It was hard to believe we were not in Fife, with coal dust everywhere, a great slag heap rising darkly above us, cable cars passing to and fro to the bins, and lorries and ass-carts jolting past, brim-full of coal.

“One observes the country, though tolerably good for tillage, to have a gloomy aspect, rising by a steep ascent from the verge of the lake to ... the black mountains which terminate the visible horizon ... It might be asked to what end Nature could have heaped up such a bulk (mountains) to annoy the surrounding inhabitants.”

So wrote an observer in 1802, who proceeded to answer his own question by mentioning the iron ores of Slieve Anierin and round about Arigna. In his time grey and white irons were produced at Arigna, and local landlords operated iron furnaces and works at Ballinamore and Arigna.

As for coal, the seams were apparently visible, particularly to the south and west of Lough Allen. As at Ballycastle, they were worked in a small way.

Arigna coal has been mined from that day to this. Today there are four or five mining companies busily

supplying a demand which has slackened little since the war-time fuel shortage.

This may seem strange, until one sees, further along the western shore of Lough Allen, several impressive Battersea-like chimneys belching forth smoke. They belong to the large power station recently erected by the Electricity Supply Board. How this would have delighted Dean Swift, who, in a moment of spiteful anger, said: "Burn everything English except their coal!"

## **DINERS TO DUBLIN**

**Laurence Liddle**

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A reference in a recent issue of "The Bogieman's Gazette" to former GNR Restaurant Car 88 has prompted the thought that younger, and maybe even middle aged, readers of these notes might be interested to know something about this vehicle's early history.

As built, 88 seated thirty passengers on fixed seats arranged two and one per side at tables for four and two respectively. Internally the general appearance was not unlike that of the refurbished 2400 and 2401 of the GSR or of contemporary LMS catering stock. The new car had an end kitchen; the Second Class saloon, to which Third Class passengers were admitted on sufferance rather than welcomed and which seated eighteen, occupied the centre of the vehicle. The twelve first class seats were over the bogie at the end remote from the kitchen. The reason for the First Class saloon being in a less comfortable situation than the Second Class one was presumably so that, in accordance with the normal marshalling of four of the five main line sets, the First Class compartments of the First/Second compo could immediately adjoin the First Class dining accommodation. In this connection it is interesting to note that whilst as built Restaurant Cars 401 and 402 had their First Class accommodation centrally situated, when 401 was extensively reconstructed after the Dromiskin derailment in 1933 the positions of the First and Second Class saloons were reversed, thus giving First Class passengers on the Down and Up Mails, in which trains the rebuilt car operated, direct access to the catering facilities.

88 was built at Dundalk Works in 1938, and on entering service in the early summer of that year was put into the 08:15 Up/18:40 Down main line set, replacing 402 of 1916, which latter car took the place of centre kitchen diner 144 in the 12:00 Down/19:10 Up train.

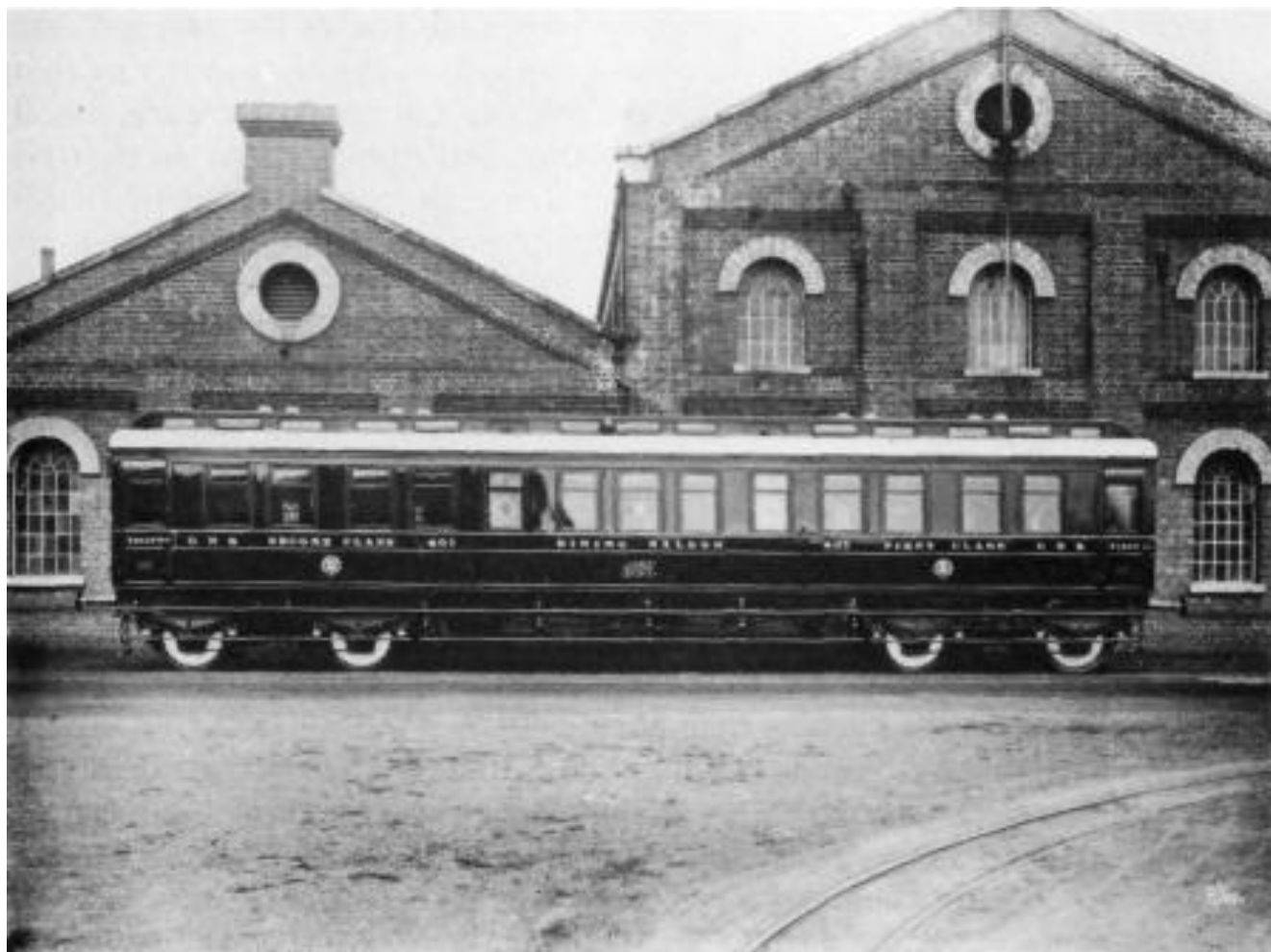
The 08:15 and the 18:40 were important trains, not only did the former as the first train of the day from Belfast to Dublin carry a fair load of business and other inter-city travellers, but, since it provided a connection out of the early morning cross-channel arrivals from Glasgow, Heysham and Liverpool, there was usually an appreciable number of boat passengers, particularly from Scotland, on the train. Similarly on the return down journey, as well as a plentiful inter-city traffic (the 18:40 was the last train from Dublin to Belfast on weekdays) there were also passengers for the evening Heysham steamer ex Belfast (largely from Goraghowood and Portadown) together with those who had left London and elsewhere in Britain earlier in the day and had crossed by the afternoon Holyhead-Dun Laoghaire Mail service.

Set (table d'hôte) meals were very much the rule in 88 during her brief pre-war heyday - what now would be called "Full Irish Breakfasts" on the Up service and five course dinners (soup, fish, meat, dessert and biscuits and cheese) on the Down. It was also possible on the 08:15 to partake of tea/coffee and scones/biscuits south of Dundalk.

88 continued to run in the 08:15/18:40 set for a while after the outbreak of the Second World War but the combination of fewer trains and increased numbers travelling ensured that the accommodation provided by the fixed seats soon became inadequate. The car was switched to the 09:00 down which returned to Dublin as the evening train from Belfast at varying times for the remainder of the war. The early up train and its return working, again with varying times, successor to the 08:15 had a variety of catering vehicles over the next few years; sometimes 402 which, like its rebuilt sister 401 and the centre kitchen 144, had its accommodation augmented by the addition of extra table and chairs, a

procedure which was impossible with the fixed seating of 88.

When the first (Belfast-based) “Enterprise” was introduced in 1947 the catering vehicle was Buffet Car 124, built in 1942, but 88 was used on the service as a relief vehicle when required. In 1957 this “Enterprise”, for which Buffet Car 268, built in 1950, had become the regular catering vehicle, became a BUT railcar train. At first the buffet car was again 124 which was now adapted for BUT operation and also for the notorious tray service on extended seat arms which was introduced along with the BUT cars. However, the need for better kitchen facilities than were available in 124, together with adverse public reaction to the tray service, led to 88 being converted to run in BUT trains and its reappearance in the Belfast “Enterprise” set. Later again, in UTA days, the car had its fixed seating replaced by chairs.



***GNR dining saloon 401 at Dundalk Works. The narrow gauge line which served many parts of the Works can be seen in the right foreground.***

Finally, mention of the 09:00 down main line train reminds me of two items of minor interest: first, despite the numerous timetable alterations of the war years, the departure time of this train never varied from 1939 to 1945, the one constant factor of the Main Line timetables of those years. My second point is that when I was in the GNR Operating Department one day in 1946 I was told (and I cannot remember if my informant was Campbell Bailie, at that time Operating Assistant to the Traffic Manager, or Willie Sefon, Campbell’s right hand man) that when the Great Northern services were about to resume after the 1933 strike the timetable clerk was told that he now had a free hand to go

ahead and recast the timetable in an ideal form. Presumably he would not have been able to introduce any significant changes in the down and up Mail timings, though my informant made no mention of this. What the latter did say, however, was that the clerk was told that he could not alter the 09:00 departure from Amiens Street. The result of this latter constraint, despite much brain work and burning of midnight oil, was that in all major aspects the new timetable looked remarkably like the old one.

## **BOOK REVIEWS**

**M. McMahon**

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### **The Fintona Horse Tram, Norman Johnston, West Tyrone Historical Society.**

Brilliant - quite simply brilliant, this is how to write a book on Irish Railways - none of this endless perambulating about Acts of Parliament and debenture stocks at X%!

The quality of reproduction is excellent, 76 black and white photos, 14 colour, plus diagrams and good precise writing make for an easy and informative read. Technical matters are easily described and would not deter even the least mechanically minded.

The various tales of the line are clearly detailed - the saga of sick motive power on page 67 is absolutely priceless, and I am sure very typical of the spirit that existed on the branch.

It is the first book that I have seen where as well as crew names being noted, many of the passengers are also named. At the launch of the book on 3<sup>rd</sup> October many local people turned up and this is a sure sign of good involvement with the community, where names in print count.

Now for some statistics - the Fintona branch was  $\frac{3}{4}$  mile long and the book costs £5.95. For the same quality writing mile for £ a history of the entire GNR system would cost £4,480 - I for one would say it would be worth it!

All I can say is get out there and buy one - better two, one to read and enjoy, one to keep carefully. We must encourage Norman to forge on - Great Northern!

### **Irish Railways In Colour - Steam To Diesel 1955-1967, Tom Ferris, Gill & Macmillan/Midland Publishing.**

This is a very welcome addition to the Irish Railway library and appears in the midst of what would appear to be a revival in Irish Railway publishing. This volume has correctly received much praise from the other side of the Irish Sea, and indeed at first glance it is an excellent production.

There is a feel of a 'rushed job' in certain places through the book, some of the photographs are fuzzy or have strange colours (even considering early colour films). Some of the examples could be improved on, page 16 top, and is that photograph of 64 at Baltinglass on page 82 really supposed to appear the way that it does?

The photographic quality of the GNR branch lines on pages 62 to 65 is quite simply outstanding - where ARE all those photos taken years ago?

One final point: some of the captions are a bit thin, for example page 67 - both photographs get a very basic one liner, so much more information is easily available from books or even just asking! The map at the start contains several errors, perhaps mostly an exact date, considering the programme of closures in 1957.

I can certainly recommend this book - an excellent production, buy it now, they will all be sold soon!

### **The Cork & Muskerry Light Railway, Stanley C. Jenkins, Oakwood Press, Headington, Oxford, Locomotion Paper No.39.**

This book is a very welcome reprint of the long out of print title of the same name written by A.T. Newham in 1968.

Photographic quality is excellent - the quality art paper does real justice to already good photographs.

Mr Jenkins has certainly 'beefed up' the original edition, whilst still retaining what was perhaps the definitive work on the C&M. Maps are much improved and many notices, etc., explain very clearly the workings of this interesting line.

I do hope that other Irish "locomotion papers" from the Oakwood stable may be similarly treated - there is an excellent base to build on.

Unusually, I recommend a third book to you; at £4.95 the price is well worth it for the photographs alone.

### **British & Irish Tramway Systems Since 1945, M & P Waller Ian Allan Limited, Shepperton.**

I suppose to pack information on trams since 1945 into 207 pages does require some compression but in places the compression has gone a bit far. As you read, for example, the chapter on Belfast (pages 15-19), it is well into the third page that 1945 dawns, leaving two pages to describe what the title of the book says - since 1945!

Irish lines covered include Bessbrook, Dublin, Fintona, Giant's Causeway and the Howth Tramway - but considering that Belfast chapter the Salthill tram could have made a brief appearance!

The Fintona branch is covered in around a page of text, 1 map and a good photo - at the same £ for mile as Norman's book. Waller's history of the GNR would cost £5.40 - not nearly such good value!

I suppose if you collect books on Irish Railways/Tramways you should include this one, but not for its information. I do feel that it started out as a history, but "since 1945" got added by mistake.

### **South Donegal Railway Restoration Society - 1993 Calendar (Cumann Athchoine Iarnróid Dheisceint Dhún Na Gall), SDRRS, Donegal Town.**

Sorry but I have to get the Irish in somehow!, this black and white calendar includes some nice photographs, but lacks a bit of punch in reproduction. In my copy, anyway, the greys are black and the blacks blacker.

The captions are good but descriptive of the photographs, I suppose to suit the more public format of a calendar.

I would love to see this production in colour on quality paper - indeed why do we not have a decent Irish Railway calendar? Each Society in Ireland should donate two excellent photos of former railways in their area. Come on ARPS(I), get cracking for 1994 on this one and let's get 'over the bank'.

I feel that the SDRRS calendar could become a bit monotonous by October/ November, one grey print after another, but still it is a worthy publication and a good base mark.

## **CLOGHER VALLEY RAILWAY**

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They tuk our oul railway away, so they did,

And sowl the whole lot for a few thousand quid.

They say the ratepayers here are well rid -

Ach, ahmdambut boys, it's tarrah!

For fifty long years she puffed to and fro,

At times she'd get there; at other times no;

She's worth more dead than alive, so must go -

Ach, ahmdambut boys, it's tarrah!  
She ran down back gardens and up the Main street  
And frightened the horses she happen to meet,  
And now she's tuk aff for to build up the fleet -  
Ach, ahmdambut boys, it's tarrah!  
I hear they're for sellin' the oul line for scrap  
For to make into bombs for to plaster the map,  
Well, here's hopin' oul Hitler's below when they drap -  
Ach, ahmdambut boys, it's tarrah!  
They say that the Air Force soon will begin  
To use up our Railway, this war for to win;  
They'll drap Clogher Station all over Berlin!  
Ach, ahmdambut boys, it's tarrah!  
Them Nazis now boast of a new submarine,  
They say it's the finest that ever was seen;  
A CVR depth charge will leave it 'has been' -  
Ach, ahmdambut boys, it's tarrah!  
When the Roosians and us march down Wilhelmstrasse  
Oul Hitler'll say: "Boys, but I'm the quare ass -  
Sure I might have knowed Clogher could still houl the pass.  
Ich, dambut boys, it's tarrah!"

*[Another find by Rev. Eddie Creamer. The closure date of the CVR, 1941, will explain the somewhat militant sentiments. "It's tarrah" does not mean farewell. Sometimes amplified to "it's a terror," it is an expression of consternation - Ed.]*

## **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

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Dear Editor,

I write as a member, both of the RPSI and of the GSRPS, with regard to the poem "A Rusty Love Affair" which appeared in the last issue of Five Foot Three.

"This Queen of the past" is ex-GNR(I) Q class locomotive No.131, at present being restored at Mallow. The poem was the sequel to a visit to Mallow shed some years ago by Ms Taylor, as related in an article in the Cork Examiner in 1989.

Negotiations are at an advanced stage in our efforts to avail of EC funds to enable us to complete the restoration of the locomotive which it is intended will haul trains on the Cork-Cobh line and elsewhere.

Yours sincerely,

*Dermot McNamara*

Dublin 8



Dear Editor,

Oops! And who was the brave one to write about Whitehead without having all the facts? Well, I suppose we're all entitled to one or two errors. Anyway, I am told by Mr Patrick O'Donnell of Edward Road, Whitehead that the most likely date of the Lawrence photograph is about 1910 ... and his evidence, being local and detailed, convinces this RPSI member. For the rest of my information, I await contrary evidence.

Speaking of errors, I stated that the photograph was Cabinet 10842 ... wrong! ... I should have said Royal 10842. Royal, Cabinet and Imperial are the three sizes of plates in the Lawrence collection, and if anyone is looking for copies from the NLI, it is important to specify the correct plate size.

Regards,

*Niall Torpey*

Dublin 16

Dear Editor,

In Five Foot Three No.36 W.T. Scott covered various proposals to construct a tunnel linking Ireland with Britain in his article "The Irish Channel Tunnel" based on ideas discussed at the International Engineering Congress held in Glasgow in 1901.

Recently while reading through Chambers' Journal of Popular Literature - Science and Arts, which was published in weekly parts in 1891, I found an article about the proposals to construct a submerged tubular bridge between Portpatrick and Donaghadee and with the aim of supplementing Mr Scott's article I now will present a brief précis of these proposals.

It appears that in the 1880s several plans to connect Ireland and Scotland were in circulation and some of these attracted considerable support not only from the public but also in the House of Commons.

One proposal put forward at the end of the 1880s was the construction of a submerged tubular bridge, between Portpatrick and Donaghadee, a distance of about 22 miles. The plan envisaged a bridge of ordinary construction being enclosed in a continuous cylinder sunk to a depth of 60 feet below the surface and retained in position by anchors and chains. Trains were to be operated by electricity or compressed air.

However it was noted that this idea was wholly untried and that it might be better to try it on a small scale elsewhere first. It was also noted that there were very many problems of construction and maintenance to be overcome.

Ingenious as the idea was, it was felt it was taking things a bit too far to expect investors to lay out about £5.25m (1891) in what was seen to be a wholly novel and untried idea.

For these reasons and the lack of suitable technology at that time, no further work on the project, other than planning, was ever carried out.

Yours,

*James Scannell*

Shankill, Co. Dublin

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**HENRY DUNLEATH 1933-1993**

**Robin Morton**

As this edition of Five Foot Three went to press, we learned with deep regret of the death on 9<sup>th</sup> January of our vice-president, Lord Dunleath, at the age of 59. It was in 1982 that Lord Dunleath

accepted the position of vice-president of the RPSI and many members will have fond memories of the ability and geniality with which he presided over several of our annual general meetings in the 1980s.

His name will always be linked in RPSI circles with the restoration of Great Northern compound No.85 “Merlin”. It was thanks to Lord Dunleath’s enthusiasm, vision and financial support that the locomotive was returned to traffic after more than 15 years in Witham Street museum in Belfast. Lord Dunleath approached the Society in 1976 to explain it had been his ambition for some time to see Merlin restored to main line running condition. To make the dream come true, Lord Dunleath’s charitable trust funded the locomotive’s overhaul.

Lord Dunleath was at the regulator at Merlin’s official launch in Whitehead in June 1986 and nobody was more delighted than him when No.85 made a triumphant return to the Belfast-Dublin line in September of that year. The high point of that period must have been No.85’s non-stop Enterprise 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary run from Belfast to Dublin in August 1987, an occasion which Lord Dunleath so obviously relished.

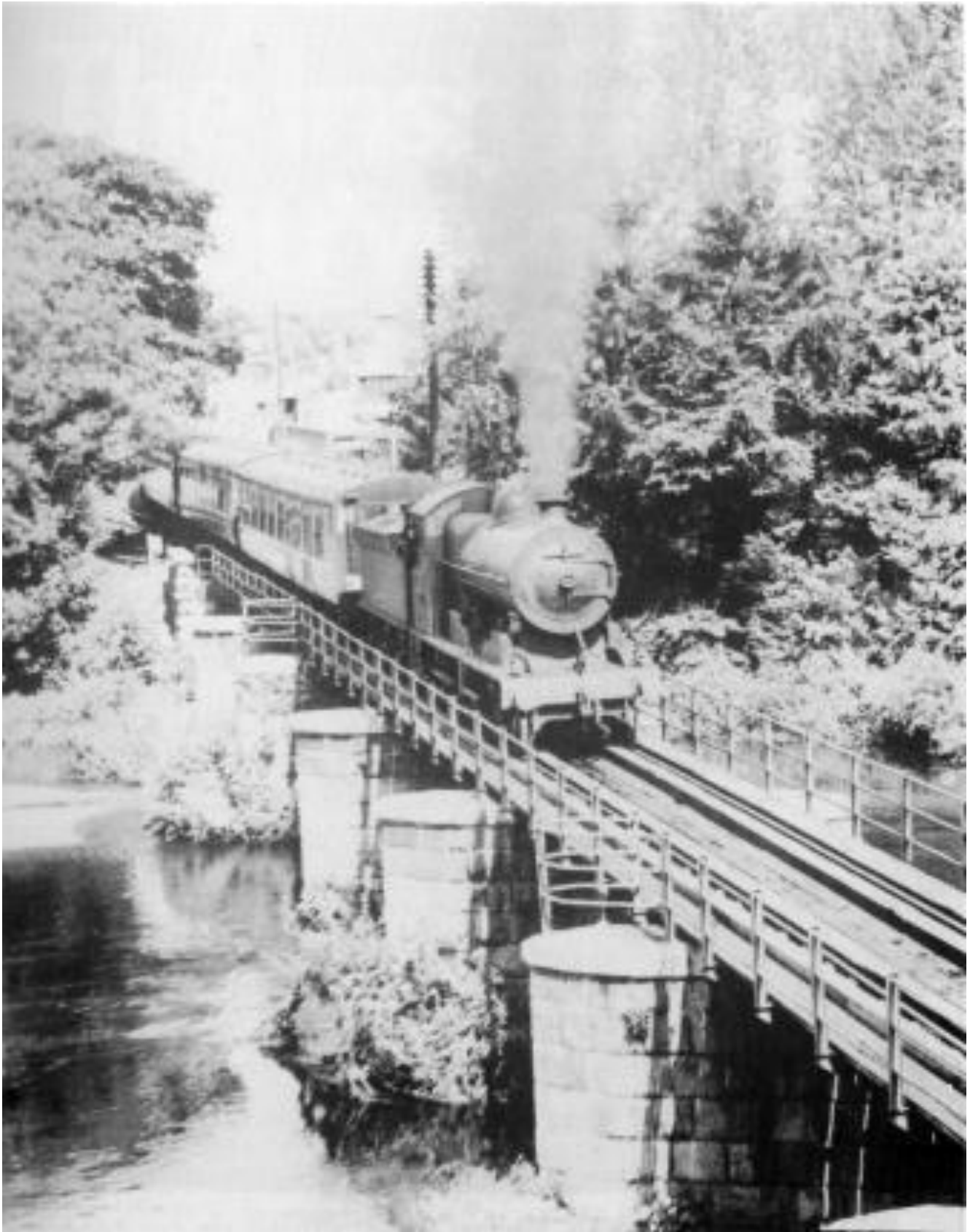
Following the disappointment of No.85’s withdrawal from traffic in 1989 with firebox problems it was once again Lord Dunleath whose support enabled the Society to make the necessary repairs and we are now looking forward to seeing No.85 in action once again. As vice-president, Lord Dunleath kept closely in touch with the Society’s activities and represented the RPSI at several functions, such as the inaugural run in Dublin in April 1991 of No.461, when he welcomed President Mary Robinson on board.



***All aboard - Lord Dunleath poses for the camera before boarding the Steam Enterprise at Central Station on 1<sup>st</sup> September 1984. (Belfast Telegraph)***

Lord Dunleath’s good humour endeared him to all the members of the Society with whom he came in contact. One of the first times many of us met him was when we invited him to travel on an early Portrush Flyer. A first class compartment was reserved, cleaned out and made ready for its VIP passenger. We welcomed Lord Dunleath on board and showed him to his seat. Shortly after departure I went down to check, and found his lordship with his jacket thrown aside, his goggles on, his head and shoulders thrust far out of the window as he savoured the sound, smell and smoke of the engine - thoroughly enjoying himself.

Above all Henry Dunleath was an enthusiast - he listed “steam” as one of his recreations in Who’s Who and the Society has been privileged to have enjoyed his friendship and support. On behalf of the RPSI, may I express our sincere sympathy to Lady Dunleath. We are all the poorer for his passing.



*No.461 crosses the River Slaney on leaving Enniscorthy with the Sea Breeze excursion of 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1992. (C.P. Friel)*



*Not the Black Forest but Co. Wicklow. No.461 slogs her way over Rathdrum Viaduct on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1992. (C.P. Friel)*



*With the first 100 miles of her single-handed working of the southern section of the Gráinne Uaile tour behind her, No.461 approaches Bellacagher level crossing on 9<sup>th</sup> May 1992. (N. Poots)*





*Unaware that this section of the tour had been re-routed over the Larne line, the photographer made a fruitless dash to Ballymena after this shot of No.171 leaving York Road on 11<sup>th</sup> May 1992! On the left, the trackbed leading to the new Yorkgate station is being prepared. (N. Poots)*