

# ***FIVE FOOT THREE***

Magazine of the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland

# **FIVE FOOT THREE**

## **No.40**

### **Winter 1993/94**

**Editor: Nelson Poots**

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

***Front Cover: No.461 crosses the River Slaney, leaving Enniscorthy with the Sea Breeze excursion to Rosslare. (N. Poots)***

#### **EDITORIAL**

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As will be seen from the Secretary's report, during the past year a new and streamlined Council structure has been created. Redundancies have been widespread and sundry functionaries whose input was not deemed essential to the governance of the Society have been swept from the corridors of power and are now sub-contractors. As a result of this bloodless revolution the Editorial ear is now less close to the ground so it is to be hoped that any controversial comments from this source will constitute only a gentle stirring of the pot rather than an upsetting of apple carts and not attract corporate castigation.

Leaving aside such weighty matters, there is cheerful news of a successful operating season. The season, if that is still the right word, grows ever longer - in 1993 extending from the movement of Transport Museum stock in February to the Santa trains in December. This is something of a mixed blessing, bringing in money for maintenance while reducing the time available to do it.

On the locomotive front the current upheaval should result over the next two years in an increasing improvement in locomotive availability compared to the present hand to mouth situation.



***Something here to suit all tastes - NIR Hunslet 101 hauls Londonderry Port & Harbour Commissioners No.1 and William Dargan's saloon en route to Cultra during the movement of stock to the new gallery on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1993. (I.C. Pryce)***

The phrase "locomotive front" brings to mind a somewhat vexatious topic - in which one must declare a degree of self-interest - that of headboards on locomotives. It would be interesting to know how many of these are commissioned by the appropriate authority. Among the declared objectives of the Society is "the preservation/restoration of Irish railway artefacts" and the fact is that very few Irish trains ever carried headboards. The Enterprise headboards (remember them?) are authentic, as are some of our carriage roof boards, while the Portrush Flyer one, although not authentic, is at least tastefully constructed and unobtrusive. As for most of the remainder, perhaps the less said the better. One contributor who gave vent to his feelings was taken to task (as was the Editor) though possibly more on account of his language than his sentiments. Presumably our passengers travel in our trains because they are steam-hauled and it is very doubtful whether any would be deterred by the absence of a headboard, so why have the things at all? It can hardly be to distinguish our trains from all the similar ones running around. Can anyone who takes the notion knock up something that pleases him or her and attach it to an engine? Surely a well cleaned locomotive would project a much better image than a

shabby one bearing some gaudy attachment.



*North Atlantic brake 91 was pressed into service for the retrieval of RPSI vehicles from Magheramorne in April 1993. The resultant mixed train is about to be shunted into RPSI premises by No.461 - how many mixed trains have included two turntables? (W.T. Scott)*

In case it hasn't been mentioned elsewhere, those who observe with concern the diminishing number of steam drivers will find another gap with the retirement in January 1994 of NIR's Willie McCaughley whose steam swansong was on a rather out of tune No.171 on the last of the Santa trains. He was one of the very few remaining ex-Great Northern men who had worked on the Compounds in regular service. A man of few words - as more than one media interviewer found out the hard way - he was happier expressing himself through the regulator nor was he averse to taking up the shovel. On No.171, with the lever up near the cab roof, the regulator could be a problem and at times William, not a particularly tall man, could be seen performing remarkable acrobatic feats as he wrestled her on to the big valve! We wish him a long and happy retirement.

Where would the Irish be without anniversaries! A non-controversial one this time, it is exactly 60 years since the opening of the Greenisland Loop Line and Five Foot Three is fortunate to have an article giving a fascinating account of how it was constructed without interruption to traffic. Although not in time for the anniversary it will not be long now before passengers are making their aerial way towards the Mossley bank. Have we spoken to NIR about The First Train?

## **CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN**

**Sullivan Boomer**

1993 has been a very good year for the Society with our overall traffic figures appearing to be significantly up on previous years. We are obviously producing a product that the public want, and our efforts to improve the quality of our service are starting to pay dividends. This was achieved in spite of having to cancel one of the "Sea Breeze" trains out of Dublin at the request of Irish Rail, because of urgent engineering work on a bridge. However, I feel that two warnings are necessary. Our operating costs are rising steadily, no matter what Governments may say about inflation, and some increases in fares will be unavoidable. Also, we must continue to provide a high quality product AND meet the ever-increasing requirements of the railway safety procedures. To this end a higher standard of maintenance has been progressively introduced over the last year or two, and the Society will be introducing a Rule Book for its operating staff, and Standard Working Procedures in the coming year. These are essential to meet the needs of Health and Safety legislation.

Operationally, we plan to return to the Great Northern section after an enforced absence due to the restricted space resulting from the Cross Harbour works, and with the opening of that link later in the year we fully expect to be back to a situation of a few years ago. However, the 'wooden body' ban will still present problems. It now seems that single line sections can be traversed by our own coaches subject to negotiation with Irish Rail, but the double track sections are still not available. We have been giving the question of steel rolling stock some considerable thought, and in the proposals under ERDF2 we plan to introduce a "converter coach", which will convert the vacuum braking system on the locomotives to the air braking system on the Mk2 rolling stock. This will be subject to the availability of a suitable steel bodied brake coach, but it seems likely that such a vehicle may be possible in 1995/6, after which date we would hope to re-introduce the "Steam Enterprise" to our regular timetable.

Looking forward to 1994, we have submitted an application for support under the next tranche of ERDF grant aid. This time the scheme is to run for 6 years, a long time in railway preservation planning, and the Council has bid for a total of £1.4 million support over that period, and the facilities to be provided will include the new Locomotive Workshop, proper carriage maintenance facilities, better valeting and operating facilities, and the all-important visitor centre and viewing galleries which will also provide us with the requirements for our full acceptance to museum registration.

To many members it may seem at times that the Council does not act as they would hope. This is not because we are unwilling, but because, from our regular meetings with senior management in the railway companies, we have to look at a rather larger picture than just the RPSI's operations. We are very fortunate in having many good friends in both companies, and their advice and assistance is always welcomed. The Council is looking at the longer-term future, and is confident that with careful and constructive management the Society will be operating throughout the Irish railway system well into the next century behind steam. Isn't that what we all want?

## **NEWS FROM COUNCIL**

**Paul McCann**

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March 1993 saw the first meeting of our newly structured (i.e. rationalised and reduced in size) Council. In general, meetings now tend to concentrate on the major issues and run more smoothly as a consequence. Although there is still a substantial amount of work to get through each month, the more trivial items can be passed to the Operations, Finance or Workshop sub-committees to be dealt with there.

Your Secretary, however, not having a sub-committee to delegate to now has more on his plate than ever. With the disappearance of the Publications post from Council, that responsibility now falls to me but happily your esteemed Editor has agreed to continue editing the magazine, and for that I am grateful.

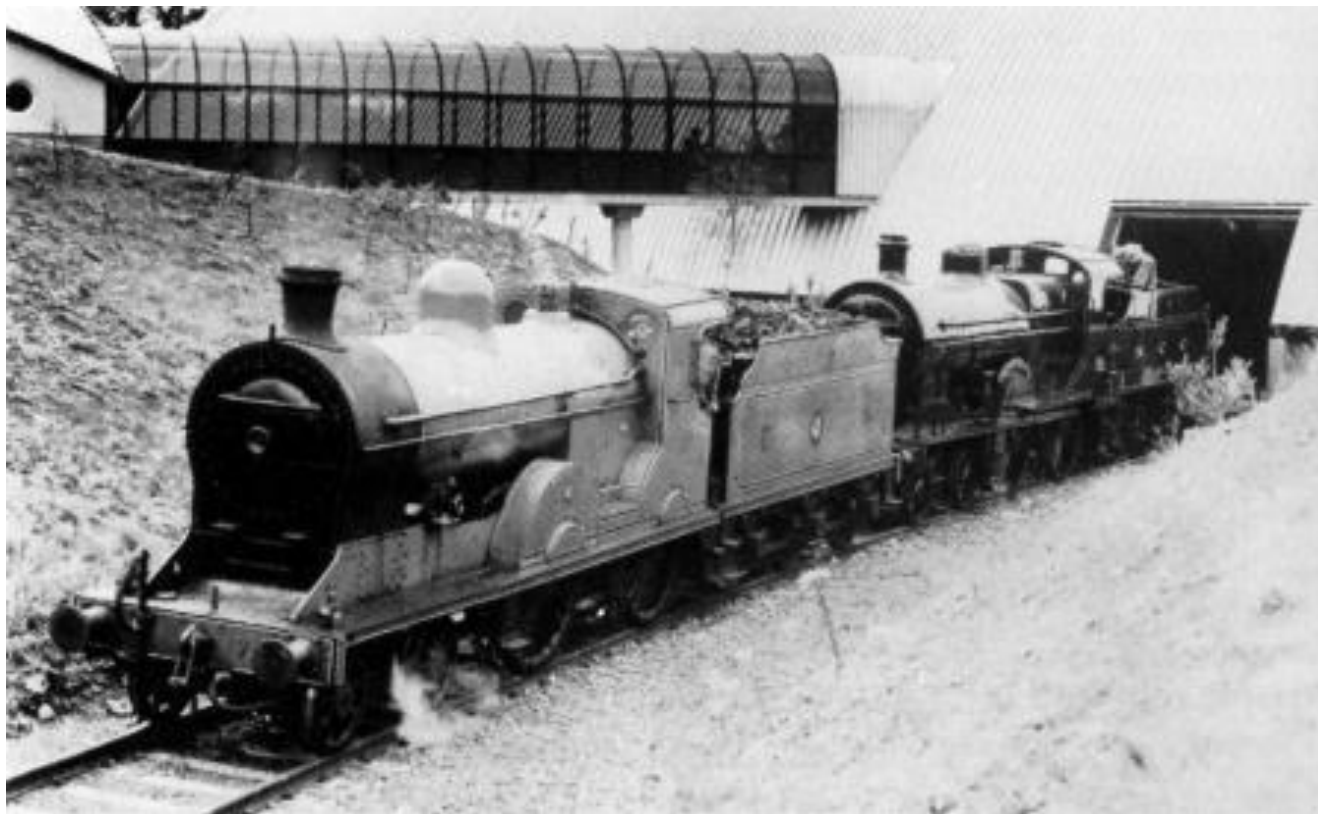
Since the departure of Robin Morton from the Council the Society News-Letter has been in a state of limbo with no fixed abode, being compiled variously by our Editor, Secretary or Chairman, and the quality was noticeably variable. Since the early summer the job has stayed with me and an improved standard of publication has been experimented with - I hope all members will agree that the format has undergone a vast improvement over that which went beforehand. I may not have Robin Morton's journalistic flair, but I hope that at least the content is well laid out and legible.

As a result of the new Council structure and the subsequent delegation of responsibilities it has become more important that we formalise a set of Terms of Reference for our sub-committees. Also, in September we met with the heads of the Operating Department in Northern Ireland Railways and they expressed a desire to see a properly agreed set of Operating Regulations. To this end, we have been busy drawing up the two documents and they should be proposed for adoption in the very near future. Another document undergoing constant revision is the Society's Health & Safety Policy - very



important in this day and age of massive bureaucratic intervention.

As usual over the past few years, the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) has occupied a substantial slice of Council time. In general, we are fairly well on target as regards the originally agreed programme. Currently, we are looking forward to the next ERDF programme which should bring us up to the year 2000, if we are successful. A new proposal has been submitted and we are looking for a decision before Easter 1994.



***No.171 was back on the Bangor line on 26<sup>th</sup> September to work an empty stock train, including directors saloon 50, prior to the official opening of the new railway museum. Before the saloon could be put in, NCC No.74 "Dunluce Castle" had to be shunted out. (C.P. Friel)***

Our AGM in Belfast was poorly attended this year and I am told that it was a 'rugby' weekend, but not being a sports fan I can't confirm this as the reason. Hopefully the 1994 meeting in Dublin will be on a suitable day and will have more interest shown in it.

The death of our Vice-President, Lord Dunleath, early in the year came as a shock. We are still considering a suitable form of tribute to mark to his contribution to the Society, the most likely being a plaque to his memory on No.85 "Merlin" when she is back in traffic in 1994.

There were no major issues of contention raised at Council this year, only the usual bargaining between the Carriage and Locomotive Departments for a greater share of the available funds - nothing serious, just lively debate!

Notable operations this year were the two "Derry to Kerry" trains featuring Michael Palin for the new series of the BBC's "Great Railway Journeys of the World" (probably already broadcast by the time you read this) and the "Celebration Special" in July when we officially opened our new carriage shed and said Thank You to all those in the International Fund for Ireland who made it possible, and to those in the ERDF programme.

The Society gained two new computers and a fax machine during the year and it is hoped these will streamline our accounting procedures and the administration of the International Railtour.

As usual, I must thank NIR and Irish Rail for allowing us the use of their premises for our Council meetings. My thanks also to those who helped spread the load for me, i.e. Charles Friel for the Belfast Winter Meetings, Nelson Poots for editing this magazine and John Creaner who helped keep the legal vultures at bay for another year.

Look out for a video celebrating the Society's 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1994.

## **UPS AND DOWNS - THE 1993 SUMMER STEAM SEASON**

**David Humphries**

At the conclusion of my report in issue 39 of Five Foot Three, I expressed the hope that our first Santa Steam Trains in Dublin would be a success. I can now indeed report on a most successful venture. All six trains were well filled and we carried in excess of 1,900 passengers over the two weekends. The switch from Connolly to Pearse Station for our 'winter' season proved a good strategy as the overall roof gave welcome protection to our patrons from the elements and the ambiance of the station itself added to the overall festive atmosphere. Operationally, the use of platform 3 for departures and No.4 for setting down on the return journeys was very beneficial. The journey time to Maynooth was quite adequate for the two Santas (don't tell the children) to get their business done.



*No.461 passes Limerick Check cabin at the end of the first day of the tour on 8<sup>th</sup> May 1993.  
(C.P. Friel)*

**2<sup>nd</sup> May 1993:** If 1992 ended on a good note then 1993 proved to be a very trying year - hence the title of this piece. The Dublin season started well with the Wexford leg of the Michael Palin "Derry to Kerry" BBC TV recording. The event attracted wide public attention and the train was fully booked. While there was some initial adverse comment about the one-price ticket of £18 I believe the increase was justified - there were certainly many disappointed folk who would gladly have paid more just to be there. For the record, the BBC did not hire our train nor was there any other form of sponsorship involved. Running costs were higher, e.g. Irish Rail's charge was about 80% higher than for a normal

weekday operation. Bord Failte did agree to guarantee the event against a financial loss. Happily, we did not have to call on this - it's a proud record indeed that all of our Dublin based operations show a surplus for the Society.

I feel that it was a great pity that we had to use our Whitehead set for the "Sea Breeze" rather than the more traditional 'green set' of previous years. Unfortunately, the latter was not ready for operational duties - except for Brake 1915. My regret is mainly that when the programme is transmitted it may look as if we only operate one train set instead of two! Those who were fortunate enough to travel will, I'm sure, retain many happy memories of the day. Who will ever forget the lineside helicopter around Bray Head? The watching crowds at all the vantage points along the way - even on the return journey - hoping for a glimpse of our star (no, not No.461) for the day. Here I must pay tribute to Michael Palin who took the whole event in his stride. He was most generous in the time he gave to our passengers. I expected his hand to fall off with all the signing he was doing. Who will ever forget the scene at Wexford when we arrived - it looked as if the whole of the county had turned out to greet us.

**23<sup>rd</sup> May 1993:** Our next operation was the Royal Canal Festival Shuttles. As the 'green set' was still not fully ready we had the additional hassle, and expense, of a carriage movement from Whitehead to Dublin. GNR Restaurant Car 88 and side corridor GSR Bredin 1335 arrived in Amiens Street on the afternoon prior to the shuttles. Not a good situation for the nerves when your trains are heavily sold and the seats you need could get caught on the wrong side of an 'incident' between Belfast and Dublin. In the event, the day went very well and the mix of one GSR, one GNR and five CIÉ carriages was to become the train make-up for the remainder of our season.

June became a fallow month as our planned Mid-Summer Night's Steam had to be abandoned due to lack of a sponsor. The event has been put into the 1994 programme and should it be that commercial support is not forthcoming then the extra costs involved will be reflected in the ticket price. Given the demand for this train in 1992 I don't expect this will be a major problem.

**4<sup>th</sup> July 1993:** "The Shannon" to Athlone and Ballinasloe, via Mullingar, was very significant for the Society as it marked the return of our preserved coaching stock to a section of line that had hitherto been prohibited. Our thanks to Athlone Chamber of Commerce & Industry and to Telecom Éireann for underwriting this event. Again we managed to stand on our own two feet and did not have to call on this guarantee. Loadings out from Dublin were good but patronage on the Athlone to Ballinasloe local run was disappointing. This operation had its own particular headache when Irish Rail presented us, just days before our run, with their directive that non-Irish Rail employees would not be allowed on the footplate. As we go to print this subject is still a matter of discussion between the Society and the Company. The signs are encouraging and I am hopeful that it will be resolved to our mutual satisfaction.

**24<sup>th</sup> July 1993:** With only ten days to go Irish Rail advised us that there would be a full engineer's possession at Wicklow over the weekend of our second "Sea Breeze". We just do not have the resources to re-schedule our programme at such short notice and therefore had no option but to cancel. In fairness to the Company they did agree to pick up our direct expenses as a result but this did not include the actual revenue loss to the Society which I estimate at about £2,000 (or £8,000 if you talk in ERDF terms). Timing could not have been worse from a marketing point of view either. Our ticketing arrangements with Irish Life Building Society were in the process of being taken over by the First National Building Society at the time so readers can imagine the further confusion caused at the various outlets. I take this opportunity to express our sincere thanks to the staff of both building societies for their patience at that time and their continued goodwill towards the RPSI - selling train tickets is not part of their job description!

**21<sup>st</sup> August 1993:** Happily our third "Sea Breeze" had an incident-free passage. It was great to get back to normal. Many of those who had their outing cancelled in July were able to join us on this day.



**12<sup>th</sup> September 1993:** So to “The Greystones Shuttles” on the second Sunday of September: A simple out and back operation. Wrong! Having gone public with the event we were advised, again at very short notice, that our paths would have to be revised to take account of a 25 mph maximum speed for tender-first running. My thanks to Barry Carse for his efforts in dealing with this one.

**5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> December 1993:** And so to our Santa trains of the current year. A simple matter of repeating 1992’s successful formula and everything will run like clockwork. Wrong again! With just over two weeks to go and we finally received the specification for how the locomotive must be lit for ‘after dark’ running. We had been advised of such a requirement since mid-August and had tried to anticipate the Company’s requirements. Imagine our dismay then to be requested to turn No.461 into an ‘071’ style locomotive! Fortunately we were able, after lengthy discussions, to arrive at a position where the conversion of the existing oil lamps to a battery powered system did the trick in the end. The overhaul of No.461’s axleboxes was successfully carried out between the Greystones Shuttles and Santa trips - I am sure our Locomotive Officer will deal in detail in his report with what a major job this proved to be. From an operating point of view I will only recount how unnerving it is to have your first date virtually sold out and know that the engine is at Inchicore Works in the process of having its motion reassembled with only days to go. Will it be finished in time and will it work - thoughts not guaranteed to give one restful night’s sleep. Congratulations to Chas Meredith and his team for a job well done. Sufficient to record that both Sundays went extremely well and we carried over 1,800 passengers - if only we had had an eight-carriage set.

In conclusion I should like to express my sincere appreciation to all of my fellow volunteers who worked so hard in 1993 to make a trying season a successful one. To our corporate advertisers in our brochure a special word of thanks for their continued support. A big ‘thank-you’ to our friends in the media - where would we be without the likes of Billy Walters, Jim Scannell, Gregg Ryan, Dan Walshe and Brian Gillen - a most valuable support team. To our many friends in Irish Rail who give us every support and consideration I am pleased to record the Society’s appreciation. To anyone reading this who feels they should be mentioned, my apologies for the omission and please accept our thanks. Here’s to 1994.

## **LOCO REPORT**

**Peter Scott**

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### **No.3 “R.H. Smyth” (LP&HC 0-6-0ST, Avonside 1928) - Boiler repairs, Whitehead - 75% ERDF funding.**

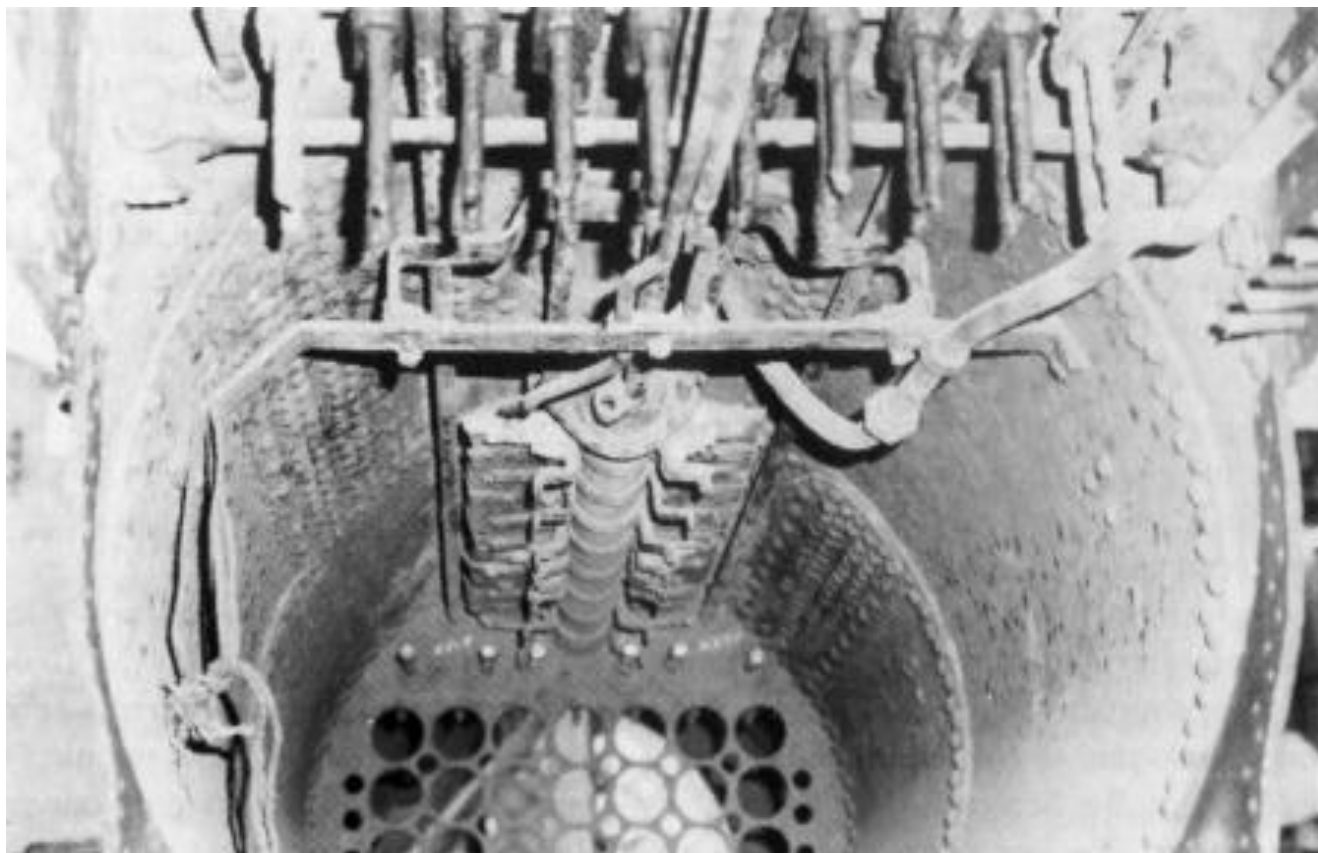
The boiler work has been completed and the boiler steam tested before fitting to the frames. The lower half of the copper inner firebox was renewed, including renewal of rivets and stays as required. The saddle tank was repaired and a new smokebox fitted. Reassembly is now progressing as time permits.

### **No.4 (LMS (NCC) mixed traffic 2-6-4T, Derby 1947) - Boiler repairs, Whitehead - 75% ERDF funding.**

No.4’s boiler was last repaired at Swindon in 1963, when it received a new inner firebox. At the same time, patches were fitted to the outside back corners because of cracking. Since then, further deterioration has taken place and there was extensive grooving, star cracking and general erosion of the outer firebox plates, resulting in actual leakage in several places. As dismantling progresses, it became apparent that renewal of the lower three-quarters of the firebox sides and door plate was required, together with the internal stiffening plates and the longitudinal and transverse stays. This work is much more extensive than originally budgeted for and as a result the ERDF allocation for No.184 and some of the locomotive workshop’s allocation has been transferred to No.4.

To date, the inner firebox has been removed, the outer plates cut back and the old stiffening plate and stays removed. The new sides are being made by R.K. Pridham Engineering in Devon and the door

plate is being made at Whitehead. This is a complicated shape, including the flanged door opening, and required a special flanging block to be made. The flanging is done by heating the plate and gradually knocking down the edge with large wooden mallets.



*The inside of No.4's boiler, showing at sides and top where the defective outer plate has been cut away. The rope on the left was put there after the boiler was opened! (C.P. Friel)*

**No.85 “Merlin” (GNR(I) 4-4-0 compound express passenger loco, Beyer Peacock 1932) - Boiler repairs, Whitehead - 75% ERDF funding.**

Most of the boiler work is now complete and the boiler has been hydraulic tested to 330 lbs/sq. in. (working pressure is 220). At the time of writing, it is being prepared for steam testing which will be done out of the frames as with loco No.3. The advantage of this is that any minor leaks which show up can be attended to while accessible.

Following problems with the 4,000 gallon tender (readers will recall that it derailed several times) we decided not to persist with running this vehicle. As designed, it is somewhat top-heavy and reacts excessively to track variations. It also obscures the driver's view for tender-first running.

The Compounds ran for most of their lives with tenders similar to that fitted to No.171, the only difference being the extended coal rails. The Society possesses two 2,500 gallon tenders, built in the 1950s, and it was decided to modify one of these to run with No.85. The tender (No.73) is at present having its water tank enlarged and the coal rails rebuilt, together with general repairs. See Charles Meredith's article on the extrication of the tender from Mullingar.

**No.171 “Slieve Gullion” (GNR(I) 4-4-0 express passenger loco, Beyer Peacock 1913, rebuilt GNR(I) Dundalk 1938) - Whitehead - Renewal of piston rings and other repairs.**

Very little mechanical work has been done to No.171 in recent years - all effort was concentrated on

the boiler. During the 1993 season the locomotive began to indicate by unmistakable signs that a set of piston and valve rings would be appreciated. In the interval between the Museum Opening train and the "Santa" specials, the valve chests were re-bored and the valves overhauled with new rings. Before the 1994 May tour, the piston rings will be renewed together with other repairs to crossheads, reversing gear, etc., as well as the location and repair of an exceedingly elusive leak in the water tank which contrives to fill one of the tender bearings with water.



*The gentle art of flanging firebox plates. Irwin Pryce on the left, in addition to the discomfort of reaching over the fire, has found that the mallet often bounces sideways after a blow has been delivered. (C.P. Friel)*

#### **No.461 (ex-D&SER 2-6-0 goods engine, Beyer Peacock 1922) - Dublin - In traffic.**

No.461 is running-in after having its driving axleboxes and journals overhauled. The big ends are also to receive attention.

I am much indebted to Charles Meredith, Assistant Locomotive Officer, for organising the above work - see his article on the subject. It would have been almost impossible to have handled this job at Whitehead at the same time as re-boring No.171's valves. No.461's axleboxes have given continuing and unexpected trouble and the exact reason has not been established, since the general method of overhaul was the same as for locos No.171 and No.4, as well as several bearings on No.85, and all these have (touch wood!) run satisfactorily. One possibility is the use of the wheel lathe to machine the journals - this lathe is designed for machining the tyre profiles and is difficult and tedious to use for journals. The journals have now been trued up using a centre lathe. Another factor is the use of welding to build up the worn bearing surface of the bronze axleboxes. Weld metal is never the same as the original lead bronze of the axleboxes. Had time been available, we would have renewed the axleboxes but discussions with our Treasurer indicated that cancellation of the "Santa" trains would have been financially unacceptable. So the axleboxes have been further welded up. Hopefully they will perform

well, but I await more extensive running of the loco before throwing my hat in the air!

**Carlow Diesel (ex-Irish Sugar 4-wheel diesel-mechanical shunter, Ruston & Hornsby 1955) - Whitehead - general overhaul. RPSI funding.**

The main diesel engine and the petrol donkey engine for building up air pressure are now operational. The air system is being overhauled and corroded sections of the cab and engine cover replaced. Work continues as time permits.

We still haven't established the fleet number for this loco - can anyone help?

*[According to "Irish Industrial and Contractors' Locomotives", published in 1962, neither this loco nor a similar one supplied in 1948 bore any number. Several more of this type were supplied to the other sugar factories in the 1950s and, assuming the booklet to be accurate, none of them received numbers. - Ed.]*

**No.23 (ex-Irish Shell 4-wheel diesel-mechanical shunter, F. C. Hibberd & Co., "Planet" 1953) - Whitehead - In traffic.**

The loco will receive gearbox and other repairs as soon as the Carlow diesel is available for traffic.

### **Locomotive Workshop**

This project has been postponed to ERDF Phase 2 which will hopefully be forthcoming. The Workshop allocation has been transferred to No.4 and carriage maintenance.

### **Plant**

A centre lathe and a milling machine have been acquired; both are of larger capacity and in better condition than the existing machines and will improve our machining capabilities.

## **THE RESTORATION OF LOCOMOTIVE 461 - PHASE TWO**

**Charles Meredith**

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Since the restoration of locomotive No.461 and its return to traffic in 1991, continuing problems have been experienced with overheating axleboxes and big ends. Attention to these problems as they arose involved a great deal of expense in having the engine moved from Dublin and Mullingar to Whitehead and back on a number of occasions to say nothing of the equally great trouble involved in carrying out the work itself. This necessitated teams of three or four Dublin working members travelling to Whitehead for a considerable number of very hard working weekends.

The final problem, following all our hard work, remained the left-hand driving axlebox, which was consistently much hotter than it should be, but which was nursed along throughout 1993 and actually survived the last day's running of the Summer Steam season - three shuttles from Connolly to Greystones on 13<sup>th</sup> September.

On the advice of James Doody, Manager, Locomotives, Inchicore Railway Works, we had attached adhesive temperature measurers to the offending axle box. The several runs prior to 13<sup>th</sup> September had produced readings of 85°C, quite hot enough, but the final trip of 13<sup>th</sup> September brought the reading up to 110°C. At this stage there was only one thing to do - lift the engine and examine the axle box. The heat of the axle box led IR to decide that the engine should not travel to Whitehead, so the job had to be tackled in Dublin.



*No.461 being lifted at Inchicore Works, leaving the driving axle with its offending axleboxes to be rolled away for attention. (C.P. Friel)*

As ever, Inchicore rose to the occasion and a deal was struck to enable the engine to be lifted by the two 40 ton overhead gantries in Diesel 1 - an historic event in itself, quite apart from the necessity of getting the job done.

Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> October was set for the lift and all went well. The entire event was captured on video by the RPSI Film Unit (Southern) of Gerry Conmy, Norman McAdams and Denis McCabe, while stills were taken by the Society's Official Photographer Charles Friel. Pearse McKeown was in attendance.

On examining both the left-hand and right-hand driving boxes, it was at once obvious that the left-hand box had reached the end of its present travels. The white metal bearing was breaking up and the bronze crown of the bearing was badly grooved. Further examination and measurement showed that both axleboxes had worn to such an extent that they were, in effect, too large for the journals (axles) and that the journals themselves had had such rough treatment that they had become slightly oval in shape. The only course of action seemed to be:

- (a) have the journals machined back to proper profile and measure them in their final form;
- (b) have both axle boxes bronze-welded internally to reduce their diameter to something approaching the newly-finished diameter of the journals;
- (c) have both axleboxes bored out to a reasonable finish somewhat narrower in diameter than the final finish;
- (d) have both axleboxes re-white metallised;
- (e) have both boxes finally bored out to desired dimensions;
- (f) re-fit;
- (g) pray!

All this is fairly simple to list, but the actual arrangements were far from simple. First we had to find a lathe capable of accommodating a 5'3" (over flanges) diameter wheelset; the only one we could find was owned by Naylor Engineering, Carnew, Co. Wicklow, who agreed to do the turning. Then we had to get the wheelset to Carnew; this was accomplished with the aid of a most useful and versatile machine - a lorry and skip provided by A1 Waste Disposal. In the meantime, the axle boxes were bronze-welded by Associated Rewinds (Ireland) Limited, using the TIG welding process, bronze welding material was supplied by Oerlikon Ireland.

The boring out and machining of the axleboxes was carried out by John Bissett Ltd., Ringsend, and the white-metalling was done at almost no notice and in record time by Cookson Enterprises of Navan.

Naturally, everything took longer than we had anticipated, resulting in an increasingly cliff-hanging situation! However, all tasks were done in time and everything was once more back at Inchicore for the second lifting session in Diesel 1 on Monday 29<sup>th</sup> November - with the first Santa Trains fixed and all but sold out for the following Sunday 5<sup>th</sup> December!

The Locomotive Department gang did the Society proud and the engine was fully assembled, re-united with its tender and fitted with superb electric head lamps to meet IR requirements by Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> December. The engine was steamed on Friday and trundled up and down an Inchicore siding known as the German Road all day, by way of initial bedding in of the bearing surfaces.

Saturday saw the engine in steam again, for a mechanical examination by James Doody before he could pass it as fit to leave the Shops. Passed OK, she again trundled up and down the siding, before leaving Inchicore for Connolly under her own steam on Saturday afternoon.

Not to overstrain the bearings, we decided that the following day's Santa Trains would run to Clonsilla only, instead of Maynooth, and at a slow speed.



Following a completely successful day, with beautifully cool axle boxes, we felt we could risk running the next Sunday's trains all the way to Maynooth and at scheduled speeds. Again, all went extremely well and Driver Nicky Moore expressed the opinion that, for whatever reason, she is now a much more free-running engine than she was before.

It is impossible to name all the people who contributed so valuably to the work, but at Inchicore we must thank particularly James Doody, Manager, Locomotives; Tony McDonald and Sean Leonard, Lifting Shop foremen; Tony Jackson, Chief Chemist; Joe Connolly, Training School; and Jimmy Doyle who is the Inspector in charge of the Inchicore shunting logistics and had No.461 moved wherever we wanted her at the drop of a hat! Locomotive Inspector Tony Foley was, as ever, a tower of strength.

The various firms involved, all of whom provided their services either free or at completely uneconomic rates, were Naylor Engineering, Carnew; Associated Rewinds (Ireland) Ltd., Tallaght; Fry's Metals (Ireland) Ltd., Clondalkin; John Bissett Ltd., Ringsend; Al Waste Disposal, Arran Quay; Cookstown Enterprises Ltd., Navan. The Society is extremely grateful to one and all.

Perhaps the reference to prayer earlier in this note should be explained! One of the problems associated with boring out what is essentially an empty space is finding the centre to which to bore. With a steam locomotive, having three coupled axles, failure to find the true centre when boring out the middle (driving) axle boxes will have one inevitable result - once the outside coupling rods are on, the wheels won't turn! In order to find the true centre of the axle boxes we decided not to rely on the dimensions of the boxes themselves. Instead, we trammelled from both the leading and trailing wheel centres, knowing what the designed measurements should be. The respective measurements were marked off on the loco frames, over the driving axle horn spaces. The axle boxes were then refitted and the marks transferred on to the boxes themselves. Finally, all measurements were checked against the coupling rods. Prayer and care between them seem to have come up with the right result; when we reassembled the locomotive, the coupling rods slid into position very comfortably and, to allay our worst fears, the wheels turned!

## **CARRIAGE & WAGON REPORT**

**Gavin Martin**

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The Department has changed out of all recognition over the last two to three years. Our quality of restoration, throughput of restoration work, maintenance work, stock availability and passenger mileages are all increasing at a very satisfactory rate, but we must remember that the RPSI operates on modern high-speed railway systems and that our attention to mechanical soundness and passenger safety must be greater than ever.

We have spent the last eighteen months setting in motion procedures, schedules and work programmes which will ensure that the RPSI's reputation for producing vintage rolling stock restored to a high standard, and in good running order, will continue.

The Department is run by the two Carriage & Wagon Officers of the Society, myself at Whitehead and Peter Emmett at Mullingar. Between the two Council members the work programmes and expenditure plans for the year are worked out and monitored, as well as liaison with the railway companies' engineering and safety departments, the Society's insurers, materials suppliers and other bodies as may be required.

At each depot there is a dedicated pool of volunteer labour, who undertake tasks depending on their individual skills and competence. Our members are always learning and applying new skills, and improving their proficiency at others. The Whitehead depot also benefits from two full-time subcontractors, whose fees are part-funded by the European Regional Development Fund, and also from young people on employment training schemes who are on work-placement schemes as part of their training.

We also maintain a relationship with Carrickfergus probation office, whereby people subject to community service orders may work their hours at Whitehead, providing opportunity for them to learn new skills and much needed extra hands for us.

Negotiations are in hand to renew our liaison with the Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders (NIACRO) and FAS, the Irish training and employment agency.

The department is responsible for the restoration, maintenance and repair of our coaches and other vehicles in the collection. This breaks down into several areas:

**Mechanical Engineering:** Under this heading we include the wheels, axles, bogies, suspension, drawgear, framing, brake systems, heating systems, electrical and ancillary systems which comprise each vehicle.

Our vehicles are split over four locations: Whitehead Yard, Mullingar Yard, Houston Yard (with grateful appreciation to Iarnród Éireann), the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum's Rail Gallery.

The growing number of locations has forced the C&W department to acquire a 35 cwt van to transport work crews and materials to the sites required, saving not only on the time involved but also transportation costs involved in the moving of parts such as dynamos (which require four men to lift) timber, glass and other spares as required.

An inspection schedule has been agreed with NIR, Irish Rail and Cornhill (who provide our insurance cover) which is based on a three-tier system.

1. Examination of all the points listed above before every trip.
2. An annual 'Schedule D' examination and overhaul for every traffic vehicle.
3. An annual inspection and random spot checks by Cornhill and Iarnród Éireann personnel.

**Joinery/Woodwork:** The major strength of a timber coach comes from the methods of construction employed which, when in good order, provide a safe and substantial body. If however, the framing is carelessly or incompetently repaired the structural strength of the vehicle can be seriously compromised.

**Research And Archiving:** The restoration of a vehicle built forty, sixty or ninety years ago cannot be undertaken without spending a great deal of time and effort to discover how things should be done. A great deal of work is involved from livery and structural details, down to the colour of the lavatory walls or lino. Attention to detail makes the difference between a rebuild and a restoration and this area in particular is one in which those persons who cannot work at Whitehead or Mullingar for whatever reason can often be of invaluable help to the restoration effort without having to leave their favourite chairs!

**Management Functions:** The planning of restoration schedules, maintenance schedules, co-ordination of railway company and insurance inspections together with the allocations of available volunteers and other labour to tasks.

Legal responsibilities abound whether it be obligations under Health and Safety at Work, Committee On Substances Hazardous to Health, Mechanical Handling or any of the other myriad pieces of legislation applying to places where work is carried out. Just because a volunteer worker isn't paid does not create any exemption or lessening of the Society's responsibilities as an employer, and the situation is even more clear-cut with regard to sub-contractors.

The financial planning of the department is also of paramount importance so that we can make the best use of what are inevitably limited resources. We have made significant savings in materials expenditure and running costs, but are continually striving to ensure we get the most we can for our money.

I should like to draw attention to several points:

- (a) Over the last four years our own coaches have cost us £32,985 per year to run including the two-day tour, or two thirds of the cost of hiring stock from the railway company based on figures which do not include the tour, not to mention the additional revenue earning potential of the vintage train for both period films and TV documentary such as Michael Palin's "Great Railway Journey" from Derry to Kerry.
- (b) Work on improving plumbing was proceeded with as an absolute necessity, and we have not sent a train out since July without all facilities functioning - although lack of servicing facilities means that continued increases in water tank capacity will be required to ensure that our train is always presented to our customers as we would wish it to be.
- (c) Returns to traffic in this financial year have been higher than ever before - 411, 1097, 88, 50, 9, 1335.

It must also be noted that this increase of almost an entire train in the available stock was not accompanied by the withdrawal of other vehicles, although 114 has been stopped in order that repairs to the floor may be completed before the Lough Atalia railtour.

- (d) Traffic availability 1994-95.

The following sets are proposed following consultation with both Area Operations Committees:

Northern Area - 91, 238, 241, 243, 68, 87, 1097, 411.

Southern Area - 1916, 1327, 1335, 88, 2422, 1419, 1142, 9.

Other vehicles available for traffic - 50, 114.

Other vehicles awaiting running repairs/overhaul/restoration and due to return to traffic in 1994 - 1469, 255, 1328, 227.

**Future Plans:** 1994 will hopefully see the return to traffic of a complete LMS (NCC) train, composed of the following vehicles - 91 ('North Atlantic' Brake Third), 238, 241, 243 - Corridor Thirds; 255 - Open Third; 87 - Dining Car; 68 - Corridor Composite; 411 - basic passenger brake/parcels van.

Great Southern Railway brake 861, GNR brake first 231, LMS third 532 are due for refurbishment in 1994/5.

Other restoration plans are dependent on the result of the application made to the European Regional Development Fund for additional funding. In essence the Carriage section of the submission comprises £450,000 over six years, in the following areas.

1. Return of the majority of our passenger stock to traffic, the only exceptions being those which are very long term 'ground up' rebuilds, of which there are only two or three.
2. Restoration of our vintage first-class and saloon stock to produce a 'luxury' or 'royal train' type of accommodation.
3. Restoration of the six-wheeled and non-corridor stock for historic, educational and commercial (i.e. film contract) use.
4. Completion of the carriage shed and maintenance infrastructure at Whitehead.
5. The restoration of a representative goods train of typical Irish goods vehicles, again with a view to educational and film use.

The emphasis on the grant-aided funding is on tourism and education, and applying bodies must be able to demonstrate that their projects will succeed in these areas. Our society's record in bringing visitors from far afield for railtours and open days will stand comparison with any similar body. We

have completed our submission carefully; by the time this report is circulated it will be before the administering body of the scheme, and can only wait and hope.



*On 18<sup>th</sup> April 1993 a school of instruction was held at Whitehead for persons involved in operations. All appear well satisfied with the event. (C.P. Friel)*

## **WHITEHEAD SITE REPORT**

**Dermot Mackie**

If 1992 was the year of the new carriage shed then 1993 was definitely the year of the heavy lift. After a successful Santa operation in December of 1992 it was January before we could start on this major project with the dismantling of part of Number 3 carriage siding in preparation for the turn-out. It just happened that a squad was working on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> January which was 25 years to the day since our hardworking JCB excavator and all round workhorse was first registered. The event was celebrated with low alcohol bubbly and an appropriately monogrammed chocolate cake baked by my wife Sandra. Does 25 years qualify the JCB as a museum piece in its own right? Work continued at Whitehead on Saturdays in February and March on the turnout with the aim of having it completed and the lift area site connected by Easter. Meanwhile Charles Friel and myself were spending Monday nights at the Belfast "Tech" on the slow but essential task of making over 100 small drilled anchor plates to bolt down the flat bottomed rail on the concrete base of the heavy lift. The last of these were ably finished by Alan McRobert at Whitehead which meant that the Carriage and Wagon department took possession of the rail connected heavy lift area and moved in their first coach during an Easter week work-in.



*The new heavy lift area beside Whitehead carriage shed, showing the pit and the recently erected sets of sheer-legs with their lifting tackle still to be installed; 4<sup>th</sup> December 1993. (C.P. Friel)*

After this the pressure was on to get the sheer-legs sand-blasted and painted. Each leg was cleaned outdoors and then carried into the carriage shed by the hand crane, where many willing hands applied primer and top coats. While this was going on it became apparent that the water supply at Whitehead was inadequate. Investigations showed poor pressure and on the very helpful advice of Samuel Blair of the DOE Water Service it was decided to install a brand new 50mm water main. This was connected on 6<sup>th</sup> June - D Day, and produced an immediate cure. Subsequently, new water supplies in both the carriage shed and the platform, neatly installed by Jim Bromfield, David and Paul Henderson and Stephen Glass, have transformed our ability to water coaches.

To get back to the sheer-legs. The first complete set of these were assembled and lifted into position with the hand crane and the assistance of the JCB and a wire rope on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> June. When decked out in bunting they formed a majestic backdrop to the official opening of the new carriage shed on 2<sup>nd</sup> July. After a well-earned summer holiday we were back in action in September with elements of the second set of legs being sand blasted, along with the new tender for No.85. Thanks to Peter Scott for arranging the sand blasting. Following painting and assembly they were lifted into position on Saturday 9<sup>th</sup> October. Future work will include the restoration of the motors and gearboxes and the re-cabling of the pulleys and shackles.

If 1993 was all about going up in the world then 1994 will probably be a case of going round in circles! Our proposals for a turntable in the corner of the football pitch at Whitehead, behind the platform, have been favourably received by Carrickfergus Council and hopefully should attract ERDF funding. Interesting times ahead for all you track enthusiasts so don't miss out on this chance to get involved. Any volunteers are most welcome. It only remains for me to thank again all those mentioned above together with stalwarts like John, Tim and Philip Lockett, Craig Mowbray, Trevor Mounstephen, Drew and Trevor Wood, Simon Marsh, Albert Sage, Thomas Charters and Johnny Glendinning, without whose help none of this year's work would have been possible.

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**DAVY MCDONALD****Irwin Pryce**

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The death of Davy McDonald on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1993 has saddened many of us in the Society. Davy had been associated with the RPSI from its earliest days, indeed he drove No.171 on her first trip in Society ownership. At that time No.171 had not been restored and bore visible and audible signs of the 7 years since she had last seen the inside of Dundalk Works. Davy was not to be deterred by a small matter such as this and the homeward sprint along the Lough Shore showed that his skills and enthusiasm were not limited to products of the NCC.

For many of us Davy typified the best type of railwayman, dedicated to his craft and with a clear view of how things should be done. We shared with him his obvious sad disgust at how modern methods of management let 'his' engine, No.51, get into her final state of decrepitude. Any conversation with him on the Stone Trains soon led to discussion of how long it was since her last wash-out, how long since a spanner had been laid on her and her latest mileage. If Davy had little respect for some of those who ran things, they certainly owed him a debt of gratitude as No.51 continued to work 18 hours a day, day in and day out, during her final years. There was no doubt that Davy's sympathetic and skilful handling kept her going despite a massive mileage since shopping.

Those who worked with Davy relished his own particular brand of quiet humour. To the casual observer he often presented a sad and soulful expression. Only a closer examination showed a mischievous twinkle in his eyes: woe betide those who mistook this for a lack of wit on Davy's part for they could be led on, ever so gently, until they finally realised just who the fool was.

Listeners to BBC's Radio Foyle could have heard Davy explaining the origins of the reefer coat to an earnest young lady interviewer. This, he said, came about from the days when enginemmen experienced



difficulty with full-length coats being drawn into the firebox by the fierce draught and the company solved this problem by issuing short coats to all its footplate crews! Harry Ramsey, barely able to contain himself, busied himself with a variety of trivial tasks before challenging Davy. "Ach, she wouldn't know any better anyhow!" was the reply.

A gentleman at Portrush who claimed some knowledge of steam engines on account of a professed expertise in nautical matters found himself answering an increasingly bizarre series of questions, culminating in a demand to explain the working of the handbrake in a ship!

6<sup>th</sup> July 1968 saw York Road in its customary disarray with regard to MPD availability. This, combined with an effort to avoid using steam, had resulted in a morning of confusion and delay. Davy with No.53 had been rostered for an earlier special but eventually found himself on the 10:50 Portrush. Some 5 minutes before departure an official who, as Mac Arnold commented, was not noted for his interest in steam engines, strode towards McDonald and demanded to know why his engine was being allowed to blow off. His reply was simple and delivered very, very slowly, "Because I should have been away an hour ago." This slight on his enginemanship obviously stung Davy for we were treated to No.53 being whipped up to 84 mph at Dunadry - probably the second highest speed with an Irish locomotive in the last 50 years.



*Davy McDonald, wearing his familiar cap, aims the single line tablet at the cabin steps, returning from Castlerock on 21<sup>st</sup> July 1984 with favourite loco No.4 (C.P. Friel)*

Harry Ramsey and Davy for many years were the regulars on the Portrush Flyer. Harry himself was the amused victim at Portrush as Davy explained to a small audience how, while they were on the Stone Train, he had watched a pair of crows circling round Harry's engine, No.53, surveying the chimney as a possible nesting site - a neat way of suggesting that his contribution to moving the train was well short of 50%.

His own economical working was legendary and crews on other engines would often receive a visit during the lie-over at Magheramorne when the quantity of coal left in their bunk would be examined. Either way, this provided a lead-in for suggestions of excessive coal burning or, alternatively, of allowing the other engine to do more than its fair share of work.

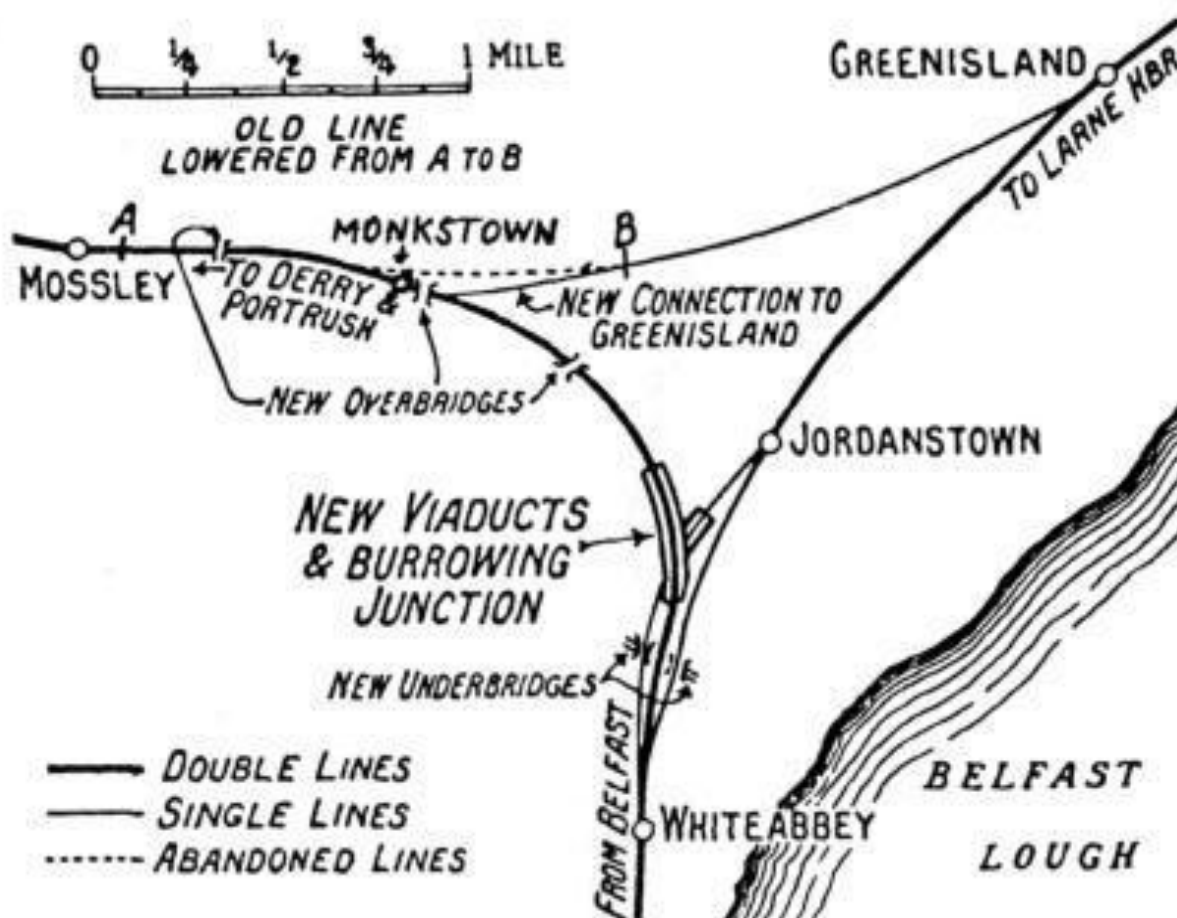
To share a footplate with Davy was an education in enginemanship, especially on our own No.4.

Those professional and amateur railwaymen who worked with Davy McDonald were all enriched by his humour, his skill, his obliging nature and his gentle good manners.

## THE GREENISLAND LOOP LINE OF THE LMS (NCC)

William Robb

The main line of the LMS Railway (NCC) originally ran northward from Belfast along the shores of Belfast Lough as far as Greenisland, 6.7 miles out. Here the Larne branch continued straight on, but the main line ran back in the Belfast direction so that all main line trains had to stop and reverse. The reason for this was that when the Belfast & Ballymena Railway was built the Antrim escarpment was thought to be too steep to be surmounted direct.



A certain amount of time was saved by the following practice. When a train arrived at Greenisland the engine which had hauled the previous train to that point was put on the rear and the train started at once. The engine belonging to the train was detached and turned ready to similarly take over the next train. This obviated the necessity for each train to wait until its own engine was detached, turned and run round the train. But even so it was early realised that the only satisfactory solution of the problem was to cut out Greenisland altogether.

Parliamentary powers for such a scheme were obtained as long ago as 1872 but, owing to the high cost involved, the work was not undertaken. When the doubling, of the Larne line between Carrickfergus and Whitehead was completed in 1928 the Government of Northern Ireland was anxious that further works for the relief of unemployment should be undertaken. Accordingly fresh Parliamentary powers were obtained that year, but, owing to the industrial depression and difficulty in obtaining the necessary land, work on the site was not begun until 1<sup>st</sup> January 1931.

The new line was planned to leave the old line at Whiteabbey, 4.3 miles from Belfast and, curving to the left on radii varying from 66 to 88 chains, to meet the old line coming from Greenisland at a point just past Monkstown. Here, however, it would be at a considerably lower level, so that it had to be continued on to Mossley, a total distance of 2.7 miles from Whiteabbey, before the level of the old line was regained. This last section of the new line is on the same site as the old and necessitated the latter being lowered one track at a time. As the old line rose continuously from Whiteabbey to Greenisland and from Greenisland to Mossley, the new line was of necessity steeper still, being graded throughout at 1 in 76.

Work was begun at a point between Monkstown and Whiteabbey where the line would be on the ground surface. North of this the line is all in cutting and south of it is all on embankment or viaduct. As the cutting was extended northwards, therefore, the spoil excavated (consisting of boulder clay, no rock, fortunately, being encountered) was run by means of a light narrow-gauge railway with petrol locomotives out to form the embankment. The light railway was carried on timber trestle-work which was eventually buried in the clay tipped from the top of it. A broad-gauge line was also laid for carrying spoil and ballast. The greatest depth of cutting was 22 ft and the embankment rose to a height of 35 ft.



***No.80 “Dunseverick Castle” on the 12:05pm Belfast-Portrush on 20<sup>th</sup> September 1932. The train is coming from Greenisland, using the old Up main line during the period of single-line working. What will become the new Down line curves in from the right. (W. Robb)***

The line was planned so that the excavation and fill should approximately balance, the total being 230,000 cubic yards. It was excavated by two Priestman petrol-paraffin half-yard excavators. The formation width of cutting was 32 ft and of embankment 29 ft. It was necessary to build a large viaduct to carry the line over Valentine’s Glen (near Bleach Green Halt), eight road bridges, of which four were under-bridges and four overbridges and numerous smaller bridges and culverts, some of the latter

being constructed as siphons. Owing to the levels of the new line differing from those of the old, it was possible to eliminate four level-crossings, one at Bleach Green halt, one at Monkstown and two at Mossley where a rearrangement of the roads enabled two level-crossings which were only about 100 yards apart to be replaced by one overbridge. These bridges, which are all built of reinforced concrete, vary greatly, no fewer than five different designs (excluding the large viaducts) being used according to local circumstances.

The new junction at Whiteabbey was built as a burrowing junction, the down Larne line running below the new loop. Both the up and down lines were raised in order to completely eliminate the level-crossing at Bleach Green Halt. At this point there are thus three under-bridges side by side, the middle one being a double-line bridge carrying the main lines, while on either side of it and slightly lower are single-line bridges carrying the up and down Larne lines respectively. A new single-line concrete viaduct had to be built to carry the down Larne line over the Glen, the up Larne line being carried on the old two-span masonry viaduct.



***No.84 "Lisanoure Castle" with a works train on the new formation near Monkstown on 14<sup>th</sup> April 1933. The front of the engine is near one of the siphons while the old main line can be seen in the background. Despite the direction of the exhaust it looks as though the brake van has been dropped off and a load of stone is being propelled back down the cutting. (W. Robb)***

The down Larne line viaduct was completed about September 1932. It consists of one span of 89 ft and six spans of 35 ft. The width of the arches is 17 ft and the maximum height above the stream is 40 ft. The larger main-line viaduct was completed on the 11<sup>th</sup> April 1933. Having three spans of 89 ft and seven of 35 ft, and of similar design to the smaller one, its maximum height is 70 ft. It is on a curve of 60 chains and a rising gradient similar to the rest of the line. The width of the arches is 29 ft and the total length including the flat span skew bridge over the down Larne line, which is immediately at the south end of the viaduct proper, is 800 ft. Check rails were laid throughout. At the time, it was the largest ferro-concrete viaduct yet built in the United Kingdom. A total of 17,000 cubic yards of concrete was worked into the two viaducts. This was placed in position in the moulds by means of two Insley concrete-placing masts, 120 ft high, capable of mixing and placing 120 cubic yards of concrete in eight hours. Concrete was hauled in buckets up these masts and then slid down chutes placed to guide it into the moulds where required. Stone for the concrete was obtained from Larne, sand from

Lough Neagh and cement from the British Portland Cement Company's works at Magheramorne.

As it was desired to retain the old Monkstown-Greenisland line in order to run through trains between the main line and the Larne line, a short single-line spur was built from the old line a short distance on the Greenisland side of Monkstown down to the new loop, joining it at a point immediately before the new over-bridge. This was done to enable the level crossing at Monkstown to be completely eliminated as the loop line does not join the old line till a short distance past Monkstown Halt. The section of the old line between the point where this new spur diverges and where the new loop joins it was torn up and the remainder of the old line to Greenisland reduced to single track.

Work on the loop line necessitated single-line working being introduced at both ends of the line at various times. At the south end all traffic was diverted to the up line in September 1932 while the new down Larne line was being built. This was completed in May 1933 and during the summer season double-line working was restored, the new down and old up lines being used. At the end of the 1933 summer season single-line working was again introduced, all trains using the down line, while the old up line was being raised to run over the new bridge at Bleach Green Halt.

At the north end of the new line single-line working over the old up line between Ballyclare Junction and a special signal cabin and crossover laid on the Greenisland side of Monkstown was brought into operation at the end of the summer of 1932. During this time the old down line between Monkstown and Mossley was being dug away to the level of the new down line. In May 1933 the new down line from Monkstown to Mossley and the spur from the new junction at Monkstown overbridge to the old line were brought into use. Both up and down line trains were then worked from Greenisland over this new line and during this time the remaining half of the embankment (carrying the old up line) was lowered to the level of the new up line. Double-line working at both ends of the line was not restored till the opening of the loop proper.



***Another works train, this time at the new junction on the Belfast side of Monkstown. The new single line from Greenisland - later to be known as the Back Line - curves in from the left. The loco is No.30, a venerable Beyer Peacock 0-6-0 delivered in 1880 and rebuilt three times before being withdrawn in 1938. The date is 22<sup>nd</sup> May 1933. (W. Robb)***

The loop was equipped with Westinghouse single-aspect colour searchlight signals and advantage was taken of the alterations in signalling to install similar signals the whole way from Belfast to Greenisland, over the new line as far as Ballyclare Junction and on the old line from Monkstown to

Greenisland. A new signal cabin with illuminated track diagram and train description apparatus was built at Greenisland to control all train movements within the triangle Whiteabbey - Greenisland - Monkstown. The points at Whiteabbey and Monkstown Junctions were electrically worked from this new cabin, though each was over two miles from it. Intermediate signals between those controlled from Belfast and Greenisland boxes were worked automatically.

Work on the loop necessitated the closing of Mossley station (closed 1/11/1931), Bleach Green Halt (23/10/1932) and Monkstown Halt (28/5/1933). New halts at these places were opened coincidentally with the loop. Temporary wooden platforms were at first provided but these were soon replaced by new platforms, walls and shelters, all made of concrete. A curious fact about the new halt at Bleach Green was that from one platform the other could not be seen. This was because it was at a point where the up and down Larne lines are on either side of the main line which is on an embankment between them and at a higher level.

The permanent way on the loop was of the NCC standard 85 lbs per yard rail carried in 46 lb chairs fitted with through fang bolts to the sleepers.



***2-6-0 No.90, only two months old, crosses on to the new Up line near Monkstown with the 11:10am from Portrush on 15<sup>th</sup> September 1933. Again, the formation of the old main line can be seen in the background. (W. Robb)***

The scheme, originally drawn up by Mr. W.K. Wallace, formerly engineer of the NCC and later Chief Civil Engineer of the LMS Railway, was carried out by direct labour to the requirements of Mr. H.P. Stewart, chief engineer of the NCC, who, unfortunately, had to retire through ill-health in June 1933 before the loop scheme was completed, and who died on the 2<sup>nd</sup> October of the same year. The line was completed under the supervision of Mr. R.L. McIlmoyle, who became civil engineer of the NCC on the retirement of Mr. Stewart. Mr. A.N. Scott was resident engineer and Mr. D. McLellan, formerly LMS divisional engineer at Glasgow, was the consulting engineer. The total cost of the line was about £200,000 of which the Government of Northern Ireland contributed 75% of the labour cost (about £80,000). About 400 men were employed.

It was hoped to have the line ready for the summer of 1933 but the railway strike in the early part of



that year delayed work, as no locomotive men were available for working trains of spoil and ballast for the new line, and it was not completed until the end of that year.

The official opening of the line took place on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> January 1934, the ceremony being performed by His Grace the Duke of Abercorn, Governor of Northern Ireland. After being received at York Road terminus, Belfast, by Major J.A.W. Torrens DL, Chairman of the NCC, the Governor and the party of railway officers and guests, which included Sir Josiah Stamp, President of the LMS, travelled by a special train, hauled by 2-6-0 No.90 named "Duke of Abercorn" in honour of the occasion, to the main line viaduct, on the south end of which the ceremony took place. After speeches the line was opened by His Grace cutting a silver cord stretched across the line. At the conclusion of the ceremony the train proceeded to Portrush, being the first passenger train to run over the new loop. A luncheon was held at the company's Northern Counties Hotel, Portrush, and the train returned to Belfast the same evening.



*The new Loop Line is now well and truly open, the date being 31<sup>st</sup> March 1934, and the Larne line can be seen passing under the flat span bridge before the main line viaduct. The Down platform of Bleach Green Halt is just out of shot in the left foreground. Also on the left can be seen Henderson's siding which served the linen factory from which the area got its name. No.81 "Carrickfergus Castle" drifts down the bank with what could be the 9:40am Coleraine or the 10:20am Cookstown goods. (W. Robb)*

On Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1934, the new line was brought into regular use with consequent acceleration of all main line trains of from 15 to 25 minutes. The actual saving due to the use of the loop, which cut off 2.5 miles as compared with the old route via Greenisland, was from 10 to 13 minutes, the remaining acceleration being due to faster running. Further improvement in train services took place on 1<sup>st</sup> June, the most important being the introduction, for the convenience of Belfast businessmen residing in Portrush, of a new fast train, "The North Atlantic Express", running from Portrush to Belfast at 8:10am and returning at 5:15pm (12:40 on Saturdays). The schedule was 80 minutes for the 65-mile run, including a two-minute stop at Ballymena. Three new carriages, including a buffet car, all of the latest LMS type, seating three-a-side in the thirds and with low waistline, were built at Belfast Works for this train. One of them, 91, has survived and is now the property of the RPSI.

The construction of the Greenisland loop line was the biggest local railway engineering project carried out within recent years until the reconstruction of the Belfast Central Railway and led to an immense

improvement in train services from Belfast to all parts of the north and north-west of Ulster. It was a great joy to me to be able to follow this scheme in detail, and now the current project to link York Road to Belfast Central proves that the days of railway development are not yet over.

## A STYLISH EXIT

As each new year dawns, the printers of Five Foot Three find themselves besieged by an anxious Editor, not unlike an expectant father, with all kinds of last minute requests. The man usually bearing the brunt of this is Alan Kirkpatrick, to whom thanks are due, not only for extricating the said Editor from various difficulties, but for turning up the items reproduced below which related to a relative of his, former York Road driver James Marks.

L.M.S. INTERNAL CORRESPONDENCE		E.R.O. NO.	Our Reference	Your Reference
To	Mr. M. Marks, Driver, Belfast.		JS.1/	
			From	TRAFFIC SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE, BELFAST.
		(Centre No.)	EXTN.	(Centre No.)
				14th February 1947

Dear Sir,

According to my records you will attain the age of 65 years on 18th May, 1947, and your retirement will therefore take effect from that date.

You have now been employed by this Company for nearly 49 years, of which the last 28 have been in the responsible position of Engine Driver. Your job has demanded a keen attention to duty, and especially during the Years of war, has been arduous and difficult.

I am glad to take this opportunity of thanking you for your faithful service, and at the same time to wish you many years of good health in which to enjoy your retirement.

Yours faithfully,

*W. C. Clegg*

The letters themselves are thought-provoking. Do retiring drivers still get letters like these? Was there some hidden meaning in Bill Hanley's postscript? Would any driver foolhardy enough to pull back 11 minutes between Coleraine and Belfast in today's circumstances be congratulated or carpeted?

The photograph ties in quite neatly with Mr. Robb's article, showing as it does mogul No.90. The loco cannot have been more than six months old then as it was one of four delivered from Derby in July 1933 and received the name "Duke of Abercorn" for the opening of the loop line by that gentleman in January 1934. The NCC seem to have been strangely hesitant about applying names as it was March 1936 before the other three, plus Nos. 94 and 95 of 1934, had all received their names.

Those with an eye for detail will notice that the tablet exchanger has not yet been fitted to the cab-side of No.90 and can pass a little time in spotting the details (at least 10) in which her front end differs from that of the tank version as represented by our No.4. Incidentally, does anyone know the reason for the single shackle fitted to the coupling hook? With very few exceptions, none of the NCC's tender

locomotives seem to have carried anything other than a bare hook at the front and the Moguls themselves appear to have cast off their shackles as the years went by. It has been said that in their bad days they came near to casting off their crews as well, but that's another story.

L.M.S. INTERNAL CORRESPONDENCE		E.R.O. 10	
To	Our Reference	Your Reference	
Driver J. Marks, Belfast.	<div>From TRAFFIC SUPERINTENDENT'S OFFICE BELFAST</div>		
(Centre No. )	EXTN. )	(Centre No. )	
Saturday, 24th May, 1947.		23rd May, 1947.	
<p>As you sever your connection with the company on Saturday, 24th inst., I should like to thank you personally for all your assistance to me in the carrying out of your duties. You were one of the few men who gave no trouble at all, and whose work, so far as I was concerned, was above reproach. It was indeed a pleasure to work with you, and I shall miss you very much.</p> <p>May you be long spared to enjoy your well earned retirement.</p> <p>Yours sincerely, <i>Jas. S. Wilson</i></p> <p>P.S. Please call in Operating Office at 10.30 a.m. on Saturday, 24th, as Mr McCleery would like to speak to you. You will be credited with 8 hours for that day. <i>Approved as granted as a special holiday for</i></p>			
L.M.S. INTERNAL CORRESPONDENCE		E.R.O. 10	
To	Our Reference	Your Reference	
Driver J. Marks.	18/14		
(Centre No. )	EXTN. )	(Centre No. )	
		From Locomotive Engr's Office, Belfast.	
		11th August 1944	
<u>8.45 p.m. ex Derry, 9/8/44</u>			
<p>Owing to engine trouble on the Derry section this train arrived in Coleraine 16 minutes late. You worked the train forward from Coleraine, leaving 19 minutes late and arrived in Belfast 8 minutes late. I wish to convey to you my appreciation for this good work, and I feel that whenever possible co-operation of this nature is highly commendable.</p> <p><i>Mr. Roberts</i></p>			

L.M.S.R. N.C.C.  
PRESENTATION FUND  
FOOTPLATE STAFF

Mr. J. Marks,  
Driver,  
L.M.S.R. N.C.C.

Dear Jim,

It is with deep regret we learn you are leaving, due to the time of retirement being reached. I know I am not able to express the depth of honour and gratitude you are entitled to. You have had a very long and successful career as a Driver.

You have also given the Company a very long and faithful service, you were always held in very high esteem and respected by all for your manner, advice, and assistance rendered to young and old during your long service.

So to a very popular workmate about to enter the twilight of life I would like to convey to you the farewell, thanks and good wishes of all your Footplate Colleagues.

That your retirement may be a long healthy and happy one, and may you enjoy the leisure that has been so justly earned.

Yours sincerely,  
W. Hanley Sect.,

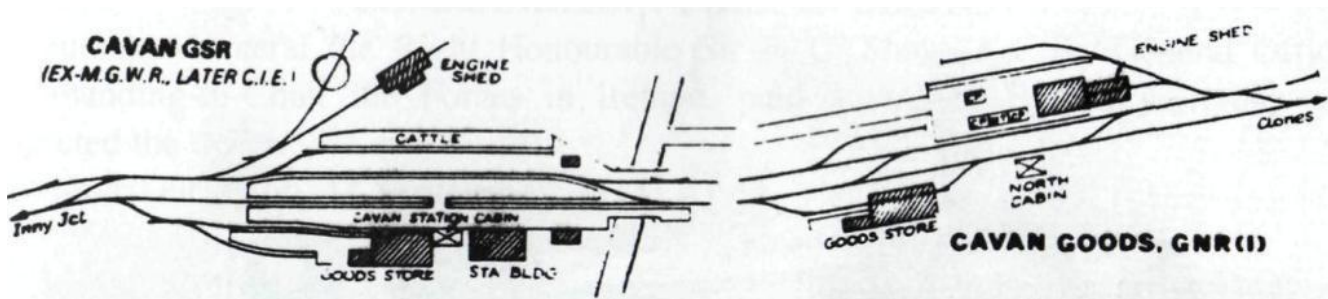
P.S.

I wish you a clear road and no bother with the sand.



*Driver Jim Marks with mogul No.90 at York Road in 1933. (Photographer unknown)*

Drew Donaldson's picture of No.72 at the south end of Cavan station brought back happy memories. It complemented what I find to have been one of the best issues ever of FFT (and my collection goes back to single figures). The recently published "Irish Railways in Colour" by Tom Ferris contains some quite outstanding colour pictures - especially of the Clones-Cavan section. The review in FFT 39 criticises the brevity of the captions - the same comment could be made of the caption of the photograph of No.72 in Cavan and the one explaining what QL 127 was doing at Omagh (page 21). Since those of us who visited Clones must be getting thin on the ground it might be worth pointing out that Cavan was a Midland Great Western station, but with a Great Northern Station Master (Mac Arnold - "to be in charge of a first class station where there was none was unusual."). The building with the broken windows to the left beyond the cattle beach was the MGW engine shed towards which No.72 would soon go to be turned; while the Great Northern had its own shed a quarter or half a mile beyond the rear of the train the Midland had the only turntable.



The train behind P class No.72 is standing in the one through road. The line immediately to the left of No.72 served the Midland cattle beach and did not, at least latterly, provide a run-round facility. This meant that the Midland did not have run-round facilities of its own. To the right of the photographer was one of the many delights of Cavan. What could have been another through road, this time with platforms on both sides of a single track, was laid out as two docks separated by two sets of buffer stops between which (in the middle of the station and under the watchful eye of the Midland signalman) was a bridge to the island platform - perfect wheelchair access long before this came into vogue. This bridge shows behind railcar C1 on page 44 of Mr. Ferris's book.

If it lacked a passenger station and a turntable the Great Northern had everything else - including the run-round facilities. Unless the cattle siding started out life as a loop, one presumes the Midland had intended the two docks in the station to be a through road, or else to use the Northern facilities. Both lines had a goods store, the Northern one is well illustrated in the background to Gerry Douglas's photograph of Ps class No.26 on page 64. This picture demonstrates, to me at least, that varnished mahogany is a more attractive carriage livery than varnished teak!

Another unusual feature of Cavan appears in this photograph of No.26. Beyond the locomotive is what looks like double track, but closer examination of the signalling suggests otherwise. Passenger traffic used the right hand (east) road. The westward line looks (neither the 1930 WTT Appendix nor the 1939 Supplement is any help) to have been for the transfer of freight. The Midland Great Western Working timetable from the eighties (1880s, that is!), reprinted with a foreword by Mr. R.N. Clements by Transport Research Associates in 1971 does provide information on the "Code of Whistling Signals" which bears this out.

The track diagram of Cavan in "Golden Years, Vol. 2" reveals another curiosity in that this line has two trap points facing each other - no doubt the boundary between Midland and Great Northern control. No.2 in the IRRS series of handsome booklets under the banner "Irish Railways in Pictures" has a picture by Mr. Spinks of a J19 standing on this section with a GN passenger train signalled to depart

from the north bay. Also shown is bull-headed track on both lines, and a facing points locking bar on the passenger line protecting the south entrance to the GN goods store loop.



***Class P 6'6" No.26 at Cavan, ready for the departure with the 11:55am to Clones, 10<sup>th</sup> May 1956.  
(R. Barr)***

The limited freight facilities at both depots and the working timetables suggest that the bulk of the traffic was livestock being worked northwards; the working instructions bear this out. Mac Arnold mentions excursions from Belfast to Galway in the thirties with a journey time five minutes short of six hours - not much better than when Ahrons commented that anyone going by Cavan must have wished he had gone by Dublin "if only to see the lights". When the Tolka Bridge was washed out in 1955 freight traffic to and from the North was worked by this route. As "The Golden Years" shows (page 172) as always Drew Donaldson was there to record the event. That page also shows NCC No.81 "Carrickfergus Castle" arriving at Clones from Cavan. Presuming that the Castle still had the NCC livery given to it by the Great Northern when overhauling No.81 at Dundalk during the war Cavan knew at least one red engine to contrast with the GN blue and, just possibly, CIÉ green. The photograph in the IRRS booklet "Irish Railways in Pictures No.1 - The Great Northern" suggests rather that by the time, 1952-54, of the lease of No.81 the UTA had already repainted this locomotive.

Mac Arnold remarked to me once that I got into some queer corners of the Great Northern. Belturbet, rather than Bundoran, may have been the despised 'Ultima Thule' so far as the locomotive staff were concerned (see Golden Years Vol. 2, page 153), but for me Cavan was the most remote. When I knew it the CIÉ passenger service was no more, and my ignorance was such that I was surprised to find a Midland 0-6-0 shunting the Northern yard on my first visit. In the Great Northern timetable it has seemed rather a 'branch to nowhere'. Belturbet, like St. Combs or Presteigne, may have been that exotica, the end of a branch off a branch, but the presence of the narrow gauge meant that it is generally



better known, or better known of, than Cavan.

It was Clones which first drew me to the area. It had fired my childish imagination when I first began to find out about the Great Northern - the concept of a junction of four single track branches was indeed exotic, but rare in practice. It was only later when I acquired my 1930 GNR(I) WTT Appendix that I learned that the line from Monaghan had been double until the early thirties. There was Claremorris and Navan, while closer to home, Crianlarich was a poor thing by comparison. The closest I have found would be Halwill in Devon, or Barnard Castle, but the latter had double track for the climb up to Stainmore, England's highest main line summit with the magic of Belah Viaduct to follow. Limerick Junction was, and is, unique.



***SG3 No.40 in the centre road at the west end of Clones, Cavan train at the platform. (R. Barr)***

My first Irish railway journey was on the County Down - from Sydenham into Queen's Quay. I was on a ship which had called for bunkers on the way from Barrow-in-Furness to Labrador. I came back the next year, in May 1956, sailing from Glasgow to Dublin on the "Laird's Hill". Due to bad weather we arrived about four hours late which upset my pre-planned itinerary. The holiday was the better for that in that each morning I would have no idea where I would be by the end of the day. I fitted in a trip to Bray and then Amiens Street to Drogheda, Oldcastle (railcar), Dundalk and the 8:00pm departure on the Irish North. By the time I got to Clones (9:38pm) I was exhausted, but had managed a shot of a Big D at Castleblaney. This was No.40 working the 6:45pm goods from Clones to Dundalk; I was to meet the SG3 at Clones again the next day having worked back with the 6:40am from Dundalk.

The first train for Cavan - 10:45 - gave me time to recover, and to explore that always fascinating station. I planned to take the bus (GN) from Cavan to Belturbet and the branch connection back to Ballyhaise. I found Cavan much too interesting and only just managed to catch No.26 working back to Clones at 11:55. I intended to arrive at Belturbet later in my tour from the west by the narrow gauge but as it turned out this was not to be. When I eventually reached Arigna I met another enthusiast (the only one I recollect during the entire ten days!) who offered me a lift westwards to Ballina. Since this was

still steam-worked I left him there for a trip behind ex-MGW 0-6-0 (Attock's No.582 built at Broadstone in 1891) to Manulla Junction where I changed for Westport. I hadn't been back to Westport until last year and the "Grainne Uaile" tour. Westport had not lost any of its charm. Had I known there were 2-4-0s at work in the vicinity I might have gone round by Tuam, Athenry and Attymon Junction instead of straight back to Dublin with the diesel.



*Class AL 0-6-0 No.56 shunting at Ballyhaise on 10<sup>th</sup> May 1956. (R. Barr)*

On my way back to Clones from Cavan we passed the branch train at Ballyhaise - not with a 2-4-2 tank but with AL class 0-6-0 No.56 built at Dundalk in 1896. Working timetable notwithstanding, No.26 had us in Clones before the arrival of the mid-day passenger from Dundalk to Omagh which in true Irish North fashion lingered for half an hour at both Clones and Enniskillen, both havens of delight. At last I was to have a run behind a blue U class 4-4-0 - the subject of an article in a Meccano Magazine in 1948. At that time I travelled regularly to and from school behind McIntosh 4-4-0 54440, as Caledonian Railway No.139 the first superheated Dunalastair IV, now in BR lined black. The Meccano Magazine article offered me the prospect of a new, blue 4-4-0 also designed by a man called McIntosh. My afternoon on the Great Northern was suitably rounded off with PPs No.74 on the 2:35pm out of Bundoran Junction - the clean black livery compensating for leaving the blue U at the Junction. It was to be a day of 4-4-0s as at Irvinestown we crossed another PPs, No.46, on a long goods. Later on I was to find a collier discharging at Killybegs and steam all over the Donegal - a piece of good fortune I did not fully appreciate at the time, and was to have repeated on my second, and last visit; but my travels on the Donegal belong to another story.



*The kind of engine Mr. Barr might have expected to see at Ballyhaise. Here JT 2-4-2T No.93 sets out over one of the few remaining cobbled streets in Belfast on her journey to Cultra on 14<sup>th</sup> February 1993. (I.C. Pryce)*

## **A DISTANT PUZZLE SOLVED?**

**Colin Sherrard**

*[Five Foot Three No.23, Winter 1978/9, contained an article by Irwin Pryce dealing with a train recorded as having been worked from Dublin to Belfast on 10<sup>th</sup> September 1918 by locomotive No.171 in the remarkable time of 107.5 minutes for the 112.5 miles. The train, all GS&WR stock, was made up of two third class coaches, a dining car, two 30' parcels vans and a 30' carriage truck, total weight 121.75 tons. The smaller vehicles were marshalled at either end, suggesting a reversal en route.*

*In the course of his article Mr. Pryce commented that famous persons had dined out for years on the strength of similar stories and he concluded by posing the questions, "What was this train for, where was it coming from and why the hurry?"*

*Fifteen years later, research by Colin Sherrard has produced what appears to be a credible solution to the puzzle. Further research may disclose whether Mr. Pryce has been able thereby to satisfy his gastronomic yearnings! - Ed.]*

A study of old newspapers in Belfast's Linenhall Library and Central Library has turned up two brief references to the movements of General Frederick Shaw, GOC, Ireland, around the time in question:

## **Belfast Newsletter, 12<sup>th</sup> September 1918:**

### **COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF IN BELFAST**

Lieutenant-General the Right Honourable Sir F.C. Shaw, KCB, General Officer Commanding-in-Chief the Forces in Ireland, paid a visit to Belfast yesterday and inspected the troops.

## **Belfast Telegraph, 11<sup>th</sup> September 1918**

### **GENERAL SHAW IN THE NORTH-WEST**

General Sir Frederick Shaw, Commander-in-Chief of the Irish Forces, arrived in Derry yesterday. In the forenoon he visited Buncrana and in the afternoon he carried out an inspection at Ebrington Barracks.

No.171's record run took place on the 10<sup>th</sup> September 1918. This could be pure coincidence, but if the train was connected with the visit, whether carrying the GOC or some of his staff, it might explain some of the puzzling aspects of the train.

1. The Secrecy. A run of this kind would be kept quiet in advance and would not be published afterwards. (Whereas other GNR high speed runs are well known, this one was not.) In view of the risk, secrecy would be advisable.
2. The High Speed. The GOC would count as a VIP, with presumably a precise schedule made out for his visit, and the train would be given priority over all other traffic. Was a very fast run originally intended or were the crew making up lost time caused by a late departure from Dublin?
3. The GS&WR Stock. Could the train have been coming from the Curragh? (With an escort for the GOC?) The two passenger coaches were third class, according to the log, but could the dining car, 2002, have been a first class vehicle?
4. The Carriage Truck. Were carriage trucks still in general use at this time? Were motor cars not becoming more common for the well-to-do? Could it have carried a motor car rather than a carriage? The GOC would probably have his own car - was it brought to Belfast for the visit?

Every aspect of the train suggests something out of the ordinary. If it was connected with the General's visit it would probably be very difficult or even impossible to get any further information.

Interestingly, the very next item in the column in the Newsletter reports that Temporary Lieutenant-Colonel G.T. Glover had been granted the honorary rank of Colonel on 26<sup>th</sup> August 1918, on relinquishing his command as Chief Mechanical Engineer, France, and had returned to his duties as Locomotive Engineer, Great Northern Railway (Ireland).

## **COMMENTS AND RECOLLECTIONS**

**Laurence Liddle**

I read Charlie Friel's article "Another Driver Remembers" in the last issue of Five Foot Three with very great interest. I knew Paddy Hoey well in his later years as a driver and had several footplate trips with him in 1963, two of which I particularly remember. Each of these two journeys was on a loco which was in poor condition and called for the best efforts of driver and fireman. The first trip was on a Mogul heading a down passenger train north of Dundalk, the second on a UG 0-6-0 working a 13<sup>th</sup> July return special from Bangor to Warrenpoint. On each occasion there was ample opportunity for Paddy to display to the full not only his professional expertise but also his considerable sense of humour. I have travelled with enginemen who, if the locomotive was in poor shape, lost both heart and time, but also with those - and they were the majority - for whom adverse circumstances acted as a stimulus to display the full range of their professional ability. Paddy very definitely belonged to the latter category. Perhaps a few comments on some of Paddy's recollections may interest both those readers who knew

him and also those younger ones whose only experience of Irish steam has been provided by our society.

On page 40 there is mention of Dublin enginemen working down the 06:40 passenger as far as Portadown and returning with the 11:00 up train. The 06:40 was the mail, the prestige train of its day. When the Dublin-Belfast express services were accelerated on the introduction of the Compounds in 1932 the Dublin men were rostered to work through to Belfast and to return with the 10:30 which they had formerly taken forward from Portadown only. On its new timing the Mail was scheduled to arrive at Great Victoria Street at 09:05. (The 2 hours 25 minutes timing allowed for four stops, including one of, so far as I remember, five minutes for Customs at Goraghwood.) On occasions however a delayed departure from Dublin, caused by the late arrival of the LMS mail steamer at Dun Laoghaire, meant a late arrival at Belfast, in one of the alternative paths provided for the Mail in the Working Time Table, and hence reduced layover time for driver and fireman. (Unless the running was so late that the crew had to be relieved at Portadown.) In the Adelaide shed mess room in those days places at a particular table were allotted to the Dublin men, to ensure that they had as much time as possible in which to eat their meals. Other round trips for members of the Amiens Street top link were 09:00 down/14:45 up and the 15:15 down/19:10 up. These arrangements ceased to operate after the 1933 strike, crews on regular weekday Dublin-Belfast services being henceforth changed at Dundalk.

Still on page 40: old numbers 201 and 202 were SG3 0-6-0s ("Big Ds"), they were renumbered when the second series of U class 4-4-0s were delivered from Beyer Peacock in 1947, numbers 201 and 203 of this latter group were named "Meath" and "Louth" respectively. The reason for the juggling of numbers was to have all ten of the U class listed consecutively from 196 to 205.

I never saw bread being made on a footplate, but I have seen a fireman doing his washing during an ascent of the North side of the Wellington Bank by a Big D on a Portadown-Dundalk goods.

Page 41: No.82 was one of the first series (78-82) of UG 0-6-0s, built at Dundalk in 1937, in the photograph she is shown with a tender of the type provided for the second (Beyer Peacock) quintet, Nos. 145-149, of 1947. The introduction of this latter group of engines also produced some renumbering, in this case of class T2 4-4-2Ts No.147 and No.148. The size of the goods train behind No.82 is eloquent testimony to the amount of general freight traffic over the old Ulster line south-west of Portadown in the period immediately before its closure. The testimony is all the more striking when one considers that one of the two vehicles between tender and van is a six wheeled low sides PWD wagon and hence unlikely to have been earning any revenue. Right up to the closure however there was heavy cross-border livestock traffic on the Clones Road.

Page 47: Whatever about the heavy GAA Special in 1960 or 1961, I remember Paddy Hoey telling me that once when a special ran from Portadown to Navan, he being the driver, the expected pilotman was not available at Drogheda. Undeterred, even though he had never been on the Oldcastle branch, Paddy continued on to Navan. Presumably on an occasion such as this the Portadown engine would come off at Drogheda loco for the relatively short runs to Navan and back. This is reminiscent of the rostering of Broadstone enginemen through to Clifden in MGWR and early GSR days; having left Dublin on one of the large Cusack 4-4-0s, or in later years perhaps a Woolwich 2-6-0, they would change to an Atock 2-4-0 or a 'standard goods' (0-6-0) for the final 50 miles across the Connemara bogs.

Finally as regards Paddy's reminiscences; the Circus Train. I have no information about Irish rail travel by Chipperfield's circus, other than that this circus did use rail transport for at least one of its tours in Ireland, however the CIÉ portions of the very extensive Irish travels of the great Bertram Mills circus in 1961 and 1964 were vividly described in an article entitled "Operation Circus Train" written by that dedicated railwayman Chief Traffic Inspector Paddy Gannon, and which appeared in the Journal of the Irish Railway Record Society dated February 1966. Inspector Gannon was closely involved with each of the two operations.

The elephant van used in 1961 was noted by Paddy Gannon as UTA 12-ton bogie van number 612. I wonder was this originally a ten ton vehicle and was the extra load capacity a result of the strengthening mentioned by Paddy Hoey Junior. Also relating to elephants, Inspector Gannon wrote: "It was noticed that when the elephants were safely settled in, the van developed a swaying side to side motion, caused by the animals themselves swaying. George Morrison the stable manager explained that elephants, having very small eyes, have a limited range of vision; they also have a certain amount of curiosity and by swaying they were able to take in more of what was going on. The swaying continued even when the van was in motion, and a speed of only 25 miles per hour was permissible for the train".



***UTA No.47 (ex GNR UG No.82), after two miles with a ruling gradient of 1 in 73 behind her, is still working hard - as is the banker, probably another UG - passing Craigavad en route to Bangor with a circus train, date unknown. (A. Donaldson)***

Paddy Gannon's narrative deals almost entirely with the CIÉ aspects of operating the circus trains. I do not think that any specific account of their running north of the Border was ever written, although the Inspector does refer in some detail to the high degree of co-operation between CIÉ and the UTA that was entailed. For example for each of the trains, three in 1961 and two in 1964, a combination of vehicles from both undertakings was used. One difference between the rolling stock situation in 1964 compared to that of 1961 was that in 1964 UTA elephant van 612 was replaced by (ex-GNR) vehicle 434N.

The IRRS Journal article also refers to the familiarising trip made when Paddy Gannon and the late Christy Kirwan, Operating Superintendent of CIÉ, Willy Sefton Assistant to the Operating Manager of the UTA and Traffic Inspector Moore of the latter concern went to the North of England to observe a circus move on British Rail who had a considerable amount of experience of this work. At some time in the early sixties I was given a graphic account of this English trip by Willy Sefton - seemingly a good time was had by all - but unpardonably I made no notes of our conversation and now after thirty years I remember very few details of it. To refer now to some other items in the 1992/3 "Five Foot Three" - I think that the probable date of 1932 assigned to the photograph on page 21 must be a misprint for 1952. The coach immediately behind the tender of GNR class QL 4-4-0 No.127 appears to

be a K17 third, the first examples of which did not appear until 1936. In the earlier 1950s the through Belfast-Enniskillen service via Omagh, 17:00 ex Great Victoria Street and 09:00 ex Enniskillen was normally provided by a third and a first/second brake compo, attached to Belfast-Derry trains between the former city and Omagh in each direction. Usually the third was of the K15 open type, the first examples of which appeared in 1935, and the brake compo was 311 or 312, these latter being of traditional all wood construction. A coach of this type is immediately behind the K17 in the photograph. I hope that I will not be thought to be pedantic if I suggest that a more accurate caption to the picture would be that the engine was lifting the through coaches off the train from Enniskillen BEFORE attaching them to the train from Derry. The alternative possibility, that vehicles from Belfast were being shunted to the train about to depart for Enniskillen is very unlikely in view of No.127 having express passenger headlamps, indicating it as the Derry-Belfast train engine. These lamps give us a latest possible date for the photo as, so far as I remember, the change from black to white lamps on the GN was made at some time in the fifties. Can any reader quote the exact date?



***No.5, first of the Jeeps, marshalling a Bertram Mills Circus train at Larne Town - date unknown but Editor's guess would be 1964 as the left foreground shows signs of lifted track (to shed which closed in 1962). The narrow gauge bridge may be seen to the right of the telegraph pole but everything except the through line has since been obliterated. Questions for the cognoscenti: Is the vehicle on the left an elephant van and why is No.5 not wearing her UTA badge? (Photographer unknown)***

This Omagh picture is interesting for two further features; first QLs, though by no means unknown on the Derry road, were fairly rare at the head of through passenger trains (I cannot recall any of them being permanently attached to tenders with staff exchange apparatus); secondly, the awkward layout at Omagh, with the junction actually within the platforms, is shown.

*[It would appear that some last minute cutting of corners was attempted in relation to my captioning of the photo of No.127 at Omagh but I didn't get away with it. Mr. Barr - and probably others - spotted it too! - Ed.]*

The reference at the bottom of page 24 to the ill-advised closure of the Ballymacarrett Junction-



Comber section of the former BCDR main line reminds me of the equally short-sighted similar operation carried out between Dublin (Harcourt Street) and Shanganagh Junction on the erstwhile DSER. Sub-paragraph (5) page 28 brings to mind the inane suggestion, emanating from some political source in the early sixties, that the Bangor Branch should be re-gauged to 4'8½" to enable ex-BR stock to run over it. I think we might add the metamorphosis of the former Bessbrook station into Newry to the list of reconstructions and improvements noted at (3) on page 29.



***GSR 4-4-2T No.459 (ex DSER) on a Dublin-Bray train at Killiney - rather more accessible than nowadays. (A. Donaldson)***

From GN, NCC and Co. Down to the Cavan and Leitrim: The coal carried by the train from Arigna to Belturbet pictured on page 51 was on its way to Drogheda cement works, trans-shipment to standard gauge GN wagons would be made at Belturbet. I am sure that this latter process, cumbersome and time consuming as it must have been, was a lot less traumatic than one noteworthy trans-shipment when a bull in process of movement from the GSR (i.e. C&L) to the GN sphere of influence got loose and took flight. The bovine gentleman was recovered the next day at Arva, indicating that however long his confinement in a small narrow gauge cattle wagon had been he was still possessed of reasonable powers of locomotion. No doubt claims were made on both GSR and GNR for delay, damage and shock to the bull, and possibly physical and/or emotional damage done to members of the public and/or their property. Did the claims offices of the two companies settle the matter amicably between them or did they have to seek judgement from the Clearing House?

Finally: Great Northern Restaurant Car 401 shown in the picture on page 52 is not the car of the same number referred to in "Diners to Dublin" in the last issue of this magazine. The 401 which I mentioned and which was built in 1916 (rebuilt in 1933) went to CIÉ in 1958 but was scrapped not long afterwards. The clerestory roofed vehicle in the photograph dated from 1895. In 1916 it was renumbered 407 and became a unit of the Great Northern's ambulance train. In 1921 407 was stripped of its kitchen fittings and became a first class saloon, having been provided with additional seats and a central lavatory. Two years later it was downgraded to second class, though without further alteration.

This car lasted until 1945, in its final years of service operating as a first class restaurant car trailer in the heavy 12:00 up and 18:00 down Belfast-Dublin trains.



*D8 No.454, by 1948 the last survivor of its class, leaves Bray with a train for Dublin Harcourt Street. (Real Photographs)*

## SENTINEL STORY

## “Larne Man”

Apart from the vehicle itself, in this photograph from member Sam Somerville’s collection one is immediately struck by the generous facilities provided to persons using Kilroot station which at that date must have been even more on the fringe of the populated area around Carrickfergus. Other stopping places nearer the centre of that area had to make do with much less. Today little trace of Kilroot’s fine station has survived the encroachment of the recently constructed power station.

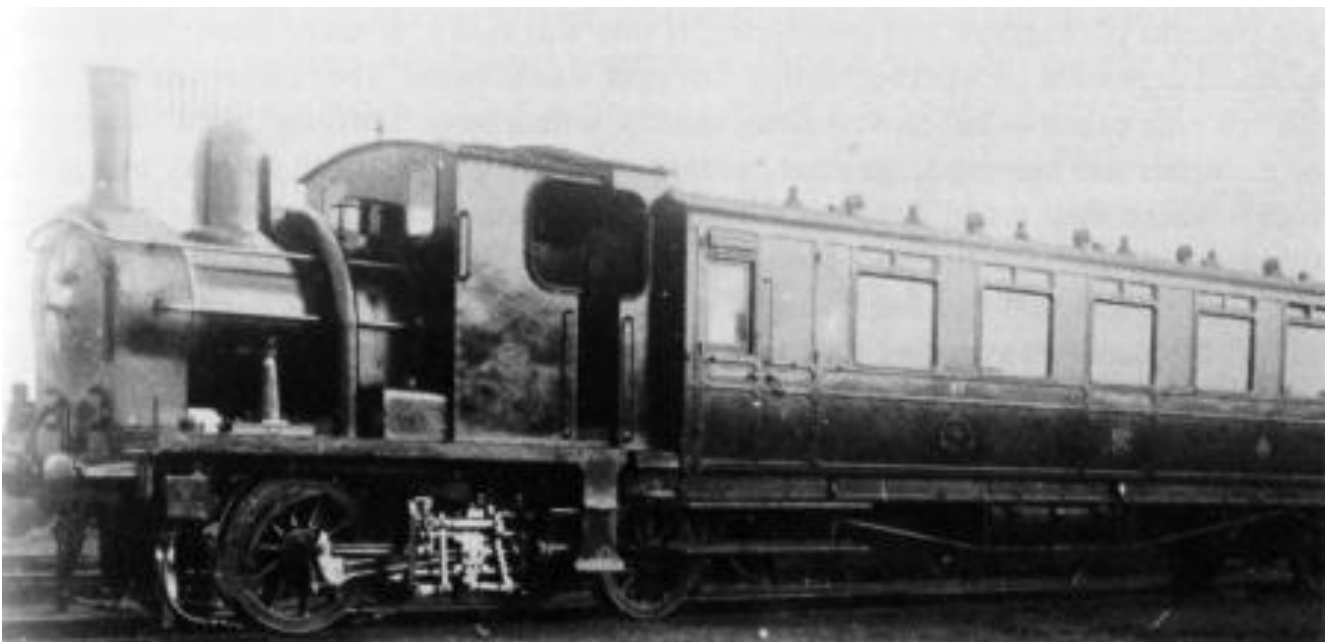
Although the vehicle illustrated above was the immediate predecessor of the NCC’s more successful petrol and diesel-powered railcars introduced in the 1930s it was neither unique nor original. Since the early years of the century many railway companies had been experimenting with similar types of vehicle for use on branch lines and other lightly trafficked services as a more economical alternative to the conventional arrangement of locomotive and coaches. The railway companies and private constructors between them produced several variations on this theme, described as steam coaches, railmotors or railcars.

The NCC had entered the field in 1905 with a pair of railmotors from the Derby works of their parent Midland Railway. These were an articulated design consisting of a tri-composite coach mounted on the rear of a small 0-2-2 locomotive. Their numbers, 90 and 90, although they fitted into the locomotive series, were carried on the coaches but not on the engines. Despite being originally intended for Belfast-Greenisland services they were frequently worked to Ballymena, a distance of some 30 miles. In addition to the need for a water stop at Antrim this working required fast running to keep out of the way of other trains which resulted in numerous cases of overheated bearings. Another disadvantage

was that if repairs to either the engine or coach were required the entire unit had to come out of traffic. In 1913 the two engines were withdrawn and the coaches, re-numbered 79 and 80, were converted to ordinary brake-composites.



*Sentinel steam coach 401 at Kilroot, 1926. (R. Welsh)*



*Rail Motor No. 91. Despite being built in Derby the tiny locomotive has a rather European appearance. (R. Welsh)*

Sentinel Waggon Works of Shrewsbury for many years made a speciality of small twin-cylindrical

shunting locomotives with vertical water-tube boilers. Their steam coaches, whose power units had much in common with those fitted to Sentinel steam lorries, were an adaptation of these and were supplied to several railway companies where they operated with varying degrees of success.

The NCC ordered one of each type in 1925, the number 401 being allocated to the steam coach while the locomotive became the second No.91. The two driving axles were connected to each other, and the leading axle to the engine unit, by chains and the breakage of these appears to have been a continual problem. Another weakness was a tendency to run short of steam. It could reasonably be assumed that the NCC had in mind that No.91 could be used on other duties in addition to passenger work but they seem to have got the worst of both worlds as in addition to the problems already mentioned this feeble machine could not have done much in the way of meaningful shunting and had the additional disadvantage, when on passenger work, of having to run round its train at the end of each journey. Both vehicles had a short life in NCC service and were scrapped in 1932 which saved the company the trouble of re-numbering the locomotive whose number, 91, was allocated to one of the Moguls delivered the following year.



***The final version of the steam Sentinel. “Denis”, built in 1958, at Whifflet Foundry, Coatbridge in 1977. (W.T. Scott)***

Sentinel also catered for road haulage with steam and diesel lorries and, while the latter never made great inroads into this market, Sentinel steam lorries reached an advanced state of development, culminating in the Super Sentinel which could attain an almost noiseless 55 mph.

The Shrewsbury company's locomotives had a longer innings. Early examples resembled water tanks with chimneys but the design was progressively refined until by the time steam construction ceased in the late 1950s they could have passed at a glance for diesels, with one notable difference. Many were coke-fired and thus did not belch offensive blue smoke or indeed any smoke at all. This made them very suitable for industrial use in enclosed areas. Coal-fired versions could be used in locations where cleanliness of emissions was less important.

One of the last places where Sentinels could be found at work was Whifflet Foundry near Glasgow and in the declining years of industrial steam many, including the author, went there to photograph and sometimes, if one was lucky, to drive them. Their power and speed depended on whether high or low gear was selected. They did not stir the blood with volcanic exhausts but moved along quietly, with a busy "huffling" noise, bringing in raw materials and moving large steel castings on bogie wagons from foundry to machine shops - where they could have sat all day without annoying anyone - and then to the exchange sidings with finished products. Environment-friendly before the phrase was thought of, it was said that the management intended to use them for as long as possible and had the facilities to ensure this. However, whether due to a change in the company's fortunes or transport policy, the Sentinels are gone although a couple of them have been preserved elsewhere.

The examples which worked on the NCC had a boiler 4' 4" high and 2' 8" in diameter, with the high working pressure of 275 psi. Cylinders were 6.75" diameter x 9" stroke, driving wheels 2' 6" diameter with a wheelbase of 8' 6". 300 gallons of water and 13 cwt of coal were carried. The weight of the locomotive was 20 tons but that of the steam coach is unknown.

Although Sentinel Ltd. were taken over following the decimation of the British locomotive industry in the 1950s and 1960s, Sentinel shunting locomotives continued to be constructed, although of course diesel-powered by then, and can be found in some of the diminishing number of industrial locations in Great Britain still moving materials by rail.

## **FITTERS AND FIREMEN ON THE SL&NCR**

**Donal Fox**

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*The following article, originally published in February 1993, is reproduced by kind permission of the Leitrim Observer:*

The Sligo, Leitrim and Northern Counties Railway was the last private line in Ireland and it survived despite severe difficulties until it was forced to close in 1957. The supports it received from Governments on both sides of the border were negligible, compared to those given to its larger neighbours, but yet it struggled on until the Great Northern Railway was closed, depriving the Sligo-Leitrim of access to the Northern ports and indeed an entrance to Enniskillen.

Certainly one of the reasons why the Sligo-Leitrim survived for so long was the excellent workmanship of the men in the machine shop, as the Works were known.

N.W. Sprinks, in his book "Sligo Leitrim and Northern Counties Railway" says of the Works:

"Manorhamilton Works was one of the last homes of craftsmanship. There were limits on what could be done there, but within those limits everything was done to standards almost forgotten elsewhere. Even though in later years it became inevitable that engines must continue to work when in poor condition, owing to the impossibility of getting major works done, there was none of the neglect of minor ailments that is now so common. Everywhere, now, enginemen are lamenting that fitters, as they were once known, are extinct. That was never true of Manorhamilton, where Gerry Lambe maintained the old traditions of craftsmanship."

Gerry Lambe was the foreman fitter at the Works and one of his fitters was Victor (Vicky) Holland, from Manorhamilton. Vicky spent 18 years as a fitter with the Sligo-Leitrim and from talking to him in

his home on the New Line, it was clearly a great time for him.

Just like other people who were associated with the Sligo-Leitrim line, Vicky has very fond memories of the years he spent there. He started in the machine shop as an apprentice fitter in 1937 receiving the sum of 10 shillings a week. "It wouldn't keep you in sweets but it was a job," Vicky remembers.

And for five years, Vicky served his time in the exacting atmosphere of the machine shop and for each of those five years he received an extra four shillings a week in wages.

Vicky served his apprenticeship with another young man at the time, John McDermott. Vicky Holland was to play a part in some of the great events of the SL&NCR, such as the arrival of the new locomotives Lough Erne and Lough Melvin at the company's headquarters in Manorhamilton in 1951.

Vicky, together with Gerry Lambe travelled to Belfast on two separate occasions to assemble both engines, after they arrived from Manchester. They were then towed to Enniskillen on the Great Northern Line and from there were brought to Manorhamilton. Each engine came in parts and took two weeks for the two men to assemble.



***Manorhamilton fitter Vicky Holland. (W. Donnellan)***



***SL&NCR fireman Bernie Gilgunn. (W. Donnellan)***

While the skill of the men from the Manorhamilton works was generally recognised, it was dirty work for those involved. As Vicky recalled: "It was hard enough at times, but good work for the time. It was messy kind of work and you'd be as black as hell when you came out in the evening."

Despite the fact that he left the machine shop over two years before the line eventually closed, Vicky has a clear memory of those who worked there. But it was Gerry Lambe who was the greatest influence on his career. Gerry, Vicky recalls, was a "born genius", and he trained Vicky as a fitter.

It was the function of the machine shop to keep the locomotives and railcars in running order. It was a job which was difficult at times as much of the machinery was old and the engines needed constant care.

Sprinks in his book remarks on the skill of the men there when he saw Hazelwood in motion: "It was a revelation to hear Hazelwood, after nearly 60 years of service (and the design was 20 years older than that) purring like a sewing machine with the lever one notch out of middle and the regulator full over."

Apart from Gerry Lambe, Vicky also recalls, Tom Kelly, the blacksmith, Willie Gray, the foreman (who came from the Cavan & Leitrim), his son Georgie, a fitter, Paddy O'Rourke, an electrician, Joe

Fox, a boiler maker, John McDermott and Thomas Rutherford, both fitters.

Another important part of the headquarters staff at Manorhamilton were the men in the carriage shop. They were responsible for the building and maintenance of the rolling stock.

**SLIGO, LEITRIM AND NORTHERN COUNTIES RAILWAY.**

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**Countess Markievicz Memorial  
G.A.A. Park, Sligo.**

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**FOOTBALL**

**INDEPENDENT SHIELD COMPETITION**

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**SLIGO v ROSCOMMON at 3 p.m.  
MAYO v LEITRIM at 4.30 p.m.**

**CARNIVAL IN MARKET YARD, SLIGO  
ON SUNDAY, 13th MAY, 1956**

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**IN CONNECTION WITH ABOVE A TRAIN WILL RUN  
AS UNDER :**

		<b>A.M.</b>	<b>Fares for the Double Journey</b>	
			<b>1st Class</b>	<b>2nd Class</b>
<b>ENNISKILLEN</b>	dep.	<b>11.30</b>		
<b>FLORENCECOURT</b>	"	<b>11.45</b>	<b>6s 6d</b>	<b>5s 0d</b>
<b>ABOHILL</b>	"	<b>11.50</b>		
<b>BELCOO</b>	"	<b>12. 2</b>	<b>5s 6d</b>	<b>4s 6d</b>
<b>GLENFARNE</b>	"	<b>12.15</b>		
<b>KILMAKERRILL</b>	"	<b>12.25</b>	<b>5s 0d</b>	<b>4s 0d</b>
<b>MANORHAMILTON</b>	"	<b>12.35</b>	<b>4s 6d</b>	<b>3s 9d</b>
<b>DROMAHAIR</b>	"	<b>1. 0</b>	<b>4s 0d</b>	<b>3s 3d</b>
<b>COLLOONEY</b>	"	<b>1.20</b>	<b>2s 6d</b>	<b>1s 6d</b>
<b>BALLYSODARE</b>	"	<b>1.30</b>	<b>2s 0d</b>	<b>1s 0d</b>
<b>SLIGO</b>	arr.	<b>1.45</b>		

Tickets available for return on day of issue only by Train leaving Sligo at 7.30 p.m. This Train will NOT STOP at Ballintogher or Ballygawley on Outward or Return Journey.

**E. W. MONAHAN,**  
GENERAL MANAGER.

MAY, 1956.

*Rail excursion poster*



Vicky recalls that they were not as well paid as the men in the machine shop. Among the men who worked there were the foreman, John Rooney, Jack McGoey, Paddy Wilson, Gerard Wilson and Tommy McGourty, carpenters and Joe Darcy, a painter.

Also based in Manorhamilton were the permanent way carpenters who made gates for level crossings and gate houses and footboards for bridges. Among the men there were Johnny Thompson, Pat Wilson, Jimmy McGourty, Daniel Cornyn and Tommy McGourty. William McBride was the permanent way inspector who came from Dundalk.

“There was always a great atmosphere there and they were a great crowd to work with,” Vicky remembers.

The Sligo-Leitrim was always conscious of the need for economy. The Board of Directors never paid a dividend in its entire history. And one of the means of saving money was the introduction of the railcars.

These were, in fact, buses converted to run on tracks. To the company, the railcars must have appeared quite a bargain, with Railcar B, the pride of the SL&NCR fleet coming from Wigan at a cost of £10,500, but to passengers they were not as comfortable as trains. Track and engine noise was more noticeable than in trains and as four wheel vehicles they rode far from well. In addition they were not as warm as trains.

Vicky Holland remembers working on the railcars and recalls that they were easier to maintain and were cleaner to work with than trains. Vicky remembers that the railcars were driven on steel wheels placed over a normal rubber tyre. The pressure in the tyre was pumped to 100 pounds and the entire wheel weighed about three hundredweight. If there was a breakdown, men, often including Vicky Holland, had to make their way to the point of the breakdown to repair the wheel and the car could be delayed for three or four hours.

In an accident near Glenfarne in 1952, Railcar 2A, driven by Tom McGilloway, struck a cow belonging to Myles Sweeney. After getting the Railcar moving again the men drank in Mr. Sweeney's pub that evening, but the matter was eventually settled in the High Court in Carrick-on-Shannon in favour of the company.

While all of the work on the railcars was done in the machine shop in Manorhamilton by Gerry Lambe and his crew, Vicky remembers that a man named Paddy McKenna from Dundalk would be called to get them out of trouble, “but that would be seldom because Gerry was a mastermind.”

Vicky remembers the engines that were in the service of the SL&NCR during his time with the Company. There were five steam engines: Leitrim, Lissadell, Fermanagh, Lurganboy and Hazelwood. Vicky recalls fitting Hazelwood and Lurganboy with new boilers and cylinders over a two month period. Fermanagh had been scrapped when Vicky Holland left the company to work in Reading as a driver.

There were five larger engines: Sir Henry (named after Sir Henry Gore-Booth), Enniskillen, Lough Gill, Lough Erne and Lough Melvin, which could pull 30 wagons.

The company's fleet was completed with two tender engines, Glencar and Sligo.

In October 1951, Vicky recalls a strike which lasted for a fortnight. The workers sought parity with similar grades in the Ulster Transport Authority in the North and with CIÉ employees in the South. The company which had always been in tight financial circumstances was unable to pay. During the period of the strike the company received deputations from traders and prominent local passengers to whom they explained their difficulties. The strike was resolved by the Company agreeing to representations to the two Governments by a joint body representing the Company itself, the Trade Unions and Traders, provided the staff came back to work. The Government of the Republic eventually agreed to a higher

subsidy to the Company, a condition of which was that the increased wages would be paid.

While the workers had won, Vicky felt that the strike had helped to close the railway. When he left, Vicky was earning £7-10s-0d (£7.50) a week. When the end came in 1957, Vicky says a lot of the men found themselves out of work, others, especially the carpenters, went to America, while other simply retired or farmed.

“You could stay working there up until you were 80 as long as you could do the work,” said Vicky.



***Miraculously restored from dereliction, GNR railbus No.2 was brought by road from Annaghmore to Poyntzpass in April 1993, placed on the rails and very soon set off for Cultra in the charge of NIR driver Jimmy Donnelly, ex GNR himself. Above the front of the vehicle, as it passes Scarva, can be seen a famous landmark, “Old Bill” alias the Scarva Man. Lack of topiary in the off-season has left his features somewhat indistinct. (I.C. Pryce)***

Another Manorhamilton man who spent a good deal of his working life with the Sligo-Leitrim was Bernie Gilgunn from Ramoney. Bernie joined the Company in 1943 and worked with them until the very end.

“I went in as an engine cleaner in 1943. The money I was getting, £2-10s-0d a week, was great compared to the £12 a year I was getting with a farmer,” Bernie recalls.

He was later graded as a fireman, a heavy job which meant that he had to be at work very early.

“The latest I would have to be in at was 7am and I had to cycle four miles from my home in Ballyboy. I would have to be in at midnight if I had to light the engine for a cattle special, or at 3:30am because the train had to leave Manorhamilton backwards for Collooney to pick up a special of cattle at 5am for Enniskillen to make the Great Northern to make the cattle ship in Belfast,” said Bernie.

Halloween was a very busy time for cattle special as farmers sold some of their stock before the winter. There would be three or four specials during that time which meant that it was a very busy time for the Manorhamilton fireman. Each wagon would bring 12 cattle and they would be organised by a man called Denning, remembers Bernie.

There was also a market train to Sligo every Saturday, leaving Manorhamilton at 11am and returning at 7pm. The return fare was just one shilling and people would be picked up and let off along the way.

“My job was to keep the steam up and keep the fire going. I had to shovel coal on to the engine, it took three tons to travel from Manorhamilton to Enniskillen, and to shovel it into the fire on the journey. It was brutal work. I had to oil the engine and keep the boxes from heating up. I had to look out for signals and gate houses and to see that the guards were giving the right of way,” Bernie commented.

The Big Snow of 1947 proved to be something of a windfall for Bernie Gilgunn. During that time he was on call for three whole days and nights and the money he received “was the best pay I ever got.”

“We were bringing men to clear the roads between Manorhamilton and Dromahair, because it was far easier to use the railway than the roads during that time. We also brought bread from Coyle’s bakery and butter from the creamery to the people all along the way and I remember people coming and carrying it away. We did the same as far as Glenfarne,” Bernie told the Observer.

As a fireman, Bernie was very much in tune with how the engines ran and his favourite was Lough Gill.

“We never had any bother with her. Some of the other engines were very severe on fuel, a lot had to do with the way they were set. The Sir Henry was very good too, but I never liked the Lough Erne. It was hard on fuel and it was very hard to keep steam up at all,” he said. “I had a wonderful relationship with everybody who worked with the Company. I enjoyed all my time there. I was well able to work and I was never a day out sick. My job involved a lot of night work, firing engines on my own which could be lonely, but I enjoyed it all,” said Bernie.

As a fireman, Bernie got to know all the drivers and among them were Joe Dunbar, Jack Connolly, Mick Kearns, Tommy McTernan, Tommy Marron, Gerry O’Connor, Jimmy Keaney, Patrick Hugh Keaney, Tommy McGilloway, Paddy Nevin and Paddy McTernan.

Others who worked there in Bernie’s time were Jimmy Peckinham, a storeman, John Paddy Rooney and Joe McTernan, examiners, Padraig McKeown, a bus driver, John Ward, Head Porter in Dromahair, John Roche, a lorry driver Peter Kilmurry, a mechanic in the bus depot, Pat Kearney and Georgie Flynn in the forge. “The closure was the downfall of Manorhamilton. Business went down in the town. It was one of the best places in the North-West for drinking porter. Two horses and carts, driven by Bernie Summers and Ernie Moore were kept going bringing porter from the station. The last day was certainly sad. There was a big crowd out to see the last train. You would almost think they were celebrating, but there was nothing to celebrate,” Bernie commented.

*FOOTNOTE: Mr. Gilgunn must surely have been misquoted in relation to the engines’ use of coal – 3 tons for barely 25 miles would be incredibly high and they only carried 2 tons in any case. However, York Road loco men and, indeed, some RPSI members, would endorse his remarks about Lough Erne’s reluctance to steam.*

*Having put the SL&NCR out of business, the Ulster Transport Authority then bought Lough Melvin and Lough Erne and gave them the numbers 26 and 27. Both survived into NIR ownership although Lough Melvin had been withdrawn by then. Lough Erne was purchased privately for preservation, subsequently passing into RPSI hands through the generosity of a consortium of members and can be seen at Whitehead, albeit in a rather dilapidated condition. - Ed.*

## **A TENDER MOMENT OR A MOVING EXPERIENCE**

**Charles Meredith**

Long-standing members of the Society will recall that, many years ago, we acquired from CIÉ two spare high-sided Great Northern tenders. These were duly hauled to Mullingar, where they stood, forlorn, awaiting a decision as to their long-term use. One was tentatively earmarked to run as a larger tender (in suitably re-designed form) with No.184, whose own tender is too small for long-distance running. The other came into its own with the riding problems attributed to the large GNR tender (ex

loco 207) which the Society acquired with No.85. Rather than test NIR track condition any further with the large tender, a decision was taken to move one of the spares from Mullingar to Whitehead by road and rebuild it there to run with No.85.

The tender chosen was GNR No.73, one of a batch of ten tenders built by Beyer Peacock of Manchester in 1948 to run with the U class passenger locomotives Nos. 201 to 205 and the UG class goods locomotives Nos. 145 to 149. Three more similar tenders were supplied by Beyer Peacock in 1955, followed by a final four in 1956. The other tender owned by the Society is No.43, of the 1956 batch. All the others have long since gone to their reward, save one which is paired with No.131 at Mallow.

All the tenders carried 6 tons of coal and 2,500 gallons of water.

To move the tender from Mullingar, a vast amount of logistical preparation was necessary. For a start, the two GNR tenders were situated in the dead-end siding extending towards Dublin from the canal-side road of Mullingar Shed. In addition, not only was the tender we wanted locked in behind tender No.43, but both tenders were locked in by coaches 1916 and 1463 undergoing restoration in the Shed itself.

Having considered the many difficulties, we decided against moving the tender to Wallace's Yard, at the Dublin end of Mullingar Station, for low-loading, because of the problems of getting an IR diesel loco through our Shed and then shunting a vehicle that had hardly turned a wheel in thirty years over the Galway and Sligo running lines - a derailment in Mullingar Station would hardly endear us to the Railway Company! This left us with the problem of moving two coaches and two tenders without using an IR diesel loco; the final solution was to bring the small 4-wheeled Planet diesel from Whitehead to Mullingar on the low-loader, which would then take away both the tender and the Planet on its homeward trip. To avoid using any running lines, we proposed that the operation should take place at Newbrook Yard, where the old Bretland Gantry is once more in operation in connection with the upgrading of the Sligo line.

The next task was to persuade Irish Rail that what we proposed was both feasible and safe and to procure their approval. In the event, the Irish Rail support was immense; subject to the appropriate staff supervising the job, permission was given and the job was fixed for Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> August 1993.

The low-loader was despatched from Whitehead, with the Planet locomotive, on Friday 27<sup>th</sup>, with an expected time of arrival at Mullingar at 10am on Saturday. The Mullingar Gang set off from Dublin early on the Saturday, which fortunately was a lovely day. Come 10am there was no sign of the low-loader. Come 11am still no sign! At this stage apologies seemed called for to the considerable number of Irish Rail personnel assembled to oversee the operation. The Assistant Locomotive Officer's words were hardly delivered when, lo and behold, the phone rang in the Gantry Office - P.N. O'Brien was on his mobile phone, relaying a message from the Locomotive Officer, Peter Scott, to the effect that driving through Newry in the early hours of Saturday morning what should they find in the Newry main street but one low-loader bearing one Planet locomotive, with no sign of obvious life in or about either of them. Peter Scott was hanging on in Newry to see what was what. Message ended.

At this stage the Mullingar Gang realised that, if and when the low-loader and the Planet arrived, there could not be enough time to carry out all the shunting necessary to move all vehicles necessary to release tender No.73, and replace all those not travelling to Whitehead. This was the time for all good men to come to the aid of the party! Fortunately, the Mullingar Gang consisted, amazingly, of about eleven stalwart souls; with assistance from Tom Geraghty, IR Operations representative, and Tony Martin, IR Mullingar Traffic Inspector - strong men both - the following human locomotion ensued:

1. Coach 1916 from Shed, towards Galway, and reverse into Fire Station side road.

2. Coach 1463 from Shed, towards Galway, and reversed down against 1916.
3. Tender 43 right through Shed, towards Galway, and reverse into a siding between the Shed and the Galway running line.
4. Tender 73 right through Shed, towards Galway as far as Newbrook Yard.

At this point the low-loader and the Planet diesel arrived. The Locomotive Officer was unimpressed. Despite the prostrated figures in evidence all around him, all he could manage was, "If you were going to move the tender yourselves, why on earth did you let me bring this so and so diesel down here?" - or words to that effect!

However, the so and so diesel did its bit. Duly unloaded and re-railed for the first time in its life on to Irish Rail metals, Planet restored all the other vehicles to their intended resting places and even retrieved No.184's small tender from its position behind where the GN tenders had lain, and moved it to the more accessible Galway end of the shed, where it will not be locked in by other stock.

Finally, the Planet pushed tender 73 on to the low-loader and loaded itself; the ramps and temporary track work were dismantled and put on the low-loader, and away they all went. The Mullingar Gang, while feeling pains in places they didn't know existed, were not so overcome that they couldn't recalculate the Planet's horsepower in the appropriate amount of Mullingar Gang-power.

Tender 73 is now safely at Whitehead and the Locomotive Officer has already made great progress towards its refurbishment as a suitable travelling companion to No.85.

The Society's gratitude to the Irish Rail personnel who assisted is immense and particular thanks must be expressed to Joe Walsh, Manager Operations; Neil O'Donoghue, PW; Michael Anderson, RS&C; Liam Maher, Athlone Area Management; Tom Geraghty, Operations; Frank Killian, Locomotive Inspector, Mullingar; Frank Harkin, Station Master, Mullingar; Tony Martin, Traffic Inspector, Mullingar; Joe Stenson and Kevin Martin, Gantry Yard, Mullingar; and Christy McGovern, driver, Mullingar.

Our thanks to you all!

## **THE IRISH SEA DAM**

**James Scannell**

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Readers of the last issue of Five Foot Three who found the idea of the Submerged Tubular Bridge proposal to link Ireland with Scotland, as outlined in my letter, somewhat amazing should now consider an earlier proposal which, although planned, never reached the stage of implementation.

Schemes to connect Ireland and Britain by direct means abounded in the 1860s and one set of planners discovered that Torr Head in County Antrim was only 13 miles from the foreland of the Mull of Kintyre in south-west Scotland. Their idea was to construct a massive dam across the Irish Sea between these points, 300 feet wide and having a maximum depth of 400 feet. The project went as far as the survey stage, after which it came unstuck as there were doubts and concerns about the construction process as well as the final cost which allowed for the use of convict labour.

The idea of a massive dam being constructed to close off the northern end of the Irish Sea is simply mind-boggling and the proposals even allowed for the enlargement of the Crinan Canal to allow vessels to enter the North Sea from the Irish Sea without first having to circumnavigate Ireland. It appears that the intention was that traffic to and from the North Sea would use the enlarged Crinan Canal to gain access to Lock Linnhe, Loch Lochy and, via the Caledonian Canal and Loch Ness, to the Moray Firth.

Nowhere in the proposals is there any indication of how the disparity between the Irish track gauge of 5' 3" and the British one of 4' 8½" was to be dealt with in order to make rail connections possible. Nor is there any mention of an Environment Impact Statement which is an essential part of the present day

planning process.

All these schemes relied heavily on Government aid and it appears that in the 1880s, while the interest was there, Government was not prepared to finance this or some of the other schemes that were being promoted at the same time. This lack of essential Government aid meant that this project, idealistic as it was, never got off the drawing board.

*[Suggested solution to gauge problem with tongue in Editorial cheek: Rolling stock, other than locos, to be fitted with wheels free to rotate on axles and held to gauge by cotters. At each side of the Irish Sea, pits of suitable length carrying tramway-type rails with gauge tapering to appropriate dimension. Trains stop short of the pit, loco is released and semi-skilled fitters in pit remove cotters prior to train being winched over the tapering section where the wheels are guided to gauge before replacement of the cotters. The braking system might present problems but once you've upstaged Moses the rest should be child's play!]*

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## BOOK REVIEWS

Michael McMahon

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**The Railway Town - The Story Of The GNR(I) Works, Dundalk. Jack McQuillan, Dundalgan Press, Dundalk £18.95.**

When I heard of this book I was very excited - about the Works!!, but my excitement unfortunately soon ended.

I for one did not at first take too well to the strange feel of the book, long dissertations about world railways and the constant American theme don't sit too well with Dundalk.

I was disappointed about the lack of "Great Northern" incidents, events and no doubt jovial goings on within the walls, instead there seem to be endless long discussions about trade union disputes and strikes. Unfortunately an element of religion creeps in just too often.

I feel that the book is well printed and produced, there are some nice photographs, particularly of people and plans, but the book is a missed opportunity.

**The Irish Narrow Gauge - A Pictorial History Vols. I & II - Tom Ferris, Blackstaff Press, Belfast £15.99 (each).**

Two more volumes from the Ferris stable - and worth waiting for - the first volume covers Cork to Cavan taking each narrow gauge system in turn and describing it with pieces of text and maps then launching into photographs with good meaty captions.

The maps are a bit tedious, whilst I appreciate the need to have them standardised, they are too numerous or too big, and hard to follow.

I presume these two works will tidy up for some time the narrow gauge picture - we by now, have had enough of the 'general' titles, David and Charles and the numerous P.B. Whitehouse books, let's get on with some specific histories on the standard gauge lines.

Overall two good books - essential for library building and I personally am looking forward to the next edition from Tom Ferris.

**Irish Railway News Vol. I, No.1 (10/93).**

At last a publication covering the current Irish Railway scene that is not afraid to speak the truth. The general theme is very supportive of both railway companies and promotes thought in the reader's mind for development potential as well as current news.

Major projects are discussed and progress is reported on with very up to date coverage including signalling, track renewals, bridge and station improvements, etc.

Specific incidents are reported in good detail as well as busy traffic schedules, often giving useful background information with regard to delays or engine failures, etc.

I would perhaps consider this as a modern day “Irish Railfans News” - a very useful diary of events with excellent commentary and certainly very educational about the current Irish railway scene.



*This photograph was recently published in the Belfast Telegraph and caught the eye of former NIR Chairman Sir Myles Humphries, who realised that the two small boys getting a close-up view of No.53 were none other than his two sons, Ian and Mark, destined to become the fourth generation of the family to work on the railways. Ian now works with British Rail in Manchester while Mark is a station supervisor on NIR. The railwayman furthest from the engine looks like Jim Blair, latterly Inspector at Larne Harbour.*

*No.53 was all dressed up for her own funeral as she was stored in the old shed at Carrickfergus later that day and only re-emerged some months later to be cut up. (Belfast Telegraph)*

**Taking The Train - A tribute to Britain's Great Railway Photographers - M.H.C. Baker, P. Stephens Ltd., £19.99.**

A fine quality photographic volume which has the work of 32 photographers along with a brief introduction of their work.

Several major Irish photographers are featured - John Kennedy, Rex Murphy and David Murray - other photographers H.C. Casserley and P.B. Whitehouse have Irish photographs included.

Reproduction is of a very high standard, the printing is very good with excellent detail. The captions are lengthy and explain the photographs well.



Whilst the book is mostly of British photographs the Irish content makes it a worthwhile addition to the library.

**Video - New Horizons - Ireland (58 minutes), Tele-Rail Ltd., Carnforth, Lancashire.**

This video is a complementary and very welcome addition to the previously reviewed Irish Rail Freight Today from the same company. New Horizons is a series of tapes introducing the viewer to a particular country's railways, and if the accuracy of other editions is the same as the Irish version then they will be excellent too!

Picture quality is brilliant with very good detailed commentary explaining the current scene and a bit of background history.

Each line is covered in turn, both freight and passenger, also the RPSI features extensively particularly with No.461 on the "Grainne Uaile" railtour.

My recommendation is go out and get one, pour yourself a relaxing drink, unplug the phone and watch!

## **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

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Dear Sir,

In the Sean Rí railtour brochure, mention was made of the rail loop between Killinick and Felthouse Junction, south of Wexford Town. The triangle was only in use for six years, 1906 to 1912.

My mother, who came from Wexford, explained many years ago, the closure was the result of a bad accident.

Can any member confirm this, or tell the tale of what must be the shortest used part of an Irish mainline.

Yours sincerely,

*Christopher Lavery*

Ballyvalley, Killaloe, Co. Clare

*[Although I understand an accident did occur on the Felthouse-Killinick loop, it does not appear to have been particularly serious or to have led to the closure. Direct Dublin-Waterford routes via Macmine and Palace East or via Maryborough and Kilkenny were already available and the link from Felthouse simply appears to have been surplus to requirements. However, others with more knowledge of the subject may be able to add to or correct this. - Ed.]*



*No.171 leaves Castlerock for Portrush with the return working of the “mini-flyer” on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 1993.  
(C.P. Friel).*



*No.171 was made to look small when posing briefly beside No.800 “Maedhbh” while returning light engine to Belfast during the movement of Transport Museum stock on 13<sup>th</sup> February 1993. (C.P. Friel).*