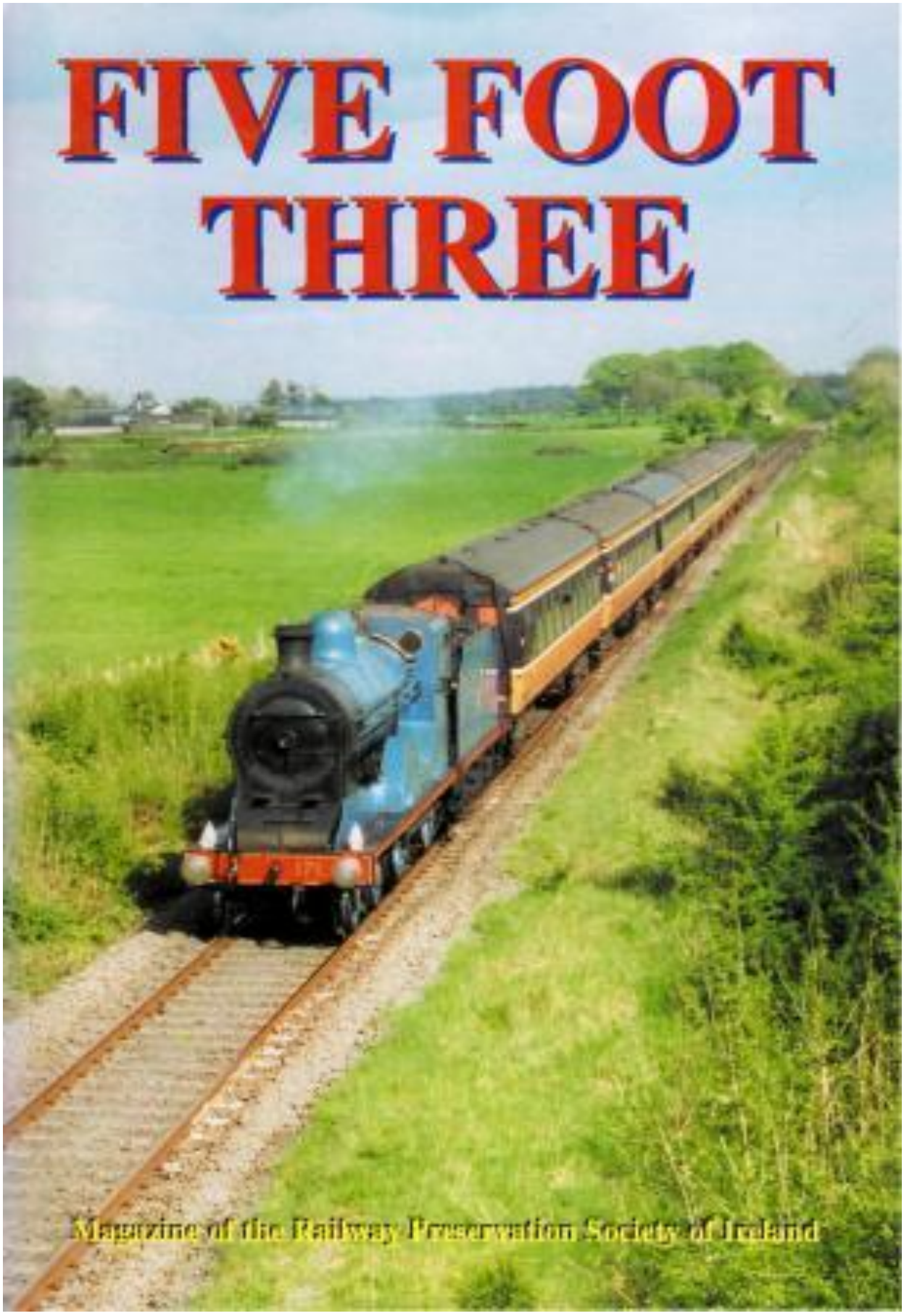
FIVE FOOT THREE



Magazine of the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland

FIVE FOOT THREE
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Editor: Nelson Poots

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Front Cover: No.171 makes a leisurely ascent of Woodlawn bank, on the outward leg of the Corrib Railtour on 11th May 2002. (W.T. Scott)

EDITORIAL

In considering the progress of the RPSI, your Editor is reminded of the first (and penultimate!) time he climbed Slieve Donard. Several times he thought he was approaching the summit, only to find that there was yet another hump to be surmounted. To those who manage the affairs of the RPSI, the "humps" of recent times have probably borne more resemblance to the Himalayas!

The most urgent matter to be confronted was the Operating Agreement with NIR which, as most will be aware, expired at the end of 2001. The effects of this, and the setting up of a new agreement, are reported elsewhere and our thanks are due to Vice-Chairman Johnny Glendinning and his negotiating team for resolving most of the problems of what was at first sight an alarming document.

Not surprisingly, the agreement included Health & Safety issues which in turn impacted (an

unfortunate choice of word!) on our coaching stock and operating practices in general. Whether because of, or in spite of, the anguished lament in the last Editorial is not clear, but we are now fortunate in having Health & Safety Officers, North and South, to organise Safety Cases and the accompanying paper mountains. It is to be hoped that NIR and IÉ, who operate into each other's territory, will be able to harmonise their requirements and procedures. Although the present position is not completely clear, life will certainly be much easier if we don't have to work to two sets of rules.

A recent article in the railway press referred to the RPSI "living on borrowed time" in relation to carriages. Although to the layman this may have had the unfortunate implication of mobile death-traps, it was not totally inaccurate in that it is several years now since IÉ began to impose restrictions on our use of wooden-bodied stock and the writing has been on the wall since then. After a period, during which many heads had been scratched, Paul Newell came in with the plan involving Mk2s and Lancastrian Carriage & Wagon. While the inability to run our historic stock will be a sad loss, it is not a matter in which we have any choice; time and railway legislation are not on our side and the present deal seems to be the best available. There does appear to be a potential let-out, under which we might be able to use vintage stock under certain strict conditions (perhaps Larne line on a Sunday) but it remains to be seen whether or not this could be arranged with NIR.

Another sad loss in the past year was the retirement of No.171. After her early bearing problems had been overcome, even NCC partisans came to respect this splendid old horse which just seemed to go on and on, rather like the largely unsung "Derry Engine" whose now imminent retirement will also mark the end of an era. Sentiment aside, the loss of No.171 meant that since July we only had two main line engines in traffic. Operational restrictions necessitated No.4 and No.85 being exchanged between Belfast and Dublin by light engine trips which eroded our income. Hopefully, a rejuvenated No.186 will emerge early in 2003 after an absence of over 20 years and No.461 will not be too far behind. Also hopefully, those (including the writer) who sing the praises of No.4 and its comforts will be able to withstand the climatic changes involved in manning No.186!

NEWS FROM COUNCIL — Paul McCann

"Bureaucracy gone mad!" - that was the opening line of last year's report to the members. Well, we haven't fully dealt with it yet, but we are getting there. Love it or hate it (does anybody love it?), it has to be accepted and that is what the officers of the Society have done. In the past year we have:

- signed a new operating agreement with NIR after lengthy negotiations;
- signed a new agreement with Iarnród Éireann whereby the Society is the first approved guest operator on that network;
- progressed significantly along the route to having a safety case acceptable to both jurisdictions in Ireland, both of whom are introducing new legislation requiring such documentation;
- made substantial progress with our plans to have a steel-bodied set of carriages available in order to meet one of the conditions attached to the NIR operating agreement;
- put a number of our operating personnel through Personal Track Safety (PTS) courses in Belfast and Dublin.

None of the above actually put a train on the road but without them we will be unable to do so in future. It is true that a lot of resources have been tied up in these health and safety matters and there will be a continuing need to keep them up to date, but a lot of the ground work has been done and the Society is gaining an increased reputation for its professional approach.

The year started, as the Christmas season ended, with the withdrawal of our old operating agreement by NIR. This was not publicised at the time as it was felt that there was adequate time before the next

main line operation in the north on 1st April. However, negotiations progressed slowly and as no agreement had been reached by mid-March, we were forced to cancel the planned "Easter Bunny" trains. It was unfortunate that this was to be run in conjunction with North Down Borough Council, with whom a very good relationship had been developing over the previous couple of years - it was not to be a good year generally for NDBC-sponsored trains.

A new urgency was introduced into the negotiations as the "Corrib" railtour was looming, and for the first time for very many years it was due to start out of Belfast, so it was necessary to have an agreement in place before then. In the event, an agreement in principle was achieved on 7th May, allowing engine movements to take place in time for the tour. Subsequent signing of the agreement took place on 8th November.

In Dublin, the southern members of our Railway Safety Committee were busily responding to the documentation requirements laid down by Iarnród Éireann. These finally came to fruition on 29th November when the Society became the first accredited guest operator with Iarnród Éireann.

All credit must be given to those Society members who worked so hard to get both these agreements in place.

I reported last year that renewed discussions were taking place to gain Museum status for the Society. In January, an acquisition and disposal policy was agreed, this being the first step on the road to becoming a museum. On 19th October, it was announced that our application had been given consideration and, in fact, had been approved. Well done to Johnny Glendinning and Mark Kennedy for their successful efforts!

Locomotive matters gave concern during the second half of the year. With No.171 coming out of traffic in July, Dublin was left without a locomotive. Attempts were made, unsuccessfully, to have No.85 passed at least as far as Maynooth but preferably Mullingar. A number of swaps were planned to have No.4 on the correct side of the border for various planned operations. This strategy fell apart on the final "Portrush Flyer" when No.4 developed valve problems. As a result, the "Bangor Belle" operation was diesel-hauled and the "Atlantic Coast Express" and a charter from Leixlip had to be cancelled. No.85 was available but could not run north of Ballymena because NIR's track is not of a suitable condition and the permission to run to Maynooth was not forthcoming.

The appeal for funds to restore No.186 was set at £85,000 and, while the very substantial amount of £43,000 has so far been raised (thanks to all who were so generous!), it is not sufficient to put the locomotive into traffic as quickly as would be liked. However, the overhaul is progressing and, all being well, running in should commence some time in 2003.

Despite the cancellation of a few operations, 2002 was a very busy year and one of the most gratifying aspects was the increased number of private charters. Such business means a guaranteed income and no requirement for outlay on advertising and marketing. Elsewhere, numbers on the public excursions remained steady. However, at Christmas vast numbers travelled and the ability of our volunteers to cope was severely tested. Notably, the trips from Coleraine and Londonderry were hard to man as overnight stays were required. However, it was done and those who took part were rewarded by fully booked trains from both centres. Coleraine had been tried as a starting point in the past, with poor results. This time, the approach to advertising and ticketing was managed correctly, and the results speak for themselves.

Locomotive No.4 made a much-heralded return to traffic in 2001 but it was felt that an official ceremony should be organised, albeit a year late. On 31st July, 50 guests were entertained at Whitehead, and a number of very useful high-level contacts were made.

April's AGM saw no controversy. The only changes in office were David Houston, who retired at the

end of his 3-year term as a General Officer, and David Humphries, who vacated the Business Development post to take up the free General Officer post. This left vacancies in Business Development and Northern Operations. In May, Paul Newell was co-opted to Council with the special responsibility of putting a set of steel-bodied carriages into traffic. David Humphries resigned from Council in November. At the next AGM, Bill King-Wood's 3-year tenure as General Officer will be finished, leaving two General Officer vacancies, along with Business Development and Northern Operations. Members are asked to give consideration to standing for these posts as otherwise there will be a major deficiency in Council's ability to manage the Society's affairs.

Dr Joan Smyth, chairman of N.I. Transport Holding Co, having been suitably instructed by former Loco Inspector Frank Dunlop, is about to launch No.4 through a tape, 31-7-02. (C P Friel)

At the AGM it was reported that negotiations were under way with the Ulster Folk & Transport Museum with a view to returning No.74 "Dunluce Castle" to traffic in a similar fashion to No.85. Those negotiations were successfully concluded. In parallel, a grant application was submitted to the UK Heritage Lottery Fund and the indications were that it would be favourably considered. However, it subsequently transpired that the HLF rules had been changed - the question of the ownership of the locomotive appears to be the problem - and the application has since been withdrawn. We are now regrouping the parties to ascertain the best way forward.

On No.4 on 31st July 2002, RPSI crew Irwin Pryce and Tony Ragg. With ex-NIR Driver George Gaw, Loco Foreman Billy Steenson & Frank Dunlop is an Editor, unusually in a suit! (C.P. Friel)

Also at the AGM, the matter of CIÉ's No.131 was raised. It was stated that moves by a joint Dundalk/Belfast group were afoot to have the locomotive restored and that funding was being sought. The Society wishes the project well and hopes to play a significant part in the restoration and eventual operation of the locomotive.

A novelty in Society events this year was the EGM. It was specifically called to fulfil the condition placed on Council at a previous AGM whereby none of the NIO compensation fund could be spent without reference to the membership. The opportunity was also taken to seek the views of members as to whether the Society should in principle buy its site at Whitehead - this was unanimously endorsed.

At the meeting, Paul Newell outlined his plans for putting a Mk2 set of carriages into traffic. Prior to the meeting it had appeared that there was likely to be major opposition to the spending plans, and a lively discussion was expected. In the event, those in opposition either didn't turn up or were swayed by what they heard at the meeting, as the proposal was opposed by a single proxy vote. It has to be said, however, that the majority feeling seemed to be one of resignation to the inevitable rather than a particular eagerness to have a Mk2 set running behind steam locomotives.

One of the major considerations yet to be addressed is the extra accommodation required at Whitehead for a full set of steel coaches, and what is to be done with the redundant vehicles from the current running set. Over the coming year it will become a pressing issue.

While Whitehead has accommodation problems, so too does Dublin. With the apparently unceasing orders for new railcars and carriages in the south, and the increase in the number of platforms at Heuston station, the space available for storage of Society locomotives and carriages is fast diminishing. It is reported that March might see it disappear completely. A potential site is being investigated but no progress can be reported yet.

Driver training, as always, is high on the agenda but attempts to progress it have so far failed. A major training scheme had been arranged to take place on the Navan line in February but it was cancelled at the last minute for various reasons. In the north, a number of potential assessors are being investigated, i.e. EWS and freelance bodies, and it is hoped that some progress will be made early in the new year.

The Society's web site has now become a very useful news and research tool. A very high percentage of new members now come via the internet, and the number of e-mail enquiries (some of them quite strange!) is amazing. The Bulletin service via e-mail remains very popular and the number using it is about 400, which is nearly 40% of the membership.

RPSI Sales team: Roy Forsythe, Willie Coates & John Friel. (C.P. Friel)

Perhaps something should be said about the (largely unsung) brilliant half-dozen shows each year organised by Charles Friel. During the long winter evenings, the monthly show is something to look forward to. In the main, the attendance is constant at around the 90 mark (sorry if the figures aren't entirely accurate Charles!), but a strange thing is that most of them don't appear on Society trains - a completely separate audience! Over the past two seasons, John Friel has increased the stock on the sales stand and it now occupies a significant length of the back of the hall. Every new release, and

many an old one, can be found there.

Now the bit that everybody is waiting for - the membership statistics. As always, the previous year's figures are in brackets. By the way, the changeover to the Euro was entirely seamless! Numbers were up again for 2002, being 1,064 (1,040). The membership breakdown is: Northern Ireland, 378 (383); Republic of Ireland, 371 (347); Great Britain, 277 (279); Overseas, 38 (31). Alternatively: Adult, 728 (721); Senior, 207 (196); Junior, 25 (22); Life 62 (64); Family 23 (18); Honorary, 13; Societies 6. The major changes this year are the increase in members in the Republic and the ever-increasing number of senior members - we're getting older, folks!

The number of members using Gift Aid forms continues to increase - 466 as against 434 last year. There are still a number of UK members who could join this scheme and I would appeal for them to do so - the only condition is that you pay enough UK tax to cover the amount reclaimed.

The usual, but very necessary, thanks must go to those who helped Council cope with the burden of management: Leslie Dick and Michael McLaverty of our insurance brokers, Marsh Ltd - Leslie put a lot of work into dealing with the new NIR insurance requirements, now satisfactorily concluded; Ashgrove House - ticketing and phone service; Wilma Cairns - ticketing, book-keeping, phone answering and general secretarial services.

Within the Society, the Posts of Special Responsibility to the Secretary for 2002 were: Charles Friel (Belfast Meetings); Nelson Poots ("Five Foot Three" Editor); Johnny Glendinning (Museums Curator); Mark Kennedy (Curatorial Adviser); Philip Lockett (Web Manager). Ciaran McAteer has been assisting with a number of legal issues. Thanks also to Peter Rigney and Robin Morton, major providers of new for the Bulletins and News-Letters; Barry Carse, collector and collator of membership payments from the south.

There are also a number of sub-committees which help take the load off Council. They have been especially busy in 2002, so thanks to the members who serve on them.

And finally, our thanks to the management and staff of Iarnród Éireann and Northern Ireland Railways.

THE NEW RPSI/NIR OPERATING AGREEMENT — Johnny Glendinning

The RPSI has had an operating agreement with NIR since 1987, when there had been concern that a publicly funded railway company was carrying the insurance of a voluntary society and that any accident caused by the RPSI would result in an increase in NIR's premiums.

The 1987 agreement changed the way we ran our trains. For the first time, our own public liability (PL) insurance covered the entire operation of our trains on NIR track and the cover was increased from £5m (for train rides and Open Days at Whitehead) to £15m. In addition to PL insurance we had to take out an accidental damage cover of £1.5m and we also were required to arrange for engineering inspections of our vehicles. The two NIR drivers and the guard became RPSI employees on the days when they operated our trains. After the 1997 derailment at Damhead other changes where made: speed restrictions, double blocking, stopping on double track when meeting another train, etc.

In 2000 Translink decided it was time that the 1987 agreement was reviewed and set up an internal working group to draft a re-wording. On 6th September 2001 Leslie Dick, our insurance broker, and I met with Edwin Macmillan (Secretariat Manager), Mal McGreevy (Mechanical Engineering Executive) and NIR's Insurances representative to look at the present and future insurance requirements to enable the RPSI to continue operating on NIR. All agreed that the PL cover for RPSI trains should be increased to equal NIR's cover. However, that cover was now £75m and it was accepted that, if we were to increase our cover by 5 times, the increased cost of our premiums would put us out of business.

We looked at how EWS (English Welsh & Scottish Railway, who operate most of the mainline steam in GB) and the owners of steam locos arrange their insurance. EWS carry a PL cover of £125m and the loco owner £10m, with EWS's PL underwriting the loco owner's PL for an extra £115m to bring them up to £125m. In other words, in any claim against the loco owner the first £10m of the claim would be paid for out of their PL cover and anything more would be paid by EWS's PL cover.

NIR's broker agreed to check with NIR's insurers to see if they would agree to us having a similar arrangement. Meanwhile, Leslie agreed to investigate whether our PL cover could also include the items insured by our accidental damage insurance. At our next meeting at the end of September all this had been put in place.

On four further occasions between October 2001 and May 2002 Paul McCann and I met with Edwin Macmillan, Mal McGreevy, Seamus Scallon (Railway Services Manager), John Barnett (Infrastructure & Property Executive) and Granville Lavin (Health, Safety & Environmental Manager). We discussed such items as wooden-bodied coaches, advance notice required for RPSI operations, crowd control, liability in the advent of an accident, arbitration and the composition of any accident enquiry. We all met for the last time on 7th May, this time joined by Stephen Armstrong (Director of Finance). At this meeting the new agreement was agreed in principle and the NIR portion of the Two-day tour was the first RPSI train be governed by the new 2002 agreement. Translink's solicitor and our solicitor were then asked to check the entire document.

Translink/NIR and RPSI personnel at the signing of the Agreement on 8th November 2002. Back row: Mal McGreevy, Paul McCann (RPSI), Seamus Scallon, Edwin McMillan, Jim Aiken, Johnny Glendinning (RPSI) and Granville Lavin. Front row: Norman Foster (RPSI) and Ted Hesketh. (Brian Thompson Photo)

Finally, on 8th November, the new agreement was signed at a ceremony in Central Station. When the new agreement had been signed and photos taken, Ted Hesketh presented Norman Foster with a 00-gauge model of NIR's GM No.208. It was a nice gesture to conclude a very important piece of work.

I would like to thank all those from Translink involved in these negotiations for their time, help and

patience throughout. I am also very grateful to Paul McCann, Leslie Dick, Denis Grimshaw, Ciaran McAteer and Peter Scott for their help and advice. Let's hope this new agreement will help to keep us steaming on NIR for many more years.

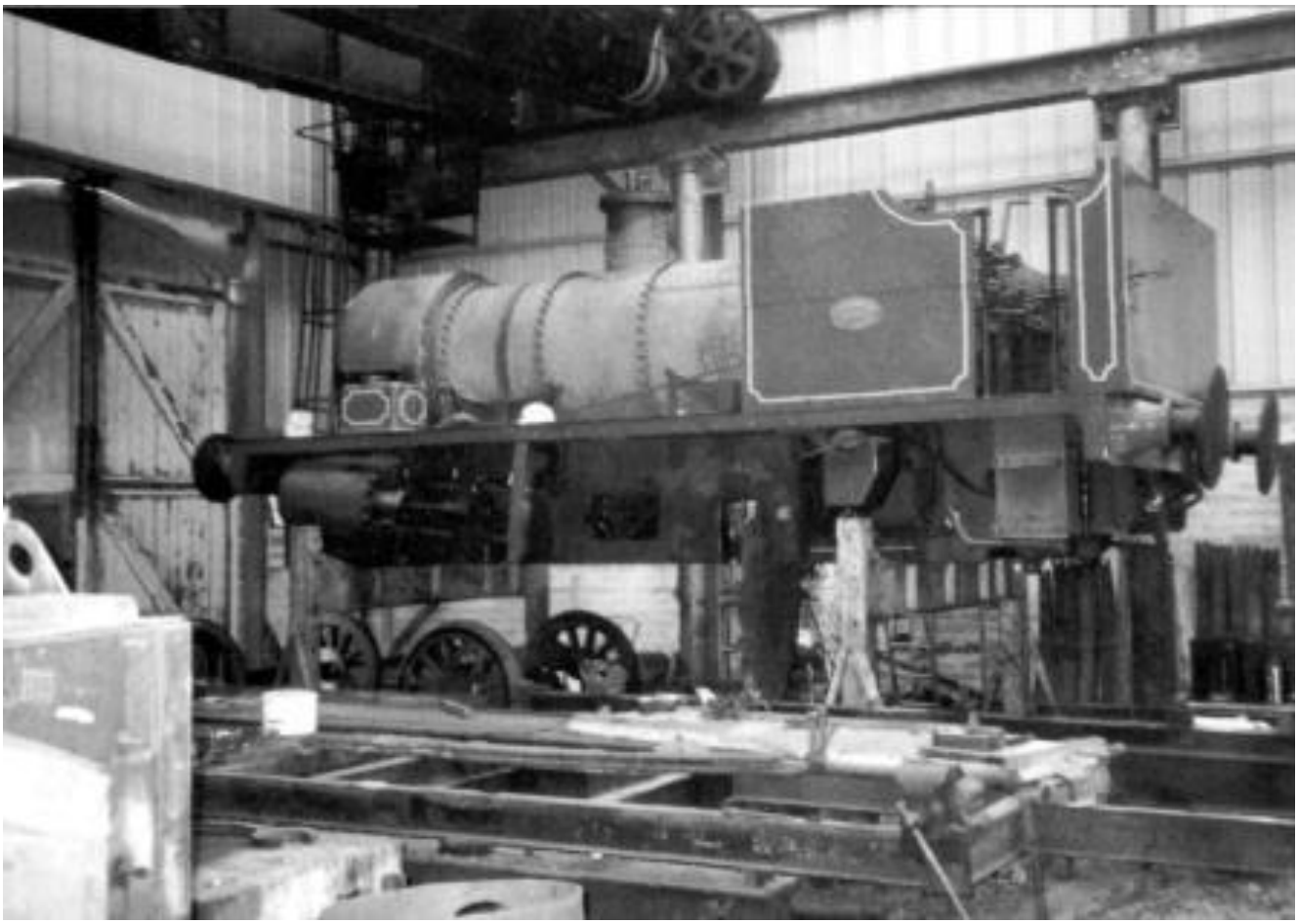
LOCOMOTIVE REPORT — Peter Scott

No.3: LPHC 0-6-0ST shunting loco. In traffic, Whitehead.

The Derry Engine's retirement draws closer, although the loco continues to perform Whitehead shunting duties without fail, albeit with big ends and other bearings that broadcast their need for adjustment. Her current boiler certificate expires in July 2003.

No.BG3: A. Guinness, Son & Co 0-4-0 ST shunting loco. Intermediate overhaul, Whitehead.

The Guinness loco is undergoing minor boiler repairs and re-tubing, most of which is complete. The next stage is hydraulic testing of the boiler. Mechanically the loco is in fairly good order and only essential work is planned. An unusual exception to this was a slack tyre, which has been re-fitted.



The Guinness is a bit high today! BG3 up on stands in the workshop with wheels out for attention to journals, axleboxes and a slack tyre. (J. Wolsley)

No.4: Ex LMS NCC 2-6-4T loco. In traffic, Dublin.

"The tank engine", as No.4 is usually known, is currently something of an itinerant with no fixed abode, and lodges in Whitehead, Connolly or Inchicore as traffic demands. The loco operated the Derry line Santa weekend and then immediately worked south light engine for the Dublin Santa trains. This

move was necessary since the only other main line loco, compound No.85, is not so far cleared for the Midland line to Maynooth.

Since her overhaul, No.4 has worked well but two problems needed attention. The right leading bogie axlebox persistently carried more heat than was good for peace of mind, and eventually it was decided to drop out the axle and examine the bearing. Nothing was found amiss so the journal was polished, alignment checked and the wheelset replaced. The entire job was completed in one weekend. Since then the bearing has operated without complaint.

Repairs having been completed, BG3's tyre has been expanded by heating and the wheelset is being lowered into it. On the right, the new boiler tubes and superheater elements fitted to No.186 can be seen (I.C. Pryce)

The second problem was more serious - a damaged valve head, which manifested itself during the return of the Portrush Flyer on 24th August. This involved dismantling and examining the entire piston and valve assembly on both sides of the loco, in order to identify the extent of the damage and ensure that no fragments had lodged in vulnerable places. Dismantling, repairs and reassembly were complete within a month, and the loco undertook a test run to Lisburn and back (via Antrim) on 22nd September. No obvious cause could be found for the problem since the remaining valves were unaffected - unless trouble experienced with the cylinder lubricator during running in caused overheating of the rings. Loco 4 is fitted with six narrow rings at each valve head together with parallel port bars, and there is a school of thought which derides this practice in favour of fewer rings and angled port bars.

No.27: Ex SLNCR 0-6-4T. In store, Whitehead.

No.85: Ex GNR(I) 4-4-0 compound express passenger loco. In traffic, Whitehead.

No.85 is now embarking upon her last year of operation, since her boiler certification runs out at the end of 2003. In a manner similar to No.4, she spent some time based in Dublin during the summer.

The compound has just completed the Northern "Santa" season, operating between Belfast Central and Whitehead. During these runs, the opportunity was taken to closely monitor the behaviour of the "Eagle Energy" coal - a fuel which has given us mixed fortunes. The passport to success seems to be to keep a thin fire, build it up in good time in the early part of the journey, and then go easy on the shovel. (This has paid notable dividends on the Rosslare runs with loco 171, where the traditional coaling stop at Gorey has been found unnecessary.) Loco 85 is of course less than ideal for short runs with half the distance tender first (especially in December!) - our appreciation must be expressed to the enginemen for their forbearance in the face of such discomforts. Far better to use her on the Dublin line, which will hopefully happen before the loco retires at the end of the year.

No.171: Ex GNR(I) 4-4-0 express passenger loco. In store, Whitehead.

In July, "Slieve Gullion" returned light engine to Whitehead on practically the last day of her boiler certificate validity. Back in 1964 when the RPSI was formed, No.171 was the popular choice for preservation of an express loco. Funding was raised with considerable difficulty and the loco was given a basic overhaul at Harland and Wolff's engine works. In spite of Harland's best endeavours with a limited budget, her return to traffic in 1968 threw up a series of unlooked for problems ranging from hot bearings to non-functioning brakes. This was in stark contrast to our other main line loco of the time, No.186, which could be relied upon to behave faultlessly. However the RPSI's unwritten motto is probably something like "he who dares wins" or "when the going gets tough the tough get going" - in any case we confronted No.171's problems and learnt the hard way. Perseverance paid off and No.171 has rewarded us by settling down as a reliable and capable machine. Tribute must be paid not only to what is basically a successful design, but also to those who have learnt to maintain her and not least of all to operate her. One of her last noteworthy runs was non-stop from Great Victoria Street to Portrush, which was accomplished in a faultless and matter of fact manner. It is sad that No.171 has had to come out of traffic when operating so well. However, she is due for major dismantling including both mechanical and boiler refurbishment before undertaking any further duties.

No.184: Ex GSR 0-6-0 standard goods loco. In store, Whitehead.

Requires major repairs.

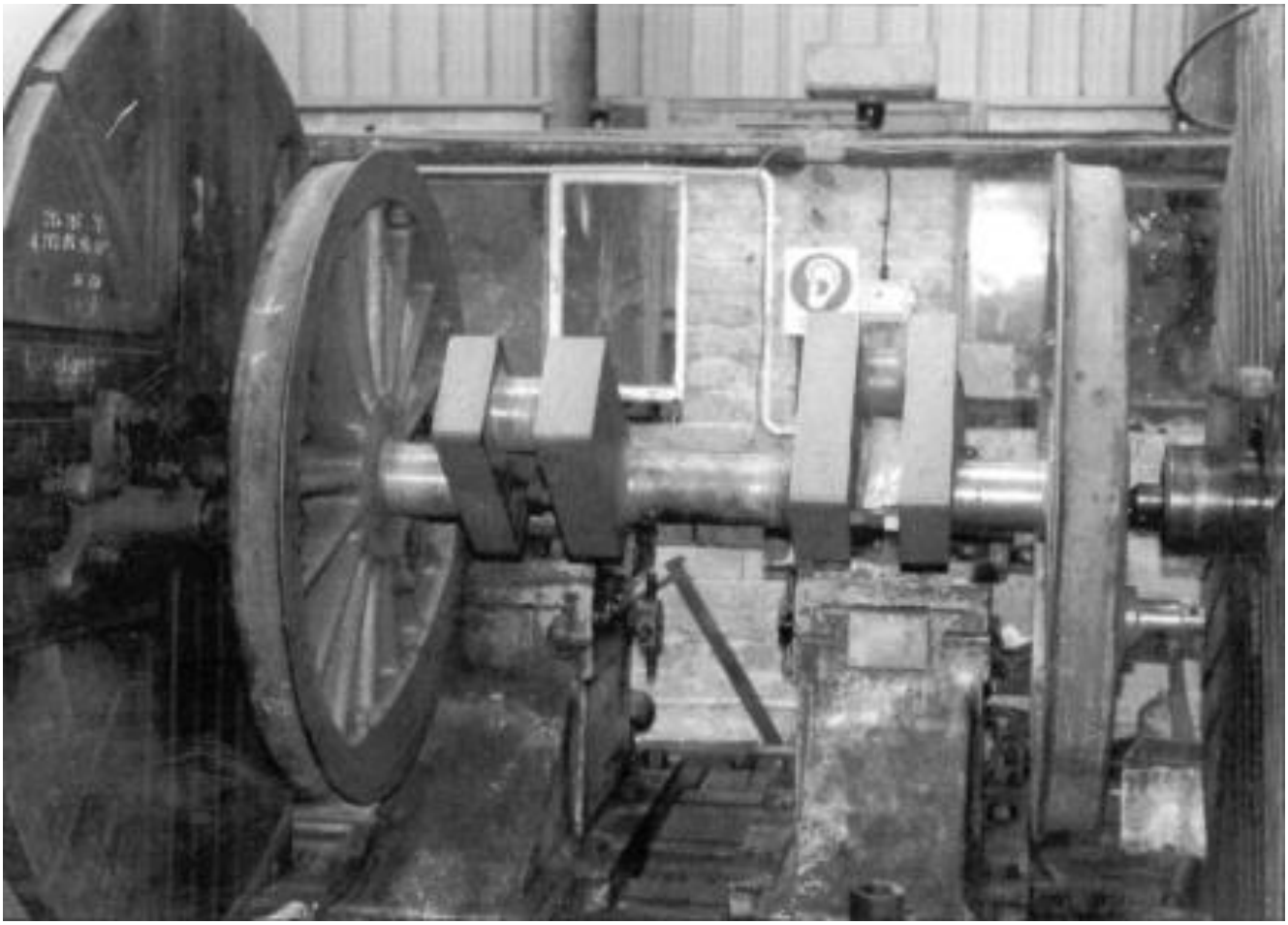
No.186: Ex GSR 0-6-0 standard goods loco. General overhaul, Whitehead.

The refurbishment of No.186 is now well advanced. The loco has been wheeled, the boiler has been fitted into the frames and a new smokebox built. Overhaul of boiler fittings, brake gear, coupling rods and motion is under way. The overhaul of the tender has been carried out in Dublin, with Irish Rail doing major platework renewals. Although the appeal for funds did not reach its target, with careful

management we have spent money where most needed and have avoided the non-essentials. Without the support of those who did contribute, the work could not have progressed at all. It is hoped that the loco and tender will soon be re-united and that return to traffic will be some time in 2003.

No.461: Ex DSER 2-6-0 goods loco. Whitehead. General overhaul.

Although not supported by any special funding, the initial stages of the overhaul have been progressed. The loco is now in the workshop and at the time of writing preparations for lifting out the boiler are nearly complete. Once the boiler is removed, it can be fully inspected and the extent of repairs decided. Then will be the time to talk about money, and appeals, and timescales!



The driving wheelset of No.186 set up in the wheel lathe for tyre re-profiling. It's interesting to note that the crank axle was forged out of a single piece of steel - though not by RPSI! (I.C. Pryce)

No.1 "Carlow": Ex CSÉ "Ruston" diesel shunter. Whitehead.

This loco has now settled down well, although it still manifests lack of gearbox oil pressure after prolonged use. The involved process of preparing and starting it is now less of a problem as crews become familiar, but the simplicity of No.23 is still missed.

No.23: Ex Irish Shell "Planet" diesel shunter. In store, Whitehead.

The Planet (or "biscuit tin" as someone scathingly dubbed it) is out of use pending general overhaul. It suffers from an engine water leak and damaged gearbox. The "Carlow" diesel has taken over its duties.

Unilok ex UTA road-rail shunter: Whitehead.

The Unilok's "finest hour" to date has been shunting loco No.74 "Dunluce Castle" at the Ulster Folk

and Transport Museum. In order to host a function in the railway gallery, the Museum required loco No.74 to be shunted outside the doors - a simple task in theory, until you consider the logistics of either fielding a locomotive for two days or a mechanical digger or winch of some sort, together with the appropriate risk assessments. Road access to the gallery is very restricted. So the Unilok was employed; it was conveyed from Whitehead by trailer, unloaded itself and drove round the museum to the railway entrance, where it was placed on the rails. The actual shunting of No.74 was the easiest part - the hardest bit was negotiating a tight corner and slippery pathway. Anyway, the machine certainly earned its keep.

[Since smooth wheels and damp mud do not go well together, some two-legged "bankers" were required while Peter emulated a rally driver. As regards the uncomplimentary reference to the Planet, I may well be the guilty party - although on a winter's day a biscuit tin might offer more comfort than either diesel. However, despite its increasingly decrepit appearance, the Planet has served us well. Given a well-charged battery, and perhaps a squirt of Easy-Start, it would start like a car and potter away all day; its primitive friction clutch not being subject to such whims as that of the admittedly stronger Ruston. With either diesel, getting an engine "upstairs" to bed could be a tricky operation, requiring a start from some distance away in order to attain enough momentum to get it into the shed but bearing in mind that it would have to be stopped once it was in! - Ed.]

No.102: Hunslet Bo-Bo loco. In store, Whitehead.

The Hunslet, together with some spare parts, is in store pending a final decision on its future.

Other Locos

I continue to hope for developments, but at the moment can really do no more than record the situation as it stands. It is now common knowledge that one of the locos in question is ex GNR(I) "Q" class 4-4-0 No.131, which is currently lying at Inchicore in partly dismantled state. A cross-border association (not involving the RPSI) has been set up to seek funding for overhauling the loco and returning it to traffic. However, it is envisaged that the RPSI would play a major part in the overhaul and subsequent operation of the loco. The other loco under consideration is ex LMS NCC "U2" class 4-4-0 No.74 "Dunluce Castle", for some years now the centrepiece of the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum's railway gallery. Following favourable negotiations with the UFTM as to the release of the loco, some private funding for the overhaul has been promised and grant aid is being sought. In both cases there have been developments, some positive and some less so. So still mañana, I'm afraid…

Coach Bogies

Ex GNR(I) coach 9 has received a set of overhauled bogies. One wheelset from brake coach 91 has been skimmed after suffering tread damage.

Volunteers

I would like to round off this report by harking back to a well-worn theme, that of volunteers or rather the lack of them. The backbone of all the Society's activities is the enthusiastic volunteer. Our level of operations is such that paid personnel can only be employed to the extent permitted by available resources and where the need for special skills has been identified. All our management, organisation, and assistance with engineering work and train operations rely upon Society volunteers. For example, the job on No.4's axle required volunteers to shunt the loco to the wheeldrop, assist with dismantling and assembly work, and provide the muscle power to remove and re-fit the wheelset. Similarly, the larger job on the valves and pistons involved volunteers to provide assistance both at weekends and on weeknights. All the same old faces and the same dwindling band! There are over 1,000 members and yet on the average Saturday the number of volunteers at Whitehead could be counted on the fingers of one hand. What the few manage to accomplish is quite remarkable. But we need new blood. I cannot

believe that the prospect of working with steam locos is so off-putting that most of our members opt out. I always thought that steam locos possessed an irresistible appeal. Maybe I was wrong. On the other hand, perhaps some members are genuinely unaware that we need more volunteers, or fear that they don't have the necessary skill - don't worry about that; there are jobs appropriate to everyone's ability! Or perhaps they feel that they won't fit in or might be laughed at. You won't know until you try, and we tend to laugh at ourselves anyway so again that shouldn't be a problem. But one certain fact is this - the volunteer trend must be reversed or we will no longer be in a position to tackle work of the type referred to above, and the implications for our continued operations are obvious. So I will close with an invitation to all members to pay a visit to the Society's premises at Whitehead, - YOUR premises, after all - have a look round and see what we do and how much needs to be done - you will be made most welcome and might even want to come back and lend a hand!

The Ruston diesel, on 16th March 2002, with its innards exposed and displaying on its cabside the number finally allocated after much thought. (C.P. Friel)

BELFAST AREA OPERATIONS — Mervyn Darragh

Hardly was there time to recover from the 2001 Christmas programme when an early Easter meant that plans for our 2002 operating programme had to be speedily put in place. Two issues during the first half of 2002 unfortunately curtailed our ability to operate as planned. Firstly, progress to push forward and agree a new operating agreement with NIR had, for no clear reason, stalled as we approached conclusion. In the knowledge that the Corrib Railtour was fast approaching, minds were focused and an

agreement tying up loose ends was reached in principle on 7th May, so enabling the Corrib Railtour to proceed. Secondly, an overrun on the Bangor line rebuild with total weekend engineering possessions prevented any thought of operating on that line. Operational approval was granted on Sunday 28th July when No.4 and an empty Whitehead carriage rake under the control of a civil engineer secured route clearance.

The Corrib Railtour ran as planned for the first time out of Belfast for many a year. Despite losing our path at Dundalk we managed to arrive in Galway only a few minutes late. Sunday ran smoothly. For the record, No.85 operated Belfast to Dublin and return while No.171 ran Dublin to Galway and back. Due to a lack of time to organise anything meaningful with NIR for the Monday, (the Company not being able to engage in any dialogue until an operating agreement had been struck) regrettably the Monday programme was curtailed. The 12-hour driver rest rule meant that our operation could not commence until around 11:00. As I write, a means to progress firemen to steam drivers is actively being progressed. All concerned appreciate that the present position cannot be sustained, despite the valiant efforts of driver Noel Playfair. The Society is totally indebted to Noel for making himself available for our entire 2002 programme which reached the dizzy level of 30 operating days! For the record, the operations were as follows: 24 passenger, 3 light engine transfers, one empty gauging train (Bangor Line), one light engine proving trip (Antrim Branch) and one light engine positioning for the Corrib Railtour.

Anna Friel and Rita Henderson in the tea bar of diner 87, 31st July 2002. (Uncle Charles)

The Hills of Donegal steam excursion to Londonderry with an optional mystery coach trip saw a fine 1st June. After our on time arrival in Londonderry two nearly full touring coaches soon had the trippers travelling through Co. Donegal and on southwards through the Barnesmore Gap to Donegal town for a

pleasant 2-hour plus lie over. To conclude a very enjoyable day locomotive No.4 ran non-stop from the Maiden City to Ballymena for an on time arrival in Belfast.

To help celebrate the Queen's Golden Jubilee, Newtownabbey Borough Council chartered our train on Saturday 15th June. Passenger levels, including a good number of invitees, were healthy despite the distractions of the England football team playing a World Cup game at the same time. Music in the form of a silver band at Mossley West station and a jazz band at Ballymena entertained the travellers.

21st and 28th June saw two heavily loaded Steam & Jazz jaunts. Accompanied by the very popular Apex Jazz Band everyone on board had a swinging night. A fortunate aspect of these trains is that advertising has been cut back to virtually nothing. On the first trip the weather was dry at Ballymena but as we approached Belfast it soon became apparent that the Belfast area and east Antrim had in the preceding hours endured one of the heaviest "monsoon" downpours in living memory. The train on approaching Belfast crawled under caution through floods and could not return to Whitehead until the following Wednesday, when the entire consist was dragged from York Road Depot behind a GM diesel.

With No.171's boiler certificate expiring on 3rd July this locomotive returned light engine from Dublin to Whitehead on Monday 1st July.

Apart from the headboard, this could an excursion of 30 years ago - No.4 at Portrush on 3rd August 2002. (C.P. Friel)

To facilitate a locomotive exchange (with No.85 heading south to replace the withdrawn No.171 and No.4 needed at Whitehead to operate on track north of Ballymena) a Northern Enterprise was worked on Saturday 27th July. No doubt more will be written about this elsewhere as this was a Dublin-based operation but needed the participation of an NIR crew to get it to Whitehead.

The Portrush Flyer season operating on 3rd, 17th and 24th August was again a big success. The afternoon excursion this year ran to Ballymoney and was as popular as ever. Unfortunately on the return journey to Belfast on the last Flyer No.4 suffered a damaged valve head and piston ring. Suffice to say that the

journey for many terminated at Antrim with transfer to a following diesel railcar. The train limped on under its own steam, arriving at Whitehead after midnight.

North Down Borough Council had borne the brunt of the early season cancellations. Their moment finally arrived with the Bank Holiday Monday, 26th August, Bangor Belle. Unfortunately with No.4's failure two days earlier a decision had to be made urgently on the Saturday evening about this operation. An ad hoc discussion with the rostered traction inspector at Antrim confirmed that a GM locomotive was available for Monday and a decision was made then to operate, as tickets had been bought and there was no way of informing Monday's passengers of the operational change. As it turned out, some passengers were disappointed and did not travel but the majority were philosophical and had a good day in Bangor.

After the urgent repair of No.4 the locomotive and a small rake of coaches engaged in a leisurely and successful passenger carrying running-in trip to Lisburn on 22nd September, via the Antrim Branch.

A very successful charter ran to the Ulster Folk and Transport Museum at Cultra for Stena Line, the leading European shipping company, on Friday 27th September. Everyone enjoyed their evening, starting with a pre-departure reception before savouring the delights of the UF&TM.

No.85 waits to leave Great Victoria Street with the Steam Enterprise of 19th October 2002. (C.P. Friel)

As early as December 2001 we had negotiated with Irish Rail in order to secure a set of Craven coaches to operate a Steam Enterprise to Dublin on Saturday 14th September. This was before the saga of the North Wall road under-bridge replacement in Dublin raised its head, and ongoing weekend work there meant that this operation could not proceed as planned. A new date was set but an over-run of the work meant that this too had to be postponed. The operation finally proceeded on 19th October. A much later date than envisaged may have had some bearing on the loading, which was slightly down on the

previous year. The operation was to have proceeded along arrangements similar to 2001 but a last minute change imposed on the Society forced the locomotive and crew to return light engine on an early path, much to the disappointment of passengers. No.85, hauling 6 Cravens and a van, had performed soundly and had arrived, following a sprightly run from Drogheda, 5 minutes early. The train returned in its booked path behind freshly painted Enterprise GM 208.

Halloween saw our usual magical train run on Sunday 27th October. Loadings were sound but for some unknown reason slightly down on 2001. Perhaps this year with the operation one day earlier and further distant from the 31st October festivities may have been the reason. All enjoyed themselves with the children receiving a present, while a balloon modeller and magician sought out and entertained each child. This is an exercise certainly worth continuing.

Near Newry on 19th October 2002, No.85 is attacking the bank with some gusto. Charles was lucky here, as the recently built by-pass road is not normally so empty. (C.P. Friel)

A short lull brought us into our Christmas season. With ever increasing demands by sources in Londonderry to bring steam, and effectively the family excursion train, back to the Maiden City a weekend steam package was organised; this meant overnight stabling in the city. A volunteer NIR crew including inspector and guard lodged in the city. This must have been a first such lodging turn for many a year. To offset outward expenditure, two Coleraine to Castlerock and return Santa trains were organised for Saturday 30th November. Good publicity yet very cost effective advertising ensured that both trains were loaded to the artificial maximum loading of 250 people. Due to the relatively short run, it took both Santas all their time to cover the train in the time allowed. Sunday saw one Londonderry to Castlerock departure, loaded to 320 people. The question frequently being asked of us was when would we be back? If ever there was a case for investing in a passing loop it is between Castlerock and Londonderry. The 27½ mile section leaves little flexibility of operation, making it very difficult to path extra trains.

The Belfast Santa trains operated on 7th, 8th, 15th, 21st and 22nd December. An interesting innovation

was the chartering of the entire train on 7th December by two organisations. The cross-community group Sense Northern Ireland hired the morning train while the Sargent Cancer Care for Sick Children took the afternoon train. A morning and afternoon train operated on 7th, 8th and 21st, while a third, late-afternoon, train was inserted on 15th and 22nd December. A welcome introduction has been the attendance of a team of 8 very efficient girls from the Girls' Brigade who assist Santa to distribute the presents. Passenger numbers carried, including the Londonderry weekend, topped 4,000!

The year 2002, despite at least 5 operations having to be cancelled for reasons mentioned earlier, proved very successful. While the Society tries to source grant aiding for projects, it is down to operations, the membership and the general public who support our trains to bring in the Society's regular income for bread and butter expenditure. This income increasingly will be sought to help offset the rebuild and restoration of Mark 2 steel coaches.

What does 2003 hold?

1. This will see the phased introduction of our set of steel-bodied coaches. It is hoped that the first significant use for the first restored vehicles will be to haul passengers north to Belfast on the Sunday evening of the May rail tour. This rake will once again open up the GNR main line to our operations.
2. In contrast, the Whitehead set of wooden-bodied coaches will be phased out over the coming months with a final farewell "tour" to be organised later.
3. Work on GS&WR J15 No.186 is proceeding to a conclusion. It is to be hoped that once the brighter evenings arrive she can commence running in. It is hard to believe that it is 23 years since this engine last steamed. As always, the work carried out to this engine has been to an excellent standard and on a par with that for No.4.
4. It looks like a driver-training programme is being pulled together and by the time you read this article it will have been firmed up. This is a welcome move and NIR are to be commended for pushing forward with the initiative.

A special word of thanks must be mentioned of the NIR operating management who facilitate our operations; a special word too to driver Noel Playfair and firemen Steven Glass, Billy Gillespie, Gary Moore and Drew Turkington. Without their support and that of the Traction Inspectors, nothing would operate.

In conclusion I would like to thank everyone on the Belfast Area Operations Committee. Members are reminded that there is no appointed Northern Operations Officer. I must mention that it is only those who have supported me on the Committee, (rostering, catering, bar, commercial and stewards) who have ensured that the trains have operated and that the service to the travelling public has been maintained to a high standard. A special mention must be made of Wilma Cairns who "mans" our office and does much sterling "front office" work for the Operations Committee.

On behalf of the Committee, we very much look forward to seeing you again in 2003. I must make particular mention of those members and supporters who make the annual pilgrimage from the mainland, particularly for the May rail tour. Your continuing support, some now for many years, is much appreciated.

DUBLIN AREA OPERATIONS — Philip Cox

The Dublin area report for 2002 is rather thin on the operations side, due to the absence of a suitable locomotive for the latter half of the year. Contingency plans were put in place by the DAOC for three trips with Cravens, using either No.85 or No.4 as motive power. However, the tight situation with regard to Cravens meant that only one of these trips ran as planned (the Enterprise) with another being

cancelled and the third substituted by a trip to Rosslare using our own coaches.

The situation regarding Cravens hire trips is simple. All the available coaches are in use at the weekend and, if available, must be brought back to Dublin. Availability cannot be guaranteed, especially during the GAA high season, which has come to mean most Sundays between July and September. This situation is referred to in the foreword to the current public timetable.

However, the lack of activity between the Enterprise of late July and the Santas, allowed for a higher than average level of maintenance activity. It meant for example, that the Santa set had two freshly painted coaches in it, and that additional work could be undertaken on the tender of No.186 in addition to the work contracted to IÉ.

The early part of the year saw the normal pattern with No.171 commencing its final year of operation, pending a major overhaul. The Mullingar trip ran on Good Friday, followed by a Greystones shuttle on 21st April.

The three day tour to Galway passed off well, but a tender journal gave cause for concern due to amount of heat it was carrying. A temperature gun allows situations such as these to be monitored, and when the offending journal was removed in Inchicore it was found that the heating was highly localised. The same gun proved to be extremely useful in monitoring a trailing bearing on No.4.

No.171 leaves Ballinasloe on the "Corrib" tour on 11th May 2002, with long disused cattle loading banks on each side. Their former traffic, and the engines which worked it, are referred to elsewhere in this issue. (C.P. Friel)

Two charter trips were operated. On 30th May, a five-coach charter including State Coach 351 took the human resource managers of the Committee of European railways to Wicklow in an evening path. The train went on to Arklow to turn around, before collecting our guests for a return to the capital that took place shortly after midnight.

On the following Saturday the full set was in service to take the Donnybrook Scouts to Wicklow and

back. This took place in most unseasonable downpours, but as the weather cleared in the afternoon, the customers had a good time. The rain had flooded a relay room in Pearse station the previous day, so our return to Dublin was delayed by the testing of signals. Our passengers, who had originated in Sidney Parade, had to leave the train in Bray and complete their journey by DART. The train itself arrived two hours late in Dublin.

8th June saw No.171's last outing with an uneventful trip to Rosslare. Due to the superior quality of Eagle Energy fuels, we no longer take on coal in Gorey, as we have done up to now on Rosslare trips with No.171. As well as leaving a smaller residue, the Eagle Energy is popular with crews, as it needs a lot less coal to make a good fire. The Rosslare trip was repeated on 22nd June, this time with No.4, and save for a tendency for a bogie bearing to run hot, was uneventful.

At the Tesco/Down Syndrome Society event at Connelly station; l-r: Gregg Ryan and Joe Walsh (IÉ), Dr Garrett FitzGerald, Dermot Breen (Tesco), Alan Crosbie (DSS) and Norman Foster (RPSI). In front are: Paul Daly (DSS), Kathleen Fitzsimons (Tesco) and David Humphries (RPSI). (Down Syndrome Soc., Ireland)

The Enterprise trip of 27th July involved a full train of six Cravens plus a van. Progress was slowed on the way northwards by a warm bearing on No.4, and consequent pathing difficulties. Tony Renehan was the first Inchicore driver to drive a train into Belfast since 1911. No.85 ran tender first to Central due to time constraints, and after turning on the triangle, left slightly late. After some good running, we arrived slightly early in Dublin.

The Enterprise operation was immensely enjoyable for passengers and RPSI volunteers alike. However, the operation was financially marginal, due to the costs of hiring Cravens. Financial uncertainty, combined with uncertainty as to the availability of Cravens, caused the cancellation of our

next proposed trip: that to Thurles on the 24th August. The bread and butter of the Society's Dublin based operations is earned between Mullingar and Rosslare. While enthusiasts sometimes demand other venues, they make up but a small proportion of the customers.

No.85 thus remained in Dublin and, with the exception of an out-of-steam photo shoot with coach 1142 for the Down Syndrome Society, played no further part in proceedings. Its departure will not be mourned by the Dublin activists, who generally regard it as at best a mixed blessing, being prohibited from working over lines which are popular. To be of benefit to the Society, a locomotive must be able to reach our most popular destinations, which are on the DSER and MGWR (Bangor also springs to mind). Due to various restrictions, No.85 cannot fulfil this criterion. This presents the Society with a strategic challenge in having available to it three operational main line engines at any one time: one in Belfast, one in Dublin and one in reserve. Given overhaul requirements, this means operating at least four and possibly five locomotives with universal availability.

The unavailability of No.85, combined with No.4's problems meant that we had to defer our November charter for Leixlip town council. Thankfully, the customer understood, and this trip will take place in the spring of 2003.

The full eight-coach set was available for the Santa trains, which ran to capacity between Dublin and Maynooth on two successive weekends in December. In excess of 3,500 passengers were carried in the ten trips, the last of which was a charter for the Inchicore sports and social club. Diner 88 returned to the set after a year's absence, and a Dutch van was hauled to provide steam heat. These trains ran empty to the new station of Grand Canal Dock, half-way between Pearse and Lansdowne Road, where the engine ran round. On Sunday 15th December No.4 hauled the empty nine-coach set into an almost deserted Connolly station thus ending another successful year of RPSI operations in the Dublin area.

RAIL SAFETY — Philip Cox

The pen is mightier than the sword, or so they say. In the year 2002, the pen (or the word processor) proved mightier than the spanner in the Southern area operations. The new emphasis on Rail Safety has implications for the Society's operations. This challenge has been met, with progress in three strategic areas.

The first of these areas was the application for and securing of a Guest Operator's Licence on Iarnród Éireann. This took place over most of the year, and involved a small number of members preparing a comprehensive set of documentation. This was presented over a series of meetings to the IÉ safety review group, and resulted in the official presentation of the licence in November. This is the first such licence to be presented to any operator, and is a fitting culmination of 25 years co-operation with IÉ.

The licence will have a limited life, as under the new Rail Safety legislation we will be required to have a submit a safety case to the Rail Safety Commission (currently the Railways Inspecting Officer). The process of securing the guest operator's licence will go some way to securing a safety case. The Rail Safety Bill, introduced in December 2001, died with the dissolution of the Dáil in May 2002. However, it was reintroduced in November, receiving a second reading and will become law in 2003. We will then have six months to prepare a safety case. A welcome aspect of the Bill is the provision for the Commission to assist heritage operators with the cost of independent validation of their safety case.

All this may seem remote and theoretical to the average working member. However as part of our safety plan, each working member has had to sign for a safety pack, which outlines the basis of safe working. Additionally in February, twelve working members attended a course in safety, and received Personal Track Safety (PTS) cards. Our thanks are due to the training school in Inchicore and in particular to Michael Baneham and Paul Flynn.

Those who argue that this is all superfluous bureaucracy would do well to remember that we work on a

railway system which is carrying a record number of passengers, and is operating at or near full capacity. The emphasis on rail safety is a matter of public policy, and the fact that we operate heritage stock in no way exempts us from the obligations placed on other larger operators.

DUBLIN COACH MAINTENANCE — Peter Emmett

In early January the set was moved out of Heuston due to the requirements of the re-signalling project. Our new home is in Inchicore, where the set currently resides. The lack of operations for most of the latter part of the year allowed us to concentrate on maintenance. In addition, dismantling work was undertaken on the tender of No.186.

88: Following damage by vandals in Maynooth, this coach was taken to Inchicore where it was repainted and reglazed as well as having repairs affected to the bearings. The vehicle is now suitable for inclusion in a premium charter train. This was not the case up to now, due to the tendency for the paint on one side to blister and fall off in large quantities. On the Tuesday before the first Santa train, the vehicle was taken to Hazelhatch by a 201 class GM, along with a Dutch van. The test proved successful and the coach was reintegrated into the set for the Santas. This also frees up the 25 seats which had been temporarily converted into a tea area in Park Royal 1383.

2421: Roof repaired, roof bands replaced, full interior refit and re-upholstery. In addition, a bay of seats was removed, and the stores area enlarged accordingly. This coach will receive additional attention, including a repaint, in early 2003.

1335: Roof resealed, repainted.

2423: In Mullingar. The sides have been replaced and work will commence in the New Year on the roof and ends. A brake area and a wheelchair toilet will also be fitted.

2971: TPO owned by An Post, roof repairs.

530A: This is a new addition, being an ex GS&WR coach which up to recently served as a signalling Dept. mess-room in Waterford. It is in excellent condition and is now stored under cover.

In addition, the electrical supply throughout the train was upgraded. The programme of fitting gangway lights was continued in accordance with our safety plan and is now complete. The wheelsets of each vehicle were ultrasonically tested during September.

During the year, TPO 2981 and Bredin brake AM13 were scrapped, after the removal of parts, and the moving of stores from 2981. This vehicle made only one move in RPSI ownership - for one day on the Michael Collins film. While in use as a store it provoked an enquiry to the Railway Magazine last year from an enthusiast bemused at seeing a Royal Mail vehicle in Heuston!

WHITEHEAD SITE REPORT — Dermot Mackie

January to March are becoming the traditional months when we get peace to do some of the necessary track repairs and 2002 was no exception. The first section of line into the carriage sheds needed replaced and, with the help of John Wolsley and Rob Davison, we began by loading concrete sleepers from our reserve supply onto a flat wagon. Over the next few Saturdays, we removed the old track, put in the new sleepers and finished the job in late February, despite a snow storm and thanks to the additional help of Mark Buchanan and John and Philip Lockett.

The ritual scrap drive and tidy-up started in March to make room for the arrival of two NIR Mk2 coaches, while April saw us doing repairs to the laneway, using hardcore, with the able assistance of Trevor Mounstephen and Howard Robinson. We also put together a temporary siding for wheel sets to gain more space in the yard, which has filled to capacity this year. Space has been a constant problem

entailing a lot of shunting and moving around of rolling stock.

May saw the start of the mid-week summer evening work, which began with the overhaul of the Antrim wooden crossing gate. Robin Morton and Alan McRobert did sterling work on this project; replacing all of the horizontal wires. In June we managed yet another scrap drive and filled a 20ft container with everything from old oil drums to defunct electric cookers. We covered our transport costs and made over £200 of profit. During preparations for the first Steam and Jazz train, it was noticed that the track outside Number 1 carriage shed road had spread under the weight of locos and carriages. Temporary restraints were put in place and the second Steam and Jazz passed off without incident.

The July break was used to replace the whole section with concrete sleepers in just two Saturdays - something of a record for the Site gang! We also installed two brand new fire hose reels with the help of Thomas Charters and James McKeown. Prior to the official launch of No.4 we had a tidy-up bonfire and the site was sprayed for weeds. In August the team replaced the heavy steel gate to the locomotive shed roads with the refurbished Antrim crossing gate; it can now be opened by one person! At the end of the month we spread forty tons of stone to make an approach road to the heavy lift area, which we intended to use to give access for lorries carrying coaches expected from GB. Little did we know that this would take up most of our time in the autumn.

John Lockett and Dermot Mackie smoothing out some new concrete flooring in the Loco Workshop. In the corner to the left, a store with office above has since been constructed. (J. Wolsley)

September saw us on temporary transfer to the Loco Dept to assist with the repair of No.4, following her failure on the third Portrush Flyer. In October, an all corridor first Mk2 coach arrived from England and was lifted off in exchange for an NIR Mk2. All our earlier preparation had paid off! Unfortunately, the Broomstick Belle operation resulted in a severe wheel flat in coach 91 and the Site squad had a

further temporary transfer, this time to Carriage Dept, where at least two weekends were spent in taking the damaged wheel-set out and then reinstalling it after Peter Scott had re-machined its profile.

During November a sophisticated fire detection system was fitted in the carriage shed, which would give us protection during the impending overhaul of Mk2 coaches. At the end of the month, refurbished Mk2 bogies returned from England and were put under the recently acquired first class corridor coach. A big shunt saw the Guinness engine back on its wheels and No.461 moved from the loco running shed into the workshop. The Santa programme, with the train out of the carriage shed, allowed us to easily clear the yard and bring in the English Mk2 brake coach. Thankfully, due to all the hard preparation work, the whole operation is now almost routine. Since the Society is now committed to running Mk2 trains in 2004 maybe this is just as well!

This is where I make my traditional plea for help in the yard. The gang will tell you it is not glamorous but without it and the work lined up for the coaches next year, there would be no trains for the Society to run anywhere, at any time. We need your help.

THE MARK 2 STORY — Paul Newell

Early last year I was asked by Council to investigate the possible purchase and shipping to Whitehead of ex-Gatwick Express Mk2 coaches to replace the wooden-bodied stock currently in use.

The shape of things to come. Before the deal described by Paul Newell, several NIR Mk2s were stored at Whitehead. Open 2nd 920 is seen here on 16th March 2002. (C.P. Friel)

However, snags soon arose. Not only was the purchase and shipping going to be very expensive, but only air-conditioned air-braked open coaches were available and no brake coaches or diners were on offer. The coaches would require conversion to vacuum braking, they would need reconditioned 5’3”

bogies and this in turn would necessitate alteration of the side-bearers.

The air-conditioning presented several problems, not least of which was that neither we nor our passengers, accustomed to vintage stock, would be keen to make the transition to an insulated environment without even sliding top-lights. Maintenance of the air-conditioning system would cause extra work and expense and in the event of brake and dining coaches being acquired, these would have to be converted to A/C. Finally, a large generator would be required to run the A/C and lights. In the face of all this, the "Gatwick" plan was dropped.

Originally intended to go to a private purchaser in England, 934 and 935 got no farther than this now desolate spot, close to where the "Titanic" was built. 934 is being craned on to a trailer for transport to Whitehead. (J. Wolsley)

Then, in late Spring, the story took a new twist when it transpired that Lancastrian Carriage & Wagon, of Heysham, had acquired ex-NIR coach 546, which some of you may have travelled in to and from Dublin. It was to be overhauled for Brian Pickett of Wessex Trains in London to use in steam-hauled excursion trains. Meanwhile, Lancastrian had been asked to quote for repairs to the NIR 80 class set damaged in the Downhill accident. Following discussions with them regarding Mk2 repairs we arranged a visit to Whitehead for examination of the withdrawn Mk2 coaches stored there for NIR.

During this visit, the Lancastrian people were surprised to see that we had some former open 1st Class ex-BR stock. Since these appeared to be in some demand in England, they agreed that if we would send them there, they would swap them for a side-corridor all-1st (FK) and a brake 2nd (BS). A further FK was also available, though in poor condition. Corridor coaches are attractive to some of our passengers and will hopefully help us to retain something of a "period" atmosphere.

However, before we could deal we needed to own the vehicles and also to get clearance from the RPSI

membership to proceed with this new venture. By now, I had been co-opted to Council to oversee the project and, following a meeting with NIR in early Summer, the coaches were transferred to us for a nominal sum. A Society EGM agreed to release the necessary funds and I got the go-ahead. Thanks to the great help from NIR we were now in a position to swap coaches and thereby save the purchase price of each vehicle - the "Gatwicks" on offer earlier had been on the market at £15,000 each "as lying".

If you say it quickly, swapping coaches is easy but when you get down to it, it is anything but. Firstly, we had to find a haulier with the necessary specialised equipment - Mk2s are 65ft over buffers and 9'9" wide. Then I had to find a shipping company with a suitable ship and willing to carry them. Luckily, through my connections with Coastal, I spoke to Norse Irish, who operate Ro-Ro services between Heysham and Belfast, and they were willing to use the m.v. River Lune which was ideal. Our friends in Lancastrian put us in touch with Moveright International of Birmingham, who were willing to transport coaches to Northern Ireland when required. These needed police escorts from Belfast docks and our thanks are due to the PSNI traffic branch at Antrim who have covered this duty to date.

Some of the many wheels of Moveright's mighty machine. Most, if not all, of them can be steered and only this made it possible for the outfit to worm its way in and out of the Whitehead site. Here, having delivered 13487, it is leaving with 924 on 13th October 2002. (J. Wolsley)

Following a trip to Lancastrian's Heysham premises, the first transfer was set up for 3rd October but, due to a problem with the lorry and trailer (apparently it has a computer which went awry and caused strange things to happen), it was put back for a week, when FK 13487 duly arrived and 924 departed. A similar operation on 8th December saw BS 9382 arrive and 926 depart.

Despite the work already done on these vehicles, the remaining restoration work is still a huge undertaking as everything has to be overhauled to a sufficiently high standard to satisfy our insurers and the railway companies. The bogies have been, and are being, sent to Heysham for overhaul, while wheel turning is being carried out by Hunslet Barclay of Kilmarnock.

A major saving will be achieved by workmen from Lancastrian coming to Whitehead for a period of 3-

4 months to repair our coaches with specialist equipment. They will be converting air-braked coaches to vacuum, attending to body-side and end corrosion, re-glazing, steam heating, interior décor and anything else required.

The fleet at present is:

13487	Ex-BR All 1st	9382	Ex-BR Brake 2nd
547	Bar/Griddle Car	934	Original NIR Mk2 Open
916	Hunslet Driving Trailer	935	Original NIR Mk2 Open

A further open and the second FK are due later this year. The object is to get two or more out as soon as possible and then add to them as we overhaul vehicles. It is hoped that in the interior refurbishing we will be able to make them look somewhat less modern than they actually are.

I must record here my thanks to Peter Scott and Johnny Glendinning for their help and advice, also to Dermot Mackie and his Site gang for preparing the heavy lift area and assisting in the lifting operations. They and Thomas Charters have also done a lot of work on the interiors; Thomas managing to find time to fit this in on top of his work in keeping our existing stock serviceable.

As I mentioned earlier, this is a huge project requiring all the help we can get. If you would like to be a part of it, please get in touch.

SUNSET OF STEAM ON CIÉ (Part 2)

In the last issue of Five Foot Three, Part 1 of this article outlined the motive power situation on CIÉ in the latter part of 1954, when existing steam locomotives were to be replaced by diesel-electrics and O.V.S. Bulleid's proposed turf/oil burner.

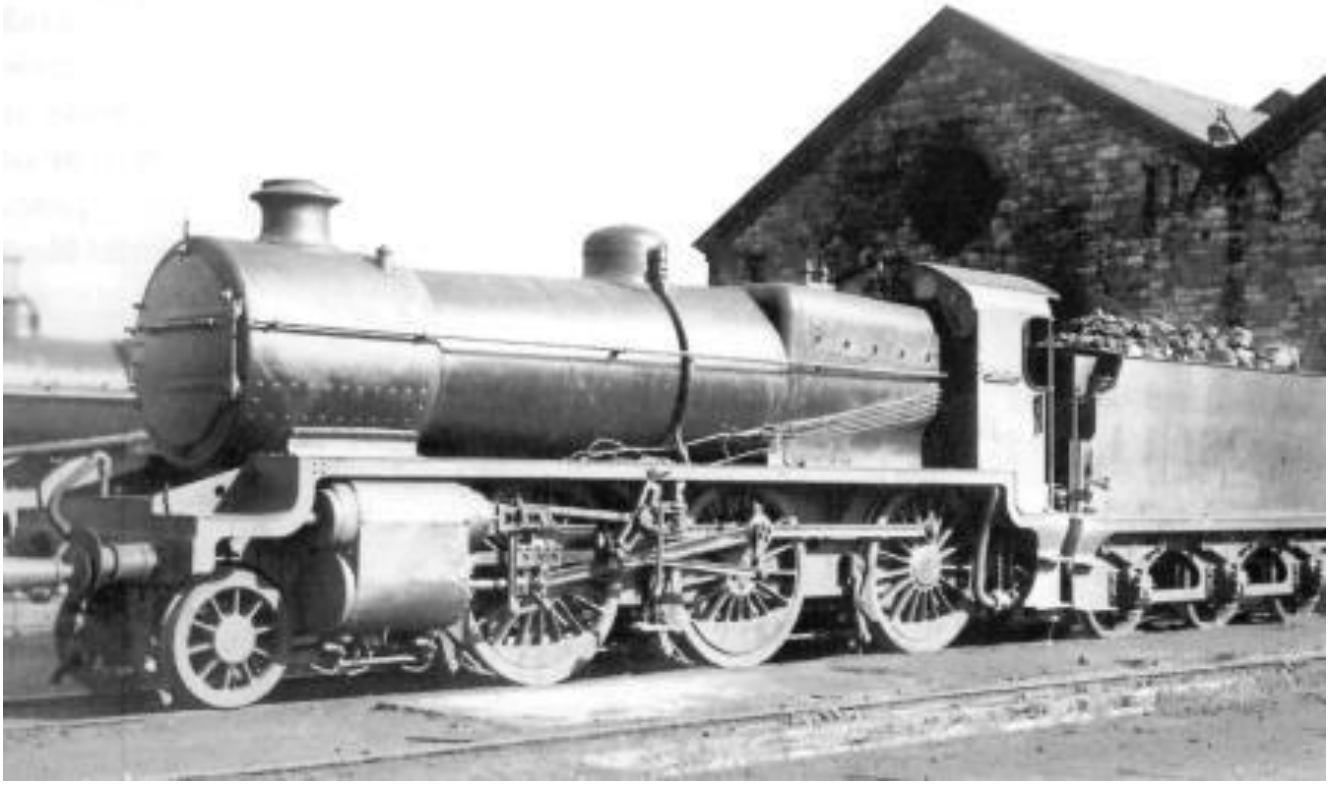
Part 1 covered the CIÉ Running Superintendent's recommendations as to the future of the 800, 500 and 400 classes. Following are his recommendations regarding the remaining classes of steam locomotive then in service, based to a considerable extent on the expectation that 50-70 of the turf/oil burners would come into service, commencing around 1960. However, that project never got beyond the prototype stage.

The restriction to main line duties of the 800, 500 and 400 classes made their replacement by A class diesels fairly straightforward, not least because the first 20 diesels were to be restricted to the Dublin-Cork line. However, while part of the effects of changing from steam to diesel is that the latter can be more intensively rostered, in this period of change there was uncertainty as to what those rosters would or could include.

Ultimately, the closure of almost all minor branches and many engine sheds made matters much simpler (it also removed the raison d'etre of the C class diesels which were eventually re-engined to something like the power and reliability of the B class), as did the ending of most of the wagon-load freight on which numerous lesser steam engines had been sporadically employed. The latter situation meant that there were always engines around to work specials, overload goods, etc., especially at weekends. However, it would appear that many of the numerous small classes on Irish railways were designed for the peculiar circumstances of a particular stretch of line. This often meant that when employed elsewhere they could be of insufficient power for the traffic on offer, or else of too high an axleload to take it where it had to go - hence the "horses for courses" reference in Part 1. Whilst only the latter consideration applied there, both are very apparent in much of what follows.

One could assume that, at the dawn of the new era, the author of the report was under some pressure to make significant inroads into the existing steam stock and would therefore have been performing a balancing act between things present and things allegedly to come. He is obviously reluctant to part

with some of the more useful classes - not least the Woolwichs (class 372/393), a good fleet of which would have been an asset to the railway, though perhaps less appreciated by the enthusiast!



A "Woolwich" 2-6-0 of the first batch, with 5'6" wheels, assembled at the MGWR's Broadstone Works in 1926, No.376 is pictured at Broadstone shed in 1928. (Kelland collection)

321 class: (D2) (9 engines)	The most important use of this class is the working of special trains during the Summer months which is essential work, but if I could be assured that the incoming D/E units will be available for Sunday work from June onwards I would not press for general repair of any of these locomotives as they accumulate their mileage rather slowly and some will still be in service in the Summer months of next year. I note per your CME.16/1/327 that loco 323 will not be repaired as repairs required are too heavy.
333/342 classes: (D4) (13 engines)	The importance of these classes is their low axleload, enabling them to work Passenger trains, regular and special, chiefly the latter, over cross country branches for Sunday traffic. If it is not desired to repair any engines of these classes in the future they may have to be replaced on occasions during next Summer on Passenger specials by the new D/E units and I am assuming that too strict zoning of the new units will not preclude them being used on such work when it is necessary. I will recommend, however, that loco 334 and 337 should be repaired, one for the Tralee branch and one for the Dublin-Wexford service, because so far as I can calculate it will be a considerable time before I can count on complete fulfilment of the general plan of use of the D/E units. It will be necessary to provide D/E units for branches such as these. You are aware, of course, that the engines for these branches are confined to branch working at present,

whereas the plan for the future envisages such branches being worked as part of through locomotive routes.

D4 No.334 near Dunkettle on what is probably a down Dublin-Cobh boat train in 1924. (M.H.C. Baker collection)

372/393 classes:
(K1/K1a)
(25 engines)

In recent years a very important traffic has been the Sunday special traffic to Knock. Regularly this absorbs 5 engines of 372/393 class engines which from my point of view are the same. There can be no substitute for these engines on this work except the D/E units because double-heading is impracticable and axleload and loading gauge limit preclude the introduction of alternative engine classes. They are also of considerable use for the working of heavy goods and Sunday passenger specials throughout the country, because they are the most powerful engines with a moderate axleload which the Company operates.

To withdraw a high proportion of these before a widespread distribution of D/E units has been achieved may result in a demand for duplicate Goods trains and difficulty in operating Sunday specials to and from places such as Waterford, Limerick, Tralee, etc. In this connection it should be borne in mind that the first use of the D/E units will be to replace the 800, 500 and 400 classes, and possibly the 333 class for Sunday specials as I have suggested under the heading of 333/342 classes.

Whilst there are 25 engines in the 372/393 class, never has there been a surplus of them because there is a continuous demand for them on relief Goods and special trains because of their high power and moderate axleload.

In my opinion it would be unwise to reach a decision to scrap all of these engines as they fall due for repairs because, failing direct replacement, the results may be reduced Goods loading, difficulty in working cattle specials and, until there are enough of the D/E units in the country, Sunday special working will probably be affected also.

I am aware of the spare parts situation as per conversation with Mr Collins, but I think an assessment of the parts availability, boilers, tyres, etc., should be made with a view to seeing how many of these classes may be retained economically. In considering this matter I suggest that it is desirable that the life of this class, as far as it is economically possible, should be extended to until the new Turf Oil Burners will come into service, as per my ???? letter.

301/305 classes:
(D11)
(7 engines)

Loco 301 is in Shops for general repair at the moment and I am not recommending general repair to any other engine of these classes when loco 301 is restored to service.

D11 4-4-0 No.301 on shed at Glanmire Road, Cork, in 1928. A handsome loco - apart from the cab, which would appear to be from the J15 school of design. (Kelland collection)

310 class:
(D10)
(6 engines)

I do not consider that any engines of this class should be general repaired in the future. They do not accumulate their mileage rapidly and the present position of the class is not unfavourable.

355 class:
(K3)
(5 engines)

I estimate that by May next year only two of these locomotives will be in service. One of them is essential to the working of the Mallow-Tralee goods service because of its high power and favourable axleload.

372 class engines would replace it, I have never had one spare for this route. Another one is used for the same reasons on the Limerick-Ballybrophy

branch. At the moment these two locomotives at least are essential and it is difficult to foresee how the same position would be met a year hence. At the same time I am reluctant to request repairs to any engines of this class, which is so small, so for the present at any rate you may assume that no further general repair is required.

368 class:
(K4)
(2 engines)

One of these has already been stopped and it is not proposed to repair it. A second engine will be stopped due to mileage by May of next year. In view of their importance to heavy Goods working on the main line and a certain lack of knowledge regarding the work on which the new D/E units will be placed, I am hesitant to recommend the scrapping of these two engines which have a certain importance. At the same time I do not think I could recommend for repair two engines when the class consists of only two. I believe they will have to be scrapped.

461 class:
(K2)
(2 engines)

I do not require further general repair to these locomotives, but they were specially built for the Dublin South Eastern Goods service. They are powerful engines with a small axleload and the time may come when a decision will have to be made to replace them by D/E locomotives, even if the working of such locomotives cannot be linked up at that stage with the general plan for the use of the new units.

[It will be obvious by now that, despite what was said in the introduction, this article does not in fact cover the remaining steam classes. Although that was the intention, pressure on space has meant that there will have to be a Part 3, which will cover the 0-6-0 classes, assorted types employed on suburban passenger work and the 2-4-0s used on some branch lines. The 461 (K2) class, see above, came later in the original report but has been included here for the sake of "tidiness". - Ed.]

GREAT SOUTHERN 4-6-0s — Sean Kennedy

It is my intention, before too long, to put on paper a treatise (great word!) on the 800s, as very inaccurate articles have been printed. I am the last of those who saw No.800 on her trials and afterwards, from inside Inchicore, watched and studied them. (By the way, I am the source of the drawings "borrowed" from the Works, which enabled the late Drew Donaldson to build his models.)

Briefly, 800 worked the American Mails from April to December 1939 - 10,000 miles with not a single change of detail. The LMS were in bad trouble then with their Royal Scots and Class 5s on fuel consumption. The published fuel returns for 800 in August 1939 of 34.2 lbs/mile was like an explosion in railway technical circles. (The Great Northern "S" class were then registering 39-40 lbs/mile.)

A party of 24, led by Ivatt and Lemon, arrived from England in January 1940. They were given the then new 801 (ready in 1939 but not released to traffic) to play with, along with engineering bodies from various universities. Documents turned up in the 1970s showed that "Macha", in these 90 mph trials between Mallow and Limerick Junction, returned 37 lbs/mile. General information on this matter had been kept quiet at the time as there had been an overall 70 mph restriction then. In one word, the design was superb - then all were submerged by war.

From the same lot of documents it emerged that former Chief Mechanical Engineer Bredin had read a paper to the Engineering department at Trinity College, Dublin, relating to his vision of future rail services. This was based on the assumption that for at least the next two decades the great ships and trains would handle the mails and high-class tourism - a vision destroyed by the outbreak of war and the then scarcely believable progress of aircraft.

Regarding the photograph on Page 33 of the last Five Foot Three, I believe that No.500 is arriving with

a Limerick train, immediately recognisable by coach 861, or a sister, behind the locomotive. 500 and 861 would come from Thurles to Ballybrophy, where 344 or 346 would arrive with a further 8 or 9 coaches from Limerick. The 4-4-0 would then wait at Ballybrophy for the Limerick portion of the Down train.

The Mails were completely worked by Nos.500 & 501 from 1925 until two Caprotti 400s (401 & 406) took over about 1932. It was during this period that the 500s showed themselves to be reliable, fast and trouble-free, with coal consumption around 35 lbs/mile. By reliable I mean not a single shed problem against 500/501 from 1925 to 1930!

No.802 "Tailte" being prepared at Glanmire Road shed, Cork, prior to working the Archbishop Cushing pilgrim train to Dublin on 24th August 1953. (M.H.C. Baker collection)

Regarding the 400s, Inchicore was one of the leaders in superheating. That wonderful CME, Coey (a Belfast man) and his Works Manager, Maunsell (a Monaghan and Trinity College man) had brought No.326, with high superheat, long-travel piston valves and 12-feed mechanical lubricator, to fruition in 1909! At this time, the GNR had lost it. They were trying Phoenix and other smokebox superheater designs which didn't work - the late Paddy Mallon, who lived for the GNR, reluctantly agreed on this point.

The three unsuperheated "improved" 400s were the decision of the disaster that was Watson, who was not of the Inchicore family, being ex-Swindon and Pennsylvania Railroad. If one looks at the photograph of No.407 on Page 36, one sees long main steam pipes, naked and without any insulation whatever. One can but imagine the effect of 60 mph into a cold wind - the cylinders were probably getting warm water instead of nice dry steam. But by then Watson had gone to Beyer Peacock - as boss!

I hope I will live to see a true account of the Bulleid saga before I depart. At a time of emergency in Britain he built an unwanted group of some 100 light Pacifics, admired by enthusiasts but an economic disaster to management and service people - all had to be completely rebuilt within a few years. Then the "Leader" debacle, a gigantic economic loss which was never going anywhere, followed by his Irish adventure.

The one blot on the otherwise brilliant and pragmatic man, Howden, was recommending this "famous" engineer to Minister Lemass to solve our post-war problems! Five years of most costly turf-burning experiments left tons of prime boilers and other non-working material on the scrap heap - the huge Turf Burner had the tractive effort of a J15! At that time four power stations were turf-fired, sales of peat briquettes were booming and a large market had been developed in England for turf mould. A fleet of 40 turf-burners would have consumed something like 100,000 tons of prime turf per year - madness!

Having ascended "The Gullet", No.326 passes Inchicore Works, 1914. (Ken Nunn collection)

On the Southern Railway Bulleid had been subject to Eustace Missenden, who mastered the SR electrics and the railway end of the huge Normandy supplies movements - brilliantly managed. This man, interviewed after the war, described Bulleid as "a dangerous idiot"!

[It is possible that some "photographer unknown" prints in previous issues may well have come from camera of Mr Kennedy. Accreditation of archive photos can often be a problem, sometimes resolved as "XYZ collection", which is all very well until the actual photographer turns up and claims it! So to any photographers out there whose works may have gone unsung, please accept editorial apologies.

Many years ago, when I dwelt where the Mountains of Mourne roll down to the sea, I came close to being barred from my "local" for instigating discussions on the best way to jump off the platform of a moving Belfast bus. Surprisingly, this topic generated such heated argument in an otherwise peaceful rural pub that the proprietress was almost driven to distraction!

As will be apparent from the articles of other contributors, something similar appears to have developed in relation to the unrelated subjects of the 800 class and O.V.S. Bulleid. Opinions on the 800s are sharply divided between those who thought the sun shone out of their ashpans and those who felt that they were not all that they might have been. What is undeniable is that they made their appearance at a singularly unfortunate time, when both the traffic for which they were intended and the supply of suitable fuel had diminished. By 1955 normality had more or less returned but by then the diesels were imminent and many are the sad stories of 800s eking out their final years on menial duties.

Having had no personal experience of any of them, to me the puzzle is why the 800s were allowed to stagger on into incompetence while the universally praised 500s were killed off - an enfeebled 800 on a goods can hardly have created good publicity!

As for Mr Bulleid and his works, I fear that controversy will rage for so long as men speak of steam. - Ed.]

OLIVER BULLEID - AND OTHERS — "Spare Link"

May I reply to the article "Sunset of Steam of Steam on CIÉ, Part 1"? I particularly wish to refer to the rather glib references to that genius of steam, Oliver Bulleid.

Not for nothing was O.V.S. Bulleid principal assistant to Sir Nigel Gresley of the LNER. He was invited to accompany Gresley to London in April 1923 upon the latter's appointment as CME of the new LNER and worked very closely with him on the "Cock o' the North" 2-8-2 class and the streamlined coaches for the "Silver Jubilee" high speed trains.

In May 1937 Sir Herbert Walker of the Southern Railway was in dire need of a successor to his CME, Richard Maunsell, who was seriously ill. The man most recommended by all was O.V.S. Bulleid.

Upon arrival at Waterloo, Bulleid conferred with Maunsell, Robb (Running Superintendent), Holcroft and Marsh (Chief Clerk to the CME). All agreed that a more powerful locomotive was required for the Continental Boat train traffic as the Lord Nelsons were being worked to their limit, while many other classes were life-expired. A mixed-traffic type was agreed upon, axle loading and 70ft turntables pointed to a Pacific type. It was not the Southern's first essay into this type as Maunsell had sketched out a 4-6-2 based on the Nelsons but with a larger firebox.

Design work began in 1938, using Brighton drawing office under C.S. Rocks, but a certain Herr Hitler was making other plans. September 1939 changed their world as much as September 2001 has changed ours. Boat train traffic ceased and the railways of Britain came under Government control. Vital materials became scarce. Sir William Stanier of the LMS became Chief Adviser to the Ministry of War Production and he was convinced of the necessity of a powerful locomotive on the SR to handle the huge volume of war material traffic and sanctioned release of the steel, copper, brass, etc. required.

Bulleid's locos were launched in April 1941 and were welcomed by his crews with open arms. Oiling was reduced to a minimum and the air-smoothed body could be washed in a carriage wash. Hundreds of hours of heavy manual work per week were saved. True, the chain-driven valve gear gave trouble but let it not be forgotten that Bulleid's original design called for gears and shaft drive as in cam-operated poppet valve motion. War conditions imposed a chain drive.

Bulleid's other war-time design, the powerful Q1 Austerity 0-6-0, was a master of its type and regularly hauled 10-coach passenger trains at 75 mph.

The concept of the Leader class was brilliant, a total break from the classic Stephenson locomotive. Like many other such innovations in history, other events conspired to kill it off.

When Bulleid came to Ireland with Sir James Milne he found the loco fleet of CIÉ in a dreadful state.

His report led to him being offered the CME's chair at Inchicore.

To say that he brought his hair-brained schemes with him could not be further from the truth. He was a very able and practical man. His remit was to keep trains running and he did. The Turf-Burner was foisted on him by a very powerful political lobby, and a memo exists wherein he told the Minister for Transport very clearly that he was fully involved in running the railway and that he would work upon the Turf/Oil Burner locomotive as and when the opportunity arose. That he fully dieselised the passenger service by 1958 shows how successful he was.

Whilst Bulleid recommended General Motors diesel locomotives to his Board, Ireland was tied up in trade agreements with Britain and dollars were not available in sufficient quantity for the purchase of American locomotives. We had to wait for J.F. Kennedy for that.

J15 No.172 was in less adventurous mood on 7th August 1950, seen here (painted grey!) reversing to the turntable at Greystones after working a stopping train from Dublin. (G. Hayes)

May I further refer to Mr Liddle's "Comments & Recollections" to confirm that a CIÉ J15 did indeed appear in Dundalk in June 1959. He is mistaken only in the fireman's name.

The Inchicore driver concerned was Dinny Murphy and his usual mate, Joe Murphy, was on leave. These two worked well together though not related. Fireman Frank Sneyd was Dinny's mate on that occasion and told us the whole story.

Dinny Murphy would go anywhere there were rails. He had been weed-spraying on the MGWR Sligo branch and next day went to Cavan via Inny Junction. Upon arrival there the local PW Inspector sent him on to stable at Clones. There the men rested.

Next day they prepared 172 and Dinny asked a local GN locoman how they would get out of Clones. "The same f---ing way you got in!" replied that soon to be redundant man. In those days each depot guarded its work jealously and did not suffer intruders lightly! So by spraying where directed by the

local PW Inspector, loco 172 and her lost crew rolled into Dundalk Irish North yard.

When the Dundalk Loco Foreman heard that a Southern J15 was in the yard, and her driver was asking for directions to Dublin, he nearly had a fit. Phones rang, Superintendent Cecil Hughes ranted and raved and a Dundalk conductor was put up to get Dinny and Frank home safely.

Dinny Murphy finished his career as Shed Driver at Amiens Street. When steam went, he retired and got a job in a factory in Ballyfermot. He died aged 79 after finishing an 8-hour shift and running to jump on to a No.79 bus.

Frank Sneyd retired in 1983 as senior special driver at Inchicore. He never made it on to the Top Link, his entire driving career being on the Special Link. He is still hale and hearty at 84 years of age.

Joe Murphy, well known to the RPSI, spent a lot of time firing to Dinny and picked up many of his habits. One Sunday morning Joe had a B101 Sulzer on a PW train for Malahide. He required a conductor from Amiens Street to Malahide but, having waited for an hour for a conductor, Joe gave up. He rang for the road and cleared off to Malahide. All hell broke loose!

HOW MUCH COAL DOES IT BURN? Irwin Pryce

Of all the questions asked of those who work on our engines this must be the most common. Most go away happy with the reply that four or five tons a day is average.

For those who look for more detailed figures the Companies kept detailed records of the use of this expensive commodity. Coal consumption was something which exercised their minds greatly since they were buying coal in huge quantities. The Great Northern at a time must have been buying some 150,000 tons a year, so any savings which could be made were important.

Attempting to make sense out of the figures is another matter altogether! Looking through the figures for the Great Northern I thought that an attempt to knock some sense out of them would be a worthwhile exercise. But like so much other data from steam engines, the picture emerging has left me little wiser at the end of it all.

What's Missing?

Annoyingly for anyone trying to make sense of the figures, some vital information is missing.

Perhaps the most significant missing fact is the type of coal. The figures give no information on this. The Works Chemist would have known the calorific value of the coal. This figure is one which can easily be measured and which in better days would have been quoted by the colliery and regularly monitored by the Company.

Good hard steam coal was easily obtainable at the time; enginemen still tell of the difference between the amount of shovelling involved with a tender full of good Welsh coal and the less desirable Scotch coal. Nobody on the footplate knew or cared about calories or BTUs!

Wardale, in his book 'The Red Devil and Other Tales from the Age of Steam', tells of how the coal delivered regularly fell well short of its specified figure. Small coal or coal that tends to break up in the firebox will be drawn through the tubes without getting the chance to give up its heat when the engine is worked hard.

To a large extent each company developed its boiler proportions and draughting to make allowance for the diet it chose to feed its engines. This element was in reality - at least until near the end of steam - a matter of informed guesswork. Many engines passed a lifetime torturing their crews when small changes to basic proportions could have rectified the matter. One part of the calculations was the diameter of the blastpipe. A narrower opening increased the speed of the blast up the chimney and so increased the draught on the fire and improved steaming. This did not come without a cost, as the

remedy brought a corresponding restriction in the exhaust and a loss of freedom in running, along with increased coal consumption. Nevertheless, this was the first option for crews and, despite a careful watch being kept by the authorities, many engines ran with a "Jimmy" or "Lad" in the blastpipe. A figure of 0.25 of the cylinder diameter was the rule of thumb for a blastpipe, with one authority quoting 0.27 for superheated engines. Our own No.186 was running with a 5 inch ring in her blastpipe when we recently measured it; the theory suggests 4.5 inches. Perhaps a change might be for the better?

The skill of the driver was a significant element. Some enginemen had a reputation as "Miners' Friends". The arrival of one Belfast driver in Dublin was regularly watched with amusement by onlookers as it often involved a furtive visit to the coal crane behind the turntable. His firemen were less amused, particularly by the frequent calls of "Come on son, you're not paying for it". I recall a fireman looking across at a stout gentleman in an AEC railcar. The driver's door bore the inscription "Driver". That should say "Drover" he said, "for he would be better employed as a cattle drover." The fireman too had his part to play. Blowing off or other inexpert handling tell a tale in coal consumption. The BNCR even had a small book printed, which was given to every footplateman, explaining the process of combustion in a locomotive in great detail.

Newry shed staff were reputed to have carried out an identity swap between PPs 42 and 74 in order to ensure that the better of the two did not go for scrap as authority had decreed. The genuine No.74 is seen here arriving at Bundoran on 6th July 1956, with Driver P. Martin in charge. (G. Hayes)

The mechanical condition of the engine is of course a major factor. Worn piston and valve rings, blowing glands and the dozens of leaks and blows which were common on some engines toward the end of steam sent coal consumption soaring.

The Great Northern figures show all coal weighed on to each engine during a 12-month period. No regard is paid to coal burnt while standing or in raising steam. The variation between individual engines would have been considerable. Another difficulty was that the mileage run gives no indication as to what type of trains were being worked by each engine, though a good general idea is available from records.

Cecil Ogle, who at a time was involved in processing the coal figures for Adelaide, claimed that some drivers indulged in all sorts of skulduggery, even to the extent of pinching coal from the stacks at the back of the triangle under cover of darkness. I doubt if any could have been energetic enough to heave sufficient coal on to a tender to make any meaningful difference to the figures. Certainly, at one time, coal consumption figures were regularly posted up and it was a matter of professional pride to have the lowest consumption in the Link.

In any case, it must have been more than counterbalanced by the coal liberated from tenders by those who demonstrated their unscrupulousness in other ways. For instance, anyone foolish enough to stand under the Reformatory Bridge between Balmoral and Adelaide when Dick Greer was due would have had his thoughts disturbed by the arrival of two or three prize lumps travelling at some 60mph shattering around him. The pieces could be retrieved later of course. Other enginemen would have regularly supplied coal from the tender to staff in country stations, often in return for a variety of "prugh". In all honesty it is difficult not to have sympathy for men working for low wages, although the company had a less charitable view of the redistribution of their assets in this manner.

"Old" U with "New" U class tender. No.198 "Lough Swilly" at Dundalk, waiting to take over the Bundoran Express. (A.M. Wright)

Less worthy of sympathy was the Adelaide man who, during a long period in Enniskillen, regularly traded the company's coal for poteen at Maguiresbridge, becoming thereafter an increasingly useless asset to his fireman. One engine excluded from the figures was the Dundalk crane tank, No.31. Her regular driver for years could be seen shuffling homewards each evening, wrapped against the cold in a great filthy black overcoat. It is said that it was not age, infirmity and the cold that caused the stooping gait, but the fact that the huge pockets incorporated in this garment contained his evening's domestic coal supply. Despite these problems, the Company continued to diligently calculate the consumption for each individual engine correct to one decimal place. The statistical nonsense of such figures is obvious of course. Even the mighty LMS learnt a painful lesson when, after boasting very publicly about the efficiency of its Royal Scots, they had it pointed out to them that their dynamometer car was

a whacking 44% out in its measurement of drawbar pull - and it didn't help that the LNER were the ones to find this out!

The Real Facts?

The figures in the table below are based on details handed down to me by Mac Arnold and include only those engines taken over by the UTA. I have averaged the figures for all engines in each class over a series of 5-year periods in an effort to avoid errors due to a small sample being taken. Those figures marked with an asterisk are the result of averaging four or less yearly figures and might be treated with caution.

Is There a Winner?

Not surprisingly, the result of all the number-crunching is that there is no clear winner, though the reader will be able to note some obvious trends.

The consistently good figures for the old U class are notable. The hefty appetite of their goods equivalent, the UG class, is surprising since they were mechanically identical to the U class, save for the wheel size. The UG class were of course viewed as a mixed traffic design and perhaps there was a penalty to be paid in the use of a small wheel for relatively fast work.

Figures for the Glover Tanks, which also shared the same design of boiler and cylinders, reflect the hard work involved in continual starting and stopping of the local trains which were their lot. The figures for the class are distorted by very high yearly figures for 186, 187 and 189 between 1944 and 1947, when I assume they were burning whatever fuel they could get in Dublin. Interestingly, the task of finding useable coal for Dublin suburban locos was partly solved by converting No.2 to oil burning during 1947 and 1948. Her oil consumption was 4.8 and 5.1 gallons per mile for these years. S class 172 also had a period of oil burning; the manufacturers, Laidlaw, Drew and Company using a view from the footplate in their advertisements. The experiment was not a success. I am told that her regular drivers argued violently, one continually complaining about poor steaming, the other telling him "Shut up, this is the easiest job we've ever had".

The steady and economical figures for the Q class are impressive. Perhaps they avoided the worst coal problems by working mainly in the North during and immediately after the war? Set against this is the fact that much of their work would have been on the Derry Road, the nature of which would not have been conducive to economical working. What a tragedy that 131 lies in bits after abortive attempts at restoration.

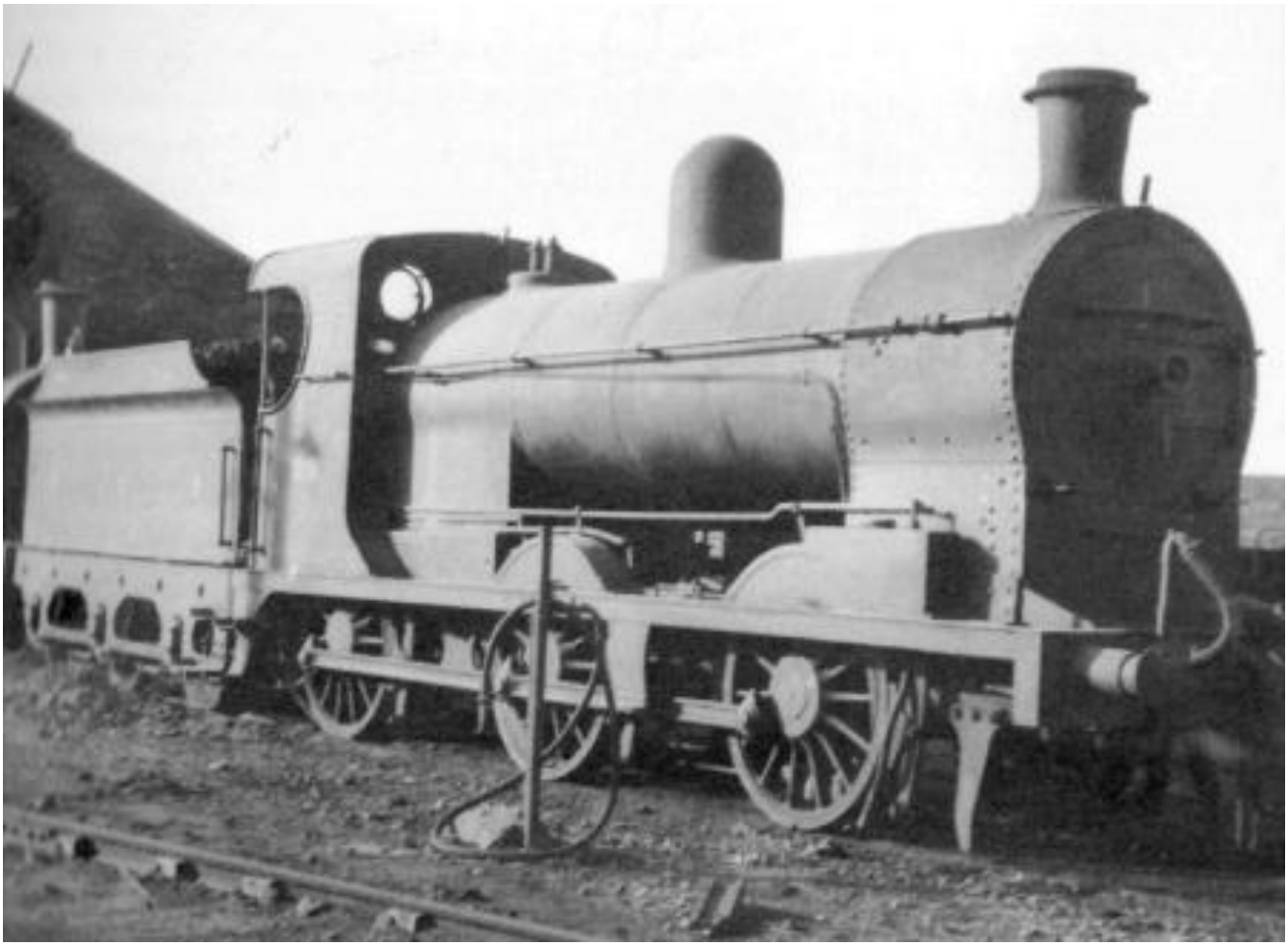
The compounds show a healthy appetite, though in fairness they were doing some very hard work. Enginemen accustomed to the S class can hardly have welcomed these engines with open arms in 1932!

The economy of the VS class compared to other classes is remarkable. Even in the difficult post war period, when coal quality declined and maintenance was slipping, the figures are striking for a large engine. They did perhaps have the benefit of working on trains for which they had been built, and of the comparatively easy timings of the 1950s.

The S class were probably the doyen of Irish 4-4-0s. In relation to the work they were performing their figures are remarkable. In their heyday individual drivers regularly turned in monthly figures of 32 lbs per mile. In the post-war period the figures look less impressive as the effects of declining standards of coal and maintenance took their toll. I have excluded from the calculations the figures for 172 in the period from 1948 onwards when she was standing as pilot at Dundalk for much of the time. From the huge consumption credited to the engine each year I can only assume that fuel of very poor quality was put on her for such menial work, the figure of 124 lbs per mile for only 5,000 miles run in 1956 is remarkable, even allowing for the six years she had run since shopping. On one occasion the driver of

192, suffering from a continual blow from the snifting valve, declined the offer of 172 as a replacement, preferring to struggle on. He had to admit defeat at Drogheda and the SG2 he took had a tender of dust mixed with turf - an even worse prospect.

The LQG class in all its variants seems to have had a voracious appetite. The figures would have been even less flattering had I not I excluded one year's figure from rebuilt NQG No.39 which reached the truly remarkable figure of 118.5 lbs per mile during almost 14,000 miles run in 1948. By 1953 this had moderated to the still huge figure of 97.6 pounds per mile. I can only assume that there must have been some very exceptional reason for these figures. Mac has a figure noted in the margin against this engine of 145.1 lbs per mile in 1945, to which he has added a question mark in apparent disbelief. Even allowing for the slow speed of loose-coupled goods trains the firemen must have been tortured on such a ravenous beast.



The hungry No.39, still as an NQGs. The engine was rebuilt as late as 1956 but survived only for 4 years in her final form. (W.T. Scott)

The figure for the SG3 class in the period from 1949-1953 seems to be inexplicably high, though it is based on four figures all very similar. Undoubtedly the nature of their work on the heaviest loose-coupled goods trains on the system, along with time spent standing and shunting, enters into the picture.

Fuel quality, difficult operating conditions and declining standards of maintenance all extracted a heavy toll on engines and crews in later years, the premium quality Welsh coal now replaced by Scotch coal or even worse imported Polish coal in some cases. The full effects of these problems are apparent from

the figures.

It is a great pity that no more scientific recording of the relative efficiency of the various engines involved was never done. A pity too that no record of the NCC coal figures has survived. I wonder why? Of course, coal consumption is only one small part of the economics of locomotive operation, the cost of repairs per mile not ever seeming to have been considered in the way the LMS did with its pre-grouping classes.

GNR COAL FIGURES

Passenger Locomotives

Years	VS	V	S/S2	QL	Q	PP	T1	T2	U old	U new
1914-18			*36.5	52.2	41.1	*37.6	45.1	*47.8	30.9	
1919-23				42.7	40.5	38.4	36.2	*46.6	34.5	
1924-28			40.2	42.1	41.2	41.9	44.9	38.7	35.1	
1929-33		48.1	43.3	44.4	39.9	36.7	38.8	37.1	30.7	
1934-38		52.2	46.4	44.5	44.4	38.7	42.4	*39.2	37.9	
1939-44		50.8	47.2	46.9	47.2	41.8	40.3	56.0	42.0	
1945-48		57.6	52.1	52.3	45.7	51.6	61.7	63.2	61.5	
1949-53	45.6	56.4	53.3	46.9	52.2	51.8	51.5	51.1	51.5	51.5
1954-58	46.2	48.6	50.9	52.0	49.7	52.8	52.3	53.3	49.9	51.7

Goods Locomotives

Years	SG3	LQG	SG/SG2	PG	UG old	UG new
1914-18			*47.0	*50.5		
1919-23	46.7	60.3	*54.5	51.8		
1924-28	55.7	59.8	51.9	46.6		
1929-33	47.2	43.1	45.8	46.1		
1934-38	57.1	52.9	47.7	44.7		
1939-44	51.7	55.4	44.3	43.4	47.4	
1945-48	68.0	72.1	56.3	61.7	54.0	
1949-53	*80.7	63.8	56.1	60.8	57.1	55.8
1954-58	61.4	65.5	57.2	55.1	52.4	58.6

Note: * denotes figures averaged over 4 years or less - treat with caution.

[Times may have been hard in the North during WW2 but the following item of correspondence, retrieved from the archives by one of our Dublin members, may give some idea of the malnourishment endured by locomotives south of the border. By taking some liberties with the title of Mr Pryce's article one can produce the sub-title below. - Ed.]

COAL? DOES IT BURN? HOW MUCH?

Mullingar Station

10th February 1943

To Coal Controller

Inchicore

There are three firms supplying coal from Arigna coalfields to the Loco Dept at Ballinamore viz Leydon's, Cull and Gannon's and Lynn's. When coal is required at Dromod for Broad Gauge engines, station agent there phones Mr. Walsh, Loco Foreman to send in a wagon of coal from Ballinamore. If the only wagon of coal he has on hands is from Cull and Gannon's and as latter is 75% shale or rock, the enginemen in Dromod refuse to take it as it is useless for any purpose, firebox being full of ashes before 10 miles have been run. If Leydon's coal is sent out, enginemen will take it as a mixture of 3 to 1 with Duff slack and in 75% of cases can run to Mullingar without cleaning out fire a distance of 37 miles. Lynn's coal is the best variety of all but supplies of latter are small and is retained in Ballinamore in 95% of cases. I may add that since the emergency the variety of coal from Leyden's and Lynn's has deteriorated. I believe myself that the firms are holding back the good varieties. I strongly urge that supplies from Cull and Gannon be dispensed with as same is useless for Locomotive purposes

To assist Enginemen to work trains from Dromod to Sligo and to Mullingar there is a supply of pitch at Dromod and since it was put there has been a noticeable improvement in the running of Goods trains. I may also add that in 95% of cases it is only the 7:40pm Goods Sligo to North Wall that takes coal at Dromod for mixture with Duff slack: the tender of the 10:45pm Goods North Wall to Sligo has a tender of briquettes and Duff slack. The up and down Boyle goods take coal at Dromod when quality is other than Cull and Gannon's

Leydon's or Lynn's coal when mixed 3 to 1 with Duff slack or anthracite coal gives good results especially when firebars are coated with same before making on fire; with duff slack it prevents the latter from running through firebars; with anthracite coal it prevents clinker from adhering to the firebars.

Owing to a strike in all the abovementioned pits at present, I believe it will not be possible whilst strike lasts for the Loco Foreman at Ballinamore to supply any more coal to Dromod as he was dependant on supplies from those firms.

I trust that I have explained the matter to your satisfaction, and any further information you require I will do my utmost to oblige.

Yours Truly

P Ledwith

Acting Inspector

PS. At the time the station agent at Dromod made this complaint Mr. Walsh at Ballinamore had some duff slack mixed with Arigna coal as Cavan and Leitrim engines cannot burn duff slack at all as they are not equipped with brick.

COMMENTS AND RECOLLECTIONS — Laurence Liddle

It was an interesting coincidence that Bill Scott, in his article on GSR 4-6-0s in our last issue, and I in the same issue's Comments & Recollections should both have referred to the 800 (B1a) class in somewhat less than glowing terms; although each of us stressed the great publicity value that "Maedbh" and her sisters generated for the Great Southern.

I had never heard the anecdote about the Bredins' maid announcing that "Maedbh" was coming up the Gullet without a pilot, but in contrast to Bill's statement that E.C. Bredin's reply to this enthusiastic outburst has not been recorded, I can quote on excellent authority a statement by that Inchicore CME about his masterpiece. When the design details of the proposed new locos were being discussed by Bredin and some members of his staff he said, "I want steam pipes like this", at the same time extending each arm at an angle of about thirty degrees to his body. My source for this example of the art of steam locomotive design in practice was the late Matt Devereux, who was Chief at Inchicore in

the sixties, and who, as a junior, had been present when Bredin made his comment.

In view of Bill Scott's comment that the only class of 4-6-0 that the GSWR/GSR "got totally right", was the B1 (the 500s), it was particularly interesting that on the occasion of Matt Devereux telling the story of Bredin's arms, he also said that in his opinion the three best locomotive types that GSR/CIÉ had were the 500s, the ex-DSER 2-6-0s (take a bow 461), and the J4 (257) 0-6-0s. Those who have read the Society's booklet "A Decade of Steam" (published in 1974) may remember the late Inspector Bill McDonnell's verdict on the 500s: "Free steaming and obviously capable of any work demanded of them, they always appeared to have a little extra up their sleeves. Excellent on heavy fast goods trains, they were equally at home on express passenger work and could hold their own against the 400s, and with much heavier loads."

This was said to be the favourite locomotive of one of Ireland's leading railway enthusiasts, Drew Donaldson, who died 25 years ago this year. No.409, with "biscuit tin" tender of the type built for Nos.501 and 502 is leaving Amiens Street with a CIÉ Radio Train. Popular in the 1950s, these excursion trains had the coaches wired for commentary. The second vehicle in the miscellany is a DSER kitchen car, reputedly the best then operational. (Sean Kennedy)

Considering the above praise from professional railwaymen, and also Bill Scott's comment, "They (the 500s) were the type of engine the GSR should have been building", the obvious question is "Why were no more than the original three ever built?". One answer that I can give, and here I am echoing our late member, and locomotive historian, Bob Clements, is that the "Woolwich" Moguls, introduced to Inchicore from the MGWR at the time of the 1925 amalgamation, were felt to be capable of doing much the same work as the 500s and to have greater route availability. Cost, too, may well have been a significant factor. Between 1924 and 1932 prices generally had tended to drop, but by 1937 there was a tendency to rise again.

Bill suggests that the GSR 400s "rarely did anything that a GNR 'S', 'V' or 'Vs' class could not have done with more economy". This raises the question of whether in the case of medium sized locomotives of roughly equal power a 4-6-0 is necessarily to be preferred. Here I think I can do no better than to quote the late Harry Holcroft, who was Technical Assistant to R.E. Maunsell (one-time CME of the GSWR) when the latter was Chief Mechanical Engineer of the Southern Railway (England). In volume two of his autobiography, "Locomotive Adventure" (Ian Al1an, 1965) Holcroft had this to say, when discussing the respective merits of the Southern's "King Arthur" 4-6-0s and "Schools" 4-4-0s, "In the case of the 'Arthurs' there was a pair of coupled wheels in advance of the drivers, and the coupling rods constrained it (sic) to revolve at the same rate of revolution as that of the drivers, irrespective of any inequality in wear which might occur, and it was to this extent a drag on the motion, apart from that set up by the lengthening of the rigid wheelbase. The leading pair being so close behind the bogie, their flanges play some part in guiding the engine on curves, and are subject to wear. It is a characteristic of six-coupled engines that the amount of metal to be cut off in the shops when returning to profile is governed by the flange wear of the leading pair of wheels. … The advantage of more adhesive weight in a 4-6-0 type is gained at the expense of more internal friction as compared with a 4-4-0". Apropos of this last comment Holcroft devotes quite an amount of space to detailing the various features which generate this additional friction.

All of the above would tend to back up Bill's contention that the type of work the 4-6-0s *actually* did (my emphasis) could have been more economically carried out by a Great Northern 4-4-0 than a Great Southern six-coupled engine.

In the case of the Dublin-Thurles/Limerick train illustrated in the last issue, by far the greater part of this train had been worked to Ballybrophy by a 4-4-0, which should have been able to cope with one more carriage between there and Dublin. *[See also "Great Southern 4-6-0s, this issue. - Ed.]*

Holcroft was not enamoured of the massive 4-8-0T shunting engines of the erstwhile L&SWR, pointing to the "wasted" weight carried by their bogies. The two GSW 4-8-0Ts designed by E.A. Watson for similar duties would have had the same drawbacks. It is well known that they played havoc with the track in Kingsbridge yard, to such an extent that one was withdrawn. The other underwent an ad hoc conversion to a 4-6-2T by the removal of the rear sections of its coupling rods, resulting in even more "wasted weight".

Reading the latest report on the restoration of No.186 set me reflecting on the great progress made by our Society, not just in developing engineering facilities for the maintenance of locos but also in the preservation of nineteenth century heavy engineering equipment and practice which would otherwise, so far as Ireland is concerned, have been lost. Certainly some cross-Channel societies have done much on the engineering and maintenance side - the Severn Valley Railway for instance. However, when one compares the actual and potential financial and human resources that the SVR can draw on with what are available to RPSI, our Society and its all too few dedicated workers may well feel proud of themselves.

What a good investment the first five "U" 4-4-0s were for the Great Northern. Year in and year out they made their way up and down the "Irish North" and the Bundoran branch hauling their 2- and 3-bogie trains, at the back of which could be up to half a dozen fitted vans, and maybe a couple of cattle wagons as well. And the contents of the vans - bread in hampers, a calf in a sack *[on the NCC it would have been a calve (logical singular of calves) in a beg. - Ed.]*, boxes of fish (an odour of fish was always a major component of the complex smell of fitted vans), perhaps a couple of greyhounds, films for the local cinema in Ballybay, Ballyshannon or wherever in their distinctive tin boxes, a new car wheel or cylinder block for a Clones garage, the variety was endless. "It's the tail of the train that pays on the Irish North", I was once told by a member of the GN's Accountants' Department. Railway devotees of a later generation than mine may remember Nos.196-200 and their post-war sisters at the

head of the seven-coach "Bundoran Express", but for me the daily routine with stopping trains on the Irish North will always remain as my mental picture of the "U"s.

It was not only on the Irish North, or indeed anywhere else on the Great Northern, that the "tail of the train" was just as important as the main part. Churns of milk from Wexford and South Wicklow to Dublin on the former DSER, bags and still more bags of parcel post on the night mails on the main line and major branches of the "Southern" and the "Midland", the "Brown vans", often marshalled immediately behind the engine, on the NCC - these and the many stock specials and the pick-up goods shunting at Lisnaskea and Limerick Junction, Carlow and Coalisland, Navan and Newry, represented to this writer at any rate what Irish railways were all about, just as much as the 800s, Enterprises and the Atlantic Coast Express. Who, among those of us who saw them, will ever forget the big ex-MGWR "mixed traffics" pounding their way out across the bog between Ballinasloe and Athlone at the head of their long "fair specials" from the former town, Loughrea or Athenry.

GSW 4-8-0T No.900, showing its conversion to a "Pacific" wheel arrangement. By coincidence the crank pin of the rear wheel is "in step" with the others. (I.C. Pryce collection)

Some other memories of what to some was the less glamorous side of railway operation. The mental camera captures the picture of Donegall Quay, Belfast, in the early fifties; the numerous covered wagons alongside the cross-Channel transhipment shed, some labelled for Grosvenor Road goods depot where their contents, mostly of "sundries", will be transferred into wagons forming the night goods trains to Derry, Enniskillen and elsewhere . But there are not just railway wagons on the Quay; porters and shunters mingle with lorry drivers and carters (for the horse has by no means yet outlived his usefulness) and their vehicles, whilst in the midst of this mass of men, vehicles and animals there is an RT 0-6-4T or an A class 0-6-0 , with cut-down chimney (and often with the fireman's bicycle on the running plate), moving slowly back and forth. Occasionally one may sight an elderly 0-6-0 from the NCC complete with archaic tender, but basically this is Great Northern territory. A wander along Donegall Quay was for me just as interesting as standing at the end of the Howth Branch platform of

Amiens Street station. Certainly one saw a greater variety of locomotives at the latter place; anything from the lone 2-6-2T No.850 of the Great Southern/CIÉ to an ex-MGW 0-6-0 on a Bray train, scarcely any two of whose rake of six- and eight-wheeled carriages matched each other; whilst on the Great Northern side items on display ranged from articulated railcars to V and Vs express locomotives.

A walk down Donegall Quay, however, enabled one to see many of the less publicised aspects of railway operation in-close up detail: double coupling of goods wagons, builders' plates with numbers and dates on wagons (many of which still had grease-lubricated axle boxes), the great variety of destinations for freight, or a near view of Stephenson valve gear operating in slow motion.

Are noteworthy railway events or personalities ever commemorated in verse nowadays? I am not thinking of the writings of professional versifiers, but of those of ordinary railwaymen such as the late Pat Duggan of Rosslare, or the anonymous author of "The Curse of Coleraine", a less than flattering account of the installation and early operation, in 1938, of the mechanical coaling plant at Coleraine shed. This poem, rather unkindly referred to as "mere doggerel" by the late J.R.L. Currie in his article "Coleraine as a Railway Centre" in Irish Railway Record Society Journal No.46 (June 1968), is unfortunately too long for full reproduction here, but I quote the first four lines:

Of all the strange inventions that's going about,

Magill' s coaling plant would knock them all out,

Between coal dust and rattling it would give you a pain,

It must be sent as a plague to the town of Coleraine.

As for Pat Duggan, there must have been few "Southern" enginemen up to a generation ago who had not heard "The Gallant Forty Four", "The Old Concrete Bridge" or the lines celebrating (?) the advent of the first "Woolwich" 2-6-0 at Rosslare. Again there is not room in this article to print any of these pieces in full, but I hope that the Editor will allow me space for the opening lines of Pat's verses on the Woolwich:

Did you see the big new engine yet, this loco 374?

She came to work the fast express and she came from Inchicore,

She was built in Woolwich Arsenal the time of the big war

She is a superheater and can travel near and far.

Pat then goes on to detail the trials and tribulations of the footplate men and shed staff when learning to cope with a type of engine entirely strange to them.

"The Gallant Forty Four" tells the story of how, at short notice, Driver Jack Cotter and Fireman Pat Lucey had to double-head the heavy morning Rosslare-Cork boat train with the small Class D19 4-4-0 No.44, "cold" from the shed. It would appear from the narrative that, due to lack of steam, the pilot did not so much provide extra power for the train engine as get pushed by the latter for most of the way to Waterford. Here is verse 5 of this graphic ballad. Note the phrase "The buffers nearly wore":

We started off right gallantly, and passing through the Strand

She registered 60 on the gauge, I had her well in hand,

If I had plenty of water here, 'tis I could do the swank

But alas it was not boiling, 'twas only in the tank.

However, nearing Wellington Bridge she had seventy or more,

"Come up", I cried, for Taylorstown, my gallant forty four".

She responded right bravely, like a steed driven to the fray,

And mounted the bank at Taylorstown, how she did it I'll not say.

We passed through famed Ballycullane, the buffers nearly wore

And myself and Lucey gasping on the gallant forty four.

Finally, a pithy little four-liner attributed to a Scottish engineman. Though not suitable for drawing room recitation, it succinctly encapsulates the traditional rivalry between the "Loco" and the "Traffic":

The guard is the man who sits in the van,

And rides at the back of the train.

The driver up front thinks the guard is a ----

And the guard thinks the driver's the same!

Any reader who can get hold of a copy of IRRS Journal No.30, Spring 1962 will find the full texts of "The Gallant Forty Four" and "The Old Concrete Bridge" in the late Driver Martin White's article "Memories of Rosslare", whilst the untitled saga of 374 is reproduced by Bob Clements in "The Woolwich locomotives of CIÉ" in Journal No 23, Autumn 1958.

A member of Ireland's smallest class of 4-4-0, "Gallant Forty-four" is pictured here at Rosslare Harbour on 28th June 1938. In the circumstances described in the article, for several miles her only contribution was probably copious amounts of smoke. (H.C. Casserley)

May I suggest that someone living much nearer to sources of information than I in my Antipodean "exile" compiles and publishes a Collection of Irish Railway Verses before it's too late. *[A job for "Spare Link"? - Ed.]*

WE REGRET THE DELAY ... "Spare Link"

We live in an age when our railways are attracting a lot of publicity. Unfortunately, it's often not of the good sort.

When the total failure of the De Dietrich Enterprise train within walking distance of its destination led to passengers being trapped in the train for almost 3 hours it made the main evening Ulster Television news. The usual collection of 'experts' appeared on our screens to tell us what is wrong with our railway system. Embarrassed managers appeared to utter their usual contrite apologies and offer free travel next time to those who had cause to use their trains again.

Old steam men sat back, supped their pints, and muttered, "It never happened in steam days." But nostalgia is an incurable disease and memory plays tricks upon the old. That glorious age of steam had as many breakdowns and cock-ups as today. Loco mileage between general repairs was very much less and rolling stock was less intensively used.

The steam locomotive was very much simpler and less complicated than the diesel locomotive. It had fewer parts to go wrong. As the late Fred Boyle was fond of saying, "When the steam loco fails, the fault is easily found but takes ages to fix. When the diesel fails, the fault takes ages to find and seconds to fix. "

Loco failures, like the poor, are always with us. At the opening of the Stockton and Darlington Railway on 27th September 1825, "Locomotion" failed shortly after starting and George and James Stephenson had to get down and go under her to correct a fault. Even the opening of the Liverpool and Manchester Railway was delayed by a fatality when William Huskisson MP was run down by the "Rocket", driven by Driver Robert McCree. Delays due to such types of incident are sadly still with us.

That shining example of railway efficiency and good locomotive management, the Great Northern Railway Co. of Ireland suffered its share of locomotive failures and I propose to tell you of a few such incidences. My object is to enlighten and educate those who would wish to follow the profession of steam footplate man. These failures took place over two years and were within the Dublin-Dundalk section. Some were due to faulty material, some to mechanical failure and some due to dereliction on the part of the enginemen.

On 1st November 1955, Driver Pat Brady booked on duty at 06:35 and prepared S class loco No.170 "Errigal" for service. He left Amiens Street shed and backed on to the 07:35 passenger to Dundalk. When he shut off at Killester the snifting valve, fitted behind the chimney and allowing air into the superheater header on the saturated steam side, failed in its action. This caused loco 170 to fail due to lack of steam. An assisting loco was despatched from Amiens Street and pushed the failure to Malahide where 170 was thrown off and the train continued 43 minutes late. A flaw in the snifting valve material was the cause. These valves, valve seating and valve guides are made of bronze. The valve body is of cast iron and it was this that failed. Such a fault could not be easily discerned during locomotive examination on shed.

Pat Brady began his railway career in August 1916 in Dublin. A resident of Ballybough, he had years of firing experience and had suffered his share of loco failures. Once, when working the Newspaper train with the "Chiseller" Cowan firing, loco 132 broke a coupling rod as they ran out on to Laytown Viaduct. Both men thought their last moments had come - a very frightening experience.

Our second failure was a rather unusual one in that the item that failed was not the reason for the train failure. VS class loco 206 "Liffey" was working the 18:00 Express from Belfast to Dublin on 27th January 1956. Driver Joseph Eaton had had an uneventfu1 trip and was running easily down Kellystown bank towards the lights of Drogheda. Without warning, his brakes applied very suddenly and severely. The crew began to examine their train. Driver Eaton found his left engine vacuum cylinder smashed. Assistance was sought from Drogheda and loco 188 (class T1 4-4-2T) hauled the failure forward after a delay of 26 minutes.

Upon examining loco 206 it was found that the pins in the left trailing bogie axlebox had sheared. This allowed the sponge box to fall off and it rebounded off the ballast and smashed the vacuum cylinder.

Had the brake cylinder not smashed, the loco would have suffered a hot box on the bogie before too long. This could have led to a total bearing collapse and possibly derailment at speed. Loss of train brake was definitely the better option.

Injectors are vital to the safe operation of any steam locomotive and unless they are very well maintained are liable to cause serious trouble.

Driver Willy Fagan of Amiens Street shed, on loco 62 (class T2 4-4-2T), was working the 07:55 passenger Drogheda to Dublin on 4th July 1956. Approaching Rush, the fireman's injector kicked. Driver Fagan had seen this happen many times since 1920 when he started as a cleaner at Dublin. He simply reached for his injector but it too refused to lift and the loco was declared a failure at Rush platform. Luckily loco 118 (class SG3 0-6-0) was lying in Skerries sidings with a PW ballast train. She ran to Rush and took over the train which she worked only to Donabate. Loco 117 (class SG3 0-6-0) had been sent out from Dublin and took the 07:55 forward after a delay of 43 minutes.

Upon examination, a large quantity of foreign matter was found in the water supply system on loco 62. Water tanks should be cleaned thoroughly and regularly. Apart from weed growth, fish, rags and coal lumps often are found in loco tanks. Keep tank lids closed and ensure sieves are in place and clean. *[Our own No.85 had this problem a few years ago, when the sieves were covered with growth resembling the currently fashionable woolly hat worn by the man who cleared them! - Ed.]*

Failure of injectors can lead to serious problems and even the most expert of drivers can be caught out. Responsibility for the safe and efficient operation of the boiler rests solely on the driver. This was drummed into me by the late Locomotive Inspector Ned Comerford of Inchicore over 30 years ago.

Driver Jimmy Shields of Adelaide had begun his railway career in 1917 and had 40 years' footplate experience. On 7th October 1956 he was working a 19:55 passenger special from Dublin to Belfast with loco 87 (class V 4-4-0 "Kestrel"). Going over Haynestown, between Castlebellingham and Dundalk, at 21:15 the train ground to a stop. The guard looked anxiously towards the engine. He saw the dull red from the contents of the firebox being paddled out onto the ballast. But the crew's efforts were too late and the lead plugs fused in the firebox. Loco 172 (class S 4-4-0 "Slieve Donard") came out from Dundalk and hauled the failure in. She then disposed of 87 in a siding and continued to Belfast with the train, 75 minutes late.

Driver Shields had misjudged the situation when both injectors failed on 87 and had hoped to run in to Dundalk for fitters' attention. He suffered severe disciplinary action. The delay amounted to 75 minutes and this added further to his penalty.

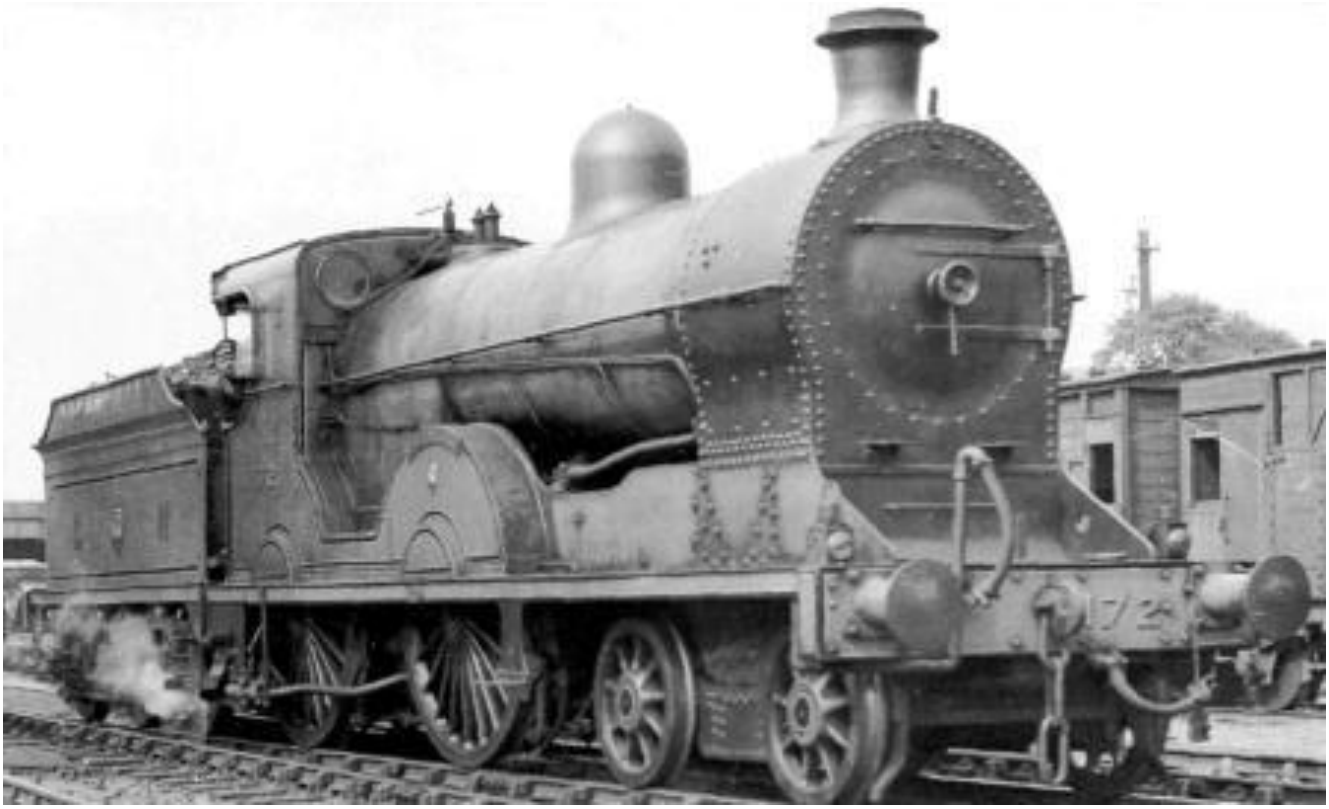
Every loco has one or more fusible plugs screwed into the firebox crown plate. Known to loco men as 'lead plugs', they are in fact made of brass with a lead core. If the water level falls too low and uncovers the plugs the lead core melts and allows steam and water into the firebox. Instant action is required to put on both injectors and drop the fire. To avoid this situation, keep the water level up at all times. Check the level constantly using both gauges alternately. Keep both injectors in use. Keep tank water level up and take water at every opportunity.

Some problems can arise very suddenly and without warning. One moment you are flying along without a care in the world, then suddenly steam fills the cab or the loco goes off the boil. Such was the case on 17th April 1957 when Dundalk driver Tommy Rowe was working the 19:00 passenger Drogheda to Dublin. Loco 65 (class T2 4-4-2T) was running easily along Ardgillan when a superheater element began blowing badly at the header. Stopping at Skerries, Driver Rowe soon found the reason for his failure. A loco man since January 1914, he knew he was beat. No point in trying to go on. The passengers were disembarked and the train set back into the siding. The 20:20 railcar ex Balbriggan picked up the passengers and a light engine was sent out from Amiens Street to recover the failed train. In this case there was nothing the crew could do. Such unavoidable mechanical failures occur and,

though many footplatemen feel despondent and somewhat responsible, no blame can be attached to them.

The superheater consists of a steam collector or header for collecting steam from the boiler to a series of superheating tubes or elements. This steam is sent back through the elements and dried, or 'burnt' as old drivers called it. Steam (saturated) at a temperature of 397°F enters the header and, flowing through the elements to the firebox end, returns to the header at 600°F having been superheated by over 200°F and increased by 35% in volume. Any leak from the header in the smokebox is detrimental to steaming. The only action the crew can take is to wire for assistance.

Running gear failure is always with us. Brake gear, rodding, blocks and defective suspension springs can occur at any time.



For a time regarded as the black sheep of the family, No.172 is seen here as the "Ruck Engine" at Dundalk. It was unusual for a post-war S class to be paired with a 2,500-gallon tender; it was said that this was to make turning easier as the engine was in theory meant to go anywhere required, though exactly where this was essential is problematic. (W.T. Scott)

When Amiens Street driver Dick O'Grady departed Drogheda on a 14:25 extra Dublin to Belfast on 13th July 1957, loco 209 (class Vs 4-4-0 "Foyle") was steaming in fine style. They crossed the Boyne Viaduct and began the assault on Kellystown bank. A sudden bang and shower of ballast caused Driver O'Grady to halt at Boyne Road Junction. Examination of his engine revealed that the left trailing engine bearing spring had broken at the top leaf, allowing the spring link to foul the permanent way.

The train was hauled back to Drogheda by the pilot engine, leaving 209 in the Section. Much work by the crew enabled the broken spring to be tied up and the forlorn "Foyle" limped back very slowly into Drogheda. The loco piloting the 14:45 regular Belfast was removed and utilised to work the special, which duly arrived in Belfast at 17:35. Incidentally, that loco was No.85 "Merlin".

Springs carry the weight of the locomotive and are of great importance in determining how the

locomotive acts as a rail vehicle. Many famous classes suffered from poor springing and a single trip on a GNR T1/T2 tank or a MGWR 2-4-0 would be sufficient to convince the amateur of the importance of good suspension.

Booking on at all hours is part and parcel of every locoman's life, especially for those working in goods links. Goods trains usually run in late evenings or early mornings when the day's loading of goods is over. In winter many goods link drivers seldom see the sun.

Thus, Dundalk driver Gerry Donnelly booked on to work the 02:45 goods from Dundalk to Sheriff Street goods yard on 16th December 1957. He prepared loco 164 (class QLG 0-6-0) and backed on to a full load train for Dublin. At 02:45 he got the road away and eased 164 out of the yard. His fireman exchanged hand signals with the guard to confirm that the train was complete. Driver Donnelly used all of his 38 years of experience to control his train and keep it in one piece. Once over Haynestown and running easily down the 1 in 170 grade towards Castlebellingham, he eased back on the regulator as they approached the Fane River bridge. Commons and Dromiskin crossing gates were his next objective.

VS No.209 "Foyle" starts a heavy northbound express out of Dundalk. The photo is undated but must have been taken soon after the engine was built, in the short period when the class ran without smoke deflectors. (I.C. Pryce collection)

Suddenly, the front of the loco was enveloped in clouds of steam. The engine's beat went off and a deafening roar rent the night air. The fireman screwed down the tender hand brake while the driver whistled for brakes. Once stopped, the light of the duck lamp showed the cause of failure. The right piston head had broken and knocked out the cylinder cover. A flaw in the material of the piston head had caused it to shatter. They needed assistance and wired Dundalk for it. Loco 154 (class QG 0-6-0) was sent out to haul the train back into Dundalk. She shunted off 164 and Driver Donnelly transferred his traps to the replacement engine. After a delay of 110 minutes the 02:45 goods set out for Dublin.

Piston heads are usually made of cast iron. This metal, though heavier than steel, is less likely to damage the steel liners of the cylinder. A space of $^{3}/_{8}$" is allowed between the piston head and the inside of the cylinder cover at the limit of stroke. Thus it can be seen that should a piece of the piston break off, it leads inevitably to a smashed cylinder cover. Severe priming in the boiler can lead to water carry-over into the cylinders. As water cannot be compressed, either the piston head or cylinder cover

has to go. Drivers should make every effort to avoid priming, and maintenance staff should properly wash out boilers on a regular basis. Severe priming can also wash all the lubrication out of the cylinders causing further damage to the locomotive.

And so the good customers of the GNR suffered delay and annoyance. But over the two-year period we have reviewed (5th November 1955 to 16th December 1957) the GNR suffered 17 locomotive failures, two in late 1955, eight in 1956 and seven in 1957. Of the seven breakdowns between Dublin and Dundalk, five were due to material flaws, one was due to foreign matter in the water supply and one was driver error.

Perhaps the old steam men are correct. Failures were fewer and delays less frequent but letters of complaint were still common. H.E. Wilson had to answer to his boss, J.F. McCormick, the General Manager, and explain just why his locomotive failed. Who answers to whom now?

BOOK REVIEWS

Rails to Achill - A West Of Ireland Branch Line, Jonathan Beaumont
Oakwood Press, £10.95 ISBN 0-85361-588-82002 Soft-back 160 pp, maps, photos, drawings.

Little on this line has appeared in print - the odd photograph, and just over a page in Shepherd's definitive Midland Great Western Railway. Traffic and passengers were always thin, and the line closed in 1937, too early for last train specials, photographic excursions by enthusiasts or preservation schemes. So a book on this line is very welcome, as closing another gap in Irish railway history, and Mr. Beaumont has certainly researched his subject well, going back to the primary sources. Over sixty years later, finding anyone who remembers the line in operation is very hard, but luckily William Lawrence the commercial photographer had representatives in the area to record the line when brand spanking new, and the indefatigable Henry Casserley travelled it fifty years later when it was worn out, and recorded his trip in a series of very atmospheric shots.

The line's very existence seems to have depended on local hospitality. When the first section opened, there was doubt as to whether Achill or Belmullet, further north, would be the terminus. Legend is that when Balfour, the chief secretary for Ireland, visited the area, the Achill people provided a proper reception, and the Belmullet crew practically none, which decided where the money went! There is a fascinating chapter about building the line, trying to unpick the complex triangular relationship between the Midland Great Western Railway (MGWR) who were to operate the line when open, Worthington the contractor and Barrington the engineer, and another intriguing account of the weary correspondence between the MGWR and the Board of Works about some ill-planned schemes in the area.

Train services, locomotives and rolling stock are well covered, and (modellers note) there are scale drawings of one locomotive class associated with the line and three suitable coaches to get started and even photographs of some wagons! The author is being a little modest in his subtitle, as this is really a complete history of railway activity in north-west Mayo, with sections covering the various still-born schemes in the area, the Westport Quay line, mineral lines on Achill Island and the railway hotel. There are some 90 photographs, including some recent ones by the author. Of the historical ones, I estimate that no more than a dozen have been published before. Other illustrations comprise track plans, detailed maps (with inset sketches or plans of engineering works), gradient profiles, and scale drawings of a water tank, a GSR cattle lorry for the road services, crossing gates, keeper's cottage and Mallaranny Hotel.

Criticisms are insignificant, and really I feel I am nit-picking. Chapter four, describing the route, where the author falls back on two contemporary tourist books, is slightly disappointing. Interesting as these accounts are, I detect that the author has explored the area extensively on foot, and a little more detail

on what can still be seen and access points would be much appreciated. There is a typo about the opening date to Westport (should be 1866). A few facsimile working timetables always add atmosphere and the dates for Government control are wrong: in Ireland the period was only 1917-19.

However, these are minor points and Mr Beaumont is to be congratulated on a comprehensive work which strikes a good balance between historical research and day-to-day anecdotes to make an enjoyable read about one of the little lines which have sadly gone. I look forward to future works from his pen - or word-processor. **AJOR**

Irish Sea Shipping Publicised, R.N. Forsythe
Tempus Publishing £16.99 ISBN 0 7524 2355 X Softback, 160 pp.

When a review copy of this book unexpectedly arrived my first reaction was that it would have been better sent to someone with an interest in ancient papers or graphic design. However, such thoughts were soon dispelled. Certainly, the basis of the book is the publicity material issued by railway companies and other Irish Sea operators from the early 20th century to the present day, but the contents are by no means confined to that.

Starting at the Clyde and working its way south, the book is awash (appropriately?) with illustrations: posters, timetables and maps, together with numerous photographs of ships, ports and some of the trains connected with the shipping services. Understandably, given the size of the original material, some of the reproductions contain rather tiny print. However, the use of a magnifying glass can be revealing in more than one sense when one compares pre-war timings with today's. Reproduction is of a generally high standard and there is a colour section showing, among other things, ships that looked like ships, e.g. the "Ulster Monarch" and, most graceful of all, one of the Isle of Man fleet. An amusing example of artistic licence is seen in Plate 2 where the artist, no doubt feeling that his picture would be the better for including a lighthouse, has moved the Corsewall Point to a position where it almost blocks the mouth of Loch Ryan!

But I digress. In addition to lots of illustrations, the book contains an abundance of informative text relating to the various operators and their ships. It seems likely that it will be compared with Laurence Liddle's recent "Passenger Ships of the Irish Sea", which is in fact acknowledged in the bibliography. Apart from its shorter time-scale, Mr Liddle's book, while no less informative and containing useful fleet lists, is a more personal account of his travels in many of the vessels. Thus, a possessor of both books should not want for knowledge of all aspects of Irish Sea travel. **NP**

LETTERS

Dear Sir,

Reference was made in FFT 47 & 48 to Seville Ironworks and the General Rolling Stock Co.

In the first issue of the IRRS Journal, R.N. Clements wrote an article on Locomotive Building in Ireland, in which he said, "In Dublin, the Seville Ironworks never, as far as I know, built an engine, but about 1850 they had ideas in that direction as they protested at being omitted from the list of firms circularised by the MGWR when looking for tenders for the building of new engines."

The General Rolling Stock Co which took over the Seville Ironworks in 1862 did not last too long, as the official illustrated guide to the MGW, GS&W and the Dublin & Drogheda Railways, by George S. Measom, published in July 1866, tells us that the occupier was then William Cherry, Paper Merchant, Steam Letterpress and Lithographic Printer, Manufacturer of Paper Bags, etc. "Established in 1854 in The Lotts, they later moved to Ormond Quay and later again to Upper Sackville Street, but expanding business required even larger premises. Fortunately the attention of Mr Cherry was directed to the factory known until lately as the Seville Ironworks and, having purchased it from the General Rolling

Stock Company, he has commenced the new year (1866) in a place suited to the extent and requirement of his trade.

250 people were employed there, the weekly wage bill was £200 and the working day was only 9 hours. Half a million bags were produced every week.

Today there is a new housing development on the site.

Dan Sheehan

Dublin

Dear Sir,

Thanks very much for yet another fascinating issue of Five Foot Three. I'm sorry it's taken a while to write to you but I don't think I've missed the deadline for the next issue - when are you going to go monthly?? *[You jest! - Ed.]*

As an enthusiast for all things Southern (as well as Great Southern, of course) I found Peter Swift's article on the ballast hoppers of particular interest. Unfortunately I can't throw any further light on the exact identity of the NIR vehicles but would like to explore another mystery highlighted by the photo from the South Western Circular - namely the origin of the other vehicle illustrated, the plough brake.

The latter was one of five built for the LSWR by Hurst Nelson in 1898/1903 together with a number of 4-wheeled hoppers. The mystery, though, is that both types are clearly direct copies of similar wagons built by arch-rivals the GWR between 1893 and 1901! What is even more intriguing - and what makes this relevant to Five Foot Three - is the fact that further all-but-identical plough brakes were operated by the GS&WR. Whilst the English vans probably went to make razor blades many years ago, at least two of these Irish vans survived into recent times: No.8452 preserved at Downpatrick and No.8456 probably still in use (photographed at Limerick Junction 9/5/1999!).

I can only assume that the adoption of a rival's design by the LSWR must have been due to some outside influence such as the Railway Clearing House, but was it the same influence that spawned the Irish vans or, perhaps, a direct contact between the two 'Great' companies - maybe they were built as an 'add-on' order by Hurst Nelson. I wonder if anyone can throw any light on this matter.

Thanks, again, for a lovely mag.

Neil Knowlden

West Wickham, Kent

Greystones Residents Succeed in Obtaining an Improved Train Service - 1887

One of the longest-running complaints that the people of Greystones, 5 miles south of Bray on the Dublin-Rosslare route, is that the difference between the fares to Bray and Greystones has been out of proportion to the difference in distance, and that the train service never meets the needs of the town.

I came across the following item in the Wicklow Newsletter dated 14th May 1887, which read: "Railway Service - For some time past the residents of Greystones have been agitating with the Dublin Wicklow & Wexford Railway Company for an increased train service between Dublin and Greystones and also to have the ordinary fares reduced. We have been informed that these demands have been acceded to and from the 1st proximo, a special train will leave Greystones at 8am. The fares have also been reduced in proportion to those from Bray. The inhabitants of Wicklow should follow suit to encourage visitors to reside in the town during the summer months."

In a notice inserted by the Dublin Wicklow &Wexford Railway. Co. in the 21st May 1887 issue of this newspaper it was stated that the 7:45am train departing from Bray would be extended to Greystones, departing from there at 8am for Harcourt Street - one of the few occasions when the Greystones lobbyists were successful in managing to get the DWWR to alter its timetable to accommodate them.

James Scannell

Dublin

[Prox., Inst., and Ult. appear to have gone the way of those other relics of a bygone age, "your esteemed order" and "I remain, Sir, Your Obedient Servant"! - Ed.]

AND FINALLY ...

A little trumpet-blowing. The last-minute curtailment of the NCC section of the 2002 Railtour meant that long-suffering Wilma had to write to numerous participants offering them a refund. Many elected to donate their refunds to the No.186 Fund - one gentleman who had been offered a refund in error even sent a donation of £10!

Following is a selection of kind remarks received:

Thanks for a wonderful weekend. Please send details of the 2003/2002 trips when available. - ***R.M., Dawlish Warren***

Congratulations on a very successful Corrib tour. I look forward to next year's. Many thanks to all concerned. - ***M.C.O., Hatfield***

Please donate the refund to the 186 restoration fund as we do want it on next year's railtour. - ***J.R.J., Lutterworth***

Thank you for a most enjoyable weekend. I look forward to seeing 186 in action in the future. (P.S.) The Antrim Coast coach tour was also excellent. - ***W.C., Nottingham***

Thanks, it was a great tour - and I'm not sure if Ballymena to Yorkgate in the bar car wasn't one of the best bits! See you again. - ***D.M., Boston Spa***

Many thanks to you all for a splendid weekend - and Monday and Tuesday. - ***G.M., Liverpool***

Can I book 6 places for next year's tour, please … we spread the word around and at least 6 more want to come so can you double the amount of Guinness in the bar car … anyway, the poor stewards deserve a decent pint on their way home. I trust you and the rest of the crew are in rude good health [Yes, we are any or all of these. - Ed.] and look forward to seeing you next year. - ***D. & A.T., Bridgenorth***

[Unfortunately (and unusually) more material was received for this issue than could be fitted into the usual size of Five Foot Three. More by good luck than good guidance, over the past few years there has been just about enough, with little editing required. My thanks to all, and apologies to anyone whose article has been pruned or whose contributions have not appeared this time. I hope that these can be used in the future and that potential contributors will not be deterred. - Ed.]

The telephoto lens makes Lambay Island appear deceptively close as No.85 makes her solitary way back north over Malahide viaduct on 19th October 2002. (B. Pickup)

No.4 leaves Connolly station with the Dublin-based "Enterprise" of 27th July 2002. (B.C. Byrne)