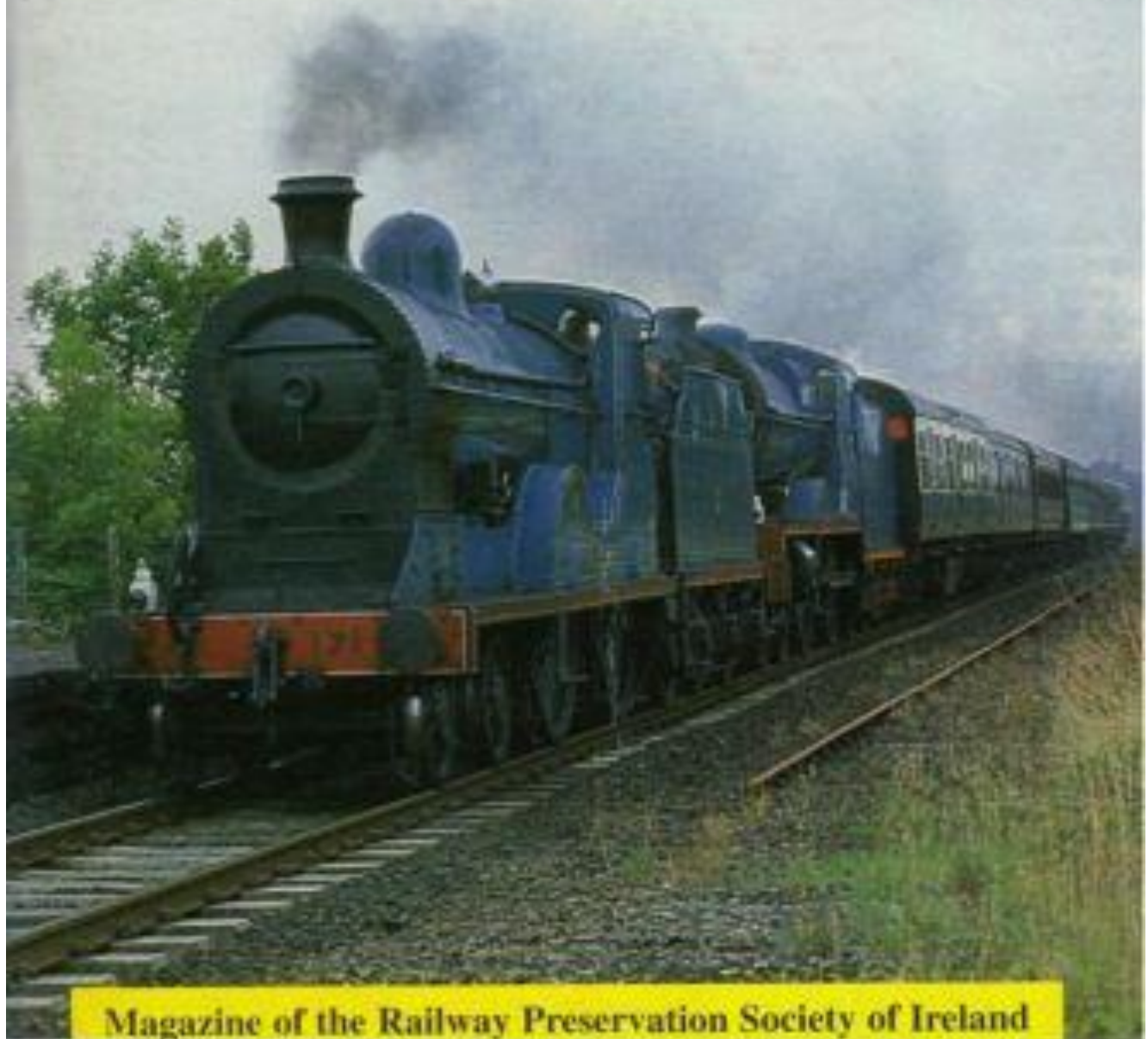


# FIVE FOOT THREE



Magazine of the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland

# FIVE FOOT THREE

## No.41

### Winter 1994/95

Editor: Nelson Poots

#### CONTENTS

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Editorial	
Chairman's Column	Sullivan Boomer
News From Council	Paul McCann
Northern Operations	Heather Boomer
Locomotive Report	Peter Scott
Carriage Report	Mark Kennedy
Whitehead Site Report	Dermot Mackie
Progress Of Rail In The NI Transport System	Denis Grimshaw
R.N. Clements, 1910-1994	Conrad Natzio
Comments And Recollections	Laurence Liddle
The Trouble With Third Class Passengers	James Scannell
Twenty Five Years On	J.A. Cassells
Cookstown Junction 1934	J.H. Fitzsimmons
More Tender Moments?	Conrad Natzio
The Tourist Trophy Motor Race	W. Robb
Uplifting Material	
Book And Video Reviews	Michael McMahon
Letters To The Editor	

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

*Cover Photograph: On 16<sup>th</sup> September 1994, No.85 had her first main outing after overhaul and was piloted by No.171. No.85 was deliberately not worked hard which led to some pleasing sounds being produced by No.171. Here the pair pass the closed halt at Kellswater - GN purists will not be pleased by the headlamp arrangement! (N. Poots)*

## EDITORIAL

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Another year, another Five Foot Three and what to say that hasn't already been said by someone else?

In recent times, unknown to the Editor, the magazine was entered in a competition whereby it was submitted to the scrutiny of editors, etc., of the national railway press. It was placed 11<sup>th</sup> out of 20, thereby putting paid to any chance of a swollen editorial head which might have been brought on by kind remarks from readers!

One of the panel's criticisms was that the pages did not have a 2-column layout and that some were comprised solely of text. One would like to feel that the majority of our readers are sufficiently literate - and interested - to be able to cope with a few A5 pages with no pictures.



*On 4<sup>th</sup> December, the first day of the Santa trains, the new Lagan road bridge and its connecting roads were substantially complete but not open to traffic. Having got a shot of the empty stock train at Greenisland, a posse of car-borne photographers skidded to a halt on one of the link roads just in time to catch the first ever steam working over the Dargan Bridge. (N. Poots)*

Another criticism was that the magazine was too historical in content and that more prominence should be given to "exciting developments". Since, unlike most cross-channel societies, we do not operate our own line we are unable to report that we have restored railway buildings or extended our track. Our principal achievements have been in the field of restoring rolling stock, especially locomotives, so perhaps we should have been blowing our corporate trumpet more loudly in relation to such things as the restoration of No.461 from a decorated husk to a competent main line engine. This is, of course, far from unique in preservation circles but maybe we should have made more of the fact that it was done entirely 'in-house' or that it was only one of four locomotives to receive reconstructed tubeplates

and/or flanged firebox plates, something which most other groups contract out at a cost of tens of thousands of pounds.

The current editorial policy is an attempt to balance departmental reports - which ought to include notable achievements - with historical items assumed to be of interest to those who would like to know what went on on the railways before preservation, without delving too deeply into the minutiae of locomotive performance or the number and type of rivets on a particular vehicle. It can truthfully be said that the only adverse reaction to date was in relation to a somewhat intemperately phrased letter published in a previous issue.

Anyone who witnessed the railway butchery of the 1950s and 1960s cannot fail to be heartened by current happenings on Northern Ireland Railways. Here indeed we have exciting developments, as described in the article by Denis Grimshaw, General Manager of NIR Operations. Those with longer memories, or who have read Mac Arnold's books, will be aware of what an effective railway the BCDR was and Mr Robb's article in this issue illustrates the lengths to which the railway companies would go to move trains. What a pity that the current population trends could not have been foreseen in 1950 when the Donaghadee branch was closed.

The state of the weather would not normally spring to mind as an editorial problem until one starts to seek photographs of main line operations. Over the last couple of years photographers have been tempted to sell their cameras since the majority of steam outings have been attended by foul weather. Hopefully, the gloom was sufficiently penetrated to enable us to illustrate something of what the Society has been up to in the past year. Enjoy your read - historical or otherwise.



*In typical "steam weather" No.171 and No.461 cross Lough Atalia, departing from Galway on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1994. (C.P. Friel)*

## **CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN**

**Sullivan Boomer**

Every year at the promptings of our Editor I sit down about the beginning of November to write my review of the year. It is perhaps a measure of the activity this year that I write this column between Christmas and the New Year! For the Society 1994 has been a mixture of success and adversity, but I

believe that we have, by and large, triumphed.

Our biggest problem this year has been the availability of coaching stock for our Dublin operations, with vehicles being worked from Whitehead again during the year to cover the shortfall in Dublin-based vehicles. The 'Green Set', as the laminates have been known to both our working members and Irish Rail, are now in need of major repair and reconstruction, and the Council has reluctantly been forced to conclude that for several of these vehicles repair would be uneconomic. As a stop-gap measure two Park Royal vehicles have been acquired and pressed into service with basic repairs carried out just before Christmas. To ease the shortfall at Whitehead one laminate received emergency repairs during the summer and has been running to Portrush, Derry and on the Santa trains. It now requires further attention, and may well be replaced by NCC side corridor 243, if the Treasurer can find sufficient funds to complete her restoration. Mullingar will hopefully produce Brake coach 1916 within the next couple of months, allowing NCC 91 to return to Whitehead for a change of bogies, and to re-enter traffic on the Whitehead set. A change in NIR rules requires additional brake coaches on the train, and a new RPSI Code of Practice on train consists dictates that we must have additional brake carriages.

I refer to our Code of Practice. This year has seen the Society move substantially forward in the unglamorous but necessary role of putting things down on paper as a "set of rules". I said last year that we had just about completed the Rule Book for Operating Staff. This is now being issued along with Standard Operating Procedures for various locomotives and other equipment, but the formalising of Society maintenance records has been going on apace. None of us want to be bureaucrats, but the laws on health and safety are always tightening, and the Society is trying hard to keep ahead in a proper and professional manner.

I have not yet had time to analyse our figures for the past year, but it looks at first glance as if our passenger numbers are again up on the previous year. Certainly the Belfast Santa trains, 10 in all, were fully booked, with not enough space to swing the proverbial cat, and I am told that the Dublin trains were the same. These are profitable operations for the Society, being relatively cheap to run yet producing a substantial income. Long-haul runs this year were also, for the most part, well filled or booked out, and the performance of our operations have been very satisfying for all concerned. No.85 also made her debut this year, and apart from one or two minor things which needed attention, has performed extremely well. I may add, as one of those who undertakes footplate duty, that her new tender is a joy, being one of our best riding tenders. Well done the Locomotive Department.

Financially, we have shown a surplus which I am told more than compensates for last year's deficit. The accounting of any charity is always confusing, as they should always be showing a deficit (in theory), but it is encouraging to note that we have been able to keep a reasonably tight control over our finances this year. The benefit of computerising our accounts has been a quicker and more accurate assessment of our financial position each month, which in turn has allowed department heads to regulate their expenditure. Some fine-tuning of the system has been carried out for the current year.

Others will, no doubt, give more details of various activities undertaken, but with the opening of the Cross Harbour Link (and much that has risen from this) we now have a totally 'joined-up' railway system which we can traverse easily. Great Victoria Street Station will open next September, the new "Enterprise" trains will arrive in 1996, and if the Council's plans work out right we could see the Society re-introducing its "Steam Enterprise" trains by the autumn of 1996. Am I looking too far ahead? Hardly. The 1995 programme is virtually complete, and the first ideas for 1996 are already under discussion. Some Council members are even looking towards the Millennium! We are planning with confidence for a future of steam haulage throughout this island. It's the only way!

Following last year's restructuring of the Council, the months leading up to, and immediately following, the 1994 Annual General Meeting saw the Council giving a great deal of thought to the organisation of Society sub-committees, and to the eligibility, election and accountability of those serving on them. The outcome was a Terms Of Reference document which was used as a basis for this year's Operations sub-committee appointments. Our new Operating Rules and Regulations document has now also been issued and all those in the operating team should have received, or have access to, a copy.

The editing and layout of the members' News-Letter still falls on the Secretary and this year more control was exercised over the layout as a new computer and printer were obtained during the year. Copy now goes to our printers in camera-ready format for duplication, so any grammatical or spelling errors are now my responsibility, as well as the content.



*No.461 arrives at Athenry after the trip down the former Waterford Limerick & Western line to Ennis, 15<sup>th</sup> May 1994. (C.P. Friel)*

Unfortunately, the second phase of the European Regional Development Fund grant aid, which we were expecting news of in the spring of 1994, has not yet materialised. Seemingly, we will not be advised of the outcome until mid-1995, with any grants following later in the year. Accordingly, your Treasurer has had a hard year at Council ensuring that the spending departments adhere to a budget at least 75% less than they have been used to over the past few years. The time has not been wasted, however, as those projects we had proposed for funding have been refined and further prioritised for

time when funds do become available.

Our second AGM in Dublin, chaired by Dr Garret FitzGerald, was well attended and deemed a success by those who were there. One wonders whether the meetings in Dublin still have a novelty value in attracting members, as recent meetings in Belfast have had less than half the numbers of their southern counterparts, and that despite a more numerous Society population in the Belfast area. We are hoping to hold the 1995 AGM in Whitehead and, if a success, this will become the norm for northern meetings as direct access by rail is now available from all over the country.

Hopefully, those who come to Whitehead for the AGM will meet our new Vice-President, Sir Myles Humphreys. Sir Myles was invited to become a patron of the Society in October and kindly accepted the post. He has had plenty of railway experience, with long service on the boards of Northern Ireland Railways and the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company.



*No.461 on the Greystones Shuttle on 11<sup>th</sup> September 1994. (Irish Times)*

With the increased emphasis on health & safety and rules & regulations, both the railway companies are taking a greater interest in how the Society conducts its business, especially in the area of carriage restoration and maintenance standards. For instance, the Greystones Shuttles in September had to use mostly hired stock from Iarnród Éireann as a number of carriages from our southern stock failed a rigorous inspection. This is in no way a criticism of either IÉ or the Society but more a reflection on the modern way of doing things. What it has done is to concentrate the minds of those in the Society as to what is required in the future to ensure the comfort and safety of our travelling public.

The situation with carriages was not helped by the fact that 1994 saw us at our worst ever for carriage availability, several vehicles having been sent south earlier in the year to strengthen the Dublin set, thus

depleting the Whitehead set and still not ensuring a full complement of coaches in Dublin. The complaints from both Operations Officers could be heard far and wide!!

1994 saw the usual number of operations over the summer months, with a number of charters helping to add to the operating income. 1995 should see a slight change of emphasis in the Belfast area as the additional flexibility of the new Dargan bridge will be available.

During the year, David Humphries and Gavin Martin have been responsible for setting up a FAS (similar to ACE) scheme at Mullingar. Negotiations with CIÉ have resulted in additional accommodation being made available at the Mullingar site. There is the potential for employing up to 44 skilled tradesmen on carriage and wagon projects at very little cost to the Society. It is hoped to have the initial phases of the scheme up and running early in 1995.

Congratulations must go to Alan McRobert, who took time off from coach cleaning at Whitehead to produce and make available to the Society his video footage from the 1993 "Portrush Flyer".

The final membership figure for the year was 1,068, just 5 greater than last year. There is still a high number of new members each year, unfortunately balanced with an equal number of failures to renew, but at least the total is increasing, however slightly.

As usual I must thank Northern Ireland Railways and Iarnród Éireann for allowing us the use of their premises for our Council meetings. I believe this says a lot for the co-operation and mutual respect between our Society and the railway companies when we are granted the use of their board rooms.

Posts of Special Responsibility to the Secretary are: Charles Friel (Belfast Winter Meetings); Nelson Pools ("Five Foot Three" editor); John Creaner (legal adviser). My thanks to them and to all the members for supporting us through another year.

## **NORTHERN OPERATIONS**

**Heather Boomer**

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1994 for the first ever female Operations Officer has been quite a year, a shortage of rolling stock and of money, and a season that things seemed to go either wonderfully or were a complete disaster. The main reasons for my frustrations were mostly in the early part of the year when some new events were tried; the snow at Easter and the general apathy of Ulster folk to try something different, add to this my inexperience and over-enthusiasm; not an ideal combination but lessons have been learnt.

Then came the Lough Atalia Railtour and I am sure most of you are aware of what happened. To quote another, "When working with machinery as old as ours you never know what lies ahead, try as hard as we might to keep it going." Poor old No.171, I am sure she must have feelings as she has worked hard the rest of the year and done us proud. A word of thanks should go to No.461 for her sterling efforts to save the day!

All of this combined with a heavy schedule and having lost time it was difficult to get new paths so we ran late for the rest of the weekend. Monday of course had its own headaches but we did achieve the highlight of the day and travelled to Navan and we did make it back to Whitehead eventually. Having been known to be fond of a little lie in myself, any other sleepy heads among you will be pleased to know we have taken steps to overcome the Monday problem by planning a later departure from Connolly this year.

The "Hills of Donegal" that ran to Dundalk as an equipment changeover was a great success. It certainly beats moving empty stock but as a normal fare-paying run, well maybe the new Dargan Bridge will make it easier for us to return to the GNR.

1994 also saw the return of the Schools Days to Whitehead. For two days in early June the sounds of delighted children and teachers resounded around the site. The whole event was a complete success and



we intend to try again this year.

The Steam and Jazz night was as ever popular with those who travelled and were entertained by our live jazz band. This operation was yet another with little problems outside our control, but our handling of them greatly impressed our furthest travelled passenger from Australia. As some of you will know he is no stranger to the problems of all types of rail travel.



*The northbound leg of the railtour on 16<sup>th</sup> May 1994 provided opportunities to photograph some of the former GNR signal cabins, now made redundant by the extension of CTC. (C.P. Friel)*

Then we came to Newry 850, a brave venture by any standards. A week before the date the advanced bookings did not look at all healthy and as this was such an expensive operation I felt there was only one decision to make. We could not afford another mistake and this one could have cost us more than money. Had the whole thing been this year it could have been a very different story.

The Train Rides at Whitehead made a welcome return to the summer scene. With little publicity we managed to cover the cost of some very welcome crew training and having the site open to the public is good news for the Tourist Board and the like.

July and August brought the “Flyer” season round again and it gives me great pleasure to tell you we ran four successful trips, one more than last year. With some careful scheduling we even managed to run to time for the most part.

The year was rounded off with ten “Santa Specials”. Running from Belfast Central across the new bridge to Whitehead proved to be a winning combination with the public and the enthusiast alike. The youngest participants also seemed very well pleased with their visit from the gentleman in the red suit. The Santa runs, although a real nightmare to organise, were a wonderfully satisfying way to end the year.

On the whole we managed to get through the year, but if we want to continue getting better we must address a few items very seriously. Public image is everything. Without the train being safe, working and clean, including the loos, we will not be able to hold on to our market or ever hope to increase it, so

come on you folk out there surely there must be a few plumbers, joiners or people who can push a brush. It does not have to be a lifetime commitment, just a few weekends out of the year. Remember many hands make light work. Keep the locomotive and carriage departments happy and I will be happy too. I would also like to ask if anyone would be interested in helping me with some of the organisation, setting up the School Days, Train Rides, etc.

To finish I would like to say thank you to many people; the railway Companies and their staff all over Ireland who go out of their way to assist us; all the other companies and organisations without whose help things would be more difficult. To the Operations Committee without whom nothing would happen, and the Locomotive and Carriage departments who, when I put them under pressure, always come up with the goods. Thanks to the members who support us by travelling and especially the ones who turn up and work hard to make it happen. I owe a special vote of thanks to Alan McRobert and his minute band of helpers for managing to keep the train clean for us, and to Roy Forsythe and family for their unstinting support over the year.

Here's to a year when we can all work together to produce the product we really feel proud to market, and to leave us on a sure footing for the years to come.

## **LOCOMOTIVE REPORT**

**Peter Scott**

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### **No.3 "R.H. Smyth", 0-6-0 ST. In Traffic, Whitehead.**

"The Derry Engine" returned to its role as Whitehead shunter and train rides loco on 7<sup>th</sup> June, when it operated the "Schools Days". The locomotive has received major firebox repairs along with a new smokebox and refurbished saddle tank. It still needs a general mechanical overhaul. Thanks are due to some of our younger members without whose help the locomotive could not have been available this year. The opportunity has been taken to train these members to operate the locomotive, and partly with this end in view the "Sunday Train" was re-introduced for the month of July only.

### **No.4, 2-6-4T. Boiler Overhaul, Whitehead.**

"The tank engine" - as No.4 is somewhat unglamorously called - is undergoing extensive boiler refurbishment as time and funds permit. It should also receive attention to valves and pistons. With delays and question marks over further grant aid, it will be several years before this locomotive returns to traffic. To date the new outer firebox sides and door plate have been welded into place and riveting of the seams is progressing.

### **No.85, 4-4-0 Compound. In Traffic, Whitehead.**

After major boiler repairs, the "Compound" returned to traffic on 9<sup>th</sup> April with the customary proving runs between Whitehead and Yorkgate. She was then programmed to assist with the North Atlantic Express to Derry, and in fact No.171 and No.85 double-headed the train throughout.

Following the Derry run, routine inspection revealed that one of the axlebox oiling pads had come apart and was allowing the spring frame to bear heavily on the journal. It was feared that the other three pads might be in the same condition, so there was no alternative but to dismantle and jack the locomotive sufficiently to remove the sponge boxes. This was a tedious and time consuming job and took up many man-hours which should have been spent on the overhaul of No.4 or No.171's tender. However, the time was not wasted since all the pads were indeed faulty and one driving journal was becoming noticeably scored. The pads were renewed and hopefully no ill effects will result.

No.85 is now operating with rebuilt tender No.73. This was originally a 2,500 gallon tender dating from 1948, and it differed from older GNR(I) tenders by having a hopper type coal bunker, roller bearings and a full bulkhead between locomotive and coal space containing lockers and fire iron tunnel. To rebuild this tender as near as possible to an authentic compound tender, it was necessary to remove

most of the modern features referred to above, enlarge the tank and revert to the traditional layout of bunker and tool boxes. The new arrangement has a water capacity of 3,100 gallons - not 3,500 gallons since there is no well between the frames. The only modern feature retained was the roller bearings. The large 4,000 gallon tender was cannibalised of bearings, springs, pipes, brake gear, etc., to fit out the new tender. It is gratifying to find that the new tender is very steady riding with none of the alarming bouncing typical of the large tender. It is also possible for the crew to see where they are going tender-first!



*NIR drivers Noel Playfair and George Gaw appear to be examining three GN locomotives at Whitehead shed! However, the photograph genuinely illustrates three different styles of GN tender, that on No.85 being the one recently rebuilt from a U class. Her former tender stands on the right, having donated various components to the rebuild. (C.P. Friel)*

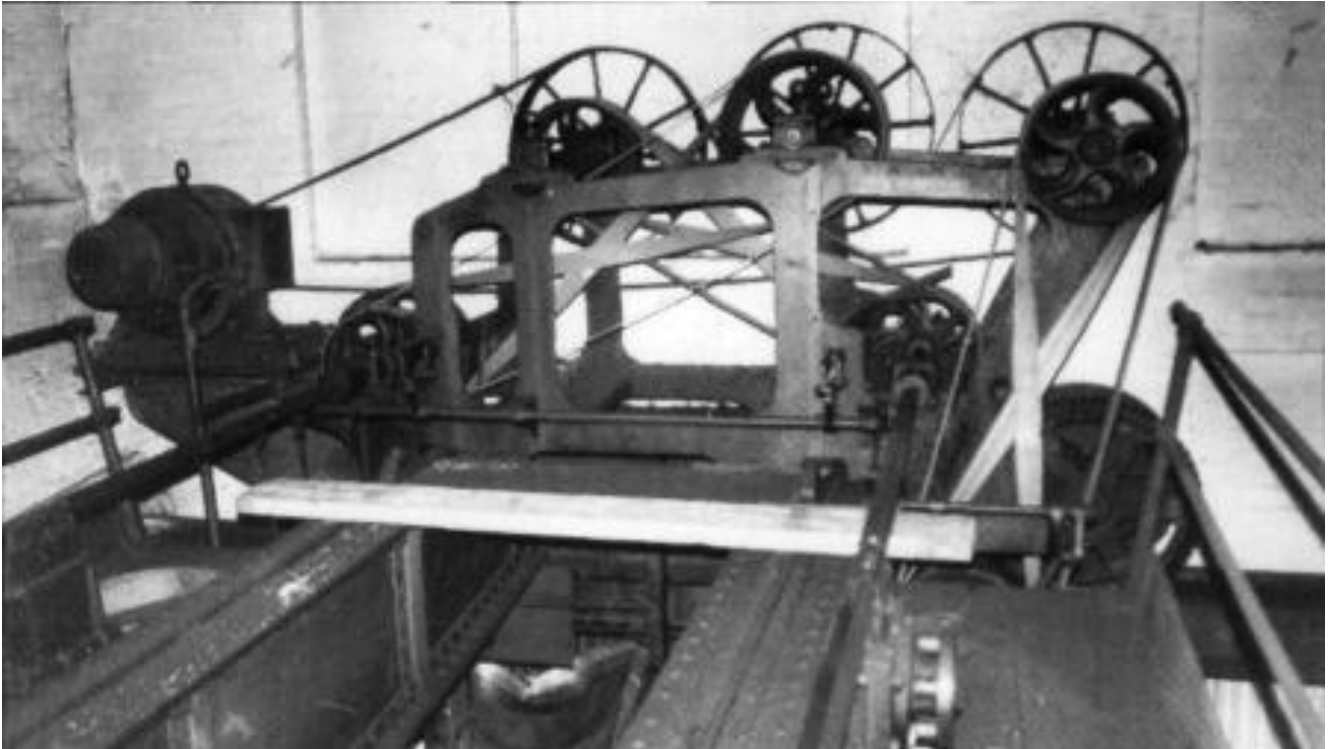
At the time of writing, No.85 has just completed the season of Santa trains between Belfast Central and Whitehead, and has thus the distinction of being the first steam locomotive over the new viaduct. The viaduct, incidentally, while doubtless being a significant and spectacular achievement was definitely not designed to be steam engine friendly. The sharp curve and 1:64 gradient from Lagan Junction over the Dargan Bridge caused some problems until the right way to tackle it was established. It should result in some interesting video. What a pity that Lord Dunleath, whose generosity and enthusiasm made all this possible, is not here to see it.

#### **No.171, 4-4-0. Tender refurbishment, ashpan and minor repairs. Whitehead.**

Having received new piston and valve rings, No.171 covered herself with glory by running a big end on the empty coaches working prior to last year's May tour. Hurried attempts to put the big end to rights were not immediately successful and it gave trouble during the Tour. I was pointedly asked why we cannot have reliable engines after three years of ERDF funding. The answer is quite simple - ERDF funding was to carry out certain specific jobs, e.g. to repair No.171's boiler or No.85's firebox. It is not

a magic wand to provide immunity against things that become worn out or damaged. Our running maintenance still relies almost entirely on volunteer effort and the magnitude of the problem is apparent when you consider that even the most ardent of volunteers has other commitments and can spare little more than **half a day per week!**

While No.171's motion certainly requires attention, the most immediate problem is the tender, the top section of which required complete renewal before it could be permitted to operate again. Our sub-contractors were re-engaged to do most of this work together with repairs to the tank floor. At the time of writing, the repairs are well advanced with the new coal rails riveted in place and the new deck plates ready for fitting.



*Dating from 1897, the crane in the former BCDR workshops awaits dismantling. The assembly shown here comprises no less than 7 belt drives and from it emerges a long shaft which, by devious means, drives the 'crab' which houses the actual lifting gear and which traverses the rails mounted on the main girders. The "Augean conditions" referred to by Peter Scott were the product of much grease and countless generations of birds! (C.P. Friel)*

#### **No.461, 2-6-0. In Traffic, Dublin.**

While No.171 caused annoyance on the Tour, No.461 excelled herself and most capably took the train on from Dublin to Whitehead. The only serious problem was unusual damage to firebars. This has been apparent on other engines as well and is being blamed on the use of Colombian coal. The characteristics of the Columbian coal are that it is clean and free steaming but burns away rapidly. During the Portrush trains, No.171 burned a 50/50 mixture of Columbian and Doe Lea and this proved satisfactory without ill effect.

As well as renewal of firebars, No.461 has an on-going problem with worn out firebox stays which require constant attention and will be renewed at the next boiler overhaul.

#### **Carlow Diesel, Ruston & Hornsby Diesel Mechanical Shunter. General overhaul, Whitehead.**

The planned overhaul of this locomotive was in fact completed with the main engine and donkey

engine rebuilt, the bodywork refurbished, wheels re-profiled and the brake equipment overhauled. We hoped that the gearbox was serviceable. Initial trials on 9<sup>th</sup> April seemed to vindicate this policy, and the engine moved slowly under its own power. But 'slowly' was the operative word. It soon became apparent that while first and second gear were working, third and top were not - there was no alternative but to remove the gearbox and strip it down. The problem was traced to a faulty oil distribution bearing, which was easily rectified, but the oil pump drive gears were found to be badly worn and will be renewed before reassembly. The main gears and clutches are in good order.

### **No.23, Planet Diesel Mechanical Shunter. In Traffic, Whitehead.**

This locomotive has also suffered gearbox troubles. These came to a head when the main input shaft from the clutch broke off in a terminal manner. The gearbox was dismantled and found to be in awful condition, with second gear completely stripped and other gears badly worn. Renewal of all worn components would be beyond our means, so the minimum of repairs were carried out - the locomotive is now back in traffic on a restricted basis.

### **Locomotive Workshop**

While grant aid for this recedes even further, the necessity for improved facilities becomes more pressing. Design simplifications and phased construction are being investigated. On a more practical note, the overhead crane together with beams and columns has been recovered from the now closed Central Service Depot; my thanks are due to all who laboured in Augean conditions to dismantle the crane.

## **CARRIAGE REPORT**

**Mark Kennedy**

### **Northern Area**

The running fleet planned for 1995 is as follows:

GS&WR 1097, GS&WR 1142, NCC 68, NCC 241, UTA 87 (diner), GNR 9 (brake), NCC 411 (full brake).



*Peter Emmett replaces panelling on coach 1916 at Mullingar. (D. Humphries)*

CIE 1469 (laminated) may be kept in reserve. The remaining laminated carriages purchased as a temporary measure in the late 1980s are now being disposed of as they have reached the end of their useful lives (excepting CIE 1916 under restoration at Mullingar).

This clearout along with the disposal of GNR carriage (UTA 727) and GNR carriage (UTA 595 brake) goes some way to freeing up valuable storage space at depots and helps us to concentrate on the rest of the stock.

If we are to purchase a steel bodied rake of carriages in the future, then we will have to reconsider the future of some other vehicles currently owned by the RPSI. One possibility would be to consider offering vehicles of no operational use to other preservation societies.



*Another view of the interior of 1916. (D. Humphries)*

Assuming sufficient resources of finance and volunteer labour, other work planned for 1995 is as follows:

- (1) Laying a concrete floor in part of the new carriage shed at Whitehead.
- (2) Erecting permanent working platforms on the outer edges of the carriage shed.
- (3) Improving the organisation of spare parts storage inside covered wagons.
- (4) Continuing with the major restoration of NCC 243.
- (5) Covering out of traffic vehicles with tarpaulins.

In conclusion, I hope that 1995 will be one of consolidation of the vintage running sets.

## **Southern Area**

The Dublin based set is undergoing much transformation over the winter period. New additions include two CIÉ Park Royals. The third Park Royal has had much structural work carried out during the year, a repaint and the construction of a mini drinks bar and a mini tea bar.

Restoration of CIÉ 1916 (laminated brake) is still nearing completion at Mullingar - the sparse train service between Dublin and Mullingar at weekends being the main problem.

GNR 88 (diner) and GSR 1335 complete the Dublin set.

It is hoped that during the forthcoming year GSR 1327, currently lying at Mullingar, will be added to the set. Other possibilities include one of the Society's CIÉ diners 2421 or 2422.

The Society relies heavily on its volunteers to carry out all its restoration and maintenance work. If you would like to volunteer to help out at Whitehead, Dublin or Mullingar, then please inform Mark Kennedy.

Finally, a big thank you to our outgoing carriage officer Gavin Martin. Thanks also to Peter Emmett, Chas Meredith, Brian Gillen, Dave Humphries, Jim Bromfield, David Henderson, Thomas Charters, Stephen Glass, Sam Somerville, Alan McRobert and Gavin Maxwell and everyone who worked so hard to make 1994 successful. All the best for 1995.



*Coach 1142 under the sheer-legs for its bogie change on 21<sup>st</sup> May 1994. (D. Mackie)*

## **WHITEHEAD SITE REPORT**

**Dermot Mackie**

Site activities this year have gone from the depths to the heights. January was extremely wet and I found myself up to my armpits in cold water and oily mud unblocking the yard's drains in very chilly

weather - a sobering experience after the festive season. Later in the month the site squad had an excellent scrap drive - the coaling tractor and the JCB loaded a 20 foot container with useless metal which realised £300 for the Society. In February we moved the heavy lift motors and winding gear into the dry of the carriage shed and stripped them down. They were in remarkably good condition after 15-20 years in the elements. After a good scrub down, an oil change, greasing and an electrical test they were deemed ready for painting. Lifting onto the top of the sheer-legs took place on the 5<sup>th</sup> March, the same day as No.85's boiler was replaced in its frame.

There followed a long period when all the electrical control equipment for the heavy lift had to be replaced. The original fittings were lost or unsafe and a new system, complete with automatic fail safe braking, was designed from first principles and supplied by our member and electrician, Bob Collins. The two of us spent many Friday afternoons and Saturdays in April installing the system. Re-cabing of the sheer-leg pulleys and winding gear took place on a glorious sunny day later in the month with the indispensable help of the hand crane. Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May saw the culmination of many hours of hard work when the power supply was switched on and everything worked almost perfectly first time. An initial lift of one end of a brown van and then one end of 1142, enabling a crucial bogie change, were all successfully completed with the able help of Alan McRobert and Gavin Martin on 21<sup>st</sup> May. The sheer-legs have now become an accepted item at Whitehead and within weeks of commissioning had more than repaid their restoration costs in saved crane hire charges.



***Dermot Mackie and the two Trevors. Forget expensive exercise machines - come to Whitehead and have a work-out on the hand crane! (D. Mackie)***

June and July had the hard working Trevors (Wood and Mounstephen) and other members of the Wednesday night track squad moving 90 concrete sleepers from the platform.

This was only possible with the help of the JCB and the hand crane as each sleeper weighs at least a quarter of a ton! Late in August Thomas Charters, Stephen Glass, David Henderson and myself fabricated a new shelter for one of the heavy lift winding sets, using the one good example as a model.

Unfortunately, the gearbox of our hard working diesel shunter, No.23, fractured a drive shaft later in the month but the whole box was easily removed with one of the heavy lifts and then dragged indoors



for major repairs.

Another scrap drive was organised on 22<sup>nd</sup> October but rain stopped play at about 3pm, with a wet and very bedraggled site squad going home early! November was a hectic month with everybody helping Peter Scott with the dismantling, removal and offloading of the travelling crane from CSD in Belfast. I said at the beginning that this year was one of extremes.

Well, we ended the year on a high note when we lifted the two shelters for the heavy lift winding gear into place. This feat required a temporary 20 foot rail extension to the hand crane and a good head for heights from David Henderson and myself. You could say it was the Whitehead equivalent of putting the fairy on top of the Christmas tree - just in time for Santa Train rides!

Apart from those mentioned above, I would also like to thank John, Tim and Philip Lockett, Craig Mowbray, Drew Wood, Albert Sage, Johnny Glendinning and a new recruit Bob Davison. Without everybody's help none of this year's work would have been possible and certainly it would not have been as enjoyable. Why not come down to Whitehead some time and share the crack? You will be most welcome.

## **PROGRESS OF RAIL IN THE NI TRANSPORT SYSTEM**

**Denis Grimshaw**

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Great changes are taking place on the Northern Ireland Railways rail network with the completion of a number of major development projects and other initiatives.

For the first time ever the Province will have a unified rail system following the completion of the Belfast Cross-Harbour Rail Link in October 1994 whilst a few months later, in June 1995, the reopening of Great Victoria Street Station will greatly improve the City Centre penetration of rail services for all commuter routes into Belfast.

Finally, July 1996 will see the completion of the major cross-border development programme to upgrade the important Belfast-Dublin InterCity rail service to the very highest European mainline standard.

Together with on-going action plans to ensure even higher standards of reliability, punctuality and cleanliness, these new developments will give Northern Ireland an excellent network of integrated train services linking all the rail-served destinations in Northern Ireland and on the line to Dublin.

### **Setting the Stage**

Following a recommendation made in the Benson Report as long ago as 1963, the Belfast Central Railway line linking the Bangor and Portadown lines was upgraded and reopened in 1976, with stations at Belfast Central and Botanic, and the resultant closure of Queen's Quay and Great Victoria Street Stations.

This was in line with Planning Policy at that time, which envisaged the City Centre area of Belfast being redeveloped more to the East of the City, in the High Street/Victoria Street/Oxford Street area, for which Central Station would be better placed than Great Victoria Street. The land occupied by the approach tracks to Great Victoria Street Station was also required for the Belfast Urban Motorway Project which was later abandoned.

Londonderry line services were integrated into Belfast Central in 1978, by diverting these trains at Antrim and using the existing line through Crumlin to join the Belfast-Dublin line at Lisburn.

The additional running time required by this route was partly offset by the ability to serve Central and Botanic Stations which were better placed for City Centre traffic than York Road Station.

Whilst the Belfast Central Railway effectively linked the Bangor and Portadown/Dublin routes and at some disadvantage in journey time, the Londonderry and Portrush routes, it left the Larne Line

virtually isolated at York Road.

Unlike the Bangor line between 1965 and 1976, this was not a complete isolation, however, as the original route from Bleach Green Junction (near Whiteabbey) to Antrim was retained for rolling-stock transfers (particularly to and from the main workshops at York Road), engineering works trains and occasional special passenger traffic.



***Cross-Harbour 1962! Great Northern RT 0-6-4T No.166 (UTA 24) on Donegall Quay, having made her way from Maysfields over the former Belfast Central railway via the Queen's Bridge tunnel. On the right is the Customs House. (I.C. Pryce)***

In the 1960s York Road Station was regarded as being in the City Centre, albeit on the edge of it. York Street was a busy thoroughfare, with continuous shops and business premises on both sides, plenty of pedestrians around and a very frequent and cheap bus service to and from the heart of the City.

Today, there is a kilometre of urban wasteland from the corner of Donegall Street to the station. To a pedestrian, this area is inhospitable, exposed and often dangerous, especially after dark.

Furthermore, with the closure of the old Co-op store and Gallaher's factory and the development of the Great Victoria Street area, the City Centre has effectively moved southwards - even further away from York Road.

The effect on the railway was to largely deter commuter traffic on the Larne line, despite the Rail-Link bus service and the fact that many of the suburban stations, such as Jordanstown, Greenisland, Clipperstown, Carrickfergus, Downshire and Whitehead are extremely well situated for the communities they serve.

Although Botanic Station has become a major traffic source for the Londonderry line and there is a significant volume of inter-line passenger business, such as Londonderry to Dublin or Antrim to Bangor, the addition of 20 minutes or more (depending on stopping pattern) of running time between Belfast and Antrim, Ballymena, Coleraine or Londonderry due to the diversion via Lisburn, puts the railway at a serious competitive disadvantage in relation to road traffic.



*More cross-harbour traffic, this time coming from York Road and featuring the NCC's V class, 0-6-0 No.13 with 'breadcart' tender, at the Glasgow shed on Donegall Quay in a setting typical of the 1960s. Above the sign can be seen one of the cranes which served the many ships then using the quay; one leg ran on a rail on the quayside and the other on a rail running along the peak of the shed roofs. Below the sign is a lightweight semi-trailer with Scammell coupling which was probably moved around by a three-wheeled Scammell Scarab tractor unit. Between the Morris Minor Traveller and the commercial houses of Victoria Street can be seen freight typical of the period. The wagon behind No.13 contains a manure spreader (JF Farm Machinery?). The rusty steel pole at the rear of the car is of the type used to carry the overhead wiring for Belfast's trolleybuses. The poles usually leaned outwards and many still survive, 30 years after the demise of the trolleybuses and No.13. (I.C. Pryce)*

### **Belfast Cross-Harbour Rail-Link**

The advantages and benefits of the York Road-Central Link Line (now generally referred to as the Cross-Harbour Link Line) are therefore obvious.

As with the Central Railway project, operational cost savings will be made, with a further reduction in terminal stations and maintenance facilities. The Larne line is now linked to Central and Botanic Stations and to the rest of the rail network and, with the recent Government approval of the upgrading of the Bleach Green-Antrim line, Londonderry line trains will be able to resume their original route via Templepatrick, saving at least 20 minutes per journey, whilst still serving Botanic and Central Stations.

Detailed market research and financial and economic analysis was undertaken to prove the viability of the Cross Harbour Rail Link project, which was finally recommended by Halcrow Fox and Steer Davies & Gleave as part of the Belfast Transportation Review Report and subsequently approved by Government at a cost of some £28 million, with 75% European Regional Development Fund assistance.



*Looking towards Donegall Quay from the east bank of the Lagan on 17<sup>th</sup> August 1993. On the left, work on the railway bridge is forging ahead while the piers for the road bridge are seen on the right. (D. Grimshaw)*

The link-line had actually been authorised in 1978, when it was to have double-track throughout, but was shelved in 1979 by the new Westminster administration, only a year or so before construction work was due to commence. The original completion date was to have been 1985.

To meet new and more stringent financial criteria, the revised project has had to include a single-track portion over the viaduct from Queen's Quay to Dock Street.

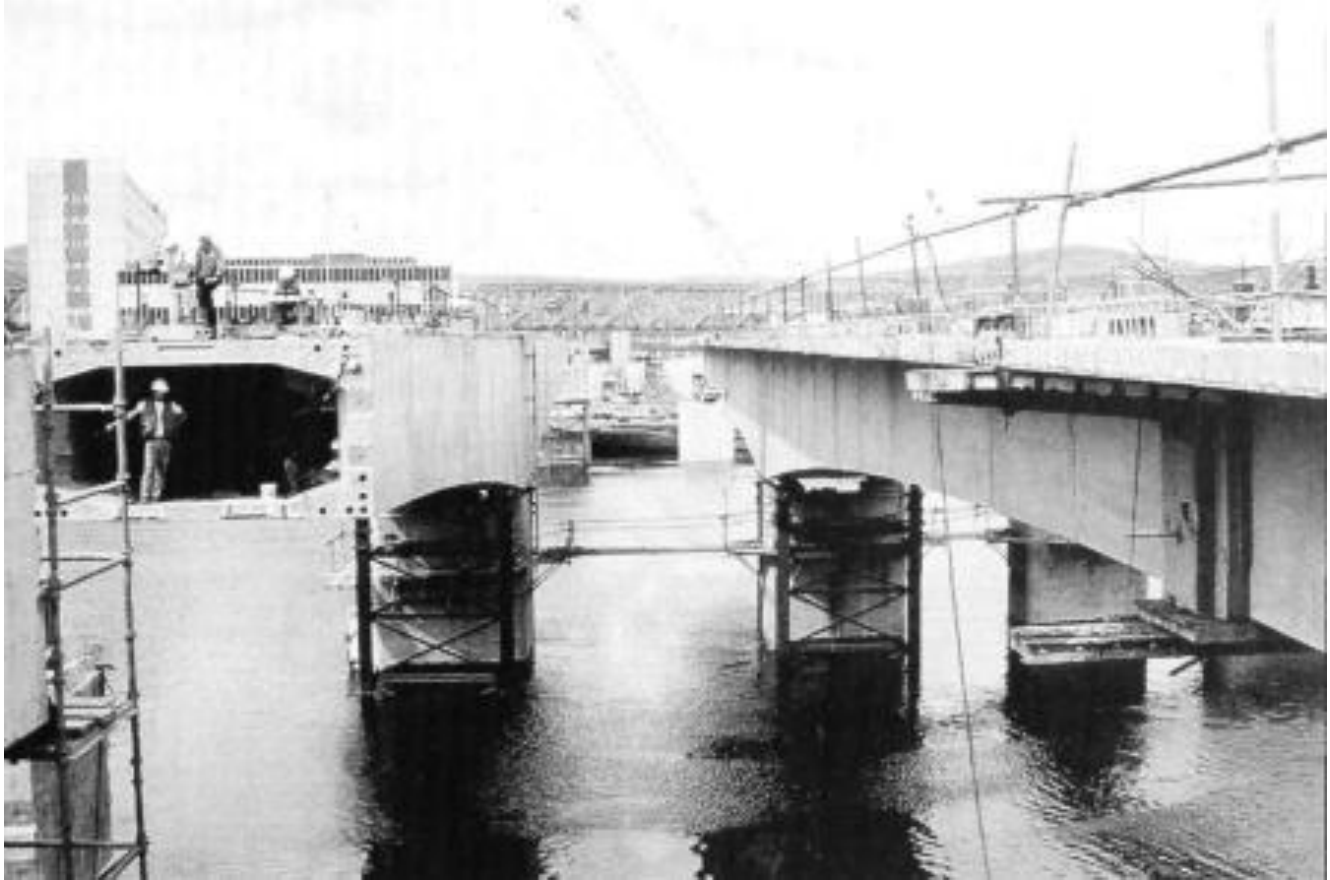
Fortunately, agreement was obtained for a crossing-loop to be built at the site of the future Donegall Quay station, halfway along the viaduct section, to facilitate train operation when the station becomes operational.

Although the station itself will not be built until finance is available, possibly around 1997, the crossing-loop has been brought into use with the link-line itself. The effect is to reduce the single-line portion to two short sections of about 400m each.

The new line is over two kilometres long - 1,424 metres of it on viaduct, the remaining section at each end on embankment. The southern end of the line starts right at the Bangor end of the existing Lagan

viaduct (before rebuilding better known to railway enthusiasts as the Shaky Bridge) at a point now known as Lagan Junction. The Cross-Harbour Rail Viaduct is the longest bridge in Ireland.

After crossing Bridge End and Middlepath Street the line curves sharply left and reduces to single-track, passing over the station concourse of the old Queen's Quay station, the river Lagan, Donegall Quay, Corporation Street, Nelson Street, the Westlink-M2 northbound slip road and Dock Street, before linking into the final embankment section - again double-track - at Yorkgate Station and then fitting tightly into the space between the M2 and the Midland Building, before reducing to ground-level to join the existing York Road-Larne line some 800 metres north of the former York Road station.



*Taken on the same day as the previous photograph, and again looking west, this view illustrates the pre-cast concrete sections being extended out from the piers. A temporary footbridge connecting the rail and road bridges may also be seen. (D. Grimshaw)*

Yorkgate - which will become a minor local station - temporarily fulfilled the role of a terminal station, replacing the passenger platforms and facilities at York Road station since October 1992.

This enabled the York Road Station area to be converted to a train servicing and maintenance depot in time for the opening of the link-line in October 1994. From that date the former maintenance depot at Queen's Quay was closed and all such facilities for the entire NIR system are now concentrated at York Road.

Finally, this in turn will enable Central Services depot at Queen's Quay to be abandoned and the final road link from the Cross-Harbour road bridge to the Sydenham Bypass to be constructed.

A design and construct contract for the link-line - being built (except for the track and signalling) as an integral part of the Cross Harbour Road Scheme - was awarded by the DoE (NI) to the Graham-Farrans Joint Venture. In particular, the appearance and visual impact of the Harbour Bridges was evaluated

with the assistance of the Royal Fine Arts Commission, and the completed structures have become notable landmarks in the City of Belfast and in particular in the Laganside Development area.



*The view to the east, with Central Station in the background. Work is well advanced towards what will become Lagan Junction, where the Bangor line train is passing. Although the new rail link was open to traffic in October 1994, scheduled services commenced on 28<sup>th</sup> November, while the road bridge was due to open on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 1995. (D. Grimshaw)*

### **Great Victoria Street Station**

Despite the many advantages and benefits to be brought about by the link-line the final piece in the Belfast Railway Jigsaw will be to achieve full City Centre penetration without bus links - not just for the Lisburn/Portadown line as prior to 1976, but for all four routes - Bangor, Lisburn/Portadown, Carrickfergus/Larne and Antrim/Ballymena.

This will be achieved by a combination of the Belfast Central Railway, the Cross-Harbour Link Line and reopening the line into the former Great Victoria Street Station, where trains from Bangor, Ballymena or Larne will reverse and continue on to Lisburn or Portadown, with the same pattern applying in the opposite direction.

A modern station, with four platforms and an attractive concourse with Sales & Information Offices and other passenger facilities and amenities, will be built on part of the former station site and integrated with the Europa Bus Centre. Pedestrian access from Great Victoria Street will be via the new Great Northern shopping mall.

The re-opening of this station and the construction of a new connecting line from the Botanic direction, has been approved and has also attracted 75% EC financial support. Most Belfast-Dublin trains and a few peak period suburban services, will continue to use the existing route from Central to Lisburn, avoiding the terminal station.

### **Cross-Border Rail Project**

To provide a Belfast-Dublin rail service of the standard expected for a primary Intercity route in the

21<sup>st</sup> Century and to compete successfully with the continually improving road network, it has been recognised by both NIR and Irish Rail (Iarnród Éireann) that substantial new investment is necessary on this route, which now carries some 500,000 passengers per year.

A non-stop journey time of 1 hour 55 minutes is the best which can be achieved with the existing track and signalling for much of the route and with the present rolling-stock, all of which limit maximum speeds to 110 kph (70 mph). As all these items were due for renewal by the year 2005 in any case, a joint NIR/IÉ project looked at the financial case for bringing forward this investment for completion by 1996. After considering a total of seven options, with detailed costing and market research, it was found that the best financial case was to complete the investment within 4-5 years, to retain double-track throughout, to upgrade the infrastructure for 145 kph (90 mph) maximum speed, to build new passenger coaching-stock of state of the art European mainline standard and to operate nine train services in each direction per day. The nonstop journey time will be reduced to 1 hour 35 minutes. New diesel-electric locomotives of over 3,000hp are to be provided. Push-pull operation will be used, to reduce terminal turn-round times. With shorter journey times and quicker terminal turn-rounds, each train set will be able to complete three round trips per day compared with two at present. Thus the nine-train service can be operated by three train sets - the same number as used today.



*The tall building on the left of two of Denis Grimshaw's photographs was eyed by many photographers but only a chosen few gained access, on 10<sup>th</sup> December 1994. Above No.85 can be seen the old BCDR goods shed with the now abandoned Central Service Depot on its right. In front of the churches the motorway curves to the left and will soon pass over the site and obliterate most of the remains of the former Queen's Quay terminus. (C.P. Friel)*

By the use of pooled rolling-stock (which incidentally will share a special NIR/IÉ common livery), the number of spare vehicles of each type required by each company for maintenance purposes will be greatly reduced, saving several million pounds.

Detailed qualitative and quantitative market research was undertaken to ascertain the view of passengers as to what requirements were needed for upgrade to service in terms of stations and on-train

facilities.

The overall cost of the project will be some £80 million of which £54 million will be in the Republic and £36 million in Northern Ireland. EC funding at around 75% has been obtained.

Some curve realignment is incorporated in the project and the speed restrictions through Lisburn, Portadown, Poyntzpass and Dundalk will be raised significantly.

Work is also in progress to rebuild a number of overbridges, to improve clearances and allow 2.75m (9ft) high containers to be carried on freight trains.

### **The Future**

The upgrading of the Bleach Green Junction to Antrim line, when completed, will permit much faster train services on the Londonderry line, with highly competitive journey times and only the building of a station at Donegall Quay on the Cross Harbour Rail Link (300m from High Street) is, at the time of writing, still awaiting Government approval.

By the middle of 1996, however, the Province's rail system will have been transformed and the Railway Company looks forward to providing a high quality service for a substantially increased volume of passengers making a major contribution to transport facilities in the Province.

### **R.N. CLEMENTS, 1910-1994**

**Conrad Natzio**

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If it could ever be said that a man had a lifetime's love affair with locomotives, that man was Bob Clements (as he was universally known amongst Irish railwaymen and enthusiasts). He died on 6<sup>th</sup> March 1994.

The Railway Magazine for December 1924 carried a short note (inevitably, on the engines of the Midland Great Western Railway) from R. Clements, then a schoolboy and a fairly junior one at that. Sherborne was of all English schools the one best placed to inculcate an interest in locomotive performance - it was the ambition, if not the boast, of Salisbury and Exeter drivers of a much later era to be doing "ninety past the College", and their predecessors on the Drummond and Urie engines of the 1920s also knew how to make good use of that tempting 1 in 80 descent.

After school Bob took a law degree in somewhat leisurely style at Trinity College Dublin; we can conclude that much of his time was spent in travelling behind, or preferably on, steam locomotives at home and abroad. Proof exists in the number of his logs published in the "British (sic) Locomotive Practice and Performance" series for the period. He also wrote about them, and a TCD contemporary remembers him as spending hours behind a typewriter, although for this activity there may have been an additional reason. In rejecting some at least of the values of his forefathers, Bob became sufficiently involved in Republican politics to be interned at the Curragh, at the same time indeed that his brother, the late Colonel Charles Clements, found himself in a German camp as a prisoner of war. Thereafter, however, Bob devoted himself to his first and abiding enthusiasm.

Fortunately for us, though unsurprisingly, the section of the Irish people with whom Bob identified himself were the enginemen, particularly those of his beloved MGWR. Many of them will remember the tall overalled figure with the black tea can who shared so many hours on their footplates - a romantic workplace perhaps, but, let it not be forgotten, an arduous, uncomfortable and dirty one. From this it will be clear that although he had an unequalled knowledge of the steam locomotives of Ireland, his true interest lay in the relationship between man and machine. In this he resembled his longstanding friend, Mac Arnold, as well as David H. Smith whose writing on Scottish railways he so much admired. Most of his own writing appeared between soft covers, alas (particularly those of the Journal of the Irish Railway Record Society); on the other hand it is scarcely possible to open a book on Irish railways without finding an acknowledgement of his generous help to others. He was fluent in four



European languages, as well as Irish and Scottish Gaelic.

Bob accumulated over the years an extraordinary collection of material, not least his own records of running on Irish, British and European railways, and an account of his experience exists in manuscript. His bequest of the whole collection to the IRRS (of which he was one of the original members) means that this should be available to all; I for one (not having been present on the night) hope at least to have an authoritative account of such legendary occasions as the Last Steam Run of the Sligo Mail - achieved, so Bob would always have us believe, "with no abuse of the engine" (a Midland 2-4-0).



*Senior citizens at Drogheda: Bob Clements (with stick), Paddy Mallon, formerly of Dundalk Works (with camera), and in front of the locomotive, Geoffrey Wigham. (W.T. Scott)*

Some of those who might have profited from Bob's friendship may have deprived themselves of it by mistaking a shy exterior for a forbidding one - the latter quite the reverse of his true personality. He remained close to his family, and lived with Colonel Henry Clements (another brother, who will be remembered by some as sharing the railway interest) and his sister in the family house in Celbridge until their deaths and his final illness.

Many people will remember him with affection and respect; nothing could have been more fitting than the presence of a group of retired steam enginemen at his funeral.

## **COMMENTS AND RECOLLECTIONS**

**Laurence Liddle**

In the 1987/8 issue of Five Foot Three our editor made a plea for contributions to keep the covers of the next magazine apart. Little did I think when responding to that plaintive request that I was starting a series of which this is the sixth, and fifth consecutive one. In 1989, when I should have been thinking of contribution number two I was occupied with much personal business, including a spell in hospital

and subsequent resettlement in Australia. After the move I soon realised that, despite various attractions of my changed way of life, my railway interests still lay, and will continue to lie, in Ireland.

There is of course a danger of becoming over-absorbed in my late septuagenarian memories to the extent of boring my readers. I hope therefore that anyone who feels that these annual contributions are overdue for replacement will make his/her views known to the editor. I will not feel offended by being reminded that I have passed my use-by date!

It may well be that even those readers who do find a measure of interests in my writings consider me to be too critical of other articles in the Society's magazine but I can assure them that criticism is not my intention. I feel however that since my continuous memories of the Irish railway scene go back to at least the year 1921 (when, at the age of six, I had learned to read the numbers and the superscription "GREAT NORTHERN" on the tank locomotives working the Howth branch) I still have something to offer in the way of information unknown to younger railway enthusiasts. After all, I doubt if there are many RPSI members other than myself who made their first footplate trip as far back as 1925 - not as impressive as it sounds, it was two runs round its train at Howth by T2 tank engine No.5.



*Young Liddle's locomotive, T2 No.5, now bearing only the initials of its owners, is turned at Dundalk on 15<sup>th</sup> May 1950. What looks like a VS tender (can't get away from them!) can be seen behind No.5. (H.C. Casserley)*

As always, the last issue of Five Foot Three was greatly appreciated. I was particularly interested in the articles "Whither Cavan" and "Restoration of 461", whilst the colour illustrations, as we have come to expect each year, were better than ever. For me the gem was the cover picture of No.461 at Enniscorthy - I wonder how many hundred times she has crossed the Slaney there. My reaction to this picture was not just because of its technical quality but also because it epitomised the Society's greatest achievement in the locomotive area, the bringing back to life of the not just dead but all but buried 15/461. [*Kind remarks much appreciated; there was a different reaction when the Editor belatedly realised that his masterpiece was an almost exact replica of a Charlie Friel black & white shot published in the previous issue! - Ed.*]

Still on the subject of photographs, those on pages 27 & 29 showing NCC main line passenger trains remind me that it seems to have been the regular practice of that company for fitted vans on passenger trains to be marshalled immediately behind the locomotive, a custom which was unusual on other Irish

railways. I have never heard the reason for the NCC procedure, was it merely to facilitate attachment and detachment at such places as Coleraine and Ballymena? I am reminded of a journey from Chester to Holyhead behind a Stanier Pacific hauling a 4-wheeled van plus 11 bogies when our running was at times so spirited as to set me wondering about the road-holding qualities of a light 4-wheeled vehicle of only moderate wheelbase.

Robin Barr's "Whither Cavan" was a nostalgic piece which produced an interesting correspondence with its author. There are a couple of points arising from the article which I think should be noted and which I have already mentioned to Robin.

First is the reference on page 35 to goods traffic between Dublin and the North being worked via Cavan during the period in 1955 when the Tolka bridge was out of action. I will not go so far as to assert that no such traffic ever went through Cavan. However, at that time the usual route was over the ex-MGWR Meath line to Navan and thence to Drogheda on the GN's Oldcastle branch. This route ensured:

1. that the shortest possible mileage over a 'foreign' line had to be paid for,
2. that there was no need to provide, and pay for, augmented Customs facilities at Monaghan and Tynan.

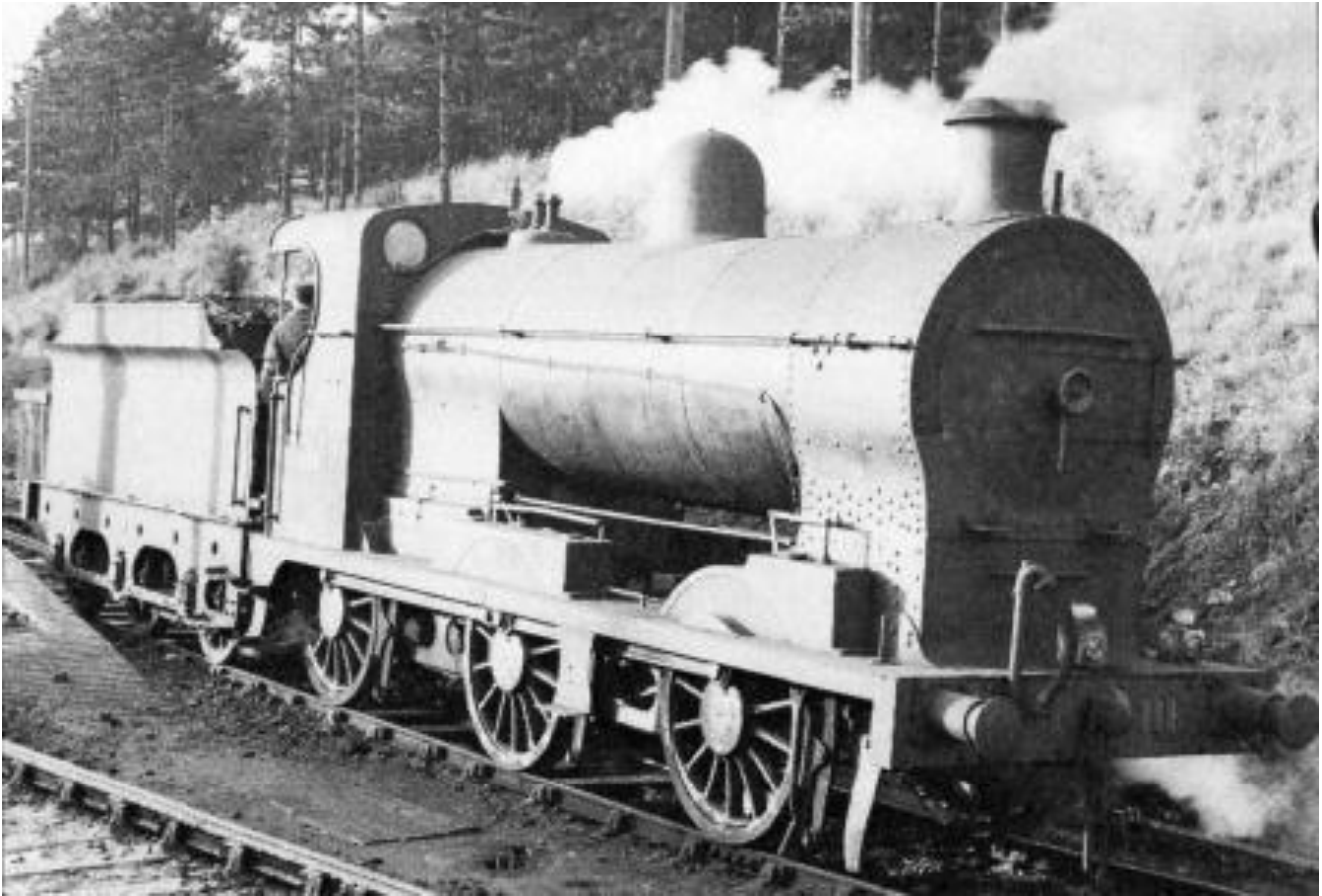
I have sometimes wondered why no-one has ever pointed out the error in the caption of the photo on page 172 on Part II of Mac Arnold's "Golden Years of the Great Northern Railway" to which Robin refers. The picture is not of a diverted GN goods train but of an engineer's train travelling towards Mullingar with permanent way material recovered from the lifting of the Clones-Inny Junction line of the then CIÉ. Apart from the evidence of the contents of the leading wagons (the second of which is one of CIÉ's post-war corrugated metal type) a close look at the buffer beam of SG 0-6-0 No.179 reveals not only the stencilled initials CIÉ but also CIÉ pattern headlamps over each buffer. This of course was standard practice with CIÉ for all trains but on the Great Northern would have indicated an express passenger train.

The track from Clones to Inny Junction was lifted in a southerly direction, one result of which was that when the operation was completed a Great Northern LQG 0-6-0 found its last resting place in Mullingar shed. LQGs were the largest GN goods engines permitted to work over the Oldcastle branch and hence, at the time of the Tolka bridge trouble, were in demand for working heavy trains from Sheriff Street (Dublin Goods) to Drogheda via Navan. SG3s could have worked over the MGW section of the journey as the Meath line had an 18½ ton axle load but the Northern's 17 ton Oldcastle branch was barred to them. Enginemen generally preferred the slightly smaller SGs and SG2s to the LQGs; however, on the heavy gradient of Drumcondra bank at the beginning of the journey the extra tractive effort of the LQGs was a considerable advantage, even with the assistance of a banker. Anyone who can get a look at IRRS Journal No.24 will find on page 122 a photo of LQG No.111 heading a goods at Drumree on the ex MGW Meath line during the time of the Tolka bridge problem.

I remember a couple of comments from footplate men about these three classes. One remark by "that genial raconteur" (Mac Arnold's apt phrase), the late Driver John Holland, should perhaps be taken with a grain of salt; referring to the generally accepted view on the GNR that the LQGs would not run when shut off, John remarked, "except in back gear". The other comment came from a Portadown fireman on whose engine I had come to Dundalk with a goods. During the lie-over at Dundalk shed we were bemoaning the fact that we did not have a 'Big D' for the return working which we knew would comprise at least a full load for our somewhat run-down ex NCC machine. The conversation developed along the lines of what excellent machines the Big Ds (SG3) were when suddenly the fireman remarked, "I'd rather have a good C" (SG or SG2).

As a mixed traffic engine the 'C' was probably a better proposition than the 'D' but I never heard any other footplate man suggest that it was to be preferred for pure goods work. Maybe some reader who

lives a bit nearer to Portadown than I do would ask our good friend Jimmy Donnelly his opinion as to their relative merits as he certainly fired many hours on each.



*QLG 0-6-0 No.111 at Drogheda in 1954. (A Donaldson)*

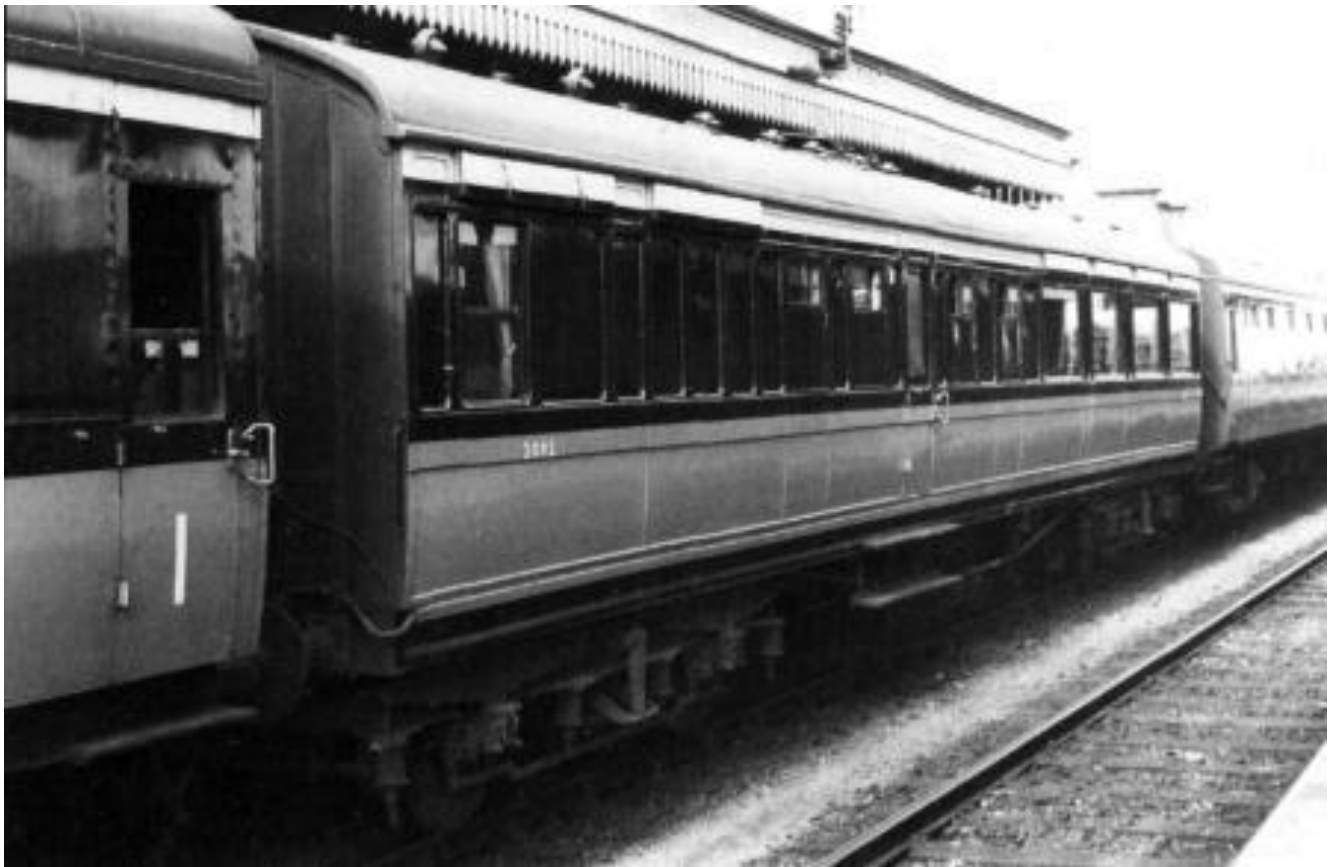
Mention of John Holland and a full load over the Wellington Bank reminds me that it was with him and fireman (later Inspector) Roy Stanfield that I footplated with the heaviest load I ever encountered on the GN. On the occasion in question we had “equal to 77½” behind a Jeep. How was it done? The solution was simple, a banker (an LQG indeed) from Dundalk to Goraghwood in charge of Dundalk driver Tom Begley. Readers may remember that a feature of such turns was that the banker was coupled behind the brake van as its function between Dundalk and “The Wood” was as much to act as a brake down the north side of the Wellington as it was to push coming up from the south.

Robin suggests that Clones was a station at which four branch lines met. This would not have gone down too well with the powers that were in GN days. The official view was that whilst Dublin-Belfast was the main line, Dundalk to Omagh, Portadown to Cavan and Portadown to Derry were also main lines, all others being branch lines. Apropos of Claremorris, which Robin cites as a parallel to Clones, we must not forget the Ballinrobe branch which ensured that the Co Mayo junction was the meeting place for trains coming from not just four but five directions.

I doubt if much of the 1947 batch of U class 4-4-0s (page 38) was designed by Harry McIntosh. These engines were basically similar to the original Us of 1915 which themselves were tender versions of the T1 tanks of 1913 but with piston instead of slide valves. These early locos, Ts and Us, would have been designed by Glover (Mechanical Engineer) and Watson (Chief Draughtsman) and there is evidence that Glover was personally involved. However, the features distinguishing the second quintet of Us, 201-205, were almost certainly due to Harry Wilson who was Chief Draughtsman during the war and

early post-war years. Who was responsible for the rather ugly side window cabs which first appeared on the original five UGs in 1937/8 I am not sure; it may be that McIntosh, who was officially Running Superintendent but in practice Mechanical Engineer under the general over-lordship of G.B. Howden, suggested this feature. Or how about Howden himself? After all, he had worked on the North British and the Scottish division of the LNER before coming to the Great Northern, and the UG and later U cabs bore a considerable resemblance to those of the later NB 4-4-0s and 0-6-0s.

May I register polite dissent from Colin Sherrard's solution to the "Distant Puzzle" of the nature and origin of the train worked by No.171 from Dublin to Belfast on 10<sup>th</sup> September 1918? I first read of this feat some years ago and subsequently learned that the train was a special from Cork to Belfast chartered by the Northern participants in either a Trades Union or an Ancient Order of Hibernians congress in the southern city. As regards Colin's queries about the GS&WR vehicles which made up the train that company never had a dining car numbered 2002 but it did have a 2092 which was a centre-kitchen vehicle seating 12 first and 24 second/third class passengers on movable wooden chairs. There was also a sister vehicle, 2093, both cars being built in 1916. 2092 lasted into CIÉ days and for a while ran in that company's Cork - Dublin - Belfast "Enterprise" set.



***GS&WR dining car 2092. Yet another question in relation to the mysterious train: why should GS&WR stock be used on the return working of a special originating in Belfast? (C.P. Friel collection)***

Apart altogether from my distinct recollection of learning of the Trades Union or AOH charter of this train, its make-up is scarcely that of a special for a General and his staff. Whatever the type of accommodation provided for the brutal and licentious common soldiery (does anyone know the source of that splendid phrase?), officers and gentlemen, resplendent in brass hats and red tabs, were unlikely to have put up with third class seats and wooden chairs. Carriage trucks were certainly in use around

1918 and they could indeed carry motor cars but I am baffled as to why such a vehicle was attached to this train.

The upper picture on page 44 of the last magazine is interesting. The leading coach of the train is one of the open type with wide centrally placed doors introduced by the D&SER on the Amiens Street - Westland Row - Dun Laoghaire - Dalkey service towards the end of the company's independent existence. These coaches carried Conductors (shades of things to come on NIR) who took fares from passengers who joined at the smaller intermediate stations. This method of operation was abandoned by the GSR but at least some of the coaches lasted until after World War II.

The article by "Larne Man" regarding Sentinel steam locomotives and wagons reminds me that in the early 1920s, about the time when I was learning to read the words GREAT NORTHERN, there was a sandpit on the southern side of the Howth branch, between Howth station and Claremont gates. The owners, I think The Sutton Sand Company, used a couple of Sentinel steam lorries presumably acquired as second-hand or demonstration vehicles as they bore an AW registration, i.e. Shropshire, of which Shrewsbury is the county town. They appeared to be in poor order and were known to my brother and myself as 'bust-ups'.

The 'bust-ups' were not the only vehicles which took sand from the pit. The Dublin United Tramways Company (1896) Ltd had a short siding into it from the north end of the loop on the Dublin-Howth road just to the east of Howth Presbyterian Church. From time to time the tramway company operated trains of two or three open wagons from the pit. These were hauled by 'goods cars', four-wheeled vehicles with standard driving cabs at each end but whose centre portions were in the form of open wagons, also carrying sand. Watching one of these hybrids endeavouring to get its load moving over the curving incline from the pit, accompanied by much slipping and production of sparks, was one of your author's favourite juvenile pastimes. When one recalls that sanding gear was removed from the early CIÉ diesel-electrics lest its operation should damage their electric transmissions one can only marvel at the abuse of this nature which the old Dublin goods cars must have had to put up with when working the sand trains.

The history of the lifted section of the originally triangular Felthouse Junction, referred to in Christopher Lavery's letter, is as follows. The spur was put in when the Fishguard and Rosslare Railways and Harbours Company's line to Rosslare was built, completion date 1906. The Wexford-Rosslare line which had had a somewhat chequered history was appreciably older. On 19<sup>th</sup> January 1910 GS&WR 0-4-2 locomotive No.272, an ex-Waterford & Limerick Railway machine, was working the 20:15 goods ex-Wexford along the spur towards Killinick tender-first when both locomotive and tender became derailed, killing Fireman Tom Power and very seriously injuring Driver John Doyle who was off duty for almost two years after the accident. The Inspecting Officer's report stated that the mishap was caused by the engine/tender coupling being too tight and there not being enough play in the buffer springs.

Whether as a direct result of this accident or not, the track on which the derailment occurred was lifted in 1912 and never replaced. The removal of the spur was unlikely to have had any significant effect on train services in South Wexford. The relatively sparse passenger and goods workings between Wexford and Waterford operated via Rosslare Strand after 1912, as they continued to do until well into post-World War II years. Our editor is correct in saying that no Dublin-Waterford services had operated via Felthouse. Apart altogether from the fact, which he also mentions, that GS&WR and D&SER each had its own route between the two cities, relations between the two companies, so far as South Wexford was concerned at any rate, were distinctly frosty - a fact not unconnected with the competition between Euston and Paddington for Irish cross-channel traffic. Here I may mention that the GWR had a public office in Nassau Street, Dublin, until World War II days.

It is possible that during the years when the autumn beet campaign marked the busiest part of the year

for GSR/CIE the Felthouse connection might have been marginally useful in facilitating the working of beet specials from South Wexford to Carlow via Macmine and Ballywilliam but otherwise I can think of no justification for its retention.

It only remains for me to acknowledge my indebtedness to the article "Recollections of Rosslare" by the late Driver Martin White (IRRS Journal No.30, Spring 1960) for the details of dates, enginemen's names and engine particulars which I have given in relation to the Felthouse derailment. Martin White, as well as being an outstanding railway character, had a deep involvement in community affairs and it is fitting that his name is commemorated in the group of retirement chalets adjoining Lansdowne Road station.

*FOOTNOTE: At the risk of offending my venerable contributor I must say that, of the two suggested solutions, the General and his brutal escort sounds the less unlikely. It is difficult to imagine what use a party of Hibernians or Union men would have for two vans and a carriage truck or why either body would require such a headlong dash to Belfast. My footnote to Mr. Lavery's letter in FFT No.40 was somewhat inaccurate as an accident with the results referred to by Mr. Liddle could hardly be described as "not serious". - Ed.*



*Definitely one for the experts - it's from the West Clare narrow gauge and there the story ends!  
(Des O'Murchu)*

## **THE TROUBLE WITH THIRD CLASS PASSENGERS**

**James Scannell**

The Victorians were a very class conscious society and an indication of their attitudes in this matter surfaced at the 87<sup>th</sup> half-yearly Meeting of the Dublin, Wicklow and Wexford Railway Co which was held on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> February 1890 in Westland Row Station (the modern day Pearse Station), Dublin.

Up to about 1912 it was custom of Irish railway companies to produce their accounts on a half-yearly rather than annual basis with half-yearly AGMs being held and conducted along the same lines as an

annual AGM.

Prior to this meeting the accounts and report for the period July-August 1889 had been circulated to shareholders and the purpose of the meeting was to discuss these items, adopt them, strike a dividend and transact any other relevant business.

The meeting was presided over by the Company Chairman, the distinguished Dublin businessman Sir Richard Martin and it began with the reading of the formal notice calling the meeting by the Company Secretary, Mr E. W. Maunsell, after which Sir Richard Martin addressed the meeting - the accounts and report circulated to shareholders having been considered 'as read' by agreement of the shareholders present.

In the course of his extensive address, Sir Richard Martin made reference to the fact that it was with great regret that the directors had had to increase season ticket prices and some fares. The greatest increase fell on suburban travellers and this had resulted in a hostile press.

Following the adoption of the report and accounts, questions were taken from the floor.

Mr R.K. Clay made the point that it appeared to him that the burden of the increases had fallen on the Bray to Dublin commuters who were the Company's 'milch cow' and that the burden should have been spread evenly throughout the system. He also asked that something should be done to cater for the needs of the third class passengers who seemed to be neglected.



*Though probably younger than the vehicles referred to by the Major General, this pair have run their last mile. Risking the scorn of the carriage experts, dare one suggest that the one on the right could be a GS&WR 1<sup>st</sup> /2<sup>nd</sup> of 1880s vintage? No guesses re the other, except that it looks as if it may have been better than a 3<sup>rd</sup> at some stage. (C.P. Friel collection)*

Another shareholder said that some passengers who normally travelled first class had opted to travel by second class and even third class as their way of protesting over the fare increases. He could understand



this if those travelling in this manner did not have the means to which their birth and means entitled them but he was confident that these men would return to the class that they were destined to travel in and that the third class passengers would be left to themselves. This shareholder also asked that the stations and carriages should be kept in better order.

Another shareholder, who held the rank of Major General, said that on the previous day he had travelled to Seapoint in a third class carriage and that he never seen anything so dirty.

In reply, Sir Richard Martin said that something had been done to improve the third class carriages bearing in mind that they were in regular daily use and that the Company was anxious that these carriages be kept as clean as possible, and made the point that the carriages were emptied once a day and then cleaned.

He then went on to say that the class of people who travelled in third class were not particularly clean and that when passengers smoked and spat, they (the Company) could not keep the carriages clean.

The Major General said that this did not happen in the third class carriage that he had travelled in but Sir Richard Martin maintained that it could have happened on a previous journey but that he agreed with all the speakers that something would have to be done to improve the rolling stock but reminded the meeting that every half-year something was done in this regard.

This ended the discussion on the matter of the conditions of the third class carriages and the character of the passengers who travelled in them. Interestingly no-one thought of asking the Major General why he was travelling in third class as, being a shareholder in the Company, he would have been able to travel in greater comfort and in a style befitting his rank and means. As it was, the comments were published in the press with no criticism or comment - it wouldn't happen today since these remarks would give TV and the press material for weeks to use, notwithstanding any action Government, Traveller groups and consumers might take.

## **TWENTY FIVE YEARS ON**

**J.A. Cassells**

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The RPSI's thirtieth anniversary outing on 16<sup>th</sup> September last (one of the most enjoyable of all) took us to Derry behind Great Northern power. It also involved three of the final generation of NCC steam men (Willie Graham, George Gaw and Inspector Barney McCrory) as well as NIR post-steam driver Noel Playfair whose NCC credentials can well be established on the basis of his days as a conductor on the Larne line! Not to be left out was retired Inspector Frank Dunlop, who turned up at Waterside along with ex-GNR personnel Bobby Quail and Kevin Love to see the train. Noel, Willie, George and Barney were delighted to have an all-NCC photo taken, and equally insistent that their old boss be found and included in the picture.

Inspired by the sheer enjoyment of the day, and interested by the concept of anniversaries, I delved into my old logbooks and albums to see what firemen Gaw, Graham and McCrory were working on twenty five years ago - the last full year of regular steam in the history of Irish railways. I'm grateful to Irwin Pryce, who provided many additional comments on an early draft of this article, and to Bill Scott for help with illustrations.

By this stage in the NCC's history, only on the Larne line stone trains was steam to be found in daily operation, and Willie, Barney and George were hard at work with men who were household names in the 1960s. Passenger work largely depended on diesel failures; indeed I have a note of one March evening when the 17:20 Cullybackey was composed of a single MED car hauling a coach! [*How did it work back?* - Ed.] In a spate of steam substitutions on the 17:30 Larne train in March and April none of these men appeared on any of the eight return trips I timed between 25<sup>th</sup> March and 23<sup>rd</sup> May; hardly surprising since they would all have been working their normal stone train diagrams. On the other hand Arthur McMenemy, who was driving the 11:30 from Belfast on the day of the RPSI trip this year, did

fire on four of these runs including two real Alan Robinson spectaculars with locomotives 4 and 53. Out of the 59 passenger runs I timed on the Larne line in 1960, only six were fired by representatives of the September 1994 trio.



***The photograph that provided the stimulus for this article. Barney McCrory, Noel Playfair, Frank Dunlop, Geordie Gaw and Willie Graham at Londonderry Waterside on 16<sup>th</sup> September 1994. (J.A. Cassells)***

Irwin Pryce noted George Gaw firing to Percy Mitchell on No.55 on the 17:30 Larne on 30<sup>th</sup> June. (He was fortunate not to be firing locomotive 5 on the same train on 3<sup>rd</sup> July when Davie Smith suffered the fireman's ultimate nightmare as the shaft of his shovel broke in two at Ballycarry!) It wasn't until 26<sup>th</sup> July that George's name appears in my logbooks, working quite a long day on that Saturday. As the summer approached its height No.4 and seven coaches worked the 10:05, 13:35 and 17:30 Larne trains, and George fired the first two return trips. The 10:05 with Paddy Russell was not so good, but Percy Mitchell gave us a smart run in the afternoon including a 7'04" from Carrick to Whitehead, maximum 62. My next Larne trip with George was very near the end of regular steam altogether - firing to Harry Ramsey on No.186 on the RPSI special on 21<sup>st</sup> March 1970.

My only 1969 Larne trip fired by Willie Graham was as late as Saturday 2<sup>nd</sup> August, when he fired to Paddy Dobbin - soon to leave railway service - on the 17:30 with engine No.10. The 07:55 and 14:05 had also been steam on this day (drivers John Weatherup and George Greer with fireman Tom McCrum firing to them both). No.10 was not steaming well, and to make matters worse Paddy Dobbin was slightly injured when stone-throwing louts broke the side window of the cab. Drew Donaldson's suggestions about how they should be dealt with are possibly best not put in print! Barney McCrory does not appear among my Larne line 1969 runs, but Irwin Pryce had him firing No.5 to Dan Macatamney on the 17:30 Larne on 26<sup>th</sup> June. Big Dan's manner was gruff and cheery (a wave of his

cloth and a “How’re ye doin’ boy?” were his inevitable greeting) and he was not known to hang about on passenger trains; on this night with 5 bogies, a GNR ‘P’ van and a four-wheel brown van he did 66 down Mount bank. By the end of the summer Barney had been passed out to replace Paddy Dobbin in the links, and Mac Arnold’s NCC Saga records the details of a run at the end of August involving driver McCrory with engine No.6 on the last leg of a Courtaulds factory outing from Portrush to Carrickfergus reversing at Belfast.

The last full year on the main line began with a very bright Easter weekend both in terms of weather and performance. The working circular for w/c Saturday 5<sup>th</sup> April contained a notice that all steam engines were limited to 50 mph with immediate effect - but after being pointedly reminded of this on the platform by W.A.G. McAfee, Rab Graham showed us what he really thought on the 12 noon special to Portrush with engine No.4!

On Easter Monday and Tuesday Barney McCrory was on the 09:25 Portrush specials. On Monday he fired to Rab Graham on No.53, and the next day to Willie Gillespie on No.4. These runs were solid enough, with Graham producing the better run, and a wee seventy at Templepatrick! On both days I took these trains only to Antrim, since a nice 10:15 Antrim-Portrush special (rostered MED diesel) was in fact worked by a gleaming No.56 sent light engine from Belfast and spare coaches from Antrim yard. This train, by the way, was worked by George Houston of York Road on the Monday, but by Jimmy Anderson of Ballymena on the Tuesday. Traffic was so heavy on this day that engine No.10 and more spare coaches from Antrim worked an unscheduled 19:15 special Portrush-Belfast. The driver was Jimmy Donnelly of Portadown, who at that time was attached to York Road along with fellow GN man Peter McCann.

Easter Tuesday produced a turn for Willie Graham, firing to Jack Kitchen on No.4 on a 19:30 special to Belfast, first stop Ballymena. With no snatchers they lost a bit of time collecting hand-tablets at Ballymoney, Ballyboyland, Dunloy and Cullybackey, and they also had a malicious cord-pull to deal with at the top of Ballyboyland bank. I also note from the log that Willie must have taken his eye off the injector while collecting the Ballyboyland tablet, for the engine primed going through Ballymoney station! I cannot at this stage remember the details, but I think that after I left the train at Ballymena there was a prolonged stop at Antrim for some kind of police investigation. The scene involving a zealous policeman quizzing an irascible Mac Arnold in a dimly lit coach about why he was timing the train can well be imagined by anyone who knew Mac!

On Easter Tuesday locomotive No.171 (running-in after shopping at H&W) worked a public 10:25 special with Joe Cairns of Coleraine, but failed at Portrush after running hot. Matters were much cooler on 31<sup>st</sup> May 1969 when the RPSI ran a Coleraine special fired by George Gaw. Very appropriately the driver on this train was Jimmy Donnelly.

George’s next appearance in my logbooks was in the Sunday School season, when he found himself firing to “Batman” Simpson on No.53 on a 9:05 a special with no less than eleven bogies - unpiloted - on 14<sup>th</sup> June. When “Batman” remarked on the engine being so far off the end of the platform at Belfast, Inspector Frank Dunlop innocently replied, “Ah, there must be an oul’ mule [*MPD driving trailer*] against the stoppers.” Not till he looked back along the curve over the viaduct to count the load did Simpson realise why the Inspector had seemed a little evasive! But there was no problem; No.50 made it over the top without falling below 12½, ran smartly into the sixties down the bank and drew into Portrush one minute early. By this stage the NCC was down to only 30-odd serviceable coaches (some wooden stock having been earmarked for conversion to 70 class diesel driving trailers) so 11 coach trains became increasingly common in the spring of 1969 in an effort to economise on the number of sets needed. With steam now finished on the GN many of our NCC runs of this period featured Great Northern vehicles, including the last of the K15s and those lovely old pre-war wooden open thirds.



*July 1967 view of Fireman B McCrory in conversation with one of the 1960s timing fraternity at Coleraine. Will Stephen Rottger still recognise himself? (J.A. Cassells)*

A week later Barney McCrory featured in my logbooks again, firing No.53 for Willie Gillespie on a 09:05 special. This train was piloted to Antrim by No.4 (Bertie Wright and Tom McCrum) for traffic purposes, and a right smart run it was too. On 26<sup>th</sup> June I timed yet another 11 bogie effort with Paddy

Dobbin and Willie Graham on engine No.51 working an 18:45 Portrush-Belfast special. This was grand stuff for such a load; indeed we got into the sixties before Glarryford. At Ballymena I got off to wait for yet another 335 ton train, this time a 19:15 up special, once again with the crew of Willie Gillespie and Barney McCrory. This proved a quite excellent run, holding 40 minimum up to Kingsbog despite persistent problems with delivery of water to the injectors, and arriving in Belfast with the tank nearly dry. It was the last week of the Sunday School season, and I remember the small knot of timers talking, as usual, to the crew when we arrived in Platform 3 at York Road, the engine simmering in the gathering dusk. Willie Gillespie said that there would be no steam next year. The talk at the shed was that the Sunday School trains would all be diesel next year. But we didn't really believe him!



*16<sup>th</sup> July 1969. Jack Kitchen and Willie Graham look pleased with themselves at Portrush after bringing in the 13:15 from Belfast. (J.A. Cassells)*

Driver Davy McDonald was George Gaw's father-in-law, and he will be remembered as a fine engineman. His professional skills were tested to the full on 28<sup>th</sup> June when working yet another 11 bogies on the 09:15 Carrickfergus to Portrush via Belfast. The brake gear on coach 236 disintegrated at

Ballyboyland, and after a quick stop for running repairs he and Davie Smith got the train - brakeless - to Coleraine without mishap.

And so to the July holidays. All of us who were active that year will remember some outstanding efforts as the curtain finally came down on regular NCC main line steam. The lads were well to the fore here too. On 14<sup>th</sup> July Jack Kitchen and Willie Graham made a smart run to Portrush with No.4. Next day I had a morning run down on the 09:25 special (Harry Ramsey and Roy Robinson on No.50) before returning to Cullybackey to cross the 13:15 with Rab Graham and George Gaw. On 16<sup>th</sup> July Jack Kitchen and Willie Graham had No.50 for the 13:15 and surprisingly for a mere 9 coach train we were piloted to Kingsbog by No.55 and Jimmy Simpson. This crew - combined age at that time well under 50 - gave an excellent account of themselves, and produced what was by that time a rare 75 down the bank. They made a good show too on the 20:15 up special, producing an equally rare 69 down the bank through Whiteabbey, in spite of recurrent trouble with injectors on the way up from Portrush.

The period from 15<sup>th</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> July was a glorious swansong for steam, with the 13:15 Belfast-Portrush steam-worked nine times. Six of these runs featured Rab Graham, who was really out to show (successfully) that despite the fearfully run-down state of the engines, steam could keep the diesel timings. Indeed so keen was he to see steam out in style that he swapped with Jack McAuley - who was probably not sorry to miss out - to get a second week of it! The firemen on these runs were Willie Graham on 18<sup>th</sup> July, Gerry Phelan on the 21<sup>st</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> and George Gaw on 25<sup>th</sup>. The only pity was that the engines by that time were in poor order; engines No.50 and No.53 worked these turns, and it needed every ounce of professional expertise to keep them on the boil and make them go.

24<sup>th</sup> July was Graham's rest day, and Willie Gillespie had a dreadful struggle all the way down and back with engine No.53. A message thrown out to the Dunloy signalman (possibly the last recorded instance of this time-honoured communication in the history of NCC steam) produced a pilot engine to assist the 19:55 ex Portrush up to Kingsbog. Harry Ramsey and George Robinson of course went out of their way to have No.55 blowing off lustily as the train limped into Antrim. One timer on board, who hadn't spotted the typically smart attachment of the pilot, was amazed when the train stormed out of Antrim and was doing 58 through Templepatrick!

On the next day's train George Gaw got a first-hand demonstration of fast hand exchanging when Rab Graham on engine No.50 took the Dunloy tablet himself at exactly 60 mph! Diesel times were kept to the minute, the train was right on time at Portrush, and for the time being all was well with the world! One of the nicest photos in my album shows Rab and George having a quick word with retired driver Jimmy Keenan at the Cookstown Junction stop during the course of this run. NIR, in an early fare promotion, almost halved the Portrush day return fare on the 13:15 to 7/6 (33.5p) which even by the standards of the time was such a bargain that it was commented on in the Railway Magazine!

The very last 19:55 from Portrush (the 19:30 path altered in this timetable) came on 4<sup>th</sup> August, worked by No.53 crewed by Percy Mitchell and Davie Smith. After that things were thin for a long time. There was a rather sad Ballymena football special with No.50 worked by Davy McDonald and George Robinson on 6<sup>th</sup> September, and two RPSI specials both involving No.171 in March and October 1970. The second of the two had Willie Graham firing to Frank Dunlop who drove for most of the day. The very last two days when timetabled trains were steam-hauled - Easter Monday and Tuesday 1970 - featured Carrickfergus and Whitehead locals hauled by locomotives No.4 and No.5 with Jack Kitchen/Tom McCrum and Willie McAleese/Johnny Magill on Monday, and Davy McDonald/George Robinson on the Tuesday.

Then the word was in early 1973 that there would be a season of steam to Portrush. I missed the first two Portrush Flyers through being away sampling steam in Germany, Italy and Austria, but I was back for 18<sup>th</sup> July 1973 - and George Gaw firing to Rab Graham. It was a smashing run (even Drew

Donaldson admitted to having enjoyed himself going to Portrush!) and with that, the next generation of NCC main line work began, which was to see us going to Portrush from York Road, Yorkgate and Belfast Central with an S, a compound and even a D&SER mogul.



*On 25<sup>th</sup> July 1969 the very last 13:15 stopped at Cookstown Junction, with Driver Rab Graham and Fireman George Gaw. The old signal cabin is gone but the original island platform and at least one of the NCC lamps are still in place. (J.A. Cassells)*

Willie Graham, Barney McCrory and George Gaw are now senior men, along with other ex-York Road colleagues Arthur McMenamin, Tom McCrum and Jack Kitchen. Miraculously too, we've also had a completely new generation of men keen to learn steam in the 1980s and 1990s, and to 'new' steam regulars Noel Playfair, Willie Gillespie, Gary Moore, Drew Turkington, Mickey Hamill and Inspectors Moore, Pentland and Welshman (I'm sure there must be other men too whom I've forgotten) we must all say a big "thanks lads!" All being well, RPSI steam engines and NIR steam crews should be giving a good account of themselves on the NCC well into the 21<sup>st</sup> century!

## **COOKSTOWN JUNCTION 1934**

**J.H. Fitzsimmons**

"Change for the Cookstown Line!"  
The call Would echo down the platform gray;  
The hiss of steam, the postered wall,  
The scene is clear as yesterday.  
  
The stationmaster so sedate,  
The station's name in brilliant white,  
A porter's barrow near the gate,  
And trucks in sidings left and right.  
  
Before entraining, we would run  
To see the engine's plated name;  
"Parkmount," or "Knockagh," or "Glendun" -  
The unnamed ones were not the same.  
  
A signal changed from red to green.  
A whistle blew, a flag was waved;

A shudder, then a tug serene,  
And motive steam by men enslaved.

The signal-cabin's yellow light  
Slid past in the December dawn;  
The crossing gates in red and white  
Securely bade us travel on.

Familiar landmarks, came and sped,  
A hill, a farm, an arch, a spire;  
And speed increased as up ahead  
The fireman stoked the glowing fire.

The thrills of pulsing steam are fled;  
Dismissed by men who did not care;  
The enginemen must long be dead,  
The Junction is no longer there.

All gone - but to a faithful few,  
Who cannot such great days resign,  
An engine with a spirit crew  
Still dashes glowing down the line.

## **MORE TENDER MOMENTS?**

**Conrad Natzio**

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I was not entirely at ease with the idea (Five Foot Three No.40, p.55) that the big tender running up till now with No.85 came from No.207 originally. I had assumed that this was the tender that had been paired with No.85 for her last few years in CIÉ service, but I'm wide open to correction, having been far from the scene of action at the time of No.85's first RPSI restoration. That particular vehicle came from No.206, and had the unusual distinction of having run with four different classes of locomotive. No.206 was taken out of traffic soon after the CIÉ takeover, in November 1958, and on 4<sup>th</sup> December No.171 appeared at the head of the non-stop 08:45 Dublin-Belfast excursion with a 4,000 gallon tender, clearly from No.206, which I subsequently photographed in Dundalk scrap line paired (no doubt for accountancy purposes) with a small tender. In January or February 1959, No.171 went into Dundalk Works for overhaul, and the big tender was transferred to No.191, but not for long. No.85 was outshopped in late February, with a small tender in plain GN blue without lettering or insignia; she worked a football special to Dundalk with this tender on 8<sup>th</sup> March, but by the 12<sup>th</sup> March had acquired the big one and kept it thereafter, so displaying until the end of her CIÉ ownership the proud coat of arms and lettering of the Great Northern on her tender if not on herself. No.85's own newly-overhauled small tender ended up behind No.170 when she was repaired by CIÉ and returned to traffic in 1960. All this is very ancient history, and doesn't answer my original query!

Perhaps it is not too late to ask for help in retrieving a little more information from the mists of time. At the period when I was starting to take a (more or less) intelligent interest in the affairs of the former Great Northern, in the autumn of 1958, the 07:30 down and 15:00 up trains were regularly steam-worked though timed for diesel, with a single engine doing the round trip from Dublin. Dublin men worked to Dundalk, and a Dundalk top-link crew on to Belfast and return, being relieved by a pair of their colleagues for the final stage to Dublin; the engine was in my experience always a small one, No.131, No.171 or No.191 being the usual choice. At this time the Dundalk men were doing good work with these engines on their other regular turns, particularly the 14:30 and 18:25 from Dublin, and I have always wondered how they got on with the very tight diesel timings. In particular the 15:00 up was allowed only 78 minutes running time to Dundalk with four stops (including 14 minutes Lisburn to



Lurgan restart, unequalled except for the inexplicable 06:30 Belfast-Dundalk of the same period, expected to reach Portadown in 31 minutes with three stops and with only 13 minutes Lisburn-Lurgan restart, 12.4 miles). I never was able to travel north of Dundalk on this train, and it was usually seriously delayed by local traffic between Drogheda and Dublin, reducing the incentive for hard running on that section, but I noted some surprisingly near-punctual times in the course of my 10 southbound runs from Dundalk. No.191 and No.171 got into Drogheda within three and five minutes of right time respectively with Saturday loads of seven bogies (helped by omission of the Monday to Friday Castlebellingham and Dunleer stops, admittedly). With 5-coach weekday loads, but making these stops, No.131 and No.171 each got within four minutes of time. If there is anyone out there who was using a stopwatch between Belfast and Dundalk, I should very much like to hear the results!



***Great Northern UG 0-6-0 No.146 (UTA 48) provided the power for this curious procession which was the final clearance of Adelaide shed in November 1966. No.85 had been in store at Inchicore and had been brought north to enter the Transport Museum, then run by Belfast Corporation. Since it came without a tender, buffers had been fitted at the cab end. The large tender is that from VS No.207 and they are going to Lisburn goods shed for storage. The UG subsequently shunted intermittently at York Road until the boiler inspector brought her career to an end. (J.A. Cassells)***

*... And from the mists of time, information comes forth, courtesy of Laurence Liddle:*

As regards tenders, I am pretty sure that the one that No.85 brought north was the one that had been following her for a few years before her transfer from CIÉ. I can confirm what Conrad had to say about the steam workings of the 07:30 down and 15:00 up main line trains. I travelled only once by those workings at the time he speaks of (autumn 1958) but remember the journeys very well as they were the last times I travelled behind No.206 and No.191. The time was early in October and it was mid-week. On the up run we had No.191 throughout; on the down we had No.206 from Dublin to Dundalk and No.191 thereafter. Arrival at Dublin was a little late - only to be expected when a decent railway had been taken over by two bus companies, as I informed a meeting I attended at the time! I cannot remember anything about the timing of the down train. I do not think I am competent to comment further on Conrad's recollections of times on the GN line. I do remember seeing, probably early in 1959, the down evening Dublin-Belfast express (not the Enterprise) leaving Amiens Street behind an S and a Q. That would have been an interesting run.

*[FOOTNOTE: Further research reveals that the tender of No.206 stayed in the South, where CIÉ for a time retained roller-bearing tenders with a view to using them in their weed-killing trains, and that when No.85 came North for preservation she had no tender but eventually came to be paired with that from No.207 which had survived the scrapping of the latter locomotive. The mists of time now close in again. - Ed.]*

## **THE TOURIST TROPHY MOTOR RACE**

**W. Robb**

In the 1920s motor racing on public roads was not allowed in Great Britain but, under an Act passed by the Northern Ireland Parliament, it was permitted in the Province. Through strenuous efforts made by the Belfast Newsletter and others, the Royal Automobile Club was persuaded to hold its "Tourist Trophy" race over the Ards circuit: Dundonald - Newtownards - Comber - Dundonald. The starting point and 'pits' were on the Newtownards Road a short distance on the Belfast side of Quarry Corner and in recent years a sample 'pit' was erected at this point to commemorate the Race. *[Unfortunately, since then, local youth, presumably bored as ever, demonstrated their sense of history by vandalising the structure. - Ed.]*



***4-4-2T No.19 at Comber on the rear of the Glassmoss shuttle train, as indicated by the white tailboard, on Race Day, 20<sup>th</sup> August 1932. 0-6-0 No.4 is at the other end. (W. Robb)***

The Race was held each year from 1928 to 1936. In the latter year a fatal crash occurred in Conway Square, Newtownards, which brought the venture to an end. With the development which has taken place in this area in recent years, together with present-day road traffic and the closing of the railway, such a race would be impossible. In post-war years the race was revived on the Dundrod circuit but it never attracted the same crowds as on the Ards circuit.

It is difficult today to realise the tremendous interest which the Race aroused. Practising, at 6am on two mornings preceding race day, was watched by large crowds.

On the day of the race itself, thousands went from Belfast and the procession of tramcars on the Newtownards Road was almost continuous. Many people slept in the Hi-Ids the previous night to obtain a good viewpoint.

During the time the roads were closed, the only access to the interior of the circuit was by the Belfast & County Down Railway which served the access points at Dundonald, Comber and Newtownards stations, and at temporary platforms at Henryville level crossing (between Dundonald and Comber) and at the Glassmoss crossing (between Comber and Newtownards) where the railway crossed the circuit. The normal train service to Newcastle was not affected, but special arrangements had to be made to handle the traffic to Comber, Newtownards and Donaghadee.



*Carr Strand bridge on 22<sup>nd</sup> August 1931, illustrating the trespass to which the company turned an annual blind eye. When the line closed in 1950 the bridge girders were used to reconstruct Dunsilly bridge which crosses the A26 road just north of Antrim. (W. Robb)*

The principal service out of Belfast was to Comber to which trains ran every 15 minutes. At the start of the day a light engine was sent out to Comber where it took up a position at the Belfast end of the station. When the first train had unloaded its passengers, this engine coupled up to the rear and immediately started back to Belfast. The train engine then backed out of the station and took up the same position to haul the next train back, and so on. At Glassmoss a temporary footbridge was erected over the road and between here and Comber a shuttle service operated. This train had an engine at each end, as it was illegal to operate passenger trains with the locomotive at the rear, a similar shuttle service worked between Glassmoss and Newtownards/Donaghadee. At Comber the trains from Belfast used the down platform while the Glassmoss shuttle used the up platform.

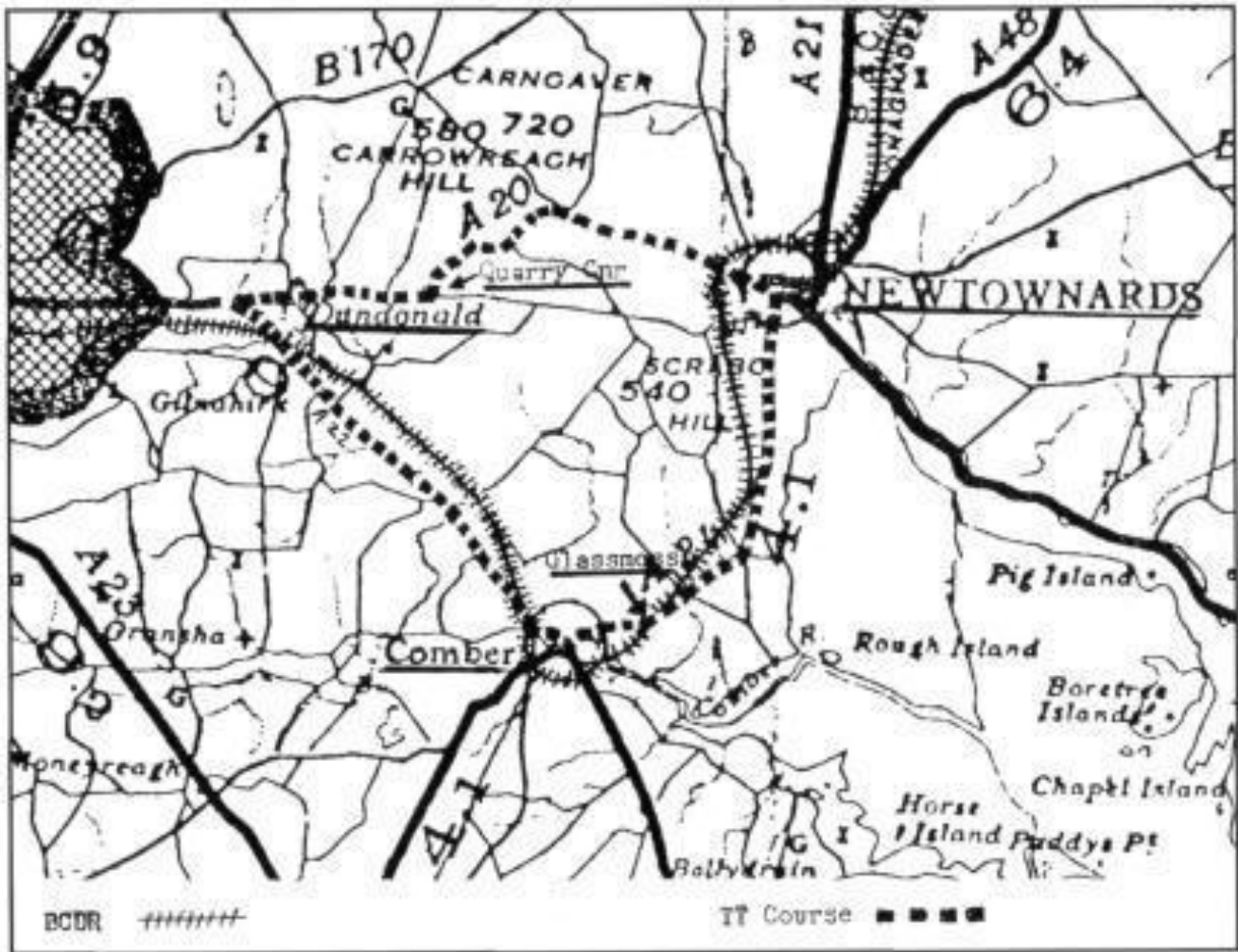
The majority of the trains were worked by standard 4-4-2T engines, but 0-6-0s Nos. 4, 10 and 14 were used on the Comber-Glassmoss shuttle trains, and the larger 4-4-2Ts Nos. 8 and 16, seldom seen off the

Bangor line, also appeared at Comber.

Race day was probably the Company's busiest day of the year. For example, the 1929 race was on Saturday 17<sup>th</sup> August when 27,000 people travelled to the course by train. At Comber the Company erected a grandstand on the bank between the railway and the road, to which the official commentary from the starting point was relayed by apparatus housed in the old North signal cabin. As the illustrations show, trespassing on the railway was so common that no attempt was made to control it and railway photographers were able to gain vantage points which would have been inaccessible on ordinary days.



*0-6-0 No.10 heads an Up train leaving Comber on 7<sup>th</sup> September, the day of the 1935 TT Race.  
(W. Robb)*



## UPLIFTING MATERIAL

The last two or three decades have seen a revolution in materials handling with the introduction of ever more sophisticated machinery. Until well past halfway through the present century industry was rail-orientated, with steam providing the motive power. The demise of steam traction was not so much due to its being ousted by diesel locomotives as to the replacement of the railways themselves by such things as conveyor belts and road vehicles. An example can be seen at the coal jetty built to serve the new Kilroot power station, where a screw augur device takes the coal directly from the hold of a ship on to a belt and thence to its destination. Previously, such a location would probably have been rail-served, with a small saddle-tank locomotive intermittently fussing to and fro, while a crane would have lifted the coal with a grab. Earlier still, the crane would have been steam-powered and instead of a grab would have had a large tub which would have been filled by a squad of men with shovels in the ship's hold.

On the main line railways the most obvious examples of such equipment were the large breakdown cranes, but other lesser machines were in use for general lifting. On a recent visit to India your editor found that even in dieselised areas the immaculate steam breakdown crane was the depot's pride and joy, while at the remaining major steam sheds the breakdown crane was in daily use for heavy lifting while the coaling of tenders was attended to by their smaller brothers.

Although quite a number of steam breakdown cranes still survive in the British Isles - there are two in

Northern Ireland, though neither works - small steam cranes tend to be scarce. However, we also have at least two of these, at the Thompson Dock in Harland & Wolff's shipbuilding complex, where they may be spotted by keen-eyed travellers on the Seacat.



*Crane VS82 out of use fit the Thompson Dock in 1983. (C. Sherrard)*

The following information was supplied by Colin Sherrard along with his article with which Mr Liddle, in his latest Comments & Recollections, politely disagreed in the last Five Foot Three:

“The photographs, taken about 1983, show the last three survivors of H&W’s steam cranes. VS82 was already derelict when photographed, parts having been removed to keep VS23 and VS81 going. 23 was the older of the two still running, having been delivered in January 1942. 81 was built about 1958. They were both still running in 1988 and, as far as I remember, also in 1989.

23 was pushed to the head of the dock by a road vehicle in January 1990 which would, I think, make her the last vehicle to run on the Harbour Tramway. In their last years the cranes were limited to that part of the tramway on the western side of the Thompson Dock and, as far as I know, the reason they survived so long was because the limited clearance on that side of the dock would have made it difficult for a road crane to operate.”



*VS23 in action in 1983 at the Thompson Dock where one of the batch of four ferries built by H&W for BR/Sealink a few years earlier has come for its annual overhaul. Students of matters maritime may be able to identify the ship: three of the four are now on the Larne-Stranraer route.  
(C. Sherrard)*

## **BOOK AND VIDEO REVIEWS**

**Michael McMahon**

### **Dampflokomotiven In Ireland, Richard Heinersdorff.**

It is somewhat unusual to review a book written in a language other than our normal but this book is certainly worth a first!

Largely written by RPSI member Richard Heinersdorff it contains 151 excellently reproduced photographs from notables ranging from Messrs Arnold and Clements to Foster and Friel. The pure text is limited to half a dozen pages with the rest of the book being devoted to photographs, with captions in German. It is amazing how one can work out the language when it is presented beside the photograph!

An excellent book, a must for any serious Irish Railway enthusiast. (I'm sure there is a market, albeit limited, for an English translation!)

### **Irish Railways Traction & Travel (Irish Traction Group), Peter Jones & Andrew Marshall, Metro.**

The third edition has just been published with a nice photo of IÉ 201 on the front cover.

A good book for both the modern enthusiast and historian, there are lots of details of modern day rolling stock and some quite long gone railcars - even for example the GNR and West Clare!

Lots of colour photographs relieve pages of text and tables which, due to the nature of the book, become a bit repetitive.

It is a pity that the published ten pages of set workings on NIR are now out of date with the opening of the cross harbour link.

Certainly another very worthwhile book for reference, especially for those enthusiasts who actually do travel on the railway.

**The West Clare Railway, Patrick Taylor, Plateway Press, Brighton.**

Yes, another book on the WCR and yes you have guessed it - it contains the words of "Are you right ...", etc.!

This volume is, I believe, the biggest project for Plateway Press and at 224 pages it will take a while to study in depth. Photographic reproduction is excellent with lots of previously unpublished material.

Maps and diagrams complement the work which goes to considerable lengths, even down to a table of WCR wagons.

I feel that we have had enough of the West Clare and other narrow gauge systems, I would love to see a book of this style on the 'bigger' railways (in both senses of the word bigger!).

Again an excellent addition to the already bulging library shelves.

**The Midland Great Western Railway Of Ireland, Ernie Shepherd, Midland Publishing.**

This book has been some years in gestation but wow it was worth the wait! Excellent, excellent work by Ernie! This is how you write a book - nice and clear text presented in a non-intimidating fashion of three columns - broken up well with photos and drawings, etc.

All aspects of this excellent railway are covered (the MGWR was of course second to the GNR!), from construction to carriages, via wagons and locomotives.

This book forms an excellent standard work on the Midland; if you want to know about it, look here.

Congratulations to both Ernie and Midland Publishing, I certainly can give them both a list of future titles and I think you all know which one will be first!

Go out now and buy this book before word gets round and they are all gone!

**Twilight Of Steam In Ulster, Films by John Laird, Midland Publishing.**

Excellent work from John Laird again, lots of locomotives on a wide variety of trains throughout the UTA area.

Freight workings are well covered with lots of Moguls and Jeeps, only exceeded by better locomotives in a faded and sometimes blue livery! The coverage of the "Derry Road" and Warrenpoint line is good, while there is some brilliant footage of the Belfast Harbour lines. "Wilfred" and "Patricia" at Courtaulds get a feature, as well as GN locos going to York Road works.

For diesel fans there is a short glimpse of a silver and yellow liveried 121 at Goraghwood and a Jeep shunting MPD cars.

Sound quality is much improved on previous volumes and the commentary is more discreet but still very useful.

A royalty from the sales of this video is being donated to the RPSI, so please buy from RPSI Sales to increase the contribution to the Society.

**Cavan & Leitrim Revival, Assorted contributors, Midland Publishing Ltd.**

A very good work on this once extensive system starts with a very detailed look at the past from all aspects and angles. Towards the end, the present day situation is covered with a 'then and now' look at Dromod and the proposed extension to Mohill. There is quite good coverage of the C&L Railway Company's locomotive No.1, "Dromad", at the shed at Dromod.

Like the Steam in Ulster video, proceeds from the sales are going to the new society at Dromod.



My advice is to buy this video; it is very good, and at the same time help the new society at Dromod to get off the ground.

## **LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

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Dear Editor,

I am very pleased with the way you have reproduced my article on the Greenisland Loop Line. I have just one comment:

In the top photograph on page 27 you have included in the caption the sentence: "What will become the new Down line curves in from the right." This is not correct.

I cannot now recollect what exactly this line is, but it seems to have been a siding of some sort as there is a brown van sitting in it. This photograph was taken from a point near the level crossing on the Monkstown Road near Monkstown Halt. As the article makes clear, the loop line came in under the Monkstown Road a short distance to the right of this photograph.

Yours,

*William Robb*

Belfast



*A break of gauge? After a period of uncertainty Shane's Castle Railway ceased operations on 4<sup>th</sup> September 1994. Here, on the final day, Barclay 0-4-0WT No.3 and Peckett 0-4-0T No.1, ex Bord na Mona and Larne Aluminium Works respectively, approach journey's end with some young passengers who appear intent on a premature exit. (C.P. Friel)*

Dear Editor,

Sam Somerville's photograph of the Sentinel railcar No.401 reminds me that she was acquired at the same time that the halts at Clipperstown, Barn, Downshire Park and Eden were opened.

A now-retired bus driver of my acquaintance in Cookstown was a Boy Scout in Maghera in the 1930s when 401 was acquired as a Scout Hall. I don't know when this use ceased but 401 lay beside Maghera Orange Hall until she finally rotted away about ten years ago.

Yours,

*Bob Hunter*

Carrickfergus



*QLs 4-4-0 No.156 on the 12:20pm Derry-Belfast. (J.A. Cassells)*

Dear Editor,

I was very interested to read the comments on the use of the QLs 4-4-0s on the Derry Road following the appearance of the photograph of No.127 in issue No.39 of FFT. My interest stems from the footplate trip of my friend David Chatfield on the 8:25 Belfast-Derry on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1955. He travelled from Belfast to Strabane and the locomotive was QLs No.156 throughout. Crews were changed at Portadown.

The load I believe was seven and the driver on the Portadown leg of the journey used about 40% cut-off and plenty of full regulator. The relieving driver used a different technique - about 55% cut-off and half regulator. Quite recently in discussing this trip, David remarked that No.156 was a beautiful engine, riding like a coach, running like a sewing machine and steaming so freely that on the easier stretches the fireman had little to do.

I did not make acquaintance with the Derry road until December 1958 when I travelled as a passenger from Belfast to Strabane on an afternoon train from Great Victoria Street. The load was five and the engine was one of the 1948 Class U 4-4-0s which worked the train throughout. Unfortunately, I did not record the number. I was quite surprised to find such a small locomotive on such a lengthy working. I saw it the same evening leaving Strabane on the return working from Derry and there was quite a firework display from the chimney.

On 29<sup>th</sup> December 1958 I was even more surprised when I saw PPs No.43 at Strabane on the morning Derry-Belfast train. The load was five which included a buffet car. Even with this load the climb over the Sperrin Mountains could not have been an easy task for such a small and elderly type. I have often wondered how the crew went on for the coal on the tender appeared to be pulverised! Perhaps some of your members who are better acquainted with PPs performance may be able to comment.

Yours faithfully,

*G. Hayes*

Auchtermuchty

***Our septuagenarian source responds:***

I am not surprised at Mr Hayes' remarks about the steaming powers of the QL class. These had larger grates than the Qs and, with the easy timings in force on the Derry Road in the fifties, No.127 would not have been pressed. Also, at the slow speed the inherent defect in the QLs, the 6½ inch piston valves for the 18 inch cylinders would not have manifested itself. It is interesting that Bob Clements, in his paper on GNR(I) locomotive development (IRRS Journal No.24, Spring 1959), wrote that the QLs rarely exceeded 75 mph in the days when the Compounds, Ss and Qs were daily attaining 85 mph and more. Bob once recorded 82 mph with a QL but it was with the paper train of only 2 bogies. The highest he ever noted with one of these locomotives with anything of a load was 77 mph down Rush Bank, load 6 bogies, in the course of a Drogheda-Dublin run of 31¾ minutes net, start to stop average exactly 60 mph.

The QLs were converted to piston valve operation when superheated on account of the trouble experienced with lubrication of slide valves at the higher pressures. It is strange that Dundalk, so progressive in many ways, seemed unable to solve this lubrication problem with pressures of 175 psi, when Inchicore successfully superheated the 321s (a very similar type of engine), working at 180 psi but retaining their slide valves. I wonder was there any marked difference in the degree of superheat, making the steam of the GN locomotives markedly drier than was the case with the 321s.

Certainly the U class were rare on Belfast-Derry trains, though I travelled on one such working from Omagh to Belfast when time was kept - this was one of the 1947/8 batch. Mr Hayes may well have been surprised to see a PP working a Derry-Belfast train in 1958 but for many years before 1914 these were the standard locomotives for such trains, scheduled at times not significantly different from those in force in the 1930s, and these were the original non-superheated engines. I think that the maximum load was either eleven or twelve (6-wheelers) roughly equal to 5½ or 6 bogies. Unfortunately, since moving to Australia I no longer have all my railway reference material but will go through what remains and will be surprised if I do not find something of interest regarding the PPs on the Derry Road. In their prime they put up some outstanding performances on that line.

***... And Irwin Pryce adds:***

Mr Hayes's comments on locomotives working the Great Northern "Derry Road" have prompted me to look back through records of the line and its locomotives.

Those who nowadays travel on the (shorter) surviving route to the Maiden City by modern diesel train might well look in surprise at the quality of service offered by the Great Northern almost 100 years

ago. For many years the Mail was allowed 2 hours 35 minutes, serving major stations, and offered its clients a choice of three classes of accommodation together with a full restaurant car service. Timekeeping must have been of a high order as Fred Graham tells me of Driver Tommy Jess, on his regular engine No.131, having to be instructed to adjust his running so as to avoid arriving during the two minutes silence on Armistice Day.



***PP No.50 pilots U No.201 as they emerge from Dungannon tunnel with the 1:45pm Omagh-Belfast on 1<sup>st</sup> August 1959. (A. Donaldson)***

The PPs shared the virtues of that happily thought out family of 4-4-0s in that they steamed freely and economically and with the virtues of Stephenson motion were well adapted for the slogging work demanded by the Derry Road. High speeds were neither necessary nor possible on the curving and often boggy road and the spiral springs which gave the engines a lifelong reputation for bouncing at speed cannot have helped. Designers of half a century later had not even then come to grips with designing a vehicle for boggy ground as I recall the sight of 56 sober faced passengers bouncing in unison in a BUT railcar at some 60 mph between Portadown and Annaghmore!

Interestingly, the records of Drew Donaldson show No.43 working the 9:20am Belfast-Derry on 8<sup>th</sup> December 1958. With 160 tons tare Driver Dobbin covered Dungannon-Omagh in 40 minutes 37 seconds. Unusually for Drew, the log was annotated with the comment that the pre-war schedule of the 8:25 Mail was 40 minutes with mechanical staff exchanges at Dungannon Junction, Donaghmore, Pomeroy, Carrickmore and Beragh for which No.43 was not equipped.

I have recorded several runs with both 'old' and 'new' U class locomotives on through workings to Derry and in general they did not shine. On one occasion No.200 "Lough Melvin" made a brave

stagger with 7 full bogies on the 2:45pm Belfast-Derry. In each case the small boiler seemed not equal to the task, but then this was not what they were designed for. No.202 "Louth" on the 2:00pm Belfast-Omagh, extended to Derry for the Christmas period of 1960, was sufficiently exerted to reach 70 mph with 5 bogies on the descent beyond Lurgan.

I never had the chance to time any of the QLs mentioned in Mr Hayes's letter. These really do seem to have been the 'black sheep' of the Great Northern. But why? Searching through Drew's logs and those of Macartney Robbins reveals little of note. Indeed the latter comments on a run with No.127 on the 4:40pm Drogheda-Dublin with 7 bogies and a van on 24<sup>th</sup> August 1946 where the engine had laboured terribly on level road and needed the downhill section through Rush to reach 66 mph, "These engines are not particularly speedy at the best of times." Another run with No.127 on the 9:45am Dublin-Derry on 20<sup>th</sup> July 1946 with a modest 141 tons also shows a lack of capacity for speed as it was not until Dunleer was passed that 60 mph was reached.

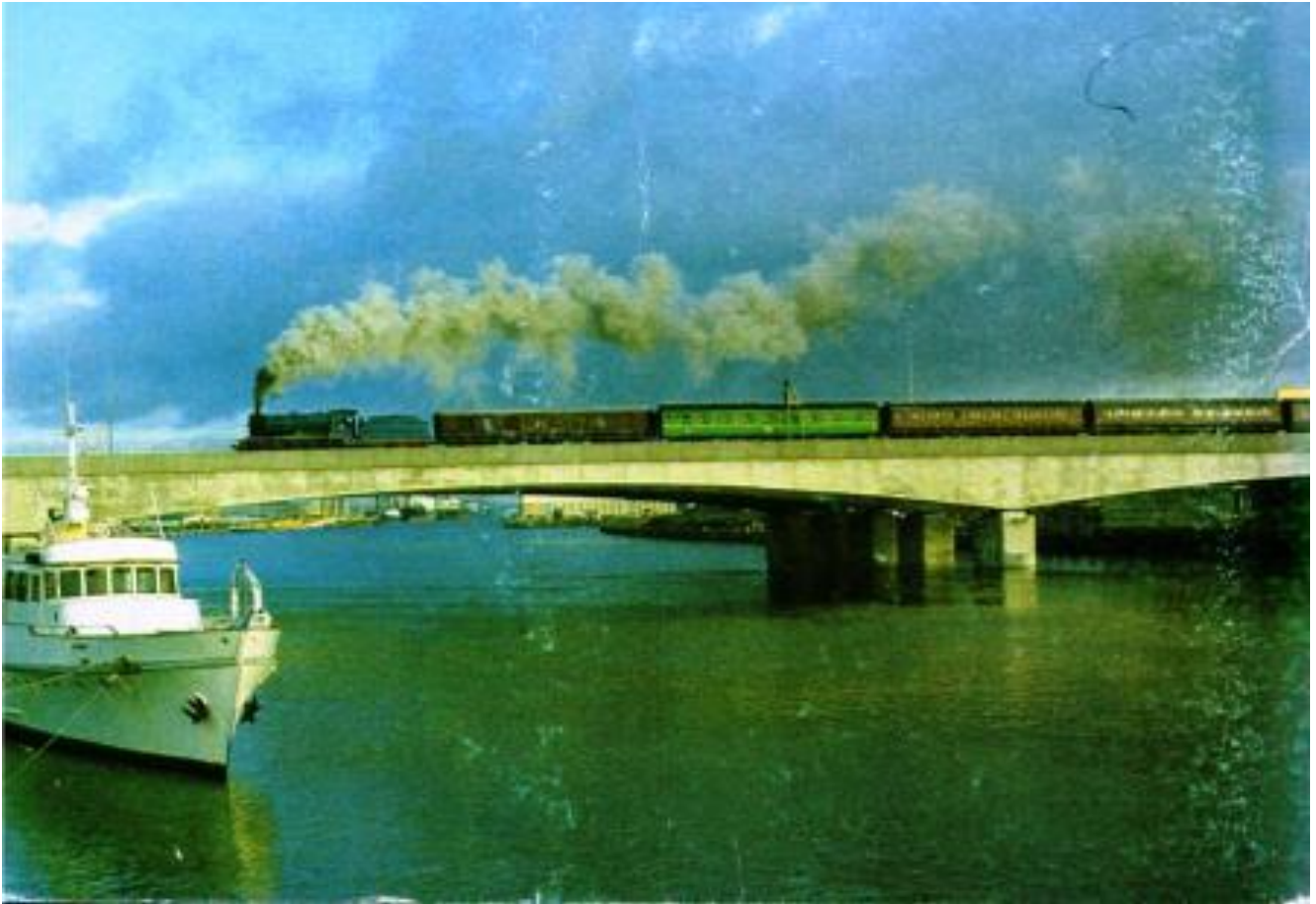
The 6½" piston valves feeding 17¾" cylinders can't have helped, nor indeed the unusual arrangement whereby the valves were placed one above the other between the cylinders. Having spent hours chipping carbon from the ports of No.171 I can imagine that the QLs must have been a nightmare in that respect. These unsatisfactory features apparently were introduced during superheating in order to avoid raising the centre line of the boiler and used rocker arms to operate valves parallel to and above the cylinders.

Any offers of an article on these most interesting locomotives?

*[Interesting and somewhat confusing. Both passenger and goods versions of the QL class appear to have had an increase in cylinder diameter on being superheated in the late 1920s. Some sources refer to the LQGs class; others to QLGs. The latter appears a more logical designation for the goods derivative of the QL class. - Ed.]*



*Deputising for No.171, No.461 brought the Lough Atalia tour North on 16<sup>th</sup> May 1994 and is seen here nearing the summit of Kellystown bank. (N. Poots)*



*Disgusted by endless murky weather, the photographer had planned a Sunday lie-in but was roused by a glimpse of sun and hastened to the Lagan Weir to record the departure of No.85 with the morning working on the final Santa day, 18<sup>th</sup> December 1994. (N. Poots)*