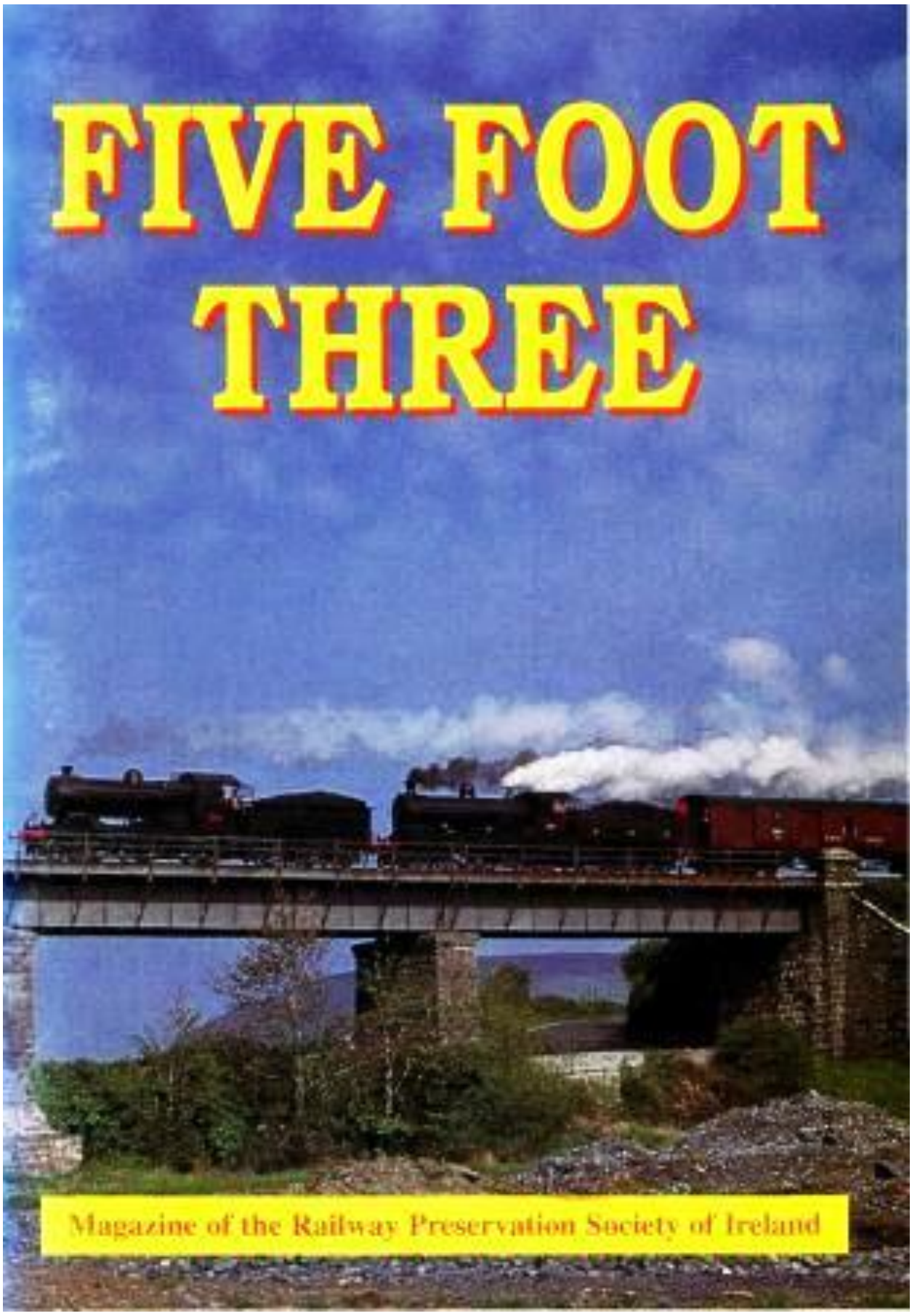
FIVE FOOT THREE



Magazine of the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland

FIVE FOOT THREE
No.43
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Editor: Nelson Poots

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Cover Photograph: With "bare Ben Bulben" just visible under the bridge, No.461 pilots No.171 near Ballysodare on the Knocknarea tour, 12th May 1996. (N. Poots)

EDITORIAL

Those who have watched the Mrs. Merton Show on TV will be familiar with her tongue-in-cheek phrase, "Let's have a heated debate". Some heat has been generated in recent times in the Society's News Letters and, in the best Irish tradition, it has had something of a North/South dimension. Bearing in mind that "opinions expressed do not necessarily represent those of the Council ...", what follows may been seen either as conciliation or pot-stirring.

Conflicting views have been expressed as to who does what and who does it better. To put it crudely, it has been suggested that the South puts bums on seats while the North provides the seats and the means of hauling them around the country. Of course, this is an over-simplification, certainly as regards the seats, but not entirely untrue. Indeed one might ask whether, if it were entirely true, it would be such a

bad thing. Whilst they have access to a much larger pool, in which the fish appear to be more willing to bite, the Dublin Operations team can nevertheless take credit for major successes in attracting both customers and sponsors.

Although, as has been reported in the past, Dublin has produced some spectaculars such as the lifting of No.461 at Inchicore and the rapid re-tubing of No.4 in 1990 there is no doubt that the Society's major engineering base is at Whitehead where, at least as far as locomotives are concerned, there is hardly any job which has not been tackled and overcome with minimal expense. Reading the railway press, one cannot but be amazed - not least at where they get the money from - by the expenditure of cross-channel societies on contracting out much-publicised jobs which the RPSI quietly gets on with 'in house'. Whilst this is ultimately rewarding for those who plan and execute such work, it could be argued that financial economy is achieved at the expense of the prolonged use of volunteer labour. Although the labour is willingly supplied, the volunteers are few and the net effect is that the results, while commendable, can take a long time to achieve. Whilst the Locomotive Officer and his team, as enthusiasts, derive satisfaction from their 'in house' achievements, there have been occasions when locomotives could have been more quickly returned to revenue-earning service if money had been available to have at least some of the work done by outside contractors.

Although we have had problems with coaching stock these can usually be overcome - albeit rather expensively - by hiring vehicles, this is not the case with locomotives without which we are lost. Your editor has been accused of being partisan - if it is partisan to point out the frugality of some departments and the prodigality of others, then so be it. Happily, as you will read, a more realistic-attitude now prevails, from which all departments should benefit.

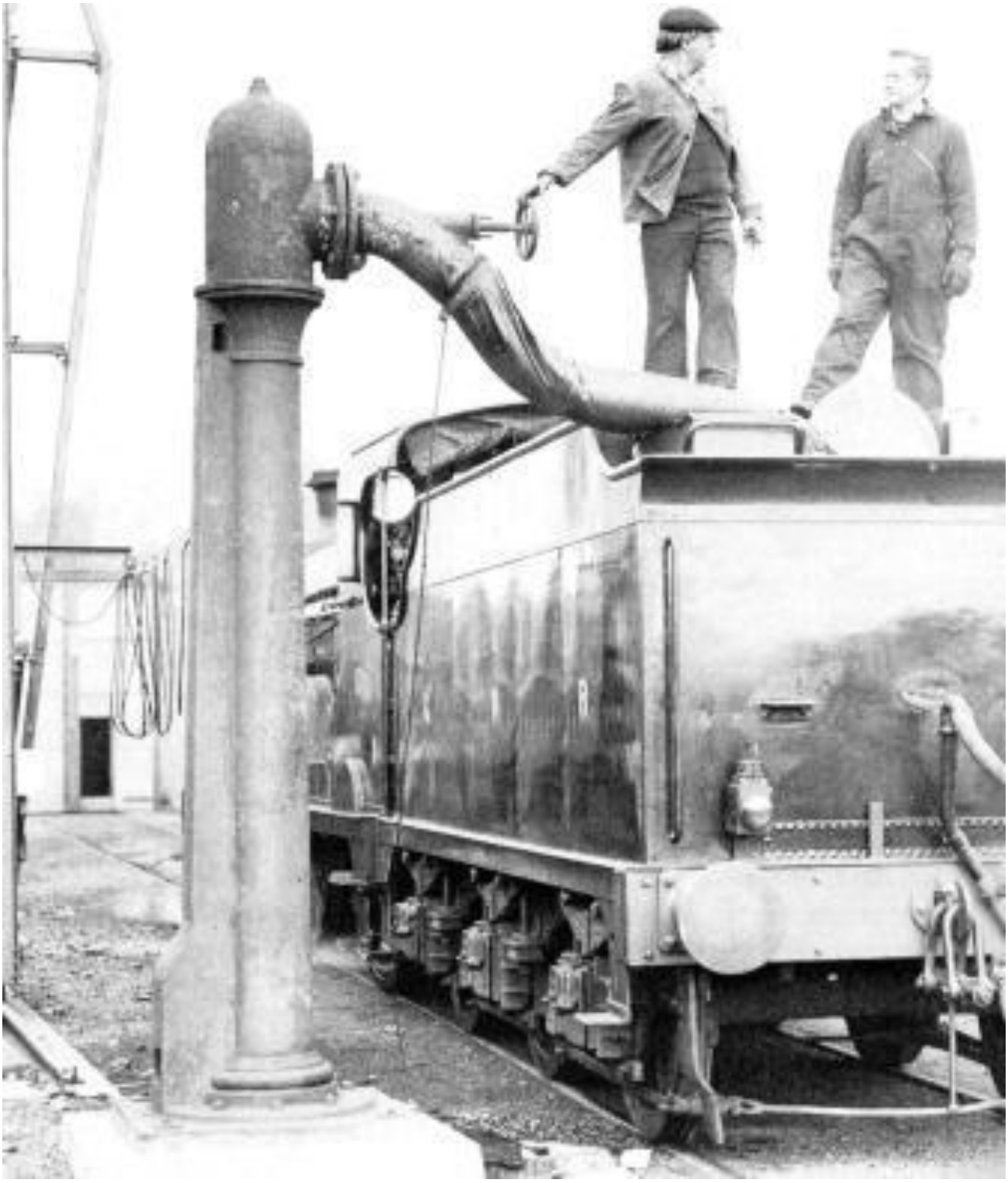
A well-known railway journal has recently been making something of a cause celebre of a 22-year old driver-cum-deputy mechanical foreman on an English preserved line. This may have given rise to mutterings by persons of 40-50 who were the last generation to experience 'real' steam (one such being the writer, now nearer 60 than 50!).

However, assuming that all the major work currently being put into locomotives is not just to "do us our day", it is vital that younger persons be brought into the scene and involved in getting to know what makes the things function. Although some of our younger members are rostered for locomotive duties their knowledge of the machinery is often scant, if only because their regular work is in other departments. It could be said that they ought to work in the loco department to acquire the necessary knowledge but, with so few regular workers anywhere, if they do that then who will be left to work in the carriage or site departments? Ultimately, the answer must be to attract to the active membership more young people who like to see machinery actually working, as opposed to merely poking buttons and gazing at a screen. With a larger pool of workers, those who would take to do with locomotives could have the opportunity to spend time in their often unsavoury innards and thereby acquire practical experience.

Meanwhile, at the rumour mill, it is suggested that Irish Rail will in the not too distant future find themselves with a surplus of Cravens coaches and that they would not be averse to parting with some of them to the RPSI. Brilliant! With the on-going modernisation of the railways North and South the day cannot be far off when, regardless of their historical or other merits, our present coaches could be an embarrassment to all concerned. Let's grab a rake of those handsome and 'steam-compatible' coaches as soon as we get the chance! The only alternatives appear to be expensive acquisitions from across the water or equally (or perhaps potentially more) expensive redundant NIR vehicles. With suitable stock we could again have the freedom of Irish rails and, above all, get back on to the Belfast-Dublin route.

On the subject of routes, you will read elsewhere of the 25mph restriction imposed on the Northern Santa trains, following the Damhead derailment. Although it was not too inconvenient on the "Santas"

it would be a very different story with the likes of a Portrush Flyer when, in addition to making a nonsense of its title, it could be well-nigh impossible to arrange a path for the train. While it would be inappropriate to make any comment on the derailment we must hope that the present situation will soon be satisfactorily resolved.



While watering No.171 Irwin Pryce and Paul Newell discuss the merits of the water column rescued from Dundalk Barrack Street by the good offices of Paul. The built-in heating system (not in use) can be seen on the left. (C.P. Friel)

It was with surprise and regret that his many RPSI friends learned of the premature retirement of NIR driver George Gaw. Over the Society's many years of main line operations George was a familiar figure on the footplate but a medical problem has put an end to this. As if that were not enough, his wife, Margaret, has also had to leave the railway on health grounds. Like his father-in-law, the late Davy McDonald, George was not a flamboyant or outspoken man but one who just got on with the job in a competent manner. Also like Davy, George would give matters due consideration and then sum up in a few telling words. On an engine it was similar; steady when need be but with occasional brilliant spurts when the conditions justified it. Although his seniority would have entitled him to spend his time on the driver's side. George was always willing to let his mate have a go or to take over the firing if things were getting a bit difficult.

In recent years he had, perforce, to become accustomed to Great Northern engines and it is to his credit that, rather than set his face against them in the traditional parochial manner, he adapted to their ways - in the face of much banter - while always yearning for the return of No.4. Sadly, he won't have charge of her when she returns, rejuvenated, to the main lines. However, on an upbeat note, the rumour mill also says that the RPSI hasn't seen the last of George!

CHAIRMAN'S COLUMN — Sullivan Boomer

It has been a strange year. After a good start over Easter, and a generally successful International Railtour to Sligo, our Summer Season promised well, but all did not go as planned. Crew shortages later in the season caused a cancellation of one of the Dublin operations, while an attempt to launch a new style of train was not as well supported as we would have liked. Similarly, out of Belfast we were facing crew shortages due to the unexpected illness of our two main steam drivers. Rapidly, one trainee who has had a lot of practice was passed out, and he carried most of the season virtually single handed.

The Belfast season ended spectacularly, but not the way we would like, when No.85's tender derailed just before Coleraine on the "Atlantic Coast Express". Hopefully, by the time you read this Northern Ireland Railways will have completed their investigations into the incident, and we will have discussed with them, and the Inspecting Officer, our programme for 1997. For the "Santa Specials" out of Belfast to Whitehead a temporary speed limit of 25 miles per hour has been applied.

As you know, we have been unable to run between Belfast and Dublin for a number of years because of the 'wooden body ban' on our coaches. We have for some time been discussing with Iarnród Éireann the acquisition of Craven coaches, and we are now seeing some light at the end of the tunnel. It would seem that within the next couple of years we should be able to get a rake of Cravens which will allow a return to the main lines in our own stock.

Our big tragedy of the year was the fire at Whitehead which destroyed several coaches. Coming after the loss of a couple of vehicles at Mullingar, this was a body blow to our representative collection of traditional Irish passenger vehicles. I appreciate that our Carriage Department has been under pressure trying to keep so many vehicles fit for traffic with a limited volunteer workforce, and I admit to a certain personal anathema to the concept of scrapping an historic vehicle which deserves a better fate. Alas, I fear realism has got to be faced, and some vehicles will no doubt disappear from our stock list for ever. Personally, I hope that some can be saved in the hope of future restoration. In the meantime, a criminal damage claim is being progressed in the hope that we may recover some value for the efforts which have literally gone up in smoke.

I must finish on a positive note. After many years it now looks as if we may get our long awaited Locomotive Workshop. This could perhaps be more accurately described as a heavy engineering shop, with smithy, machine tool and overhead craneage facilities - really the ideal Erecting Shop, but with the facility for bogie repairs and all major engineering processes. It's going to cost a lot of money, and

even with grant aid and promised donations we are still in need of somewhere around £25,000 at least to carry out the construction. We have an agreed tender price which will hold into the Spring, but we must take a definite decision early in the year, and the Council can only do this if there is enough funding available. The Society cannot afford an overdraft! We believe, with the help of all our members, and friends, this money can be raised.

So there you are - a year past like the curate's egg good in parts - and a year and more to come with, I believe, fairly good prospects. And we're still looking at other prospects for development, so there's still plenty of hope for the future. Now where did I put my lucky rabbit's foot and the four leaf clover?

Nos. 85, 90 and 186 at "Inchicore 150" on 15th June 1996. (C.P. Friel)

NEWS FROM COUNCIL **Paul McCann**

1996 was the year, I believe, when some of the threats which have been hanging over us for a number of years finally looked as if they were going to descend and swallow us up. Happily, that did not happen.

At the start of the year, the outlook was reasonable. There was a respectable surplus of funds, mostly due to the "Michael Collins" film contract in 1995, and the heads of the 'spending' departments were looking forward to getting their share. The main recipient projects were: the overhaul of No.4, bogie overhauls al Whitehead, and weather-proofing of Park Royal coaches in Dublin. With the allocations made, the financial situation resumed, more or less, to the usual hand to mouth existence.

On-going since the latter part of 1995 were discussions on the possibility of hiring consultants to advise on the Vintage Train Project put to Council by David Humphries and Chas Meredith. A shortlist of three firms had been drawn up and Iarnród Éireann and Bord Failte both agreed to help finance the study to the tune of up to £5,000 each. The agreed firm of consultants was Tourism & Leisure Partners who have a lot of experience in the field of interest. At the start of the year T & L set about interviewing all the members of Council and other relevant persons. While the major part of the research was carried out early in the year, work continued until the report was issued in August. While the initial reaction to the report was one of disappointment - it found it could not favour the Vintage

Train project as proposed by the Society - it soon became clear that a number of suggestions and pointers put forward in the report would be worthwhile if acted upon. The view in Council was ultimately that the report was money well spent for the research carried out. Hopefully, the Operation teams will now take on board some of the report's recommendations.

At the AGM in Dublin in March, on a proposal from the meeting, a Steering Committee was set up to look at the current, and possible future, structure and operation of Council. To that end, two members from the south and two from the north were appointed to the committee. One Council member from the north and one from the south were subsequently appointed. At the time of writing the Committee has yet to report to Council on the recommendations they hope to put to the 1997 AGM.

On 22nd May disaster struck at Whitehead when a number of our carriages were destroyed or damaged following an arson attack. Following police investigations, a number of persons were subsequently apprehended. A criminal damage claim has been lodged with the Northern Ireland Office and the news of the success, or otherwise, of the claim is awaited.

No.171 passes Carnalea en mute to Bangor with the Helen's Bay Golf Club Centenary charter on 30th March 1996. (C.P. Friel)

As far as operations went it was a year of mixed fortunes. In the south, a successful season came to an unfortunate end when a cancellation had to be made due to lack of railway company crews. In the north, the 1995 Santa operations were poorly patronised in comparison to the previous years, yet the Easter and "Atlantic Coast Express" operations were virtually sold out, taking everyone in the operations team by surprise. It was very unfortunate that the latter operation had to be curtailed due to No.85's tender becoming derailed near Coleraine. Both the Society and NIR investigations into the incident have, to date, found no area where fault can be attached to the Society's locomotive or rolling stock.

As the cancellation of the Greystones operation in September shows, the Dublin Operations team are going to have their work cut out to organise trains to suit the availability of steam crews. Likewise the northern team's troubles have increased with the retirement due to ill health of one of NIR's steam drivers.

It was interesting that IÉ organised two special excursions with their own stock hauled by a Society locomotive during the Summer season. Could this be a new market to be tapped?

In May we learned that of the 5 individual options we had submitted, ERDF had agreed to fund them all. This was unexpected and leaves the Society in the potentially embarrassing position of not being able to fund our share (50%) of the £160,000 total. Towards the end of the year it is looking likely that any available funds will be put towards the long awaited Locomotive Workshop at Whitehead - total cost £80,000. An appeal to the members is being started to help raise the Society's £40,000 share. Should the money be raised, the Workshop could be built within a very short time and be available for the summer season.

Further assistance is being sought from the Lottery Heritage Fund for the Locomotive Workshop and to complete the overhaul of locomotive No.4.

On insurance matters, we can report that, for once, there have been only minor increases this year - in fact a number of premiums have been reduced. The only blot on the landscape is the recent increase by the Chancellor on the tax levied on insurance premiums (90% of our payments are made under British jurisdiction). Insurance is still our major overhead and it is the cause of most of the debate at Council as to what project should get what allocation of the small monthly budget which is left for Site, Carriage & Wagon and Locomotives. Obviously, locomotives normally get the lion's share but the carriage men usually defend their corner vigorously. Expenditure on the site at Mullingar is minimal while that at Whitehead is not much more.

Appeals to the membership for help in various departments have been a feature of Society News-Letters, and to a lesser extent in this journal, over the years - and this year has been no different. At the start of the year a flyer was included with a mailshot asking for volunteers to help with the Sunday train rides at Whitehead (one of the least arduous of posts within the Society). A mix up at the printers meant that twice the number of leaflets was printed than requested and this allowed the appeal to be included in two consecutive mailshots. As a result of these appeals exactly no-one offered help. This, together with the poor performance of the early summer operations and the vandalism at Whitehead, led to a very dejected Honorary Secretary being prompted to write the piece in the Comment column of the August News-Letter. It was rumoured that a number of people took exception to the article - the point was made that the News-Letter (probably correctly) is not the place to air these views - but I was told that a number of members subsequently volunteered their services to work on locomotives and coaches, more than the two members who replied to the article. Appeals for help, of the type printed this year, would seem to be a waste of time and money. Presumably the Operations team which made the appeal will have to try a different approach next year.

Membership figures for 1996 were slightly down on 1995, finishing up at 1,014. The breakdown of that total is: Northern Ireland, 384; Éire, 316; Great Britain, 277; Overseas, 37. Or to put it another way; Adult, 717; Senior, 170; Life, 62; Family, 26; Junior, 25; Honorary, 11; Societies, 3. Obviously from those figures it would be beneficial for our future if the number of Junior members could be increased. To that end, and following a suggestion made at the AGM, it was agreed to raise the age limit for Junior membership from 16 to 18. It is hoped that any future rise in membership rates will not be passed on to juniors in order to make that category of membership more attractive.

My thanks as always to Northern Ireland Railways and Iarnród Éireann for allowing us the use of their respective board rooms for our Council meetings and also to the station master at Dundalk whose premises we use for our one meeting each year on 'neutral' ground.

Posts of Special Responsibility to the Secretary for 1995 were: Charles Friel (Belfast Meetings); Nelson Poots ("Five Foot Three" Editor); John Creaner (Legal Adviser); Johnny Glendinning (Museums Liaison Officer); Eddie Lewis (Insurance Adviser). Although not a PSR, I am indebted to

Peter Rigney in Dublin who keeps me up to date with southern information, gossip and trivia for the members' News-Letter. Also this year I would like to thank Barry Carse who helps process a large number of the membership payments in the south. Finally, in case he should not be mentioned elsewhere, I believe the Society owes a debt of gratitude to Alan McRobert who, in his own quiet way, has been producing a series of videos of our trains for a number of years now. The videos are very popular and are a welcome source of income.

My thanks to all the above and to each member for supporting us through another year.

NORTHERN OPERATIONS — Heather Boomer

After a disheartening performance over Christmas 1995, the Belfast Area Operations Committee tried an Easter Bunny operation, which similarly ran between Belfast Central and Whitehead, but which was much more successful. It was not that the 1995 Santas were a poor effort, but after Christmas 1994, which was so successful, we were endeavouring to duplicate our performance. Like Peace, it was not to be. It took the Easter Bunny trips to give us the encouragement needed for the rest of the season.

The Knocknarea International Railtour ran very successfully, both mechanically and operationally. There were no failures, few hiccups, and, all round, the Tour benefited from enthusiastic Irish Rail support. We were also encouraged by some additional support from overseas, particularly from America and Australia, both of which markets we aim to tap further to the benefit of Tralee.

No.461, piloting No.171, arrives at Enfield on Sunday, 12th May 1996. (C.P. Friel)

This year in June, instead of the normal run to Derry, we had hoped to run a special to Dundalk before the remodelling of the station. Overtaken by events, this proved impossible. Indeed, the permanent way work ruled out any operation south of Lisburn. The Midsummer Steam and Jazz went ahead, although not as well organised and supported as we would normally expect. The Committee feels that the whole

June programme needs to be refreshed in some way and we are already looking into diversification, including a Country and Western evening.

The Flyers were, as usual, increasingly busy as the season progressed. Essential maintenance meant that we were a coach short for the whole season, but this only proved problematic on the August runs when we had to turn people away.

To compensate, the Committee is planning to move the season back at least one week, to try and avoid the traditional holiday period. The fare was increased this year for the first time in three years, which may have cost us a few passengers on the early runs, but does not explain the fact that we turned away people on the latter runs (a full coach load on the fourth Castlerock run). On balance, the Committee feels that the increase was justified, but may have been unfortunate in the political climate.

On 13th May 1996, the third day of the annual "Two-Day" tour, No.85 heads for Portrush over a rather handsome piece of track near Knockmore. (C.P. Friel)

The Atlantic Coast Express has over the last few years become a very popular train, particularly with the GB market, and many enthusiasts travel to Belfast to enjoy a 200 mile round trip over single line through some of the finest scenery available anywhere in these islands. This year was no exception. With an almost capacity load, including a film crew, who were making a feature for the television programme Holiday Ireland (one of several media crews of the season ...), we felt on top of the world. All was going extremely well, until ...

Until we approached Damhead crossing, about two miles of Coleraine, when my day fell apart. At this point, there was a clunk. Initial investigations told us that the leading wheel-set of the tender had left the rails. In a bare half mile, the train was brought to a full stop by the locomotive crew. No-one was

hurt. Damage to Society property was fortunately limited to a roller bearing on No.85's tender, and some scuffing and marking of the wheel-set. Turning on the wheel-lathe at Whitehead cured the scuffing, but we also discovered that the bearing could not be repaired, and a 'spare' from the large tender was substituted for the damaged unit. A new bearing would have meant such a delay that we would have lost the 1996 Santa operations, and incurred a minimum £1,000 cost. Our thanks go to Northern Ireland Railways, who organised the fire brigade to help get passengers off the train, and buses to take them home. Need I say, we never got to Derry ...

Because the incident is classified as 'notifiable' to the Safety Inspectorate a full accident investigation was undertaken by the Society and the railway company. The final outcome is still awaited but will hopefully be completed in time to decide the 1997 programme. Temporary restrictions had to be introduced to cover the Santa Specials this year, and these were operated at a maximum speed of 25mph. Santa didn't complain, as his schedule is normally written for a maximum 30mph, and it takes the bearded gent the whole journey to hand out his presents. Irrespective, most of the Santa trains were filled to capacity, and the customers appeared to be quite happy with their slower than usual journey.

Already there has been strong interest in the 1997 Slieve Mish International Railtour, and the Committee will be getting seriously down to work over the next couple of months planning the season's local programme. For that, we require the outcome of the enquiry.

My thanks go to the limited number of reliable volunteers, some old, some new, who kept the trains running this year. Other people cry out for background help in fixing coaches and locomotives, but what I need are on-the-day people. BAOC are looking into the possibility of running a few short courses in Coach Stewarding and other practical skills for on-the-day operations. Never have you had such an opportunity to have some free travel (and improve your CV). To those of you who live too far away we are always receptive to ideas and extra financial remuneration to cover the costs of the extra safety features. Over the last few years, we have introduced on-train radios, and have now had to introduce a mobile phone. All of these things may sound far removed from the running of steam trains, but still cost money, and are a necessity to fit in with modern day safety standards. If you feel guilty about not being able to help at Whitehead, an extra £10 from you will go a long way. And if you didn't travel on every train in 1996, we'll forgive you if you travel on most of the trains in the 1997 season.

Please give some help.

SOUTHERN OPERATIONS 1996 — Peter Rigney

The purpose of an article such as this is to give a flavour of the Dublin operations during the year under review, concentrating on the out of the ordinary. As indicated last year, the Dublin season has by now a fairly pre-determined shape of Enfield, Midsummer's Night Steam, 3 Rosslares, a Greystones, and finishing the year with two Santas.

In 1996, the formula was modified in the following manner.

The third Rosslare was changed to a Sixties night special to Mullingar.

The Greystones was dropped in anticipation of engineering possessions related to electrification. These did not materialise, but an attempt to re-insert the Greystones in our schedule fell foul of drivers' holiday arrangements.

If 1995 was the movie year for us, with the Collins Movie and The Corrs video, 1996 was not a success on this front, with two days filming for different companies being cancelled at an extremely late stage. However this was compensated for by six days of crew training, four days of work for IÉ, and a charter to Rathdrum.

As I write, the Santa trips for this year have just concluded. The 1995 operations were almost filled to

capacity, and few expected that the 1996 operations would exceed this record. In fact, the trains filled by word of mouth, with few if any tickets available after the last week in November. Engineering works at Glasnevin Junction caused some delay, but the customers of all ages seemed happy. Over the last number of years, we have been blessed with mild December weather for these trips. One wonders just how long our luck will hold on this front!

During the train-splitting part of the Knocknarea tour, No.461 collects the single line token from the signalman at Killucan on 11th May 1996. (C.P. Friel)

CREW TRAINING

In late January/early February, six trips were run in connection with the training of seven new firemen, three from Connolly and four from Inchicore. The three days of footplate experience were preceded by two days of classroom work. The training trips were run to Mullingar and to Drogheda, the nearest turntables to Dublin. On the longer Mullingar trips which took place in January, coal was taken in Mullingar.

Coaling in snow is an experience not to be recommended. No.461 was used and due to a malfunction on the GN turntable in Connolly was turned first in Inchicore and then on the ex DSER table in Connolly, on which it just barely fits.

On the day of the AGM, No.461 (out of steam) and diner 88 were part of an exhibition train for the visit of the Institute of Railway Signal Engineers to Dublin.

Also in the consist on Connolly's Platform One was Mk3 stock and a 201 class loco.

MAINSTREAM OPERATIONS

These were as described in the introduction, with the following items of note:

Midsummer's Night Steam - This trip was filled to capacity, and ran with the assistance of Dawn

Farm Foods and the Army Catering Corps. This was the first outing of coach 1142 and loco No.171 on a DAOC operation. No.171's turn of speed delighted the timers and annoyed the catering department, whose sales opportunities were restricted.

Sea Breezes - Only two trips arranged to Rosslare Europort (as it is now known). No.171 deputised for No.461 on the first outing when No.461's newly installed brick arch collapsed. The second run turned back in Enniscorthy, after injector trouble on No.461. By that stage the technical problems had been resolved, but running on to Rosslare would have meant an unacceptably late arrival back in Dublin.

The third Rosslare was replaced with a Sixties night, building on the Midsummer's Night Steam format. This train was not well filled although it did make a small profit. A number of reasons were advanced for the disappointing numbers, among them being lack of definition (some thought a sixties night was for the over sixties), novelty of the operation and the timing which required customers to pay for tickets from their first pay packet after the August Holidays. All these items will have to be considered in the planning of the 1997 season.

INCHICORE 150

To celebrate the 150th anniversary of Inchicore Works. IÉ ran an open day on 15th and 16th June. The original best estimate of an attendance of 5,000 was wildly exceeded, with over 15,000 visitors taking advantage of the sunshine. In addition to providing a stall, the Society exhibited the following vehicles:

Coaches - Park Royal 1383, diner 88 and NCC 91 were on display outside Diesel 1 opposite a line-up of contemporary stock.

Brake standard 1916, NCC 238, Bredin 1335 and Diner 2421 were on display with walk through facilities in the carriage conversion shop, along with a De Dietrich coach and a TPO under restoration for An Post. 2421 acted as a Society hospitality vehicle. The Society sales stand was also in this location. (Inchicore-built first 1142 was in the works but was not displayed.)

Locos - Nos.171, 461, 186 and 85 were on display along with the Inchicore steam crane and Westrail's No.90 - ironically the only Inchicore-built product on display. No.186 was reunited with its tender and was repainted for the occasion. No.85 was in steam, having come down with 1142 and 91 and returning with 238 and 91. The prime photographic opportunity of the two days was surely on the Sunday evening when No.85 shunted the crane prior to returning North.

The Inchicore event placed strong demands on Society stewards, particularly on the locos, where a small number of junior members worked untiringly to answer questions, stop kids using the locos (particularly No.90) as a climbing frame, and regulate the 100 foot queue of people wanting to climb on No.85 and blow the whistle.

CHARTERS

We operated three charters - two for IÉ and one for a travel agent.

The first charter operated on 5th June, when No.461 and 5 coaches ran to Rathdrum empty to collect a party of Dutch and German tourists who had travelled from Waterford. Laura Gillen & company laid on a highly professional catering operation, and a Jazz band in 2421 added to the atmosphere. After a leisurely run up the coast in bright sunshine we left our passengers in Lansdowne Road, thus finishing a day which was adjudged a success by all concerned, and which will hopefully lead to repeat business.

Arising from newspaper photos of No.461 on the Enfield trips, IÉ decided that steam haulage of one of their Derby day specials would be a good idea. This was quickly arranged, and on the morning of 30th June, No.171 emerged from the Phoenix Park tunnel, before backing down on its train of six Mk2 coaches. After a smart run to the Curragh we left our race-going passengers, and proceeded to Kildare to shunt the train. No.171 then ran back to Inchicore to turn, before returning to Kildare for the return

trip.

No.171's other foray onto the main line was on 10th August, when it hauled an IÉ charter to Kilkenny to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the opening of the GSWR line to Carlow. The train of three Cravens and a GSV was filled to capacity, and the timetable gave plenty of time to enjoy the sights of Kilkenny - although heavy rain forced many customers to take shelter in Langton's award winning public house! This was the first occasion that a steam locomotive used the new Lavistown triangle to turn. No.171 ran out to Thomastown and back to Kilkenny via Bagenalstown, before returning to Dublin. This was the last steam trip prior to retirement of Inchicore driver Gerry Keenihan, who in a fast run from Kildare to Heuston certainly went out in style!

No.461 with its train of Mk2 coaches at Kildare with the Derby Day charter, 30th June 1996. Shortly afterwards, a 201 class arrived with a rake of Cravens! (N. Poots)

1996 was a very successful year for Southern Operations. Even leaving aside the six days operation for crew training, it was a very intensive year, with a loco in steam on twelve days, compared to eleven in 1995. Between 16th and 30th June, for example, we operated on three successive weekends. We have developed new products, and broadened our market. The rewards were manifest in the Santa trips, which were sold out by late November, with the advertising budget. The lesson to be drawn from this is that the commercial and operational future of the Society lies in days out for the general public, well marketed and giving value for money.

DUBLIN AREA MAINTENANCE

The operation of a season such as described above requires a considerable maintenance back up. Unlike Northern operations, the Society does not own a maintenance base in the Dublin area. We are therefore the 'tenants' of Iarnród Éireann in three locations: Inchicore, Heuston Yard and Connolly shed. Our continued operation in these areas is possible only with the co-operation of IÉ staff at all levels.

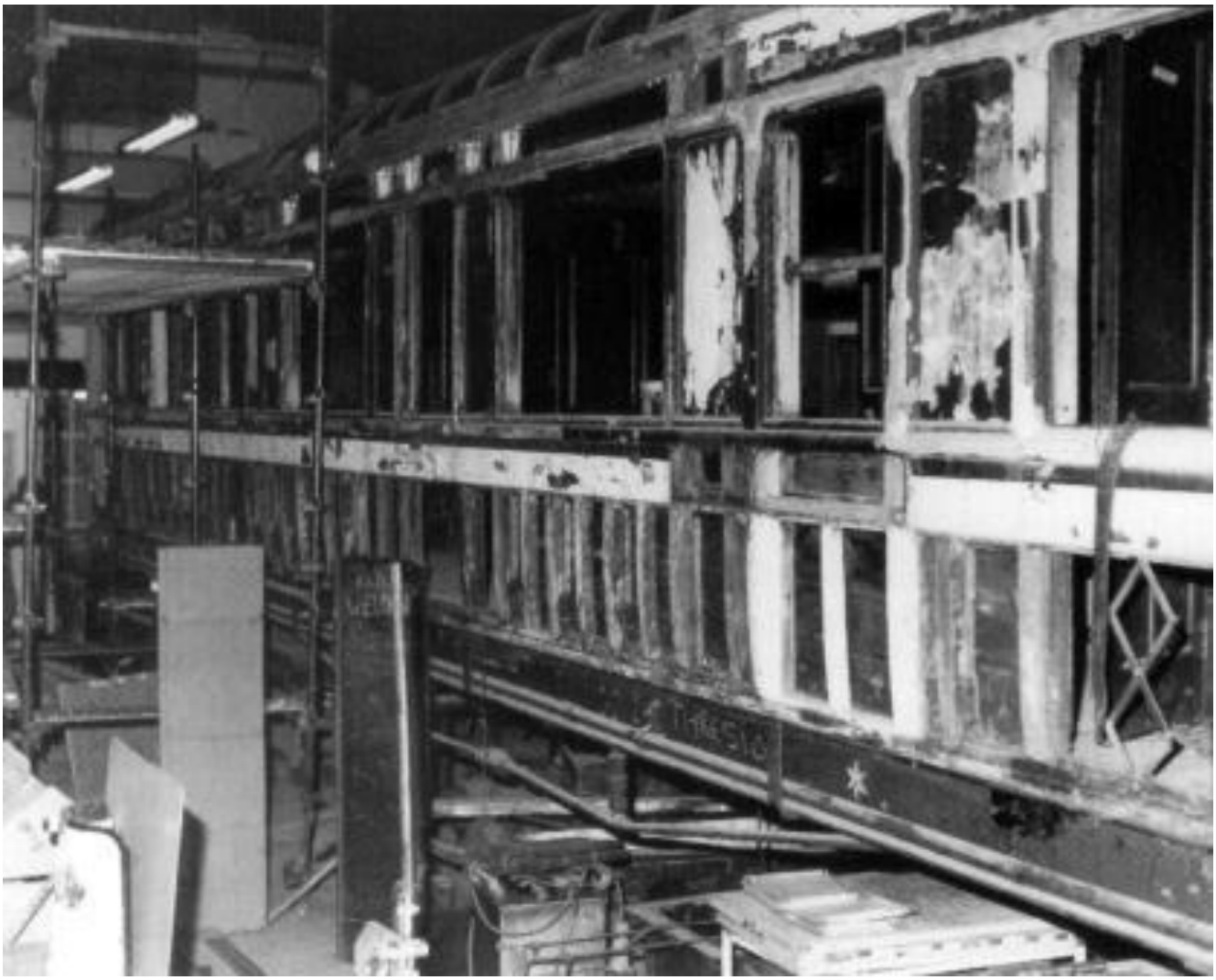
Additionally we perform heavy coach overhauls in Mullingar shed and in FAS Cabra. This latter site is staffed full time with the support of FAS, the employment and training authority, under the supervision of George Dempsey. In Mullingar, 64 seat 1463 is undergoing a major overhaul, and will hopefully re-

enter traffic in Summer 1997. A fuller article will appear on each of these overhauls in due course.

The Dublin workforce covers both locomotives and coaches. Thus, the person washing out a boiler one week could be fitting a toilet the next week, and clearing it the week after. Work must be undertaken within the requirements of railway company operations.

COACHES

There are currently 13 coaches in the Dublin area. The position of laminate 1463 and State coach 351 has already been described. Bredin brake 1900 (also known as AM13) is in Inchicore awaiting restoration, and some weather-proofing has been undertaken. TPO 2981 is in use as a store vehicle in Heuston Yard. Craven 1508 has been acquired as a possible future catering vehicle.



Irish State coach No.351 undergoing rebuilding at FAS, Cabra. (D. Carse)

Of the running set, diner 88 and Bredin 1335 have been in Dublin since 1992. Both have received an extensive internal refit, upgrading of door locks, and upgrading of their electrics. GSWR 1142 arrived in Dublin in June, when it replaced 238. It has since received an upgrading of door locks. Additionally, contractors have fitted patent safety film to the plate glass windows of 88 and 1142. Without such protection neither coach would comply with safety standards.

Brake 1916 is in fact an EGV, with its 220v generator. This has allowed us to fit a 220v line through the train providing power points and battery chargers. All coaches are still lit by a 24v battery supply,

but only 1335 retains its dynamo charging system.

Park Royals 2423, 1416 and 1383 have just completed their third year in the set. These are high capacity vehicles seating 70 each. 2423 has had a tea bar and a shop fitted, while a toilet has been fitted to 1383. All of these three coaches need panel repairs to a greater or lesser extent. 1416 has received panel and roof repairs in Inchicore, and hopefully will return there in January.

Diner 2421 joined the set last year, and was originally identical to 2422, currently in Cultra. The interior has now been modified to significantly increase the bar area. Thus we have two catering vehicles in the Dublin set, with 2421 being 'wet' and 88 being 'dry'.

Coach work in Dublin is divided into two areas, with the heavier work being undertaken in Inchicore. Heuston is a working yard, and the train must be capable of being shunted there at all times. Work in Heuston concentrates in the following areas:

- Train cleaning.
- Electrical work, where Charles McDonnell and his team have been carrying out a continuous improvement programme. Among other innovations are the fitting of photo electric light cells to control the lights in four coaches.
- Plumbing. The main innovation has been the fitting of a TW train watering system, allowing the entire train to be filled through a single half inch pipe.
- Internal upgrades. This team has finished Bredin 1335, before turning to 1383. Their modus operandi allows their work to take place between trips.

LOCOMOTIVES

Up to this year, we have been a one loco operation. From May 1996, we have had No.171 in our care. The layout of the ramps facility makes it ideal for this kind of work. We have co-existed with 201 classes receiving HEP modifications, Sulzer B113 receiving a cosmetic overhaul for the Inchicore open day, and a large number of ferocious looking wild cats who regard weekend visitors with grave suspicion.

Both No.171 and No.461 have received attention to regulators blowing through , the remedy being more successful in the case of No.461. Additionally, No.461's injectors and feed pipes received a thorough going over after the problems on the second Wexford trip. As ever in these matters we are indebted to the O'Brien brothers and all their staff in Ardmore Engineering. Their willingness to machine parts has been a valuable assistance to us. The large lumps of steel and brass that we periodically bring through their door are light years away from the tiny computer components that they normally make.

The Dublin maintenance operation has grown over the past number of years both in terms of numbers involved and locations covered. The Heuston attendance book gives a graphic illustration of this with 177 man days being put in between mid-February and mid-September. These are all voluntary hours and can be matched in other locations. What is most gratifying is that the labour input does not consist of a small group working long hours but of a growing number of volunteers working in an efficient and organised manner.

LOCOMOTIVE REPORT **Peter Scott**

No.3 "R. H. Smyth" 0-6-0ST, ex-Londonderry Port & Harbour Commissioners

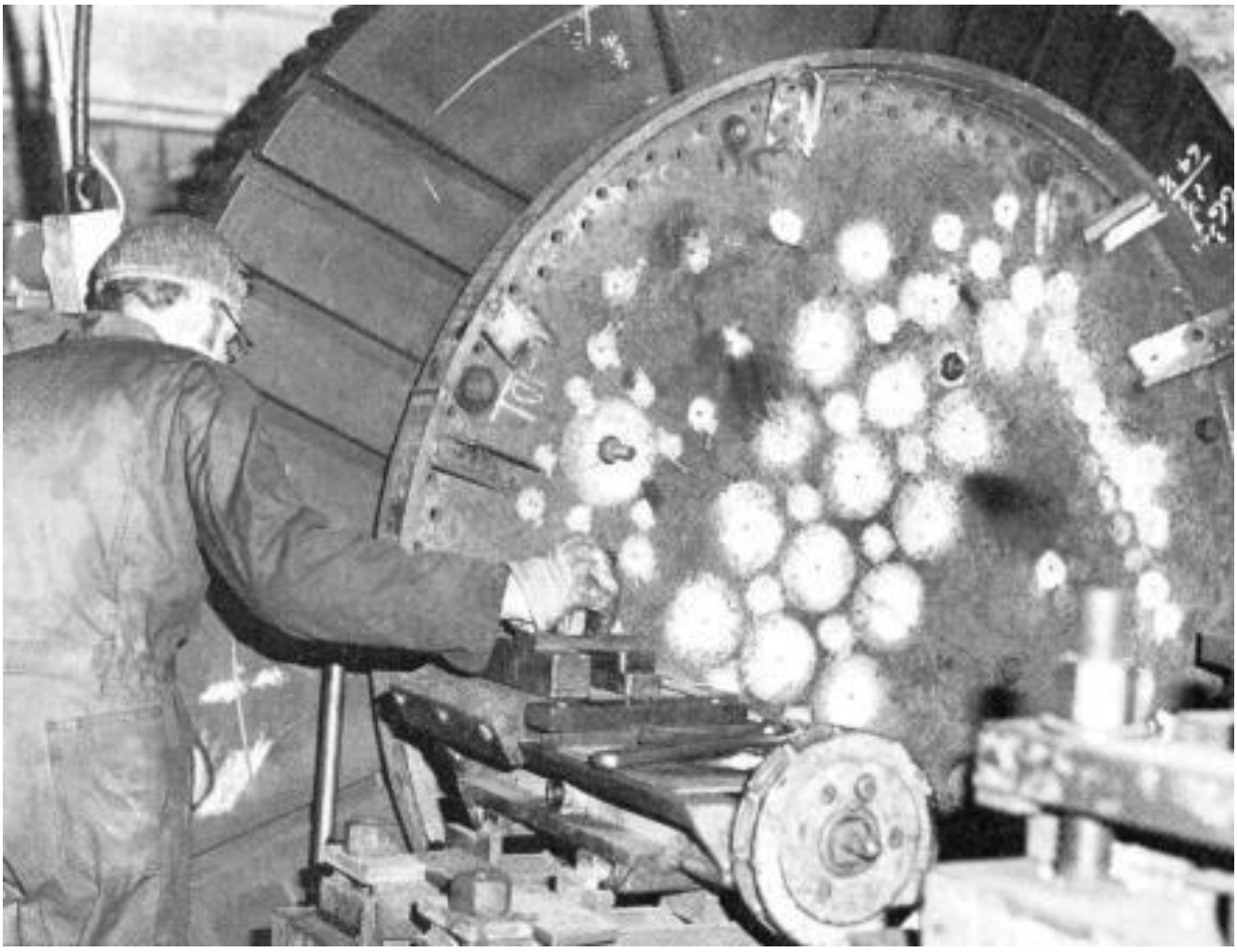
In traffic, at Whitehead.

Although in less than pristine condition, continues to do all that is required of it.

No.4 2-6-4T, class WT ex-LMSNCC, UTA and NIR

Boiler and Mechanical Overhaul at Whitehead.

On the mechanical side the least complicated - and perhaps the last - task will be cleaning and repainting the frames. In the meantime many other matters have to be attended to. No.4 is another example of how the steam locomotive could produce a good performance in less than perfect condition. It is worth remembering that in 1997 the loco will be 50 years old and that we bought and used it straight out of service in 1970. Simple arithmetic reveals that we have now owned it for longer than did the railway companies. Although a considerable amount of work has been done since we acquired it, dismantling has revealed that many hidden parts are in need of attention.

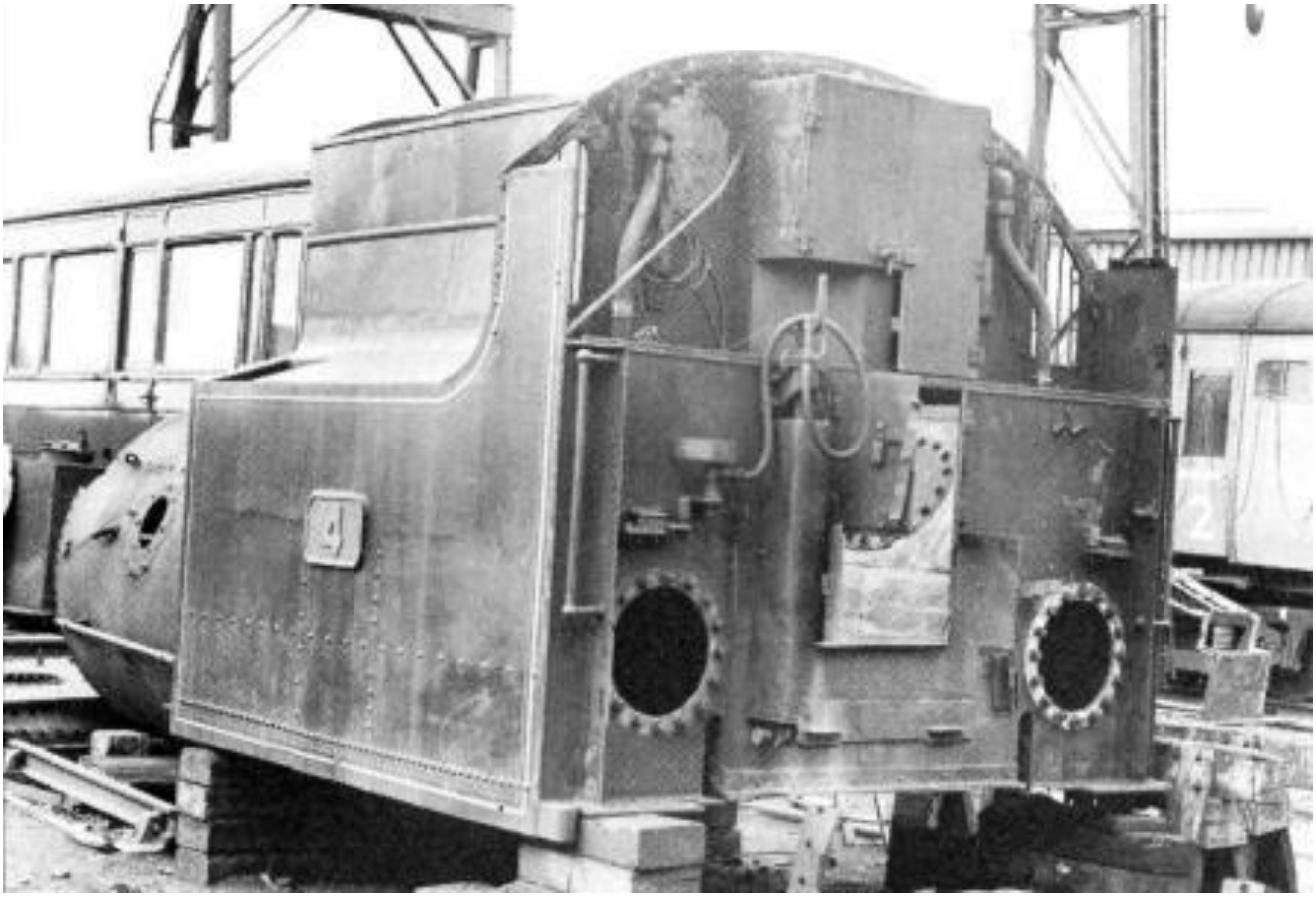


No.4's original front tubeplate would have been formed in a hydraulic press. The replacement had to be made by cutting out a circular plate and welding on a flange. Here the assembly is being trued up in the wheel lathe by Peter Scott. (C.P. Friel)

The bunker/rear tank was found to require large scale replacement of platework and this is currently under way. Frame stretchers and associated parts, including the brake frame, were found to be badly corroded and have been replaced and/or strengthened. When the bogie was dismantled and examined it was found to require a lot of attention. Slack rivets have been replaced, cracked welds ground out and renewed, the spring beams have received new ends and bushes and new axlebox horn liners are being made and fitted. The bogie axleboxes are also being re-metalled, machined and fitted.

In the motion, coupling and connecting rods have been removed and examined and their bushes are being re-metalled and re-fitted.

Several hundred new copper stays have been made and fitted to the firebox waterspace. When fitted, both ends have to be tooled over to form a rivet-type head. (Study of the photo at page 14 of the last FFT will enable the interested reader to calculate, to within a few dozen, the number of stays.) Replacement firebox crown stays have been made and installed and are in course of having nuts made and fitted. In fact, it would have been quicker to say that the boiler and firebox have been completely re-stayed as palm stays and longitudinal stays have also been replaced.



Appearances can be deceptive: not only the internal baffles, etc., but much of the external platework of No.4's bunker and rear tank were found to require replacement. (C.P. Friel)

Since the above photograph was taken, the firebox and boiler barrel have been re-united and, after many months of being rotated this way and that for access, finally stand upright. Before the new front tubeplate could be riveted to the boiler barrel it was essential to ensure that all jobs inside the boiler had been completed as access would subsequently be practically impossible.

Now that both tubeplates are in position, boiler tubes can be fitted. Not many years ago it was possible to order large tubes with one end reduced in diameter but now they come in a plain parallel version, which means yet another job to be done by ourselves. The reduction is effected by spinning down in a lathe, where the tube is subjected to the combined effects of the oxy-propane burner and a roller mounted in the tool post. This is the second batch of tubes we have done and now that the correct proportions of heat, speed of rotation and feed have been established, the work can be tackled with less trepidation.

With a volunteer workforce seldom exceeding four, even with occasional professional help when we can afford it, the work proceeds less rapidly than one would like and if No.4 gets out to celebrate her 50th birthday in 1997 it will certainly not be in the early part of the year.

No.85 "Merlin" 4-4-0 V class compound, ex-GNR(I) and CIÉ

In Traffic, Whitehead.

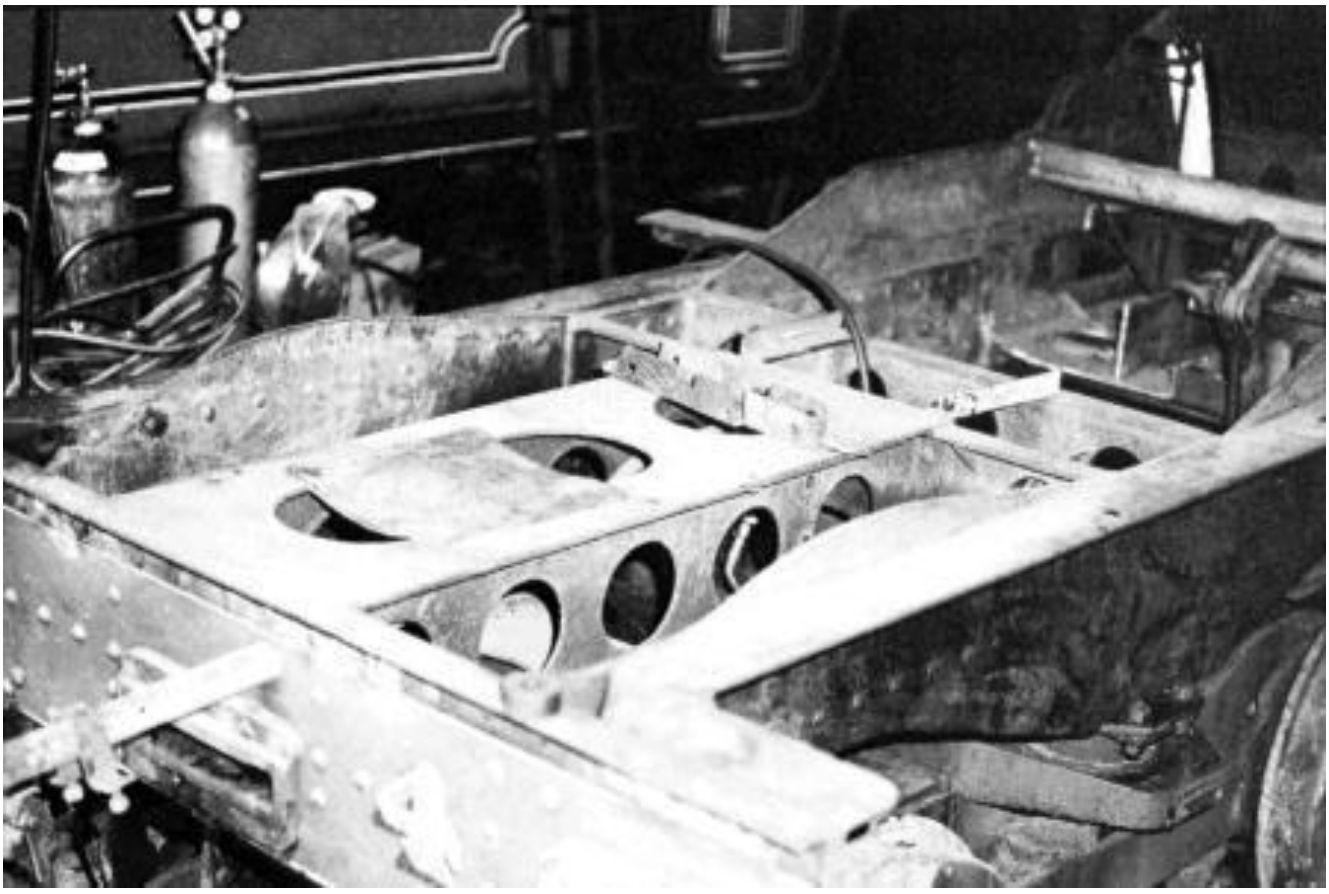
Investigations revealed no faults in the tender which would have caused the derailment near Coleraine on 7th September. The locomotive operated the "Santa" trains between Whitehead and Central subject to a 25mph speed limit imposed by NIR. This restriction was accepted on the basis that it was an interim measure pending the conclusion of the NIR enquiry which, at the time of writing, is still awaited.

No.171 "Slieve Gullion" 4-4-0 S class, ex-GNR(I), CIÉ and UTA

In traffic, Dublin.

Still in black livery and has been active in Dublin-based operations - see Southern Operations report.

Its return to Whitehead depends on what is decided in relation to No.461's impending boiler repairs.

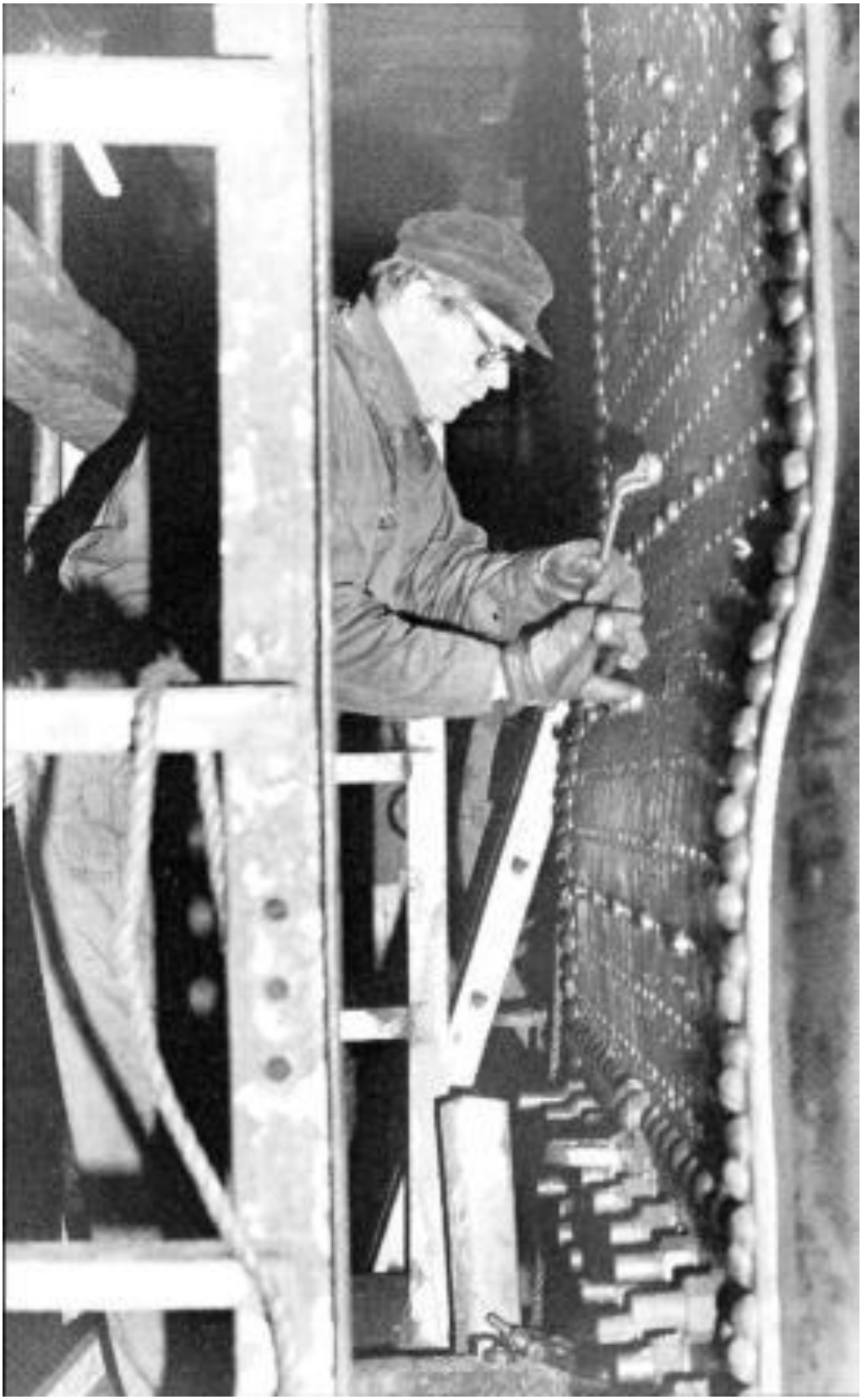


Underneath the footplate and bunker of No.4 almost fifty years of corrosion has necessitated reconstruction of frame stretchers and associated parts. (C.P. Friel)

No.461 2-6-0 K2 class, ex-DSER, GSR and CIÉ

In Dublin, minor boiler repairs.

This locomotive's boiler tubes are approaching their renewal date. These may be renewed in Dublin but this has not yet been decided.



No.4's outer firebox, upside down and seen from the rear. Nearest the camera is the new door plate, subject of much hard labour. Near the ground can be seen the ends of the cross-stays which fit above the inner firebox. Bill King-Wood is fitting copper water space stays. Before the numerous empty holes were filled Bill, perhaps to his relief, had to return to seafaring. (C.P. Friel)

Locos out of traffic:

No.3BG 0-4-0ST (Hudswell Clarke 1152/19) ex-Guinness Ltd.

At Downpatrick (leased to Downpatrick & Ardglass Railway).

No.27 "Lough Erne" 0-6-4T, ex-SLNCR and UTA

In store at Whitehead. Requires major repairs. Cleaning down, oiling and painting in progress.

No.184 0-6-0 J15 class, ex-GSWR, GSR and CIÉ

At Mullingar. Partly dismantled. Requires extensive boiler and cylinder repairs. The body of its small tender needs to be replaced.

No.186 0-6-0 J15 class, ex-GSWR, GSR and CIÉ

At Inchicore, having been taken there by road from Whitehead for display during the "Inchicore 150" Open day.

Diesel Locos:

No.23 4-wheel Planet diesel-mechanical, ex-Irish Shell

In traffic at Whitehead. For light duties only - gearbox worn.

"Carlow" 4-wheel Ruston & Hornsby diesel-mechanical, ex-Irish Sugar Board

At Whitehead but out of use due to its gearbox problem, i.e. not all the gears work. At least part of the gearbox will probably have to be dismantled - eventually!

"Unilok" 4-wheel road/rail shunter, ex-NIR

Stored at Whitehead. Needs general repair.

LOCOMOTIVE WORKSHOP

The Council would like this project to get under way in Spring 1997. The building is to be 150ft by 50ft, similar in construction to the carriage shed but including the 1897 overhead crane recovered from the old 'fitting shop' at Queen's Quay. It will be sited to the left of the existing loco shed behind the water tower and extending towards the Larne end of the site. There will be one railway track into the building, offset to the left side and leaving the right side for machinery and equipment.

The main purpose of the project is to improve the effectiveness of our maintenance of locomotives and other items, especially:

1. To re-site the machine tools away from the dirt and damp of the locomotive sheds;
2. To greatly increase covered working area;
3. To improve our capabilities by providing floor space for better and more versatile machines;
4. To provide the much needed facility of an overhead crane;
5. To improve safety by improving conditions and procedures;
6. To attract more volunteers by offering a more pleasant working environment;
7. To provide safe and effective facilities suitable for the eventual employment of staff or sub-contractors;
8. To preserve period machinery (e.g. the crane, wheel press and blacksmith's equipment) as a working museum of the steam era, and to enable public access to work in progress;
9. To release loco shed space for accommodating locos under cover and permitting proper access to them for running repairs and servicing.

The basic structure will cost £80,000 of which a certain percentage is ERDF grant aid. The remainder will be funded by donations and RPSI contributions, any 'cash flow' problems arising with the latter being assisted by loans. Promised assistance already amounts to over £13,000. Thanks are due to all who are donating to or providing practical assistance with the project.

CARRIAGE REPORT — Mark Kennedy

Whilst wondering about the future of the RPSI's wooden bodied carriage stock, I decided to read all the Carriage and Wagon Reports I could find in back issues of Five Foot Three and consider the Carriage Mortality Rate. What I found now follows:

GSWR 861 The Society's first coach purchased in 1972. Set on fire by vandals the next year but the fire burnt itself out. In solid condition but heavily vandalised. Out of use since 1984. Expense and non-standard bogies make me reluctant to return her to the running set at present. Good seating capacity, and would make an ideal dedicated Whitehead Train Ride coach.

GNR 50 Purchase aided by the Tourist Development Association in 1972. Out of traffic, low seating capacity, light underframe and drawbars cause running restrictions making her only suitable for running by a wealthy society (which the RPSI is not at present).

GNR Diner 88 Acquired 1973. In traffic in Dublin.

Some young people get pleasure from restoring carriages - others apparently see destruction as a worthwhile achievement. (C.P. Friel)

The GSR Bredin coaches appeared c. 1974.

GSR 1327 Destroyed by fire 1995.

GSR 1328 Damaged by fire in 1978, lay out of traffic until destroyed by fire 1996.

GSR 1333 Destroyed by fire 1996.

GSR 1335 In traffic in Dublin.

GSWR 1142 Acquired 1973. Lay out of use for many years before being restored. In traffic in Dublin.

1975 saw the arrival of:

GNR 227 Destroyed by fire 1996.

GNR 231 Destroyed by fire 1996.

GNR 176 Destroyed by fire 1978.

GNR 9 In traffic.

NCC 238 In traffic.

NCC 241 In traffic.

NCC 243 Long term restoration progressing well. Has yet to run on a Society train.

NCC 91 In traffic.

NCC 87 Diner In traffic. (Was to be purchased with above list but did not arrive until c. 1978.)

UTA 581 (Ex GNR K15 class.) Used outside as a store until body collapsed during a shunt in 1995.

By Winter 1975 the Society had accumulated 17 coaches:

GNR 114 Acquired c. l977. Out of traffic for past few years and lying outside. Rot in floor and side at saloon end. Still a solid vehicle but limited seating capacity.

NCC 304 Body only acquired in 1978. Resting on GNR underframe. End damaged by fire in 1996, 56 seater. Still restorable but quite a big job.

NCC 68 Acquired in 1978. In traffic. (Originally bought for spare parts?) In FFT Winter 1979 issue. C & W Officer Alan Edgar wrote: "In the past we have maintained a rake of coaches in traffic most of which were in running order when purchased ... With a few exceptions coaches bought in a derelict condition have been put into store, and have deteriorated due to leakage in their roofs." plus ça change ...

MGWR 62M (Six wheeler) was purchased in 1979. Solid and stored under cover. Good seating capacity but not suited to the Society's main business of running mainline tours.

By 1980 the Society owned 21 coaches including:

934 & 935 Waterford and Limerick coaches based at Mullingar. Both completely derelict by a combination of fire and water over the years.

NCC 255 An 80 seater open was acquired in 1982. By 1996 it was in poor condition and has been further damaged by the recent fire. Regrettably, I think it is past saving but its underframe could be used in the restoration of NCC 304.

UTA 727 (GNR open) Body scrapped due to being dangerously unstable in early 1990s.

UTA 595 (GNR brake) Body scrapped due to unstable condition in early 1990s.

NCC 411 Acquired in 1983. Was in traffic in 1996. Currently being used as a C&W store due to loss of storage space as a consequence of the new Machine Shop building. Another full brake was acquired at the same time. It is used as a grounded body store but is in very poor condition structurally.

In July 1985 the Society purchased 9 CIÉ (mainly Laminate) coaches as a temporary measure. Most have now reached the end of their useful lives.

CIÉ 1434 Body later removed. Now scrap.

CIÉ 1445 Destroyed by fire 1995.

CIÉ 1463 Currently being restored at Mullingar.

CIÉ 1489 Rotten, life expired.

CIÉ 1445 Out of traffic. Now scrap.

CIÉ 1915 Out of traffic. Now scrap.

CIÉ 2422 Out of traffic. Solid, required minor refurbishment. Currently based at Cultra.

Later the following were acquired:

CIÉ 1916 Recently restored at Mullingar. In traffic.

CIÉ 1419 (Now renumbered 2423.) Park Royal. In traffic.

CIÉ 2421 In traffic.

CIÉ 1416 Park Royal. In traffic.

CIÉ 1383 Park Royal. In traffic.

GSWR 1097 In traffic.

The above text is by no means comprehensive or entirely accurate, as I have just moved house and all files are not to hand. However I think it gives a reasonable flavour of things.

Most carriages when originally acquired by the Society were not long out of company service. This is not to underestimate the amount of work put into bringing and keeping them up to scratch, but most went quickly into RPSI service.

Historically, the best chance of survival for coaches in RPSI care has been to be consistently part of the running set. (Coaches in traffic are subjected to considerable wear and tear, vandalism from stone throwers and very occasionally, minor shunting damage.)

Coaches out of traffic lying outside have always been the most vulnerable. The main causes of their demise have been many years unprotected from the weather and malicious fire.

The best news for the carriage collection in the Society's history was the erection of the 10 vehicle carriage shed begun in 1989 at Whitehead.

The main causes of a long term failure of the RPSI carriage preservation have been:

(1) Lack of secure covered accommodation for storage of all rolling stock.

(2) Lack of financial investment in carriage restoration (due to overall lack of funds).

(3) Lack of volunteer labour.

Those are the problems. Possible solutions?

(1) Plan to extend secure accommodation for all vehicles as soon as possible - certainly within next 2-5 years.

(2) Dispose immediately of all vehicles which have no realistic chance of being restored, i.e. any vehicle which is collapsing or badly burnt (retaining useful spare parts only).

(3) Retain any vehicles which are potentially useful and practically restorable.

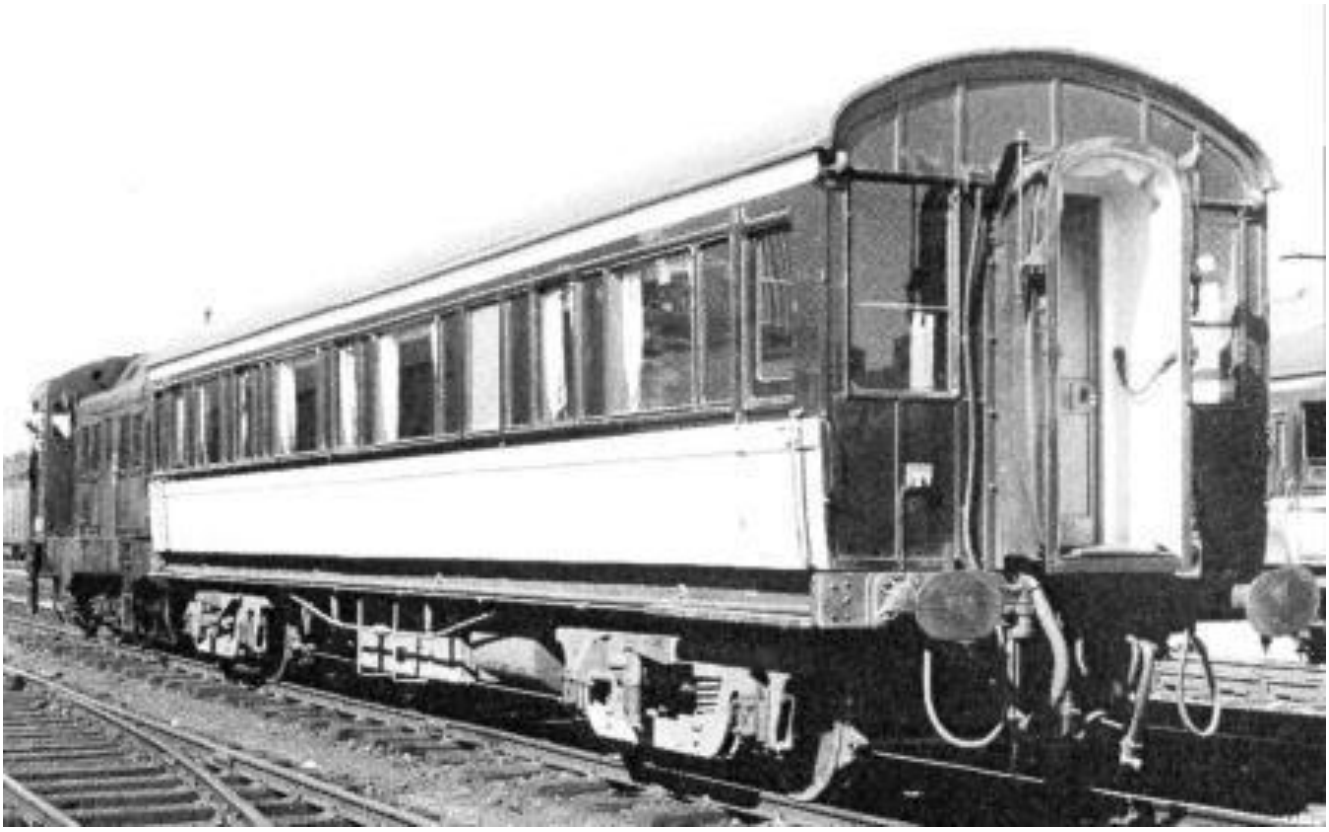
(4) Offer vehicles not suited to the RPSI's running to other organisations that may be able to do

something worthwhile with them, e.g. NCC Railcar No.1 to Downpatrick.

(5) Maintain and improve all good condition running stock.

The rationalisation suggested above would make us better placed to purchase good condition steel stock when it becomes available. Steel stock should provide improved reliability and significantly higher seating capacity which, effectively marketed, would generate the extra income we so desperately need.

The above thoughts are intended to encourage discussion on how the RPSI will adjust to meet the challenge of the future.



Irish State coach No.351 being shunted by an E class loco at Inchicore in 1971. (Michael H.C. Baker)

Finally, please give a very big hand to David Henderson and his very small team of Carriage and Wagon volunteers at Whitehead, without whom wheels wouldn't turn, bogs wouldn't flush and vacuums wouldn't suck.

Wishing everyone a full (wooden) bodied and steamy 1997.

WHITEHEAD SITE REPORT 1996 — Dermot Mackie

I think we have seen it all, wind, rain, hail and snow. January threw all these elements at us but with the sterling help of Bob Davison, John and Philip Lockett, Robin Morton, Alan McRobert and Drew and Trevor Wood we managed to replace 60 wooden sleepers with concretes on the platform road. On one particularly cold day the Editor remarked that at least we were moving about and could keep warm, the conditions in the shed being arctic for the anatomy of semi-static fitters. Early in February we put in another 30 concrete sleepers and the wet conditions were captured on video by Alan McRobert. Later

in the month the Northern Ireland Electric people put a new power supply into the platform shop and the JCB moved carriage wheel sets round to the wheel lathe.

9th March was something of a record day on the platform road with Thomas Charters, Robin Morton, Paul and Brian Maxwell and myself removing and replacing a 45 foot section with concrete sleepers. An encore was accomplished 2 weeks later with a different squad which included Tim Lockett and, at last, a dry, sunny day. A further 30 feet of track was replaced by Trevor Mounstephen, Bob Davison and myself in April by which time the pile of concrete sleepers on the platform was fast disappearing. The fence at the back of the platform had become an eyesore and it was now removed and a start made on its replacement with a new chain link fence.

The JCB with bucket extension to carry concrete sleepers - and Philip Lockett and a Site Officer. June 1996. (D. Mackie)

Wednesday nights began in May with weed spraying and the last 120 feet of the platform road was taken out with the JCB. On the 22nd Trevor Mounstephen, Paul and Gavin Maxwell and myself were laying in the concrete sleepers when smoke was seen coming from the back of the site. Fortunately we quickly raised the alarm but the extensive fire still consumed 4 coaches. The end of the month saw Trevor Mounstephen, Robin Morton and John Wolsley help me finish the relaying of the platform road. Philip Lockett and I removed the last concrete sleepers from the platform in early June (see photo) on a glorious sunny day which was almost too hot for work!

Mindful of the recent fire and the approaching bonfire season, the rest of June saw all hands, including Johnny Glendinning and Mark Fletcher, repairing and reinforcing the perimeter fence. David Henderson and Paul Maxwell made a great job of painting the water column while Stephen Glass and Thomas Charters helped to finish the refurbishment of the platform fence. The latter was ready in time

for the Whitehead Open Day which by all accounts was very successful.

Not a new square crossing but timbers for a crossover. Resting from their labours are Robin Morton, Dermot Mackie and Alan McRobert, video maker and coach cleaner extraordinaire. (D. Mackie)

August, a busy operating month, was occupied with small jobs like spraying the weeds again and fixing the cab roof of the JCB. After trips had finished in September it was decided to replace the main long

timbers in the double cross-over on the platform road. The weather, in marked contrast to earlier in the year, was an Indian summer and just for the record, this work has also been captured on video. Once again the gang of stalwarts made great progress (see photo) and with the help of the hand crane the job was finished and tested in early October.

Our attentions then turned to the interlaced sleepers in the turn-out at the bridge end of the platform. Thirty one of these were replaced with concretes in late October and early November and Trevor Wood neatly completed the power supply to the platform lights in time for the Christmas festivities.

If the locomotive workshop gets the go-ahead in 1997 the carriage shop and the old NIACRO tarry will have to be moved, together with track, to allow construction. This will take a lot of man hours so if you fancy some exercise in the fresh air and a bit of craic you will be very welcome to join our squad - we need men for all seasons.

THE SHANNON POWER SCHEME OF 1925 — Larne Man

Somehow, without any definite plans being made, the author began to receive bits and pieces, not least from Mr. Walter McGrath of Cork, relating to what remains one of Ireland's greatest civil engineering projects. Its use of railway transport was only exceeded by the major railway companies and, more recently, by Bord na Mona.

In expressing gratitude for the various contributions it is acknowledged that the following article probably does no more than scratch the surface of a very large subject which, despite its importance, does not appear to have received more than passing mention in various journals. This impression may, of course, be due to inadequate research and if anyone can point to a comprehensive work on the subject it would be much appreciated!

When the Irish Free State was constituted in 1921 its economy was almost entirely based on agriculture. Only about 7% of the workforce was employed in industry, which had become very largely the preserve of the 'Black North'. No sooner was the War of Independence over than the new-born state became embroiled in a civil war over the terms of independence - a subject which some 70 years later continues to cause problems.

However, by 1925 matters had been sufficiently sorted out for the Government of the day to be able to concentrate on establishing the various institutions essential to the running of a modern state. Whilst homes and agriculture could, at least in the short term, carry on with their traditional power sources, industrial development demanded an electricity network.

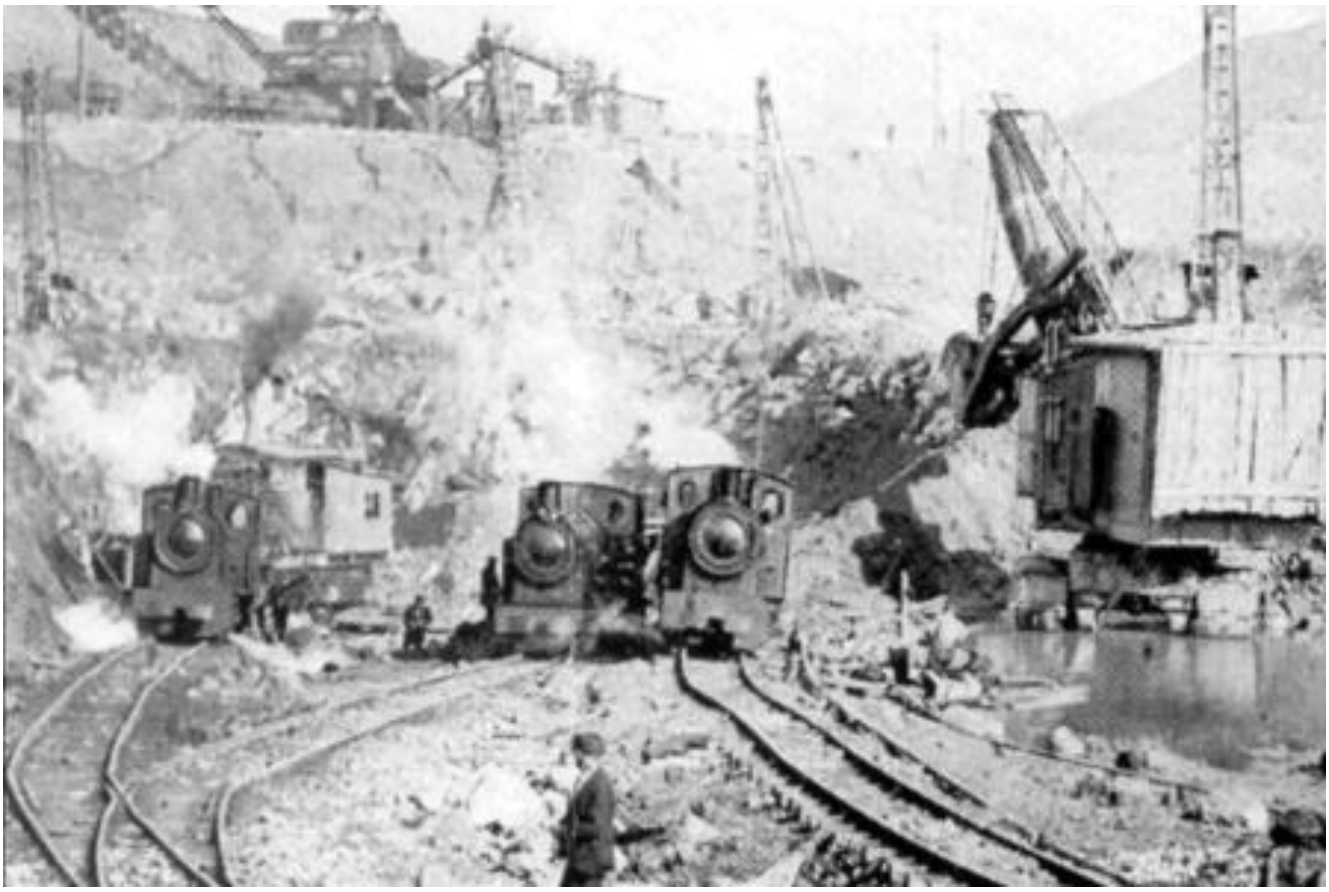
The Ministry of Industry and Commerce, whose responsibility it then was, did not have a great deal of choice when it came to deciding how the electricity should be generated. The country had no significant reserves of either coal or oil and the large-scale development of its abundant resources of peat was still in the future. However, Ireland did have the River Shannon which, in addition to being the longest in the British Isles, had enormous storage capacity in Loughs Allen, Ree and Derg, through which it passed. Thus it was decided that the Shannon would be harnessed to power a major hydro-electric generating station at Ardnacrusha in County Clare, a few miles upstream from Limerick.

Apart from the construction of the generating plant and allied works at Ardnacrusha, vast earthworks were required downstream from Lough Derg, including the construction of a long canal, huge works of dredging and building of embankments and the channelling of the river above the generating station into a head-race 7-8 miles in length.

Needless to say, the agricultural Free State did not have the capability to tackle such a project and thus had to look elsewhere. Given the upheavals of a few years earlier, it is probably reasonable to assume that the chances of the work going to Britain were slim and the contract was awarded to the famous

German firm of Siemens. They in turn entrusted the non-electrical part of the work to their civil engineering subsidiary, Siemens Bauunion.

At that time, especially in the more remote parts of the country, land transport involving anything greater than an ass and cart could handle, was the work of the railways. Limerick was the nearest rail-connected port to the project, being on the former Great Southern & Western line between Waterford and Sligo. However, there was no rail connection between this line and the Limerick docks; thus everything imported for the Ardnacrusha scheme had to be conveyed by road from the docks to a railhead near Longpavement, north of Limerick on the line to Ennis. The resulting damage to the local roads caused concern; proposals for a rail link to the docks were made but never came to anything and all the material that came into the port continued to be hauled through the streets of Limerick.



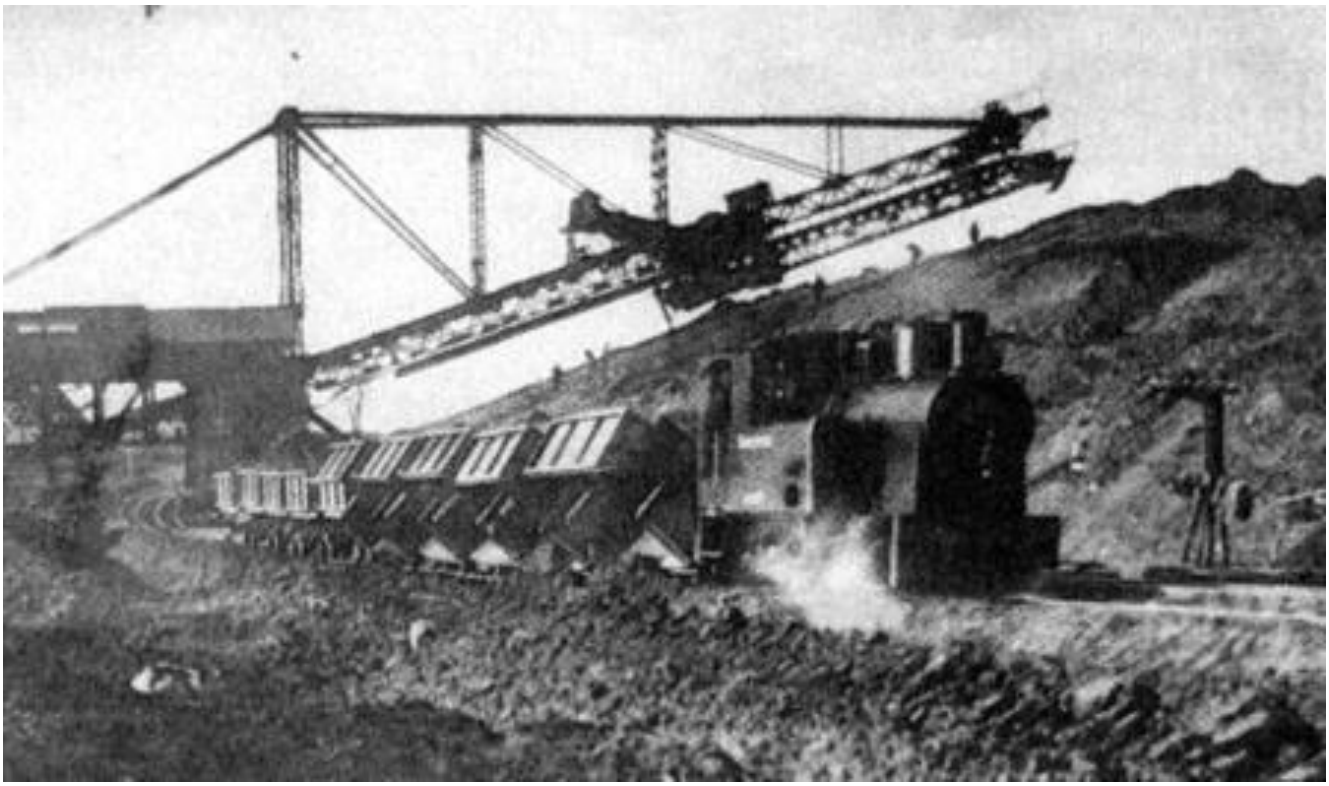
Three of the 900mm locomotives on rather unsound looking track at Ardnacrusha. The machinery in the background gives some idea of the scale of the operation. (W. McGrath)

This traffic must have been almost beyond belief as the Germans had to ship in practically everything that was needed for the project. This included over 100 locomotives and some 3,000 wagons. Although no great overall distances were involved, sufficient rail and fastenings for many miles of track had to be imported, along with prefabricated buildings and structural steel. This traffic, from the German ports of Hamburg and Emden, eventually stabilised at around one ship every two weeks. To this could be added shipments of the coal required by the locomotives and also, probably, by the temporary power station which the Germans set up.

Not surprisingly, local road haulage facilities were nowhere near adequate to deal with the heavier items discharged at the docks - themselves inadequate until new cranes were installed. To cope with this, the Germans also imported heavy duty trailers along with large Daimler tractors to haul them to

the railhead. In the initial stages the Great Southern Railway was very little involved, but later laid a branch of about 1¼ miles from Longpavement to the generating station at Ardnacrusha. Although by then disconnected, this branch was still in situ in the 1960s. En route to Ardnacrusha the contractor's 'main line', of 900mm gauge, crossed the GSR line on the level at one point. Here there was appropriate signalling, normally set in favour of the contractor's line due to its greater density of traffic!

Mention of 900mm gauge (approx. 2' 11") leads us to look more closely at what the Germans brought in. Although the Republic of Ireland now measures its roads in kilometres, this would have been an alien system in the 1920s when the legendary Irish mile (yes, there was such a thing!) would probably still have been in common use. However, Germany would have been operating the metric system and their Irish railway did likewise. As a digression, one is tempted to wonder what system was used in the generating station and its associated works, but suffice to say that the contractor's railway lines were of 900mm and 600mm gauge. The latter, just under 2' 0", was used for temporary lines serving various locations and consisted of light prefabricated track panels which could be moved from time to time as required.



One of the giant grading machines towers over a 900mm gauge loco and a rake of tippler wagons. (Courtesy of Railway Magazine)

So what ran on these lines of alien gauge? One might surmise that the 900mm lines, being of a more permanent nature, might carry larger and fewer trains requiring less locomotives while numerous 600mm locomotives would be scuttling around the lesser lines. On the contrary, no less than 93 locomotives were employed on the 900mm, with a mere 13 on the 600mm gauge. Nor were the latter confined to poking around quarries as they also served some major installations such as concrete plants. Even allowing for traditional German efficiency, it could be assumed that no more than 9 or 10 would have been in traffic at any time, so they must have been kept quite busy.

The tipping spoil wagons, unlike some contemporary rickety wooden vehicles, had iron bodies so

constructed that one side was raised as the floor was tipped to that side. They were veterans of the Schwarzenbach Dam project in Germany and stood up well to the rough and tumble of life by the Shannon. The trackwork in some of the photographs would suggest that that life was not an easy one. According to some reports, the local youth, presumably sated with merely watching trains go by, were wont to alleviate their boredom by interfering with points, thereby adding 'tumble' to 'rough' and proving that vandalism is not an exclusively modern phenomenon.

The very much more numerous 900mm locomotives included four 550v overhead wire electrics, which poses another puzzle for someone looking back 70 years. Why? Siemens Bauunion constructed various large electrically powered machines to work on the scheme, not the least being enormous grading machines which in some cases appear to have straddled the railway lines. They moved to and fro, placing the spoil deposited by the works trains in position to form the barrages necessary to channel the diverted waters of the Shannon. A temporary power station was set up to provide electricity for this and other machinery, so it could be assumed that some of this energy was utilised by electric locomotives serving the machines.

But with scores of steam engines on the same gauge, why bother with such a tiny stud of electrics? Apparently Siemens Bauunion had agreed that the 'permanent' parts of the 900mm system would have electric haulage. In the event, this seems to have been confined to the short Longpavement-Ardnacrusha section. Apart from not setting fire to thatches, which the steam engines did from time to time, it is hard to see any other reason apart from proximity to an existing power source. They would, of course, also have the electric locomotive's long-standing advantage of almost continuous availability.

Whilst the intimate details of the locomotives may only be revealed to the most dedicated researcher, a general picture is available, courtesy of Mr. D. Coles' little booklet "Irish Industrial and Contractors' Locomotives". Apart from the 4-wheel electrics, all the engines employed on the project were outside-cylindered 0-4-0Ts from a variety of German builders: Borsig, Hanomag, Henschel, Jung, Krauss, Linke-Hoffmann and Rheinische Metaalwerk. Unlike many of the venerable machines employed by British contractors, these dated from 1919 up to brand new 1925 products. A further result of the lack of local facilities was that when in need of heavy repair they were returned to Germany where they were either repaired or replaced. This could indicate either that the Germans did not think much of Irish railway workshops or simply that it was as easy to put the engines on a boat for Germany as to get them to a main works in Dublin.

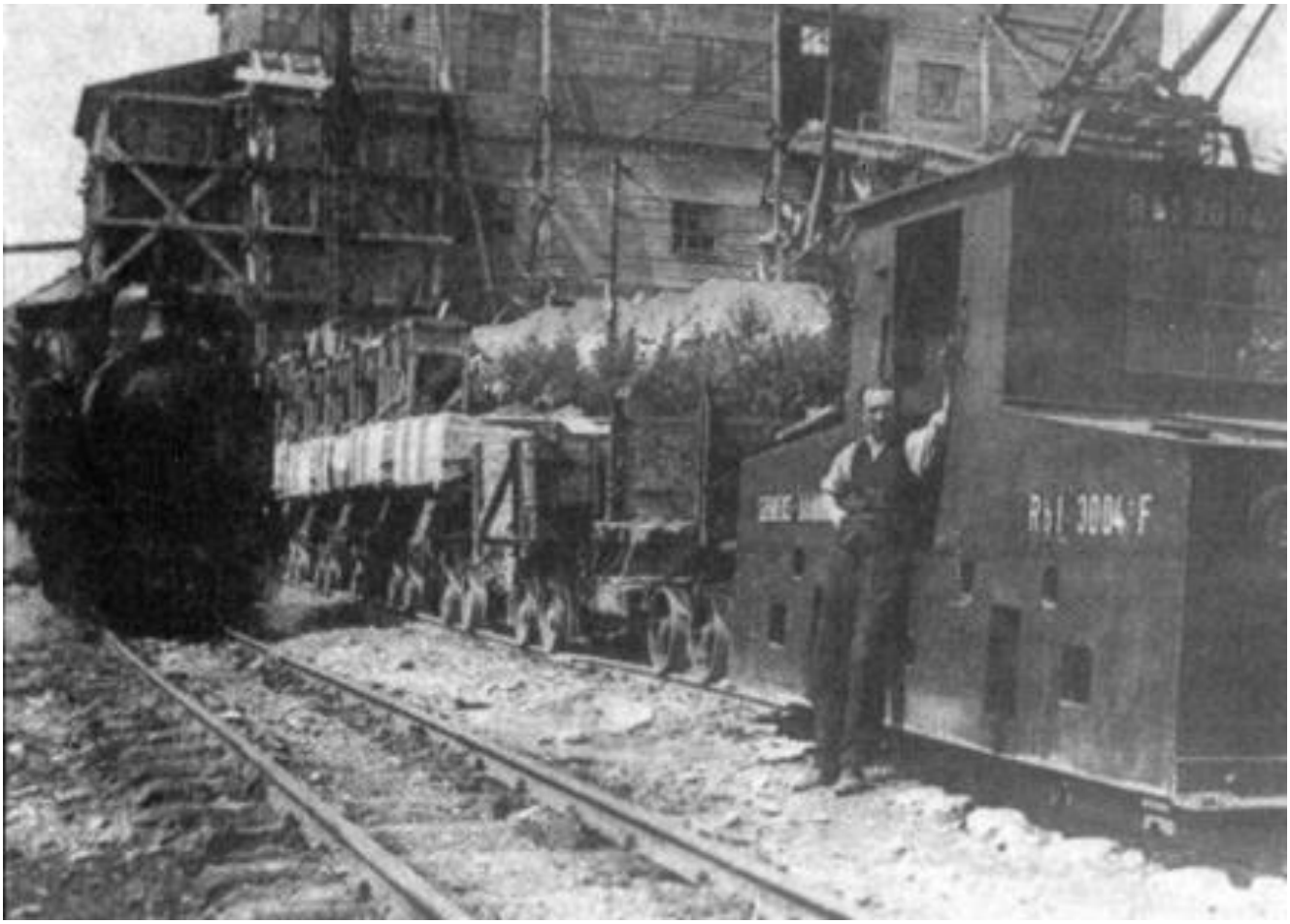
The 900mm Borsig locomotives, of which there were 18, could be quoted as a representative sample, with $12^{3}/_{8}$" x $12^{3}/_{8}$" cylinders and 2' 7" wheels. The 600mm engines, ten of which were the products of Linke-Hoffmann, were correspondingly smaller, with cylinders of 7" to 8". They included, for some reason, a solitary example of the works of A. Jung, the remaining two being part of the vast output of Henschel & Sohn.

Photographs show locomotives of both gauges to be remarkably free - apart from a sand dome - of the external clutter which one tends to associate with 'foreign' engines. Having said that, although some display the 'two-piece' German chimney, they were after all industrial engines and had no need for all the attachments of their main-line relations. Later, many were fitted with spark-arrestor chimneys, no doubt in an attempt to alleviate the thatch problem.

The driver leaning against the electric loco in the photograph was said to have been sacked by Dublin United Tramways for driving under the influence and also to have had a fondness for speed. One would have thought that at Ardnacrusha there would have been less opportunity to indulge in speeding and also that the demon drink might have been less abundant. But, as the saying goes, 'love will find a way'; perhaps it was only official outlets which were less abundant and the loco which is the main feature in the photograph may also have been playing some kind of supporting role!

Although the majority of activity took place on the barrage and associated works within the eight miles or so between Limerick and O'Brien's Bridge there were other subsidiary works further upstream around Banagher and Meelick where some of the 600mm locomotives were employed for a time.

Like many more recent projects, not everything went according to plan and the work fell behind schedule. A serious setback was caused by a fire in the contractor's store at the railhead at Longpavement. In 1927/8 a somewhat acrimonious correspondence developed between the Minister and Dr. Von Siemens. The Germans were unhappy with the Irish environment and the quality of local labour. Not surprisingly, this did not go down too well with the Minister. The project had been troubled by numerous accidents, some fatal, due in some measure to the unfamiliarity of locally recruited men with this type of work but probably not significantly worse than on other comparable works. Whilst County Clare may have presented its own problems, these would not have included predatory carnivores or spear-throwing natives such as the Germans could well have encountered in their country's East African adventures some years earlier.

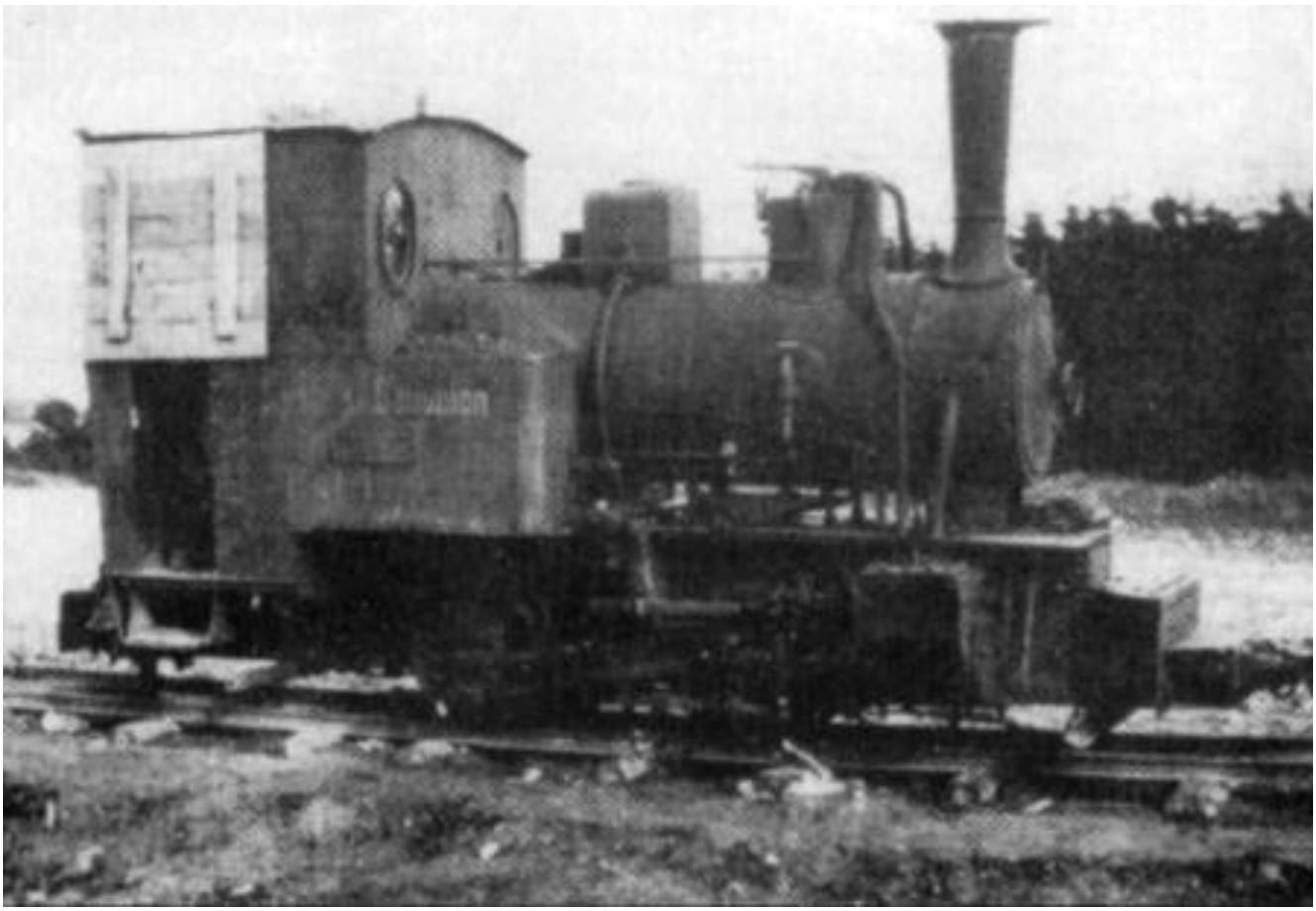


The retired tram driver relaxes against his electric locomotive. The plant behind supplied graded spoil and aggregate and was the scene of much railway activity. (Courtesy of Railway Magazine)

It was in everyone's interest that completion should be on schedule. Apart from the Irish Government's pressure, the eyes of many other countries were upon the Germans. In addition to Siemens' commercial considerations, there would also have been the matter of national pride and a desire to demonstrate that German industry, despite the aftermath of World War I, was still among the world leaders. After a final effort the project was indeed completed on time, officially opened by President Cosgrave in July 1929, and came under the control of the newly-formed Electricity Supply Board. All that remained was a

tidying-up and landscaping process which carried on into 1930, with a corresponding run-down in men and machinery. The Free State Government was justifiably proud of what was then the greatest ever public works project in Ireland, as witness the fact that for several months in 1929 the Great Southern Railway ran excursions to the works at special reduced fares.

Looking back, it is difficult to imagine the scores of locomotives and swarms of wagons spread over this vast undertaking - the Silent Valley reservoir in the Mournes a few years later, although much smaller, used only half a dozen locomotives. Once the job was completed, Siemens Bauunion packed up everything they had had brought in - railway, rolling stock, houses, temporary power station, the lot. Everything was back in Germany by 1931 and before very long, apart from the GSR branch, man and nature between them had eradicated all trace of the railways which had served the scheme.



One of the Henschel 600mm locomotives, with locally added weatherproofing. (C.W. Herbert)

[Footnote for those of a devious turn of mind: Electricity Supply Board is commonly abbreviated to ESB and such was the name of a horse which in 1956 caused consternation in England by winning the Grand National from the Queen Mother's Devon Loch, the latter having suffered an inexplicable failure in the final stages. The editor, then an impecunious teenager having his first flutter, had backed ESB and won the handsome sum of 30 shillings. Happy to relate, this did not induce a sense of vocation and subsequent similar ventures have been very few and consistently unrewarding! - Ed.]

THE GNR(I) AND ITS THIRD CLASS PASSENGERS — James Scannell

The Dublin Wicklow and Wexford Railway Co. was not the only company to encounter problems with shareholders over third class accommodation and services to this class of passenger (see FFT No 41) as

this issue surfaced at the Wednesday 20th February 1889 half yearly meeting of shareholders of the Great Northern (Ireland) Railway Co which was held in the boardroom of Amiens Street Station - the modern day Connolly Station.

There was good news for shareholders in that the Company proposed to pay a dividend of 5¾% based on the very good results for the period July/December 1888. Compared to the previous period in 1887, there had been a net increase of £18,047, being an increase in the gross receipts of £13,726 and a decrease in working expenses of £4,321.

In his review and comments on the report which had already been sent to shareholders, Company Chairman J.W. Murland revealed that first class traffic had remained static, second class traffic had increased by £837 and third class traffic by £6,461 - a total increase of £7,205 from 120,325 passengers.

At the end of his presentation Mr. Murland invited questions from the shareholders in attendance and after a number of issues had been raised, a Mr. Hutton stood up and said that as a traveller in second and third class carriages he was pleased to see an improvement in the former as in the past they had been in a very poor state and that he would like to see a similar improvement in the third class carriages as he felt that they were building these on the old lines rather than putting cushions in them. He indicated that one great objection passengers had to travelling by third class was the vibrations and cold from them and he requested that some action be taken to remedy these defects.

He also complained about smoking in these carriages even though the Company provided specific carriages for smokers and felt that officials should clamp down on offenders who were causing a nuisance to passengers.

Mr. Andrew Currell from Ballymena supported the remarks made by Mr. Hutton requesting improvements for third class passengers.

Mr. Charles Scott from Omagh said that the Company had a duty to improve the 3rd class accommodation but not to the same extent as the 1st class nor should hot water bottles be provided for third class passengers and felt that they should follow the style of third class carriages in use on the London and North Western Railway.

Mr. Richardson QC said that there were problems in preventing smoking in third class carriages and this might be overcome by designating some of these carriages ‘for ladies only’. Another shareholder said that there were no ladies’ carriages in use.

After listening to these comments and a whole host of other ones, Mr. Murland then rose and gave his reply to these comments.

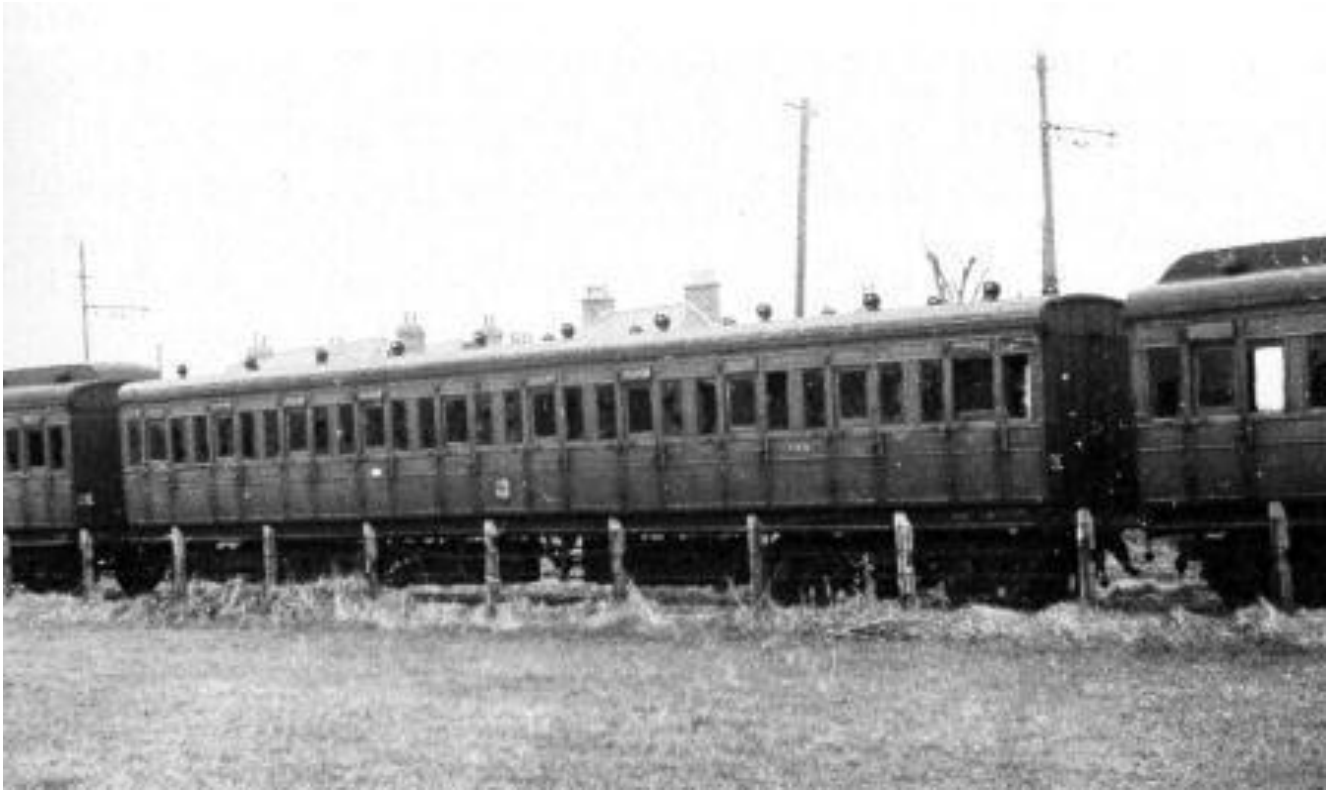
In relation to the condition of the third class carriages he said that he had pointed out at a meeting in Belfast that after their amalgamation they were using a number of third class carriages which were not as good as they ought to be but that they had been re-building third class carriages at the rate of 7 or 8 per year, which with the exception of the upholstery, were the same as the Great Southern and Western Railway Co. were building. He admitted that they were not furnished with cushions but were well ventilated with the seats being made as comfortable as could be. He revealed that the company had opted to provide third class passengers with return tickets at reduced rates which he considered more important and beneficial for them rather than making the third class carriages luxurious, a course of action which he felt passengers would be in agreement with.

With regard to smoking in non-smoking carriages, he agreed that this was a nuisance but it was a practice very hard to put a stop to. The Company had provided special smoking carriages but it was hard to prevent people smoking in other carriages and they could not expel offenders with force as this might involve them in litigation which they wished to avoid but they would do their best to stop

smoking in non-smoking carriages.

With regard to a letter he had received from 'A Middle-aged Woman' who had been compelled at times to endure conversations which were not suitable for polite ears, he agreed that it was desirable that third class passengers should indulge in more edifying conversation but he could not see how the directors could do anything in the matter. However, they would do all they could in future to secure ladies and others against such inconveniences. With this remark Mr. Murland concluded his reply after which the meeting formally agreed to the motion that a dividend of 5¾% be paid to the ordinary shareholders.

Today at a time when the issue of smoking on trains is still a lively issue between smokers and non-smokers, it is interesting to see that it was just as lively over 100 years ago. The times may change but some issues never do.

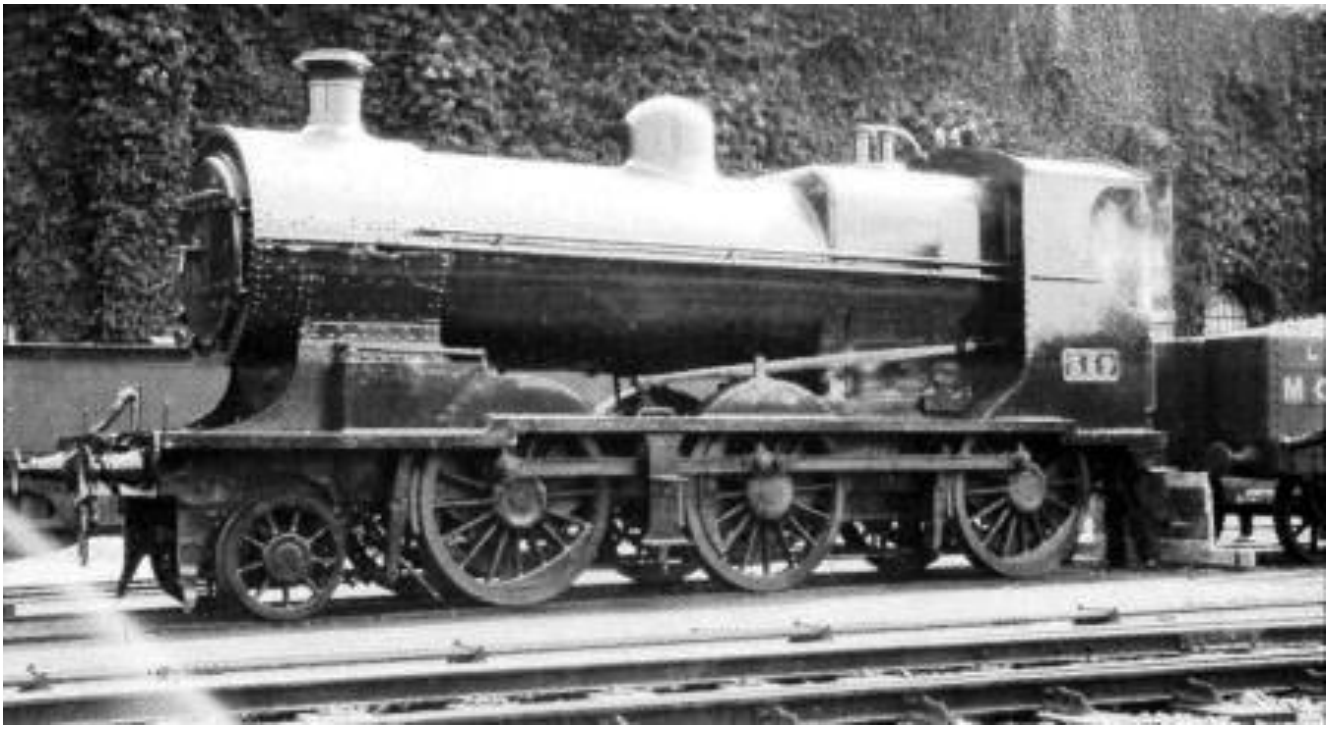


Ten years after the 1889 meeting the GNR(I) turned out a series of bogie 3rd class coaches, designated K1. Not for the claustrophobic, these vehicles managed to contain 100 souls in 10 compartments within a body of just over 51 ft. in length! Seen here at Sutton on 19th March 1959, 136 lasted for another year before scrapping. (R.M. Casserley)

COMMENTS AND RECOLLECTIONS — Laurence Liddle

As we have come to expect, the last issue of Five Foot Three held much to interest the discerning reader. For my part, I was intrigued to read, in "The Last Days of Steam at Inchicore", of the fulsome praise accorded by fireman Christy King to ex-GNR class QLG 0-6-0 No.159. It may be remembered that he was quoted as saying that "fired light and often, 159 blew the stars out of the sky" and gave him "the run of his lifetime". This is by no means the only praise for the QLGs by a CIÉ man that I have come across and at first sight their enthusiasm seems hard to account for since I never knew a GNR driver to display any marked regard for these machines. However, if one considers the matter both Inchicore praise and Northern lack of appreciation are fairly easily explained.

As regards the first point, we must remember that by 1st October 1958 (surely the most infamous date in Irish railway history) dieselisation was far advanced on CIÉ with the majority of trains, both goods and passenger, being operated by the A class Co-Cos or, in the case of passenger workings, AEC railcars. The result of this situation was of course that steam locomotives were being deliberately run down, heavy repairs being almost a thing of the past and minor work restricted to the bare essentials needed to keep the engines limping along until dieselisation was complete. On the Great Northern on the other hand, although must of the passenger mileage was being run by BUT and AEC railcars (and do not forget that it was the GNR which provided the models for the CIÉ AEC cars), all goods trains - apart from whatever occasional working on the Drogheda cement factory branch or elsewhere might have the distinction of MAK power - were steam operated and thus the GN 0-6-0s were still receiving reasonable attention both in sheds and in Dundalk works.



K4 No.369 in apparently ex-works condition, said to be at Broadstone on an unknown date. The number plate and MGWR wagon would suggest that it may have been prior to the 1925 amalgamation. The cab has not yet been rebuilt to its later, more civilised, form - any suggestions? (Photographer Unknown)

The most comparable CIÉ locos to 159 and her sisters were the K3 and K4 inside cylinder 2-6-0s (No.461 was class K2) and the Woolwich moguls, class K1 and K1a. The latter type which, so far as Ireland was concerned, originated on the Midland Great Western, were used by GSR/CIÉ as a mixed traffic loco on both the Midland and the Southern sections. These machines evoked differing feelings among footplate men - for example, our member Jack O'Neill wrote in "A Decade of Steam on CIÉ", "The Midland men loved them, the Southern men were suspicious of them". Generally speaking it would seem that the Woolwiches were uncomfortable to ride on (they were not unique among outside-cylindered 2-6-0s in that respect), difficult to bring back to pressure if the steam went back and inadequately braked for working loose-coupled goods trains. On the other hand they were powerful and reasonably fast. It is easy to see that with the faults just mentioned, which would have been exacerbated by the lack of maintenance, they would have compared unfavourably with the QLGs which were still in fair order. As an example of the state to which a steam locomotive could be reduced in the 1958-63

period I recall a footplate trip on an ex-GN SG3 heading the "Porter Train" between Dublin and Dundalk in the very early sixties. Not only had this loco (from memory No.117) a condition that a driver referred to on another occasion as "a shocking wheeze in the chest", but she lacked a brick arch - No.461, eat your heart out!

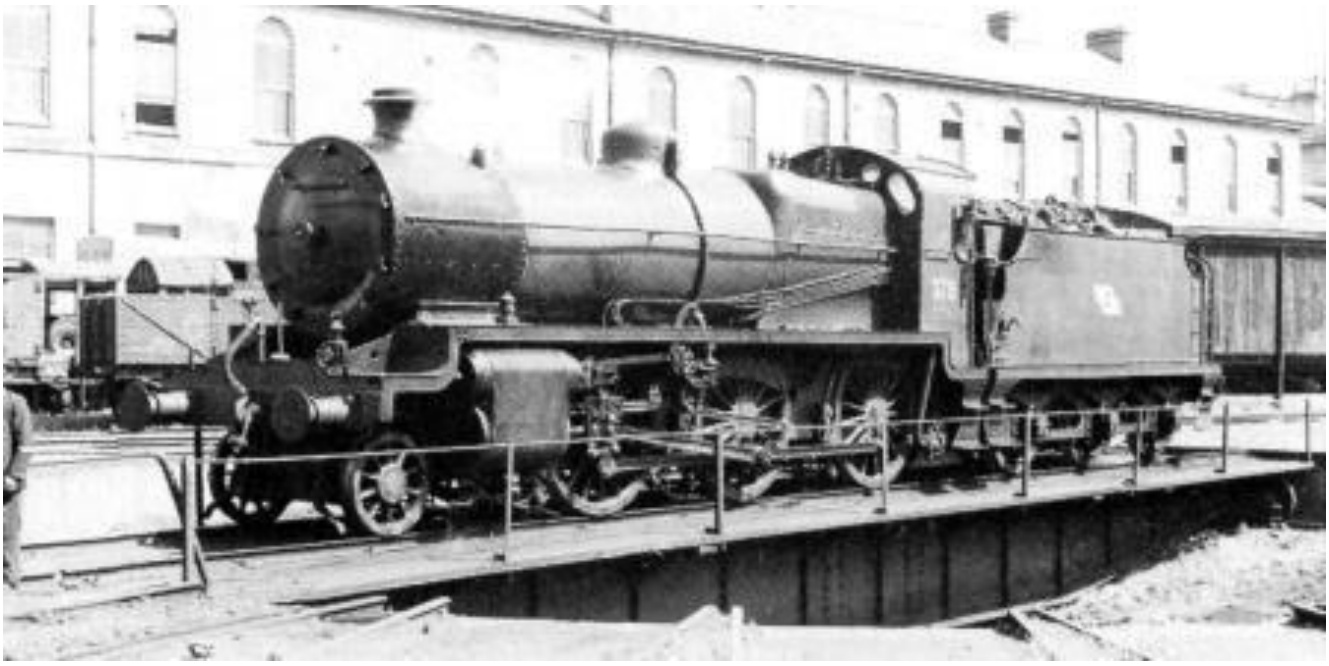
The K3 and K4 2-6-0s seem to have been well enough liked on their native Southern. I do not think that any of them ever appeared on the Midland other than at any time the loco of the Kingsbridge-Clara goods needed to visit Athlone shed. Jack O'Neill wrote that these engines were easy to fire, light on coal and very powerful. A comparison of the vital statistics of the K3s and K4s with those of the QLGs certainly suggests that, given equal standards of maintenance, the former engines could have shown the road to the QLGs. Each class had 19" x 26" cylinders with piston valves and the working pressure differed by only 5psi, 175 for the 0-6-0s and 180 for the Southern engines. The QLGs had smaller wheels, 4' 7¼" as against 5' 1¾" which, despite the lower boiler pressure, gave them a nominally higher tractive effort of 25,385 lb against 23,260 lb. However, any advantage here would have, under heavy working conditions, been more than offset by the considerably greater heating surface provided by the 5' 2¾" boiler and larger firebox of the 2-6-0, compared to what was available from the 4' 6" boiler and smaller round-topped firebox of the Northern engine. All of which surely illustrates the state of disrepair to which CIÉ locos had been reduced at the end of the steam era.

Kellystown Box was near the summit of the 1 in 167 climb from the Boyne viaduct and was probably the smallest signal box on the GNR. On 29th August 1956 SG3 No.117, wheezing slightly, passes with a Dublin-Dundalk goods. (W.T. Scott)

The reason why Great Northern enginemen were less than lavish in their praise of the QLGs is not far to seek; their standards of comparison were the SGs, SG2s and SG3s. Each of these types was highly regarded and faster (particularly the SGs and SG2s) and stronger and better steamers (the SG3s) than the older QLGs, even after the latter had been superheated and given 19" cylinders with 8" piston valves in the 1920s. It is interesting to note that as regards cylinders and valve gear, the original S class 4-4-0s, the SG2s and the rebuilt QLGs had identical cylinders and piston valves, and that the valve

motion included rockers, as may be seen on No.171 (and indeed No.461) today. A query - why, if as was reputed to be the case, George Glover favoured direct drive Stephenson gear, as exemplified by the S2s, SG2s and SG3s, did he revert to the use of rocking gear when rebuilding the Q class 4-4-0s and the QLGs? In the case of the first mentioned engines this work entailed raising the boilers - probably an advantage since the locos as rebuilt had deeper fireboxes than previously, even though the original firegrate of 19.9 sq ft was retained.

To revert for a moment to the theme of GS versus GN goods engines: what a pity that we will never know whether an SG3 or a K3/K4 (as rebuilt) would have been the better engine to take a heavy goods up the 'Gullet' from Kingsbridge Goods to Inchicore, or a similar train out of Cork, through Rathpeacon and on towards Blarney. Or again, which would have been the more nimble-footed, the SG2 or the K3/K4 at the head of a 10-bogie GAA special between Newbridge and Clondalkin. I believe that at the time of the 321/QL engine trials on the GSWR and GNR in the early years of the present century there was also an interchange of goods engines between the companies but I have never heard or read any details of these latter trials. Can any reader give any information on these?



K1 "Woolwich" No.379, in green livery, at Broadstone on 16th May 1950. (G.W. Sharpe)

On page 36 of our last issue there was a picture of Great Northern 4-4-0 No.76 heading what is captioned as an afternoon train about to leave Derry (Foyle Road) for Belfast. *[The caption said: 6'6" P class No.27, although that is not the point at issue. - Ed.]* I will not go so far as flatly contradicting the identification of this train since I neither took the photograph nor was present when it was taken. However, my guess is that this was not a Belfast train but one scheduled for the Irish North route - most likely the 'Boat Train' (the name dates from the days of the Greenore-Holyhead passenger steamer service).

In 1936 this train left Derry at, so far as I remember, 14:35 and was due in Dundalk at around 18:50 after having called at all stations from Derry except Kellybridge Halt, a total of 26 stops with, I think, an engine change at Clones. There was no longer a passenger ship running from Greenore in 1936 although cargo/livestock vessels left that port for Holyhead on Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday evenings, but the Boat Train gave a good connection to Dublin by the Up Mail, ex Dundalk at 19:04, arriving in Dublin at 20:05 with a two minute stop in Drogheda. This connection was the best available

from all stations Ballinamallard-Inniskeen inclusive, but passengers from Trillick and stations northward to Derry got a better service by the Up Derry Mail, leaving the Maiden City at 16:10 and connecting with the Dublin Mail at Portadown. Keen-eyed GNR enthusiasts will have noticed that on the basis of these figures passengers from Bundoran Junction apparently had no service by either route. Not so, the explanation is that the departure times from that long gone but well remembered station were identical within a minute by either the Omagh or the Enniskillen route.

For most of the year the 14:35 ex-Derry conveyed an Enniskillen-Dublin through brake tri-compo, whilst during the currency of the summer timetable the through service was from Bundoran, with the tri-compo being augmented by a K14 compartment third.

I have two reasons for doubting that the train illustrated on page 36 was destined for Belfast, the first of these being the loco. At the date the picture was taken the Derry-Belfast train would normally have had a rebuilt Q and not a large wheeled PP such as 76 *[or 27?]*. My second reason relates to the coaches; I cannot be certain but the leading vehicle looks suspiciously like one of the notorious 100-seater compartment thirds, not used on the Derry-Belfast through services in 1936. Additionally, there appear to be only three bogie vehicles on the train whereas the 12:45 and the 16:10 Derry-Belfast trains, the only two afternoon services at the time, were normally five or six bogie formations, also the 16:10 Mail had a TPO as its leading vehicle. The last ex-Derry train of the day, the 19:10, was normally just a two coach set. I readily admit that what I have so far said about Mr. Priestley's photo is no more than conjecture. However, I can be specific about the goods vehicles in the foreground of the picture - these are standing on the siding leading to the dock lines - R.H. Smyth territory - and may well have just been subjected to, or be awaiting, the attentions of our hard-working shunter.

Presumably the roofing of the island platform was under repair on 10th September 1936. How many readers remember the floral baskets that used to hang below it, adding greatly to the attractiveness of the station? Or again, how many remember the somewhat ambiguous (to a railwayman at any rate) notice which was prominently displayed and read: "To the American Tenders". Never let it be said that Cobh was Ireland's only regular transatlantic port.

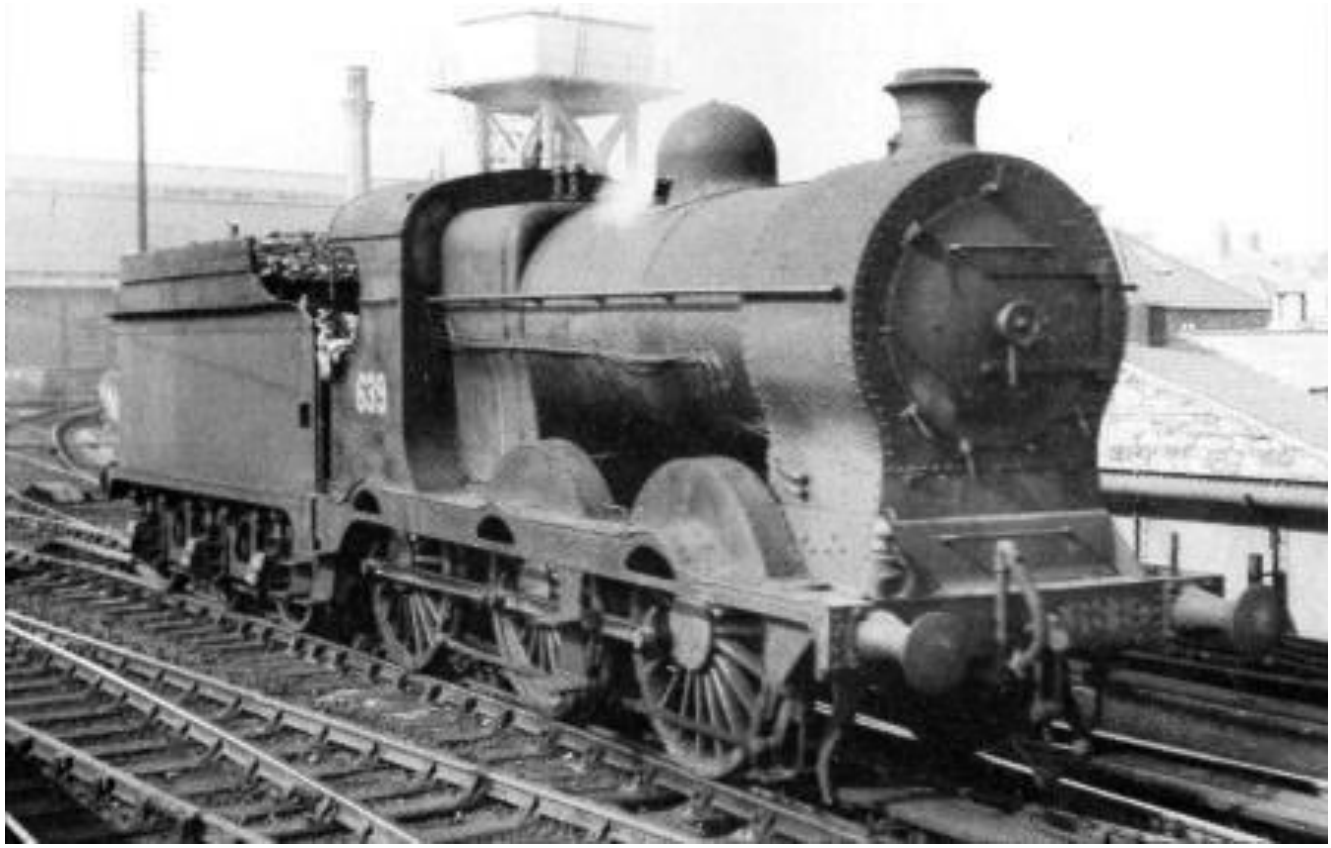
That was an excellent picture on page 57 of ex-MGWR 'mixed traffic' 0-6-0 No.629, of GSR/CIÉ class J5. On the Midland the class designation had been 'F'. The J5s, also known as the 623 class, were impressive looking engines for 0-6-0s. Their large 5' 8" wheels and high pitched boilers made them look more massive then, for instance, the considerably more powerful SGs and SG2s of the Great Northern or the very comparable J4s (257 class) of the former Great Southern and Western. When I first saw a J5, at Mullingar in 1926, I was much impressed as my daily locomotive fare until then had been the T1 and T2 tank engines on the Howth branch, varied only by very occasional appearances of an A or AL 0-6-0 heading the three or four vehicles of a so-called 'fish special'. This first J5 to come my way was in charge of a Friday relief to the up Day Mail which was composed entirely of ex-MGWR six-wheelers. My recollection is that the roofs of the coaches, most of which were still sporting the 'flower pots' of oil lighting days, were appreciably lower than the cab roof of the locomotive.

The 'mixed traffics' performed well on the primary duties for which they had been designed, hauling the numerous livestock specials which were the main providers of the Midland's income. They were also used on passenger specials and even as pilots to main line expresses. The fact that 0-6-0s, albeit with unusually large wheels, were regarded as suitable pilots for such trains is an interesting commentary on 'express' speeds on the Midland Great Western - an example of these is the average of almost exactly 40 mph for the non-stop booking of 75 minutes for the Up Day Mail over the 50¼ miles between Mullingar and Broadstone. The company obviously had no need for such a regulation as that of the Great Northern which ordained that when a goods engine (in effect a 0-6-0) was piloting a passenger engine the latter had always to be in the lead. *[Did not the GSR/CIÉ have a similar ordinance about bogie engines leading? - Ed.]*

The fact that the J5 engines had a considerably lower theoretical tractive effort than the GN SGs and SG2s or the DSER inside-cylinder moguls is of course explained by the large wheels of the Midland locos. All three groups , GN, DSE and MGW, had 19" x 26" cylinders and 175psi pressure. (In the case of the DSE engines this last figure refers to the original boiler; the "N" boiler, as on No.461, worked at 160 lbs.) However, there was a much more fundamental difference than wheel diameter between the GN and DSE engines and the Midland machines - firegrate area. Here, whilst the SGs and SG2s had 22.9 square feet and 461/462 had 20 with the original boiler and 21 with the "N", the 'mixed traffics' had to be content with 17.3 square feet, less than that for a GSWR J15 or a Great Northern UG.

I have never understood why the 'mixed traffics', W. H. Morton's only original design for the MGWR and the last engines to be built at Broadstone works (the first batch of 'Woolwich' were erected rather than built there) were not given larger grates. The only explanation I can think of is that the "C" boiler provided for them was also used in the rebuilt D6 and D7 4-4-0s (MGWR class C), thus making do with one size of boiler rather than two.

The J5 0-6-0s, 23 in all, were built in two batches, at Broadstone and by Armstrong Whitworth at Newcastle on Tyne. The building period extended from 1921 to 1924. Whilst the two lots were identical in all main features there was one easily apparent difference. The Broadstone engines had raised running plates which dropped slightly at the front of the leading splasher whereas the Armstrong Whitworth locos had lower running plates which were level throughout their length but had small subsidiary splashers with oiling crescents to provide access to the crank pins.



Class J5 No.639 ambles through Amiens Street on 10th September 1959 - see Mr. Hayes' letter. Note the oiling crescents in the splashers. (G. Hayes)

So far as I know, the 'mixed traffics' continued to work almost exclusively on the Midland section of the GSR after the 1925 amalgamation. Jack O'Neill, again in "A Decade of Steam", tells of No.641

working from Waterford during the beet campaign of 1949, but that is the sole instance of a 'foreign' working that I know of. The axle load of 17 tons 8 cwt (though within an overall weight of 47½ tons, only 13 cwt heavier than the second series of UGs on the Great Northern) may have limited the possibilities of 'foreign' employment for the J5s. They were permitted to work as far as Bray (via Dun Laoghaire) on the DSE though I never heard that one did. During the 1950s there was an intriguing notice displayed on the down side of the line in the Dun Laoghaire cutting, just before the divergence of the branch to the pier. It read, "623 class 5mph to pier". Did one of Morton's handsome 'mixed traffics' ever take time off from perambulating with long trains of cattle wagons around the Midlands and the West to haul a boat train, or even the loose-coupled 'Parcel Post'?

A rare visit by a "Glover Tank " to Dun Laoghaire pier. Class T2 4-4-2T No.143, with its new owners' initials on buffer beam, leaves with an evening boat train on 9th September 1959. (G. Hayes)

From page 57 to page 58, and from one mixed traffic 0-6-0 to another. The caption below the picture of the Bundoran Express reads in part, "a UG would hardly be considered as 'Express' material", an opinion with which I imagine most people who remember the UGs would agree. However, in fairness to the memory of those hard-worked and versatile little machines I would like to quote a short extract from an article by the late Bob Clements on GNR locomotive development, which appeared in the Spring 1959 Journal of the Irish Railway Record Society. Referring to the UGs Bob wrote, "Light enough to go nearly anywhere and, with a 5' 1" wheel, able for anything but the fastest expresses. Indeed Jimmy Woods even worked the 14:45 from Belfast to Dundalk one day in 1938 with no appreciable loss of time". The 14:45 was the regular afternoon Dublin express which had timings over the first three sections of the journey of: 30 minutes Belfast-Portadown, 20 minutes Portadown-Goraghwood and 26 minutes from there to Dundalk. Why this train was given 26 minutes over the Wellington bank whilst all other Dublin expresses (except the Mail which did not stop at Goraghwood) had 25 I do not know, but whatever the reason for the extra minute's allowance, Dundalk driver Woods and his fireman must have put in some sterling work. Bob Clements makes no mention of the size of

the train but a normal midweek load in 1938 would have been seven bogies to Portadown (six Dublin and one Warrenpoint), eight from Portadown to Goraghwood (the extra vehicle being a through Derry-Dublin tri-composite) and seven again on to Dundalk. While we can imagine the little engine, its relatively small size probably accentuated by a 3,500-gallon high-sided 'Compound' tender, getting away up the bank out of Goraghwood in fine style, helped by 200 lb pressure and the acceleration of its small wheels, there must have been some loss of time once the summit beyond Cloghogue Chapel had been reached even though, as was the practice at the time, the engine was steamed down the south side of the bank. It is not unreasonable to envisage a speed in the high 60s, or just touching 70, passing the Dundalk Works reservoir and on down round the curve and through the rock cutting. However, even a new UG - as this one was in 1938 - in first class order and in the hands of a top link set of men, would have been a long way from reaching the 90 mph which Bob recorded with S class No.173 "Galtee More" on the Up Mail over this stretch of line. The driver on that occasion was Harry Waterhouse of Adelaide who was a hard runner in the 1930s but Jimmy Woods appears to have been no slouch either. In his IRRS Journal article Bob mentioned a time of 32 minutes 45 seconds over the 31.75 miles from Drogheda to Dublin by Compound No.87 "Kestrel", the driver being Jimmy Woods. A point to note is that this run was made after No.87 had her working pressure reduced from 250 to 200 psi.

V class No.206 "Liffey" passes Harmonstown (and the photographer's trusty bike!) with a Bundoran Express in 1956. The train is unusually small and lacks a diner. Notice the "Enterprise" board, which could be turned up as required, on the smokebox handrail. (A. Donaldson)

For a picture of the "Bundoran Express" looking like an express all that is needed is to turn to page 4 of "Merlin", Charlie Friel's superb collection of photographs of ex-GNR No.85 and her sisters. Here we see the pioneer Compound No.83 "Eagle" at the down main line platform at Dundalk Junction, heading the "Bundoran Express" which the locomotive has just brought in from Dublin. In the 1950s any one of the three larger types of express 4-4-0, V, VS or S/S2, was liable to be rostered for the main line section of the journey to Bundoran. There is no doubt, however, that a Compound or one of its 'simple' cousins provided a more impressive spectacle than a S or S2. Even so, with the "Express" in my experience never loading to more than seven bogies, the smaller locos could make light work of the easy main line schedules of the early post-war years - 40 minutes from Amiens Street to Drogheda and

a generous 31 from there to Dundalk. These figures were the 'times shown to the public' all that I have a note of here out in the Antipodes. Whether the 'workers' showed any shorter allowance I cannot remember; this was certainly the case as regards the Dundalk-Goraghwood timings in the 1950s - Public Timetable 34 minutes, Working Book 29 minutes. Here however there was a specific reason for the difference, a five minute allowance to offset delays in departure due to protracted exit Customs examination.

If there are any readers who have not yet acquired copies of "Merlin" and the companion book "Slieve Gullion" my advice to them is: drop anything you may be doing and beg, borrow or steal both books immediately; you will be well rewarded. The combination of Charlie's virtuosity with the camera and the technical skill of Colourpoint, the printers and publishers, has resulted in two outstanding productions.

For what seems to have become my annual trip to Rosslare via the "Strawberry Fair" this year I abandoned my customary ex-NCC compartment vehicle in favour of an Inchicore product. The company was as interesting as ever and my views on the superiority of compartment to centre corridor stock for steam excursion travel were unchanged at the end of another memorable day. Indeed these views were if anything enhanced by the luxury in which I travelled, a carpet on the floor and, to crown it all, a toilet compartment worthy of a four star hotel. Five cheers for David Humphries and his co-workers.

As for the actual journey, as a Great Northern addict since the age of five or thereabouts I could not but be pleased to find No.171 at the head of the train, and yet, and yet, No.461 has become such an institution on this and other regular trips down the South Eastern and is so manifestly the appropriate loco for such occasions that I must admit to having felt a twinge, though no more than a twinge, of regret that she had to give way to a senior, and more glamorous, colleague.

RAILWAY HARDWARE — W.P. McCormick

Railway Hardware, and I mean by that the fittings along the actual railway line, has always interested me and I lament the fact that, as in so many other cases, a lot of the character and interest is now missing. Whereas not so many years ago when our three main companies in N.I. were: Great Northern Railway, LMS Northern Counties Committee and Belfast and County Down Railway each had their own type of rail fastening and lineside signs, their own type of signals (usually semaphore) and their own unique type of milepost. Nowadays all have the same large flange, flat bottom rails with the ubiquitous pandrol type clip. Cast iron signs with their own company name have been replaced with anaemic standardised plastic or enamelled signs, mileposts with stamped out metal plates and of course the delightful semaphore signals have almost disappeared, replaced by the standard colour light - you might as well be on the High Street!

Up to the late 1950s the standard rail on main lines was bull headed 90 lbs per yard held in cast iron chairs with wooden keys on the outside, the chairs were secured to the sleepers with three screws or fang bolts, Secondary lines were supplied with second hand bull headed or more often flat bottom 79 lbs per yard laid either directly on to the sleeper or with base plate. Each company had their own initials cast on to the chairs together with the initials of the maker and the year. After the formation of the UTA and the closure of much of the BCDR and many GNR lines, chairs from these companies were to be found all over the country. Many are still on the old Bleach Green to Antrim section and BCDR chairs were in abundance at Portrush until relaying a few years ago. The NCC in addition had many chairs of their predecessors MR NCC and even Belfast and Northern Counties Railway. On the GNR inside keyed chairs were to be found on some secondary lines and sidings. These were introduced around 1903 by W.H. Mills, Chief Engineer at that time, and the thinking behind it was to make track inspection easier as the fastening on both rails could be checked at the same time.

Portrush Down Outer Home signal, photographed in 1981, is approached in a cutting on a curve, hence its height. (W.P. McCormick)

In the Republic many chairs with the names of the pre-1925 companies are still to be seen in use. On the Sligo Leitrim and Northern Counties Railway some of the original rails of 1879 were still in use on sidings at the closure in 1957. Bridge rails can still be seen in use as supports for signs although it is

now well over 100 years since they have been in use. This of course was in the days when railways had to make do and mend (or when scrap metal was not as valuable). Old rail was used for fence supports and can be seen at many points today; sometimes it is possible to see the original company and date of manufacture. At Bangor station you can decipher B&CD Rly Cumberland Steel 1888 on an upright. BCDR chairs are dated 1920 onwards as prior to that this company had practically no bull head rail, surprisingly they used flat bottom rail spiked directly to the sleepers. Flush with government payments for war service, chaired rail was introduced on the Bangor line and parts of the main line. It is sad that no examples of rails or fastening exist in the Transport Museum.

The fireman's assistance would also have been useful in sighting this stunted pair of somersault signals at the Coleraine end of Ballymoney. May 1980. (W.P. McCormick)

Lineside signs were a source of great interest, again each company had their own unique type, quite a few of which survive. Trespass and accommodation crossing signs were most frequent. The NCC lines still have some BNCR signs (particularly around Ballymena) and many MR NCC accommodation signs still exist in situ. The last remaining BCDR line has a few original Trespassing and Right of Way

signs. On the GNR it intrigued me how, when the GNR Board took over they religiously buffed off the (I).

The NCC who were very fond of pre-cast concrete had a heavy sign of this material admonishing one to STOP LOOK LISTEN. Perhaps the most interesting (certainly the most long winded) was the Dundalk, Newry and Greenore Railway sign which, although dated relatively recently (1945) and headed DN&GR referred to railways worked by LMSR and threatened penalties under the London and North Western Railway Act 1883, a reminder of the DN&GR antecedents. There were many other signs too, CATCH POINTS, WHISTLE, bridge plates and of course mile posts, clever on the GNR with a different shape for each fraction of a mile, mundane on the NCC compared to their elaborate bridge plates and heavy on the BCDR, riveted on to flat bottom rail posts. Some of the original Londonderry and Coleraine plates still exist, attached to narrow gauge rails.

Under the heading of line-side hardware should also come tablet and staff changing apparatus, relics of these remain on some parts of the NCC main line. A sophisticated type was used on NCC and BCDR systems with their tablets and a more crude version of nets on the GNR Portadown-Derry section with their staffs.

BCDR banner and dwarf signals at Helen's Bay, 1969. (W.P. McCormick)

By far the most conspicuous feature of the railway line was of course the semaphore signal and here companies really showed their individuality, the solid looking GN type mounted on what often appeared to be any convenient pole, the unusual somersault signals of the NCC with their graceful finial and the long bladed BCDR type with 'ballet dancer' top, usually on a lattice metal post, in grey paint rather than the more usual white. There were so many different types - short and long, double arm, calling on, junction, dwarf and the GN revolving ground signal. Most had the company name cast

on to the spectacle frame. The 12 mile Bangor line had no less than 3 different types of signal, lower quadrant semaphore, upper quadrant semaphore and banner, the latter very unusual for a running line. This track circuited system must have been well ahead of its time when installed in 1931. Many of the signals were operated by lead acid batteries. It is interesting to note that the new Lagan bridge and the Blythefield curve have banner signals as repeaters.

Castlerock down starter and tablet exchanger, the latter long out of use, 15th August 1992. (N. Poots)

Even platform edges were different, varying from the engineer's brick on the Derry Central to the heavy diamond pattern stones on B&CD platforms, still evident at Carnalea today although on most platforms the raising of height on one or two occasions has left them well buried. At the now closed

station of Craigavad it is surprising to see how low the original platform was, suitable for the six wheelers with their two running boards and of course a lower rail height. This station has the last surviving original BCDR name board. Platelayers' huts were another lineside feature, often made from old sleepers, sometimes brick with rounded corrugated roof containing usually hammers, spikes and fish plates even detonators, and complete with cast iron stove, for which coal was usually available! And finally bridges, mostly of beautiful stone construction, with graceful arches, some built for double and even triple track which never came. Some, as at Ballymoney, for both standard and narrow gauge. The bridge plates varied with the prosperity of the company, GN with the company initials and number, NCC with elaborate numbers and BCD merely painted numbers. The railway lineside was also much tidier, if one looks at any old photographs in pre and immediate post war years one is immediately struck by the lack of trees and vegetation. Compared to today's lineside, pre-war ones were like well-kept gardens, perhaps this is one of the reasons why we did not hear much about slipping on autumn leaves in those days.

So compared to the old days the railway scene today is functional but mundane, no doubt efficient and labour saving but seen from the carriage window there is a sameness wherever you may be - Ireland, Great Britain or further afield, but one thing is certain, today's signs will not last as long as the cast iron signs of the 19th and early 20th centuries which they replace - and you only got fined 40 shillings (£2) in those days for trespassing!

CAMPING COACHES — Mark Kennedy

Although most railway carriages when they have finished their passenger carrying service are usually broken up or adapted for civil engineering department use, a number were converted as caravans. They were parked in sidings at tourist resorts and let out during the summer months as camping coaches.

Following the lead of their English parent company, the LMS NCC introduced caravan coaches in the summer of 1935. They were generally used for a ten week period each year. Bookings were normally from 12 noon Saturday to 12 noon Saturday. To rent one cost £2 l0s (£2.50) per week for four persons, with dining/living room and two double bedrooms, with all bed and table requisites supplied. Other than the actual rental, the only condition was that not less than four Monthly Return Tickets be paid. Holidaymakers could travel by train in the ordinary way to the place where the caravan coach was situated. There was also an extra cost for cooking and lighting oil.

To rent a similar camping coach in England, Wales or Scotland cost £1 more during July, August and September, and 10 Shillings (50p) more out of season. This was because the coaches there could accommodate six people. Prices remained fixed until the 1939 season when a broader pricing system was introduced ranging from £2 before the end of May up to £3 during July and August. Prices in Britain remained higher ranging from £2 to £4.

For the 1940 season the prices in Northern Ireland were changed again, this time ranging from £2 5s (£2.25) in October to £3 5s in July and August.

Before the 1937 NCC Tourist Guidebook was even printed, all LMS camping Coaches in England, Wales and Ireland were fully booked for the week commencing 31st July 1937.

The company description at the time was as follows: "An LMS caravan is a railway carriage converted to form a delightful summer home. It is not an old out of date coach in a worn condition in an out of the way place; it is a modern corridor railway carriage, with the interior fittings removed ..."

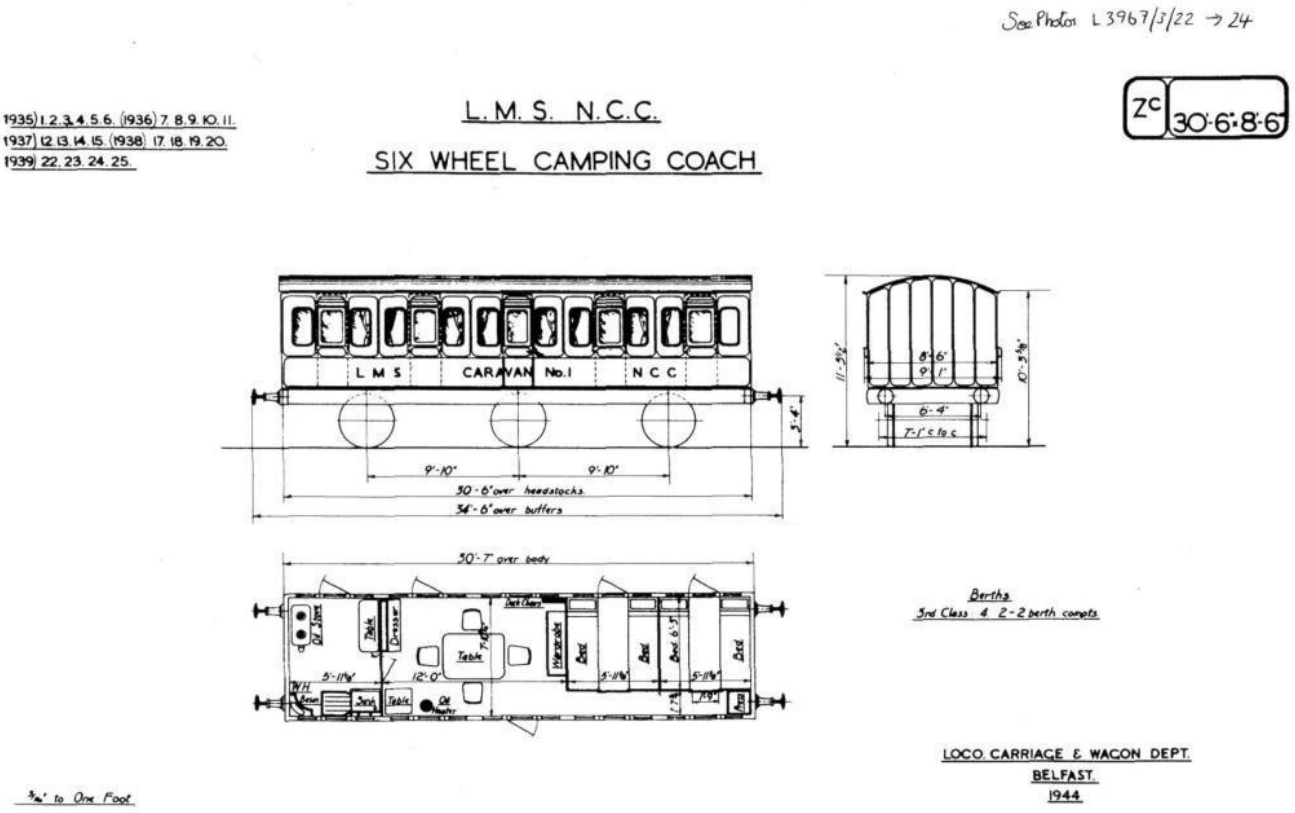
Six coaches were available in 1935 on the NCC system at Castlerock, Magilligan, Portstewart and Whitehead. Two coaches, numbered 9 and 11 were placed at Ballycastle in 1936. By the start of the Second World War in 1939 twenty five were in use, Downhill also having been added to the list of sites.

At each station the coaches were placed on a length of track adjacent to the railway station, permitting the use of toilet facilities there as there were none on board the coaches themselves. The advertising material stated: "The local station master will be your guide and friend, and your letters if addressed LMS Caravan, ... Station, LMS Railway, ... will be delivered to you as at home."

The coaches proved so popular that they were often booked from season to season, and were marketed to walkers and climbers as well as the general seaside holidaymaker. Booking could be made by writing to Mr Malcolm Spier, Manager and Secretary, York Road, Belfast.

The carriages used were all originally standard gauge vehicles. The ones used at Ballycastle were mounted on narrow gauge underframes, and located on the old loading bank beside the goods store.

Presumably the ones at standard gauge locations retained standard gauge underframes.



The first compartment was fitted out as a kitchen/bathroom containing a 'two ring' oil fuelled stove, a table, a Belfast sink with a wooden draining board and a small corner mounted wash hand basin. A door was added in the internal partition to allow access to the next room. This was the living/dining room and was twice as large as the kitchen, having been made from two compartments knocked into one. The living room had a dresser, a dining table and four chairs, a wardrobe, a small table, an oil heater and deck chairs. The corridor ran off the living room leading to the two bedrooms, each room had two built-in single beds.

By 1940 the camping coaches had been suitably 'Blacked Out' to conform to Air Raid Patrol regulations in force during the Second World War. Presumably this meant that dark blue/black blinds had been fitted to all windows.

The NCC's Drawing Office diagram of the Camping coaches listed them as Third Class. The overall external dimensions of each carriage was shown as 30 feet 6 inches by 8 feet 6 inches wide. The carriage bodies are originally Belfast and Northern Counties Railway non-corridor five compartment

six wheelers dating from around the late 1890s. The modification such as the corridor and bedroom sliding doors are typical of the style and workmanship of the NCC's York Road workshop in the 1930s. The sliding doors are identical to those found in NCC bogie carriages of the period although the corridor itself had to be very narrow to allow the beds to be a standard 6 feet long.

The NCC's original technical drawings of carriages were all destroyed during the blitz and had to be redrawn in 1944.

Recently, an old camping coach came to light on the outskirts of Ballycastle having been moved from the station in the mid-1950s, since then it was used as a summer house and store in the garden of a private residence. This vehicle was originally a straight sided five compartment, seating 40 in the first four compartments and a half compartment for the guard at one end. When built it weighed 13 tons, and was vacuum braked. It had oil-gas lighting, cushioned seating and carriage foot warmers, but would not have had steam heating. It was one of the following numbers: 92, 96, 99, 100, 113, 118, 120, 127, 136, 143, 144, 150, 152, 161, 206, 207, 210, 211. These brake thirds were classified Z9 and became known as Zc when converted to camping coaches. Some of the camping coaches were rebuilt using Z10 class five compartment 50 seaters. These had been the most numerous class of six wheeler in the BNCR fleet; some 57 vehicles were originally built.

One of the window panes in the end bedroom compartment still had the word SMOKING' etched into the glass.

The NCC camping coach recently discovered near Ballycastle. (M. Kennedy)

The popularity of camping and rambling holidays led the Great Western Railway in Britain to introduce camping coaches in 1934. Their publicity department was deeply involved in all this and even produced a series of booklets for hikers and ramblers. Most GWR coaches were stationed at seaside locations. In 1934, the destinations advertised were the "Beauty spots of Somerset, Devon, Cornwall and Wales".

The Belfast and County Down Railway also jumped on the caravan idea for the 1936 season,

advertising "The Novel Holiday" at the following locations: Newcastle, Killough, Donaghadee and Ardglass. Terms and conditions were very similar to those of the NCC. The booking charge throughout the season from May to September was £2 10 Shillings (£2.50) per week. A deposit of 10 Shillings 6d (52.5p) was required on confirmation of booking.

When the Ballycastle line closed in 1950, most of the camping coaches remained in the station for about a decade, but it is not clear how long they were used by holidaymakers. The BCDR Donaghadee branchline also closed in 1950, but the camping coaches remained in use for another five or so years. It was popular for families in Belfast to rent a summer residence at a seaside resort. For families on a light budget the camping coach allowed the freedom of rented accommodation without the expense of hiring a house.

The equipment provided in a BCDR camping coach was as follows:

Crockery - 4 dinner plates, 4 pudding plates, 4 tea plates, 4 soup plates, 2 veg. tureens, 2 dishes, 4 cups, 4 saucers, 4 tumblers, cruet set (3 pieces), 1 enamel jug (2 pints), 1 enamel jug (1 pint), 2 pudding basins, 1 tea pot (2 pints), 1 sugar basin, 4 egg cups.

Bedclothes - 4 under blankets, 8 sheets, 8 rugs, 8 pillows, 8 pillow cases.

Kitchen Utensils - 2 saucepans (1 steamer), 1 frying pan, 1 kettle (4 pints), 1 colander, 1 pan scrub, 1 enamel bowl, 1 enamel jug, 2 enamel buckets, 1 dripping tin, 2 water cans, 2 small enamel water cans, 1 broom, 1 hand brush, 1 bread board, 1 scrubbing brush.

Other Linen - 2 table cloths, 1 dish cloth, 2 tea cloths, 2 dusters, 2 roller towels, 1 oven cloth.

Cutlery - 4 large knives, 4 small knives, 4 large forks, 4 small forks, 4 dessert spoons, 4 tea spoons, 4 egg spoons, bread knife, carving knife and fork, tin opener, corkscrew.

Miscellaneous - 3 oil lamps, 1 hurricane lamp, 1 tin for paraffin, 1 oil stove, 1 heat-cook oil stove with oven, 1 dustbin, 2 chamber pots, 1 funnel, 4 chairs, 2 deck chairs, 1 fire extinguisher, 1 mirror, 1 doormat and 1 mop.

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LMS NCC Technical Drawing, UFTM Archive, Cultra

Thanks to Mrs Boyd of Ballycastle.

BOOK AND VIDEO REVIEWS — Michael McMahon

This year more with fewer words - variety is the spice of life!

1) J.G. Robinson, A Lifetime's Work - David Jackson, Oakwood Press, 234 pages, £18.95

A brilliant book, very well written and the photographic reproduction is excellent. The "Limerick" chapter is of obvious interest and is clearly understood. Lots of locomotive detail, obviously, but the social and railway politics of JGR's time make for great reading.

2) Irish Railways in Pictures, No.1 The Great Northern, Re-published by the IRRS London Area, 33 pages, £3.95

Firstly I must refer the reader to CPF's review in Five Foot Three No.21, Winter 1977/8. Those comments still apply and the re-print is of the same "superb" quality nearly twenty years later. The only change is of a photograph on the inside rear cover, now of the 'new' Great Victoria Street station.

3) Irish Railways, Locomotives and Coaching Stock - Peter Fox, Platform 5 Publishing Ltd, 96 pages, £9.95

Aimed at the non-resident enthusiast as a guide book, this has been written by somebody about whom I wonder has he ever visited Ireland. Quite patronising, it is only reasonable for the photographs, and even then make liberal use of the scissors to remove those captions. Lots of inaccuracies make for frustrating reading - give it a miss!

4) The County Donegal Railway - Steve Flanders, Midland Publishing, 64 pages, £7.99

Yes - yet another narrow gauge book, this time a mostly pictorial volume in the now well established Midland Publishing style. A potted history of the CDR is of necessity very 'thin' but at least most of the photographs are good. For me a very frustrating feature is the almost total absence of accurate dates in the photograph captions.

5) The Londonderry & Lough Swilly, A Visitor's Guide - David Bell & Steve Flanders, Published by the Co. Donegal Railway Restoration Society, 96 pages, £4.99

This is basically a guide for exploration around Donegal, setting out tours of former L&LSR lines. Map references and sign posts in the text guide the reader to the exact location of stations, bridges, and anything L&LSR! Lots of local knowledge provides a very worthwhile and readable book.

There is now a good excuse to go to Donegal, or indeed escape from the family for a day if you are there on holidays! If you have not got a car, the latest L&LSR bus timetable is on page 93!

6) Book: Locomotives & Railcars of Bord Na Mona - Steve Johnson, Midland Publishing Ltd, 46 pages, £4.99

Video: Peat Railways of Ireland - Steve Johnson, On Line Video, 52 minutes, £16.99

Together these two items make quite a lot of sense. The video is informative with some lovely shots of big trains struggling across bogs and bridges. The book is basically a stock list with a bit of background detail. Watch the video and read the book - then the whole BNM system becomes quite interesting. The whole system usually gets very scant attention and Steve Johnson has done a good job in creating an interest for many people who are almost unaware of the vast mileage of narrow gauge track in Ireland.

7) Inchicore 150 & The Railways of the Dublin Area Video Lines, Kent, 60 minutes, £12.99

The video is of quite good technical quality - nice bright sequences, but wasn't the weather brilliant anyway? The commentary is at times tedious, pronunciations are the usual non-resident - Howth and Ballina to name a few. Carriage types are mixed up - Cravens and Park Royals. All in all, very simple errors that local knowledge could have easily checked.

Lingering shots make you reach for the Fast Forward button, but I suppose it is a reasonable documentary work.

8) The Dingle Train - D. Rowlands, W. McGrath & T. Francis, Plateway Press, 160 pages, £19.95

Yes I know, another narrow gauge book, but that's what seems to be around currently. Where are all the 5'3" books?

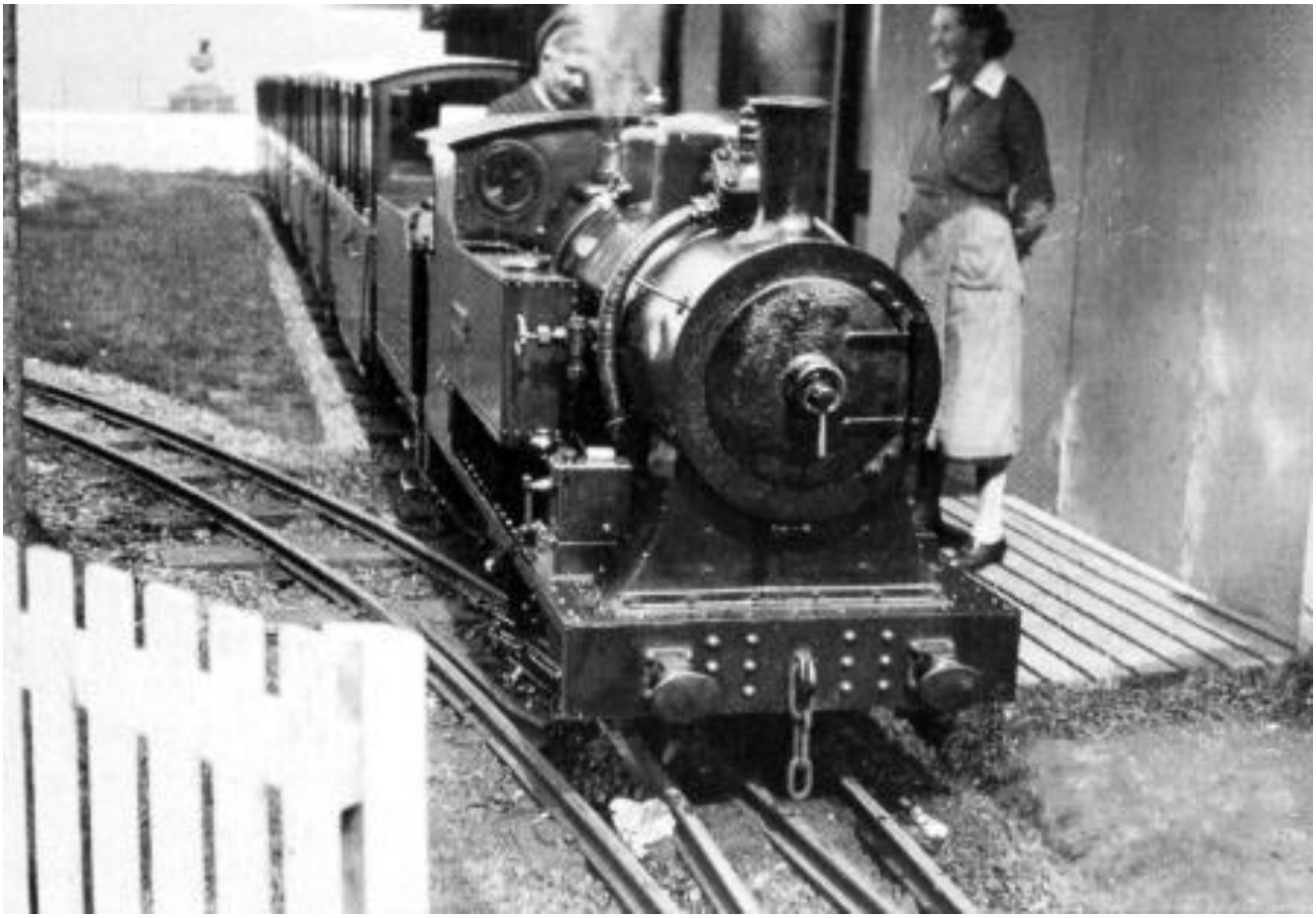
The photographs in this book are simply excellent, particularly those from Ivo Peters. There are quite a few 'then and now' sequences which are very interesting. The text is of a very local nature and at times

tends to be a bit repetitive and tedious. This aside, it is a very worthy addition to the Irish Railway Bookshop.

Bellevue - Belfast's Mountain Playground - Stewart McFetridge, Publisher unstated; £5. 99

This recently published paperback tells in detail the history of Bellevue, Belfast's mountain playground on the slopes of the Cave Hill alongside the Antrim Road in North Belfast. The area had three aspects - as a public park (with an extensive range of fairground amusements), as a zoo and as the site of Belfast's only miniature steam railway.

From the railway historical point of view, Bellevue had two aspects. The area was originally the property of the Cavehill and Whitewell Tramway which connected at Chichester Park with the Belfast City Tramways and ran to Glengormley. It came into the possession of Belfast Corporation when the Cavehill Tramway was acquired and developed into a through route from the City Centre to Glengormley. For many years Bellevue was managed by the Corporation Transport Department and provided a bountiful source of revenue for its trams. Only later was the management taken over (more logically) by the Parks Department. With changing public tastes in transport, holidays, etc., the area has lost much of its former popularity although the zoo has in recent years been modernised and is now the principal attraction.



"Jean" with her train at Bellevue Park, having run round the balloon loop seen diverging on the left. (W. Robb)

The 15' gauge Bellevue Miniature Railway ran on a level track along the plateau at the top of the steep approach from the Antrim Road and at the foot of the basalt escarpment. Its length was about a quarter of a mile and it had a station at each end - Bell Hazel and Bellevue Park. The rolling stock consisted of

one steam 0-4-0 tender/tank locomotive and a number of articulated coaches. The locomotive had a fascinating history. It was built in Germany by the firm of Krauss for a fairground in Munich, and was acquired by the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch Railway which used it in the construction of its line on the English Channel coast between 1927 and 1929. Its name on this line was "The Bug". Belfast Corporation re-named it "Sir Crawford" in honour of Sir Crawford McCullough, the Lord Mayor, who opened the Bellevue railway on 28th March 1934. After a decent interval the locomotive was re-named yet again, this time acquiring the rather more homely title of "Jean".

The railway was a popular attraction for some years but eventually changing public tastes led to its closure in 1950 when the rolling stock was acquired by the Belfast scrap merchants, Eastwoods, and for many years "Jean" lay at the bottom of a mountain of scrap metal at their Andersonstown yard. The locomotive escaped final disposal because an interested employee knew what it was and ensured that it was always passed over when a clearance was being made. In 1971 it was salvaged, in an almost ruinous condition and returned to the Romney, Hythe & Dymchurch where it was restored to its original name and condition.

The book includes a fine colour photograph of the resurrected "Bug" and a wide selection of other pictures, the standard of reproduction of which is, unfortunately, rather poor. However, the author is to be congratulated on the compilation of a great deal of hitherto unpublished material.

William Robb

LETTERS

Dear Sir,

Anyone who has any regard for the continued viability of railways in Ireland must be heartened by the approaching completion (at the time of writing) of the modernisation of the former Great Northern main line, and by the recent announcement about electrification of the Bray to Greystones section of the erstwhile Dublin and South Eastern and major improvements for the Dublin-Sligo route. Welcome as all these works will be however there is no doubt that their implementation will pose problems for our Society.

We may, and I emphasise the latter word, be able to run one or two Greystones shuttles and Dublin/Enniscorthy/Rosslare trains whilst electrification work is in progress but considering the single line and the need for absolute possession at various times both ingenuity in planning and fewer trains will be called for.

Looking further ahead - what of the situation once the EMUs commence regular service to Greystones? I have no idea as to how intense a commuter service it is intended to operate south of Bray, but unless it were possible to reduce significantly the current Bray-Greystones timing of 11 or 12 minutes (highly unlikely in view of the physical characteristics of the route) even a half-hourly service would entail occupation of the single line section by scheduled trains for some twenty two to twenty four minutes in every thirty. I mention a half-hourly service because it could be argued that such provision (with suitable gaps in the sequence of electric trains to accommodate Arklow and Rosslare workings) might be considered the minimum to justify the capital expenditure involved in electrification.

Hence in the near future it is likely to be a case of "Over to Maynooth and Enfield" for all steam shuttles. As for our long distance workings on the South Eastern, who knows? All that can be said here (and I have no knowledge either of IÉ's plans or of the thinking of our own Council) is that perhaps we can hope that our long standing relationship with CIÉ/IÉ and the goodwill which we have established with Bord Failte may, (and again just may) succeed in finding a way for No.461 to continue her perambulations on her native tracks, and even on the odd occasion for No.171, climbing to Rathdrum to revive, for at least this relic of a bygone age, some faint recollections of Pomeroy and Carrickmore.

Despite possibilities however we must face the fact that steam traction over a busy suburban single line is not a realistic proposition, and also that once the Sligo line has been upgraded it will not be possible to use our own coaching stock over it. These points have been made before, but since they go to the very root of the question of the Society's future operations I make no excuse for bringing them up again. We must not forget either, that as was mentioned in last August's News-Letter whilst without the facilities at Whitehead, and the hard work of all too few Northern members our locomotives and coaches would soon cease running for lack of maintenance, without our Southern operations the bulk of our income would cease.

Yours,

Laurence Liddle

New South Wales

Ex Great Northern SG2 No.184 leaves Dun Laoghaire pier with a parcels train in July 1962. (I.C. Pryce)

Dear Sir,

Compound Locomotives - First of all let me say how much I enjoyed the video "Compound Interest" which revived memories of seeing these engines at work. The only blemish is that the narrator has got the cylinder layout the wrong way round! *[No sooner had the video been released than Alan spotted the error - I know how he feels! - Ed.]*

This leads me to another point which was raised in the last issue of "Five Foot Three", about the heavy water consumption of No.85. Compound engines can be something of an enigma and I hope the following discourse will be of interest provided it is not too boring.

I do not have sufficient detailed knowledge of the GNR compounds to discuss their performance characteristics at great length. However size for size, they were almost identical to the LMS compounds and used the same Smith/Deeley principle. The LMS compounds were inferior to the GNR engines as they suffered from a strangulated steam circuit, but if my comments on the LMS compounds are multiplied by some factor less than one, the same reasoning will apply.

With moderate loads on long non-stop runs the LMS compounds could return a coal consumption of 35 pounds per mile. With a heavy load at moderate speeds, where the strangulation effect was much less, the LMS compounds could return a reasonable figure in terms of coal burned in relation to drawbar horse-power. Such conditions on LMS express trains were not wide-spread so that in service the compounds averaged 45 pounds of coal per mile. In later years as they were cascaded down to more secondary duties average coal consumption rose to 55 pounds per mile. It can be safely assumed that as the coal consumption increased so did the amount of water used.

The Deeley regulator at starting admitted boiler steam direct to the two low pressure cylinders through quite a small bore (1½ inch or so) auxiliary pipe. Also a small amount of steam was admitted to the high pressure cylinder via a small port in the regulator valve through the main steam pipe and the superheater. Further opening of the regulator shut off the auxiliary steam supply to the LP cylinders and only the HP cylinder took steam. Memory is dimming, but if I remember correctly the full gear cut-off in the LP cylinders was 90%. Readers will be aware that ‘simple’ working was used to start the train.

Probably the last extensive use of the LMS compounds on quite important services was on the semi-fasts from Manchester and Liverpool to the North Wales Coast. These were important from the revenue point of view as they were well used and generally loaded from 330 to 350 tons. Manchester to Llandudno was 87¾ miles and the best of the trains made 13 stops with a maximum non-stop run of 26 miles. The slowest trains made 16 stops with a maximum non-stop run of about 18 miles. From each of these stops the engine would be working simple, using saturated steam at 90% cut-off. What a recipe for guzzling water and coal!

With the valves in full travel and the regulator in compound working position this was equivalent to working simple at about 36% cut-off. The trains had therefore to be accelerated working simple until sufficient momentum had been gained to enable compound working to commence.

It is perhaps not surprising that the LMS compounds were not universally popular. The drivers who got on best with them put the regulator over to full open quite early and leaving the gear in full travel allowed the engine to accelerate in its own time. As only one cylinder was being supplied this in no way drained the boiler. This method was not so stupid as it may appear, for as speed increased when working simple the throttling losses through the auxiliary steam pipe and small regulator ports became quite enormous so that the power obtained from simple working rapidly fell away.

I hope that the foregoing will at least go some way to explaining why your excellent compound locomotive is heavy on water on the duties it is performing.

Yours faithfully,

G. Hayes

Auchtermuchty, Fifeshire

[It is interesting to compare our Portrush Flyer with the North Wales trains described by G. Hayes. The mileage from Whitehead to Portrush is not very much less than Manchester-Llandudno, while the number of stops is around half that of the slowest North Wales train.

One could assume that the LMS trains were worked by experienced crews while ours are handled to a large extent by men who are learning the job. Thus the loco is quite often over-fired and blowing off

but, in operating terms, this is preferable to struggling around short of steam.

Even allowing for this, there remains the puzzle of why, with standard equipment, it should be so hard to keep the boiler at a reasonable level.

The 'early into compound' method referred to by Mr Hayes appears comparable to putting one's car into top gear at a low speed - it would eventually accelerate but would require a long uninterrupted run to keep time. I have personal experience of this being tried with No.85 out of Belfast Central on the curvaceous 1 in 60 over the Dargan Bridge - we got there, but only just! - Ed.]

J15 No.255 at Amiens Street with the 'Gas Tanks' described by "Spare Link" in the last Five Foot Three. Presumably the tanks are safely at the rear of the train. (G. Hayes)

Dear Sir,

Reading the article by "Spare Link" on the Last Days of Steam at Inchicore, brought to mind a few days I spent in the Dublin area during September 1959.

I saw several of the locomotives and workings mentioned by "Spare Link". One working he did not mention was a light engine, always a MGWR J5, which ambled through Amiens Street from the Westland Row direction in the afternoon. No doubt someone will remember what the working

involved.

Engines seen on passenger work included J15 Nos. 149, 198 and 200 together with K2 2-6-0 No.260. GNR 4-4-0 No.199N took me on an afternoon trip to Drogheda and back and GNR 4-4-0 No.170N took me out to Howth on a stopper on the same day. GNR SG2 0-6-0 No.184N was passenger pilot on the GNR side at Amiens Street.

Yours faithfully

G. Hayes

Auchtermuchty, Fifeshire

[Ref. para. 2, it has been suggested that the J5 may have worked empty carriages to Westland Row and then have gone to work, or bank, a goods out of North Wall. - Ed.]

Great Northern LQG No.158 at Londonderry Foyle Road shed on 24th June 1937. (H.C. Casserley)

Dear Sir,

The excellent article in the last edition of Five Foot Three - The Last Days of Steam at Inchicore - by Spare Link, brought memories flooding back of those final years of steam in the Dublin area, and had me searching through old log books for some additional information about some specific classes mentioned.

The experiences of Fireman Christy King working with LQG No.159 on the 01:20 Goods bring back memories of this class working on the DSE passenger turns. By 1960 such turns were almost exclusively on Boat trains between Dun Laoghaire Pier and Westland Row / Kingsbridge. However the

13:10 SO from Amiens Street to Greystones, and its return working, reverted to steam haulage in September 1960 and immediately became an essential turn for the Dublin timing fraternity. When steam took over initially this turn was virtually monopolised by U Class No.197, Lough Neagh, and Driver Jim O'Toole became a regular performer, usually to good effect. However, No.197 did not have sole rights to this turn, and other locomotives started to appear - usually from the ex GN allocation, but sometimes with CIÉ locomotives. J15 No.151 and the excellent J4 No.261 are recalled in this regard. However my records indicate that on 12th November 1960, Class LQG No.158 was turned out for the 13:10. With 6 coaches weighing 180 tons she did the non-stop gallop from Westland Row to Dun Laoghaire in 8'43", allowed 10, max 53. By the standards of the day, this was excellent running. The smart running continued through to Greystones, and a time from Bray to Greystones of 8'55" was lively in the circumstances. The only other member of Class LQG which I recorded on the DSE was No.163, in rundown condition relative to the excellent condition of No.158 and No.159 as inherited by CIÉ.

0-6-2T No.673 and No.674 (both I3 class) at Broadstone in 1959. They are said to have been somewhat lifeless compared with the GNR or BCDR suburban tanks. The containers in the foreground appear to be locomotive tool-boxes or lockers but why are they strewn around the yard? (W.T. Scott)

As Spare Link intimates in his article, the stock of ex GN locomotives which remained in traffic with CIÉ was generally in far better condition than the existing CIÉ fleet. Footplate crews were quick to take advantage of these smooth running, steam-tight machines. I recall another run on the 13:10 on Saturday, 16th September 1961, this time with that excellent locomotive No.132, Class Q, when after signal delays at Sandymount and Sydney Parade, some smart running ensued. However the climax was

undoubtedly the Bray-Greystones section when a time of 8'32" was achieved. The average speed from Bray start to passing MP 16 was 35. I will leave it to your imagination to contemplate how we tackled the severely restricted sections as far as No.4 tunnel. I should add that Jim O'Toole was not responsible for this run.

On another point raised by Spare Link - the Inchicore Workmen's train - the locomotive which worked down to Kingsbridge in the evening time on this 'service' frequently remained to haul the Dun Laoghaire Boat train to Islandbridge Junction. It was thus just possible to record a run over this section and obtain a speed. My desire to have a last run with my old favourite, No.673, Class I3, saw me on this turn on 2nd November 1961 when she hauled out the Boat train. A speed of 18 was recorded! Looking back, I'm sure that I missed runs with far more interesting locomotives doing this shunt, including the regular, No.42.

Finally, on a different matter, I once saw a list of proposed renumbering of CIÉ and ex GN locomotives pinned up on a notice board at Amiens Street shed. The idea was presumably to integrate the fleets numerically, and eliminate any duplications, of which there were quite a few. Does any member know if this plan was ever started, or was it just an accountant's brainwave.

Yours sincerely,

David Houston

Dublin

BCDR Station Wordsearch

O	E	B	T	S	E	W	R	O	G	N	A	B	S	A
M	E	S	C	S	C	E	O	N	Y	L	L	A	B	R
A	D	K	O	A	N	D	A	V	A	G	I	A	R	C
H	A	I	M	C	R	T	K	C	O	N	K	C	A	R
N	H	B	B	T	L	N	A	B	T	S	O	R	R	E
E	G	L	E	H	E	E	A	F	L	N	E	O	Y	E
D	A	O	R	E	L	S	I	L	L	I	M	S	R	V
Y	N	O	W	X	M	E	H	I	E	I	S	S	R	Y
S	O	M	D	A	L	G	G	G	M	A	E	G	U	A
I	D	F	R	D	U	R	B	S	U	D	R	A	M	R
E	P	I	H	O	T	H	G	I	R	B	A	R	Y	G
H	N	E	L	D	L	A	N	O	D	N	U	D	L	O
O	S	L	N	R	A	G	E	N	N	I	K	A	L	N
L	I	D	L	Y	A	R	T	L	U	C	G	O	U	W
K	K	I	N	G	S	B	R	I	D	G	E	A	T	B

The grid above contains the names of twenty three BCDR stations and halts, written horizontally, vertically and diagonally, forwards and backwards.

When you have found them, 25 remaining letters will spell out the names of two other stations which were located next to each other on the BCDR main line (giveaway hint - one of them had its name duplicated by another station in the same county).

The remaining 28 letters spell out (i) carriages used extensively by the BCDR, (ii) a class of BCDR steam locomotive and (iii) a famous hill located beside a BCDR station.

Compiled by Patrick J. Davey of Belfast.

Answers to the Great Northern Wordsquare in issue No.42. The complete list of loco names was: Antrim, Armagh, Boyne, Croagh Patrick, Derg, Down, Eagle, Erne, Errigal, Falcon, Foyle, Galteemore, Gill, Kestrel, Lagan, Liffey, Lough, Louth, Lugnaquilla, Meath, Melvin, Merlin, Neagh, Peregrine, Slieve Donard, Slieve Gullion, Slievenamon and Swilly. You will remember that there was one word Lough to cover the five locos with Lough in their names. The remaining letters spelled out Carrantuohill and Dundalk shed.

Another shot of "Jean", this time receiving some attention at Bell Hazel on 22nd August 1934. (W. Robb)

Yet again the May tour had mixed weather, as shown here with No.171 crossing Lough Owel on 11th May 1996. (N. Poots)

No.85 with the "Steam & Jazz" train of 21st June 1996 between Derriaghy and Lambeg. (C.P. Friel)