

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

Front Cover: No.186 near Whitehead with a Santa train on 9th December 2006. (I.C. Pryce)

EDITORIAL

Since an Editorial has been part of the magazine since time immemorial and no-one has said to stop doing it, the main problem is what to say without repeating what has already been comprehensively covered by our Secretary and other contributors.

Even though it has been referred to elsewhere one could not fail to mention the award of a richly deserved MBE to Peter Scott, who has stressed that he sees it as an award to the Society as a whole and that he could not have achieved what he has without the help of many others. However, to turn it the other way round would hardly be an overstatement - there is an old adage about taking your hand out of a bucket of water and seeing how big a hole is left, but there must be few, if any, who would wish to see that put to the test in the case of Peter.

Having returned from our temporary operating base at Lisburn, the venerable No.186 is now romping

the rails of NIR with the full available rake of six Mk2 carriages. Needless to say, those insatiable men, the timers, are now anxious to see what she will make of seven. Hopefully they will have their answer before too long, with the appearance of long-awaited diner 547 whose overhaul and re-fit has had to defer to work on behalf of other bodies.

Suppressing a deep-seated inclination to rail against the cumulative effects of the meddling industry (have you read that it is to become unlawful to use non-metric measure?) and the claiming culture, suffice it to say that it is no longer accepted that people - and things - will continue to satisfactorily fulfil what has been their role for years. Nowadays it is all about certification and re-certification, risk assessments, method statements and safety cases. Unfortunately for the RPSI, the requirements north and south of the border differ, so that a “one size fits all” production isn’t possible. The fortunate side is that, with support from others, Denis McCabe in the south and Irwin Pryce in the north have grasped the nettle, stepped into the breach and put their shoulders to the wheel - a fine mixture of metaphors!

The results have been satisfactory, although progress in the north has been delayed by, among other things, internal problems within a potential certifying body. However, there has been something of a pre-emptive strike - which can hardly have been lost on our insurers or other interested parties - in that all persons carrying out safety-critical work at Whitehead now undergo a process whereby their competence is assessed. All of the above required much work and reams of paper so our thanks are due to those who took on this daunting task.

You will read elsewhere a tribute to former GN driver Bobby Quail, whose sudden death and funeral took many unawares. Having enjoyed several spirited runs with him, your Editor recalls hurtling down the bank towards Newry on No.85 on a dark night and thinking, “You’ve finally overdone it”. Not a bit of it: full brake and a stop right at the platform end. Bobby knew what he was at - and wasn’t slow to tell you! Sadly, another ‘character’ gone.

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Johnny Glendinning

It is hard to believe that I am writing the 2006 report already. May I start by thanking all my Council colleagues for all their hard work and support throughout another very busy year for the RPSI? This year’s Council has three new elected members and two co-opted members all of whom seem to have, as they say, “hit the ground running”.

Our first Council meeting for the 2006/7 year started by celebrating the good news that Peter Scott had been awarded a very well deserved MBE in the Queen’s Birthday Honours List the previous day. Peter was invited to Buckingham Palace on 6th December for his investiture. Peter asked me to join him and represent the Society at the Palace. This I was very honoured and proud to do.

The Society was invited by IÉ to provide a train to celebrate the 100th Anniversary of both the Rosslare-Fishguard ferry service and the opening of the Suir Viaduct. This was an excellent event, despite No.4’s failure due to leaking tubes, the RPSI (diesel hauled) train, was one of the main attractions. It was also the all-important link between the unveiling of the plaques in Rosslare and Campile.

Last year I paid tribute to Irwin Pryce for his crew training and competence testing and to Mark Walsh for managing the crew roster on the AMEC Contract, and also to all the footplate crew who gave of their time so that our engine was available when necessary. Now the Heritage Railway Association has also recognised this and commended us for this achievement and also our efforts in maintaining the standard of our facilities and skills at Whitehead, which continue to increase. Maintaining engineering and carpentry skills is indeed a very important feature of our workshop facilities, especially at a time when the UK government places so much emphasis on giving as many school leavers as possible an academic third level education and very little emphasis on skill training. This is why it is so important

that we not only acquire or learn lost skills but also hold on to the skills we already have. One of the ways we are achieving this is to keep the present small full time work force of five fully employed. It would, of course be nice if we could afford to employ them solely on RPSI work, but we cannot, so contract work is the next best thing. Of course we are also giving training and experience to our members in our evening metal work class run for us by Belfast Institute of Further Education. However, Whitehead and Belfast are not the only places where the Society members can learn and use these skills, thanks to the help of FAS and IÉ, some carriage, and engine work take place in Inchicore.



The Whitehead "Youth Team" had a major role in running the 2006 Train Rides but on 10th September the Tarry was so crowded that they took an open-air meal in brake van 81. L-R clockwise: David Orr, Mark Walsh, James Friel, Edward Friel, Ben McDonald. (C.P. Friel)

RPSI heritage skill training is not just engineering and carpentry, it now includes footplate crew training as well and if all goes to plan we hope this year to train and pass out additional IÉ and NIR steam drivers and firemen. Again FAS are helping with the cost of this for IÉ drivers and hopefully

Heritage Lottery will be able to help with the cost for NIR drivers.

I was very pleased to see the younger members taking on some projects this year. First of all they ran a number of very successful Sunday Trains at which our customers got not only a train ride but a chance to climb on the footplate of No.85 and have the controls explained to them, next to be taken on a guided tour of the workshops and sheds and finally to have a look around our shop and then relax with a cup of tea in the dining car 87. A very good Sunday afternoon's entertainment, which was well organised and well run. Thanks to all who took part and I hope you will repeat this in 2007.

This group has also decided to take on a restoration project. They very wisely, I think, chose something which is not part of our normal operating fleet, but a vehicle which is a museum exhibit that they could restore at their own pace. They chose the GNR(I) brake van No.81 which had been badly damaged in the 1997 fire. The first problem was to cost the restoration work and the money required.

This came to £5,000 and thanks to the generosity of one member who gave them £1,000 to start them off they then secured a grant from the Northern Ireland Museum Council of £3,250; this left a shortfall of £750 which the Council then agreed it would pay.

A syndicate of members in the south have also been very generous, by agreeing to fund the purchase of a rake of Cravens coaches, including spares and generator/heating vans. This is very important now as there will soon be no vacuum-braked loco-hauled stock left north or south of the border capable of running on the main line, except those owned by the RPSI. My sincere thanks to this syndicate for their generosity and I hope they get many years of pleasure travelling behind steam in these excellent carriages.

Whilst I am on the subject of generosity, I would like to thank two major benefactors. The first is Peter Montgomery; thanks to his gift of the equivalent of £10,000 a year for the next five years we can pay Carrickfergus Council £10,000 a year to pay off the £50,000 interest-free mortgage the council have given us to buy the site.

The second member, who wishes to remain anonymous, has made a gift of £60,000 towards a project close to his heart, the restoration of brake coach 861. His money and a grant from FAS will mean that this coach will hopefully soon be being restored in Inchicore.

These two members are an example to all of us and we owe them a big than you for these very generous donations.

I am sure there are other members who could get their favourite locomotive, coach or wagon restored by a gift aid or bequest which would pay for their project or could maybe provide the matching funding required for a grant, or maybe it might be enough to just get the process started. So, if you would like to give or are thinking about how to get a tax benefit from giving a sum of money, either now or in your will, then the RPSI would like to hear from you.

I mentioned, in my last report to members, that the Society has for some time been in discussion with Lafarge about the RPSI having a presence at the redevelopment of the site at the old Magheramorne Cement Works. These discussions are continuing and the whole redevelopment project is now with the planners.

In July the Society marked the work done by Lord Henry Dunleath, our first vice-president, by naming the locomotive workshop after him. It was a very appropriate tribute to someone who was so helpful to the Society in the early days and it was very good of his widow, Lady Dorinda Dunleath, to be the guest of honour and unveil the plaque. Once again, we were very fortunate to have so many guests from both railway companies and local politicians, including an MP, a number of MLAs and councillors, present. Also, I was glad to see a number of representatives from our sister societies there as well.

This year both Operations Committees have been very successful with the number of trains run and money brought in. I would like to thank Debra Wenlock for her magnificent poster which she created for this year's Belfast area trains. Also, anyone who has been travelling on the DART this year will by now have noticed the excellent poster published by the DAOC advertising the Dublin area trains.

As a result of new legislation, the RPSI will soon be required to have its own Railway Safety Case for operation south of the border. Thanks are due to our member Denis McCabe, our Southern Safety Officer, who has been working away at this for a number of years now, meeting with IÉ and the Railway Safety Commission and keeping up to date with all the changes in the legislation. He has now completed our safety case and it has been reviewed by an independent consultant and passed to the Railway Safety Commission for approval. Well done Denis.



Platform party at the official opening of the Henry Dunleath Workshop on 4th July 2006. Seated (l-r): Lord O'Neill, RPSI President, Johnny Glendinning, Mrs Veronica Palmer, chairman of N. Ireland Transport Holding Co. Standing (l-r): Alderman David Hilditch, Mayor of Carrickfergus, Dorinda Lady Dunleath Sammy Wilson, MLA for East Antrim, Eddie McVeigh, European Commission, N.I. (C.P. Friel)

I am also very grateful to Sullivan Boomer for agreeing to take on the role of Northern Safety Officer. Sullivan has made a good start in improving things at Whitehead and on Northern trains.

I would like to pay tribute to Nelson Poots, our Treasurer who after seven years of looking after the accounts, has decided to retire from that office - in fact he announced his retirement a year ago in his Annual Report. Due to Nelson's dedication to the RPSI and its future he agreed to continue in office for another year when the intended successor found himself unable to take over the post. We must therefore now find a new Treasurer before this Year's AGM and allow Nelson to retire with our thanks for keeping our financial house in such good order.

As always, I must thank IÉ and NIR for their continued help and support over the past year.

No report of 2006 would be complete without a few words of congratulations to our esteemed Locomotive Engineer, Peter Scott. It was the year in which Peter gained well-deserved recognition outside the preservation world with the award of an MBE in the Queen's birthday honours list in June. It would also be in order to thank whoever nominated Peter for the honour for a job well done!

It was notable during the year that the Society was very successful in winning contracts from other heritage bodies to carry out restoration work on their vehicles. Work for the Downpatrick & County Down Railway included the return to traffic of GSWR No.90, underframe repairs on 6-wheeler 62M; at the time of writing preparations are being made to start on Orenstein & Koppel No.1. For the County Donegal Railway Restoration Ltd, No.5 "Drumboe" is receiving attention, as are a number of other items of CDR rolling stock. The only downside to these successes is that they come at the expense of work on our own vehicles. However, a major push has just started to get Mk2 diner 547 and brake van 463 into traffic for the 2007 season.

The operational year started with the return of No.186 to Whitehead after a 10 month sojourn in the yard at Lisburn. The latter turned out to be an excellent base for operations and we are grateful to NIR for permitting its use.

Thereafter, the programme of trains followed a similar course to previous years, with a number of charters both north and south. Charters to the UFTM at Cultra are a market which continues to develop. These are excellent earners as they usually involve a fixed price hire charge, with no marketing costs. Other charter destinations were Ballina and Rosslare, the latter unfortunately involving diesel haulage due to No.4 failing prior to the event. No.4 subsequently needed an expensive transfer to Whitehead for retubing - it was doubly disappointing as the much-anticipated Halloween trains from Dublin had to be cancelled.

Behind the scenes, efforts continue to increase the pool of drivers trained in steam. Despite our best efforts, nothing happened in 2006 but there are definite plans for movement on this both north and south in 2007.

Risk assessments and related safety documentation continue to be progressed, especially in Dublin, and recognition is deserved for the tedious work carried out by the Health & Safety Officers who give of their time in this area.

It was stated in my last report that Carrickfergus Borough Council have agreed to sell the Whitehead site to the Society, with payments to be made over five years. Currently, there is still a small adjustment to be made to the legal area boundaries and, after that is cleared up, a major announcement is hoped for early in 2007.

At the AGM in Dublin, there were a few changes on Council - Gerry Mooney and Philip Cox stood down to be replaced by Norman Foster and Mark Tyrrell, with Derek Young again co-opted to deal with grant applications, and Dermot Mackie co-opted with responsibility for the Whitehead infrastructure.

On the Council front things were quiet this year, with no major issues. However, there was still a lot of work to be done and Council members continue to give of their time in areas not generally noticed by the membership. As well as the safety work already mentioned, there have been attendances at child protection seminars and regional museum committees, meetings with local tourist bodies, local councils and grant disbursement committees. And who said it was a hobby?

It was in 1996 that a Strategy Committee was set up to report on how the Council structure could be improved to make its proceedings more business-like and efficient - the resulting changes which came into effect in 1997 were very successful. It's a very different world nowadays, with the emphasis very

much shifted towards the health and safety culture. With that in mind, and with the increased level of engineering activity at Whitehead, it was felt that after 10 years a review of the structure was in order and so a small committee has been convened to investigate what improvements, if any, can reasonably be made. It is hoped to report to the 2007 AGM.

The Society's website continues to play a major part in the marketing of the Society and in the provision of useful information to members and to the public. It had been hoped to have an on-line ticket booking system in place by now but the cost and the administration requirements have put this on the back burner for the present. However, the provision of printable posters which it is hoped that all members print for public display (don't you?) is a worthwhile new feature introduced in the past year.

The number of members receiving the email Bulletin continues to increase, with very few unsubscribing, so it appears to be an advantageous benefit of Society membership. Production of the Bulletin is still very much a one-man operation and despite numerous appeals it is very difficult to get news items from the Dublin area. Submissions on all aspects of Society life and general Irish railway news are gratefully received and very few, if any, are not used. There have been quite a number of requests for help in the Bulletin, many from non-members, and anybody who can help is urged to do so.

Charles Friel continues to organise the very successful Belfast meetings. It has been noted that a number of show presenters are now using computer projectors for their slides and it is good to see the old embracing the new. Charles may well be under threat as the main attraction - his brother John goes from strength to strength on the sales stand, and there have been rumours that the St. Jude's authorities are considering an extension to the side of the hall to accommodate the ever-widening row of bookstall tables!

I will now present the ever-popular membership statistics - again in tabular format as it allows me to leave the analysis to you!

	2006	2005	2004	2003	2002	2001	2000
NI	391	386	380	379	378	383	383
RoI	380	375	375	388	371	347	346
GB	290	294	284	305	277	279	276
Overseas	34	35	32	38	38	31	31
Adult	676	685	696	748	728	721	716
Senior	289	275	247	227	207	196	195
Junior	29	31	24	28	25	22	17
Student	8	6	5	1	n/a	n/a	n/a
Family	15	14	21	25	23	18	26
Life	58	58	59	61	62	64	64
Societies	4	5	5	5	6	5	5
Honorary	16	16	15	15	13	13	13
Totals	1,095	1,090	1,071	1,110	1,064	1,040	1,036

The figures speak for themselves but as in previous years I feel I must comment on the rising age profile - look at the Senior figures for 2000 and 2006! Another feature of the membership figures (but not apparent from the table) which I have remarked on in the past two years is the significant number of members who fail to renew their memberships each year in the south of Ireland, with one and a half times as many lapsing as for the total for NI and GB. I have asked members to comment with reasons and potential solutions but no ideas have been forthcoming.

No "News From Council" would be complete without the usual list of thanks. I would remark that it is

both a relief and a disappointment to be thanking the same people year in, year out. While it is of great benefit to have continuity of office, with the experience that it brings to the posts, it is worrying that the experience in the main is not being shared with younger members. However, there's always next year.

It is good to be able to report that the annual insurance costs have had a reasonable reduction this year - the second in a row - so thanks to Karen McLaverty of Marsh for that. Ashgrove House in Dun Laoghaire continue to give good service in the areas of ticketing and phone answering. Wilma Cairns in Larne is the voice you hear when phoning to enquire about northern trains - many thanks to her, especially for the patient manner in which she deals with callers on the May railtour.



Before dispersing to the delights of Portrush on 19th Aug 2006, Flyer passengers watch No.186 running round the train. (C.P. Friel)

Within the Society, the Posts of Special Responsibility to the Secretary for 2006 were: Charles Friel (Belfast Meetings); Johnny Glendinning (Museum Curator); Mark Kennedy (Curatorial Adviser); Philip Lockett (Web Manager); Ciaran McAteer helped with legal issues - thankfully not too many; Barry Carse, Dublin area membership queries; Nelson Pools ("Five Foot Three" Editor).

Also, thanks to those members who serve on the various sub-committees, the nature of which sometimes seem far removed from enjoyment of travelling behind steam.

And finally, as always, our thanks to the management and staff of Iarnród Éireann and Northern Ireland Railways for making it all possible - but I have a sneaking suspicion that most of them enjoy it too!

LOCOMOTIVE REPORT

Peter Scott

I could hardly start to write my annual Locomotive Report without first referring to the MBE which I received in the 2006 Queen's Birthday Honours. I understand that this was the result of the efforts of a number of persons who have tantalisingly remained anonymous! However, judging by the number of encouraging comments which I received - including letters, cards, emails and phone calls, the award commanded widespread support, which I am glad to acknowledge. I am delighted to know that my humble efforts have been appreciated.

While such an award is, by its nature, conferred as a personal honour, I must stress that it has only been possible due to the overall success of the RPSI - and that in turn is due to the efforts of many people besides myself over the years. I refer not only to the work and support of Society members, both past and present, but those at all levels in NIR and Irish Rail who have facilitated and encouraged the Society's operations.

It is indeed satisfying to know that Railway Preservation in Ireland has been judged worthy of public recognition.

At the time of writing, I have just returned from a visit to London, where I was duly invested with the MBE insignia by Her Majesty the Queen. I was accompanied at Buckingham Palace by RPSI Chairman Johnny Glendinning and also family representatives - guests are limited to three persons otherwise I would have invited many more! Conversation with Her Majesty during the ceremony is somewhat limited by the time factor, otherwise I would have discussed at length the problems with No.461's firebox, the Derry engine's regulator and No.85's route availability - however, in answer to Her Majesty's questions I did manage to say that restoring historic locomotives and carriages and getting them operating is highly rewarding and coming generations would do wisely to become involved in this and similar activities. Her Majesty's comments were suitably encouraging.

Now back to earth.



The “Derry Engine” on foreign service, seen here at Downpatrick North Junction on 11th June 2006. (C.P. Friel)

Locomotive Position

No.3 - LPHC 0-6-0ST shunting loco “R.H. Smith”. In traffic, Downpatrick.

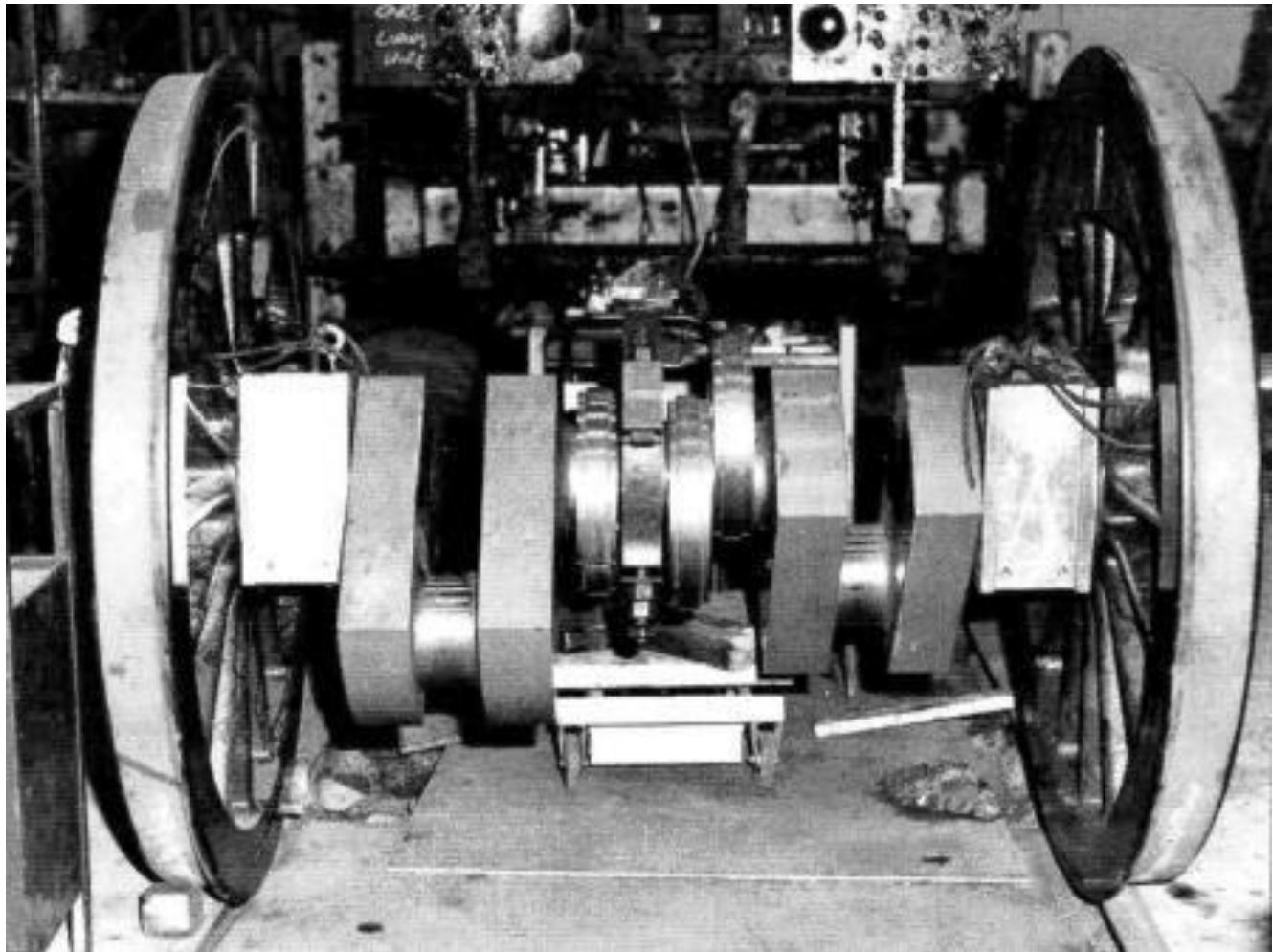
The Derry engine has continued its nomadic existence and is at present at Downpatrick, where it is operating for the Downpatrick and Co. Down Railway pending re-commissioning of No.90. The loco was transported there by low-loader on 11th June.

One of the problems experienced during the ballast contract last year was the unnaturally stiff

regulator. The higher the boiler pressure, the more difficult it became to get the regulator open - often involving both driver and fireman swinging on it, to the accompaniment of much industrial terminology. Once open, setting of the regulator to achieve ballast-dropping speed was not easy. To correct this, the regulator was reconfigured as a "two valve" unit and this immediately proved to be a great blessing. Unfortunately the nature of the ballast operation was such that the modification could only be carried out and properly tested after the loco had returned to Whitehead.

No.BG3 - A. Guinness, Son and Co 0-4-0ST shunting loco "Guinness". In Traffic, Whitehead.

The Guinness engine sees occasional use for shunting and train ride duties.



No.461's driving axle shortly before the engine was re-wheeled. Fitted between the wheels are axleboxes, driving cranks and eccentrics - in service, all will need to be greased and oiled regularly.
(C.P. Friel)

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

No.4 has just completed the season of "Santa" trains, operating between Dublin and Maynooth. During the May Tour last year, the loco suffered from firebox tube leakage, and this precipitated the decision to carry out the 'mid-term' re-tubing, which is done part way through each loco's 10 year boiler certification period. The loco was worked light to Whitehead, where the tubes were replaced and other minor repairs done in time for it to return to Dublin for the Santa season.

Minor problems with a dome joint unfortunately robbed us of the one possible Northern operation

which the loco could have worked (a Cultra charter) - much to the annoyance of all, including the long suffering NIR driver and fireman who had been looking forward to an enclosed cab for a change.

I think everyone understands that our locos have to be deployed where best suited, and at present the lighter train and shorter distances of the Northern based operations dictate that the smaller loco No.186 is based at Whitehead and No.4 in Dublin.

No.186 - Ex GSR 0-6-0 standard goods loco. In Traffic, Whitehead.

For much of last year, No.186 was shedded at Lisburn due to the Larne line relaying, and the train length was restricted to 5 vehicles due to the available siding space. Since returning to Whitehead, No.186 has operated all six available Mk2 coaches on the regular operations - Steam and Jazz, Portrush, Cultra charter trains. The coal currently being used is from Daw Mill and there have been few complaints regarding loco steaming and performance.

Part of the “rationale” for overhauling No.186 was the perceived coming need for a small easily handled loco for crew training purposes. Training of existing NIR and IÉ drivers for steam operation is currently the subject of organisation and No.186 should be available to oblige when called for.

No.461 - Ex DSER 2-6-0 goods engine. General overhaul, Whitehead.

Boiler repairs have progressed with fitting the new outer side plates to the firebox.

Rebuilding the inner copper firebox is also progressing with renewal of the platework in the fire area, where there was much damage due to wasting, cracking at stays and corner grooving - the evidence of a long and arduous working life.

The axleboxes and wheelsets have been refurbished and the loco is now back on its wheels. Installation of electric lights, batteries, and speedometer is under way - the layout is the same as that adopted for No.186. Replica electric GSR pattern lamps are being made.

Steam Locomotives In Store

No.85 - “Merlin”. Ex GNR(I) 4-4-0 compound express passenger loco. In store, Whitehead.

No.85 remains in store at Whitehead. A decision is needed regarding return to traffic. Route availability and the demise of turntables restrict this loco’s usefulness and is the subject of investigation.

No.171 - “Sieve Gullion”. Ex GNR(I) 4-4-0 express passenger loco. In store, Whitehead.

Also in store alongside No.85, No.171 needs more extensive work than No.85. The “new shed” at present houses the three surviving GNR(I) 4-4-0 locos and as such is something of a GNR(I) loco history lesson: No.131, built in 1901 and subsequently rebuilt with larger superheated boiler; No.171, basically a similar design but larger all round and, curiously, employing four slide bars like a goods engine, instead of No.131’s two bars. Another anomaly is the different thicknesses of crank web, necessary to accommodate the larger cylinders which caused the centreline of the big ends to move outwards. And then the compound, No.85, built in 1932 when 4-4-0 locos had been displaced elsewhere by later designs. No.85 is actually 2'5" longer than No.171, which by all accounts is the best that could be accommodated in the Dundalk erecting shop, and as such too short for a 6-coupled loco. But all three retain the 4-4-0 wheel arrangement, 6'7" driving wheels, Stephenson valve gear, and vacuum brake. All three also lie out of use - the differing status of each is outlined in this report. At present there is little pressure being applied to refurbish any of them, or to raise the necessary funding - or am I missing something? Anyone with definite views, please make them known, especially if accompanied by a Lottery win!

No.27 - Ex SLNCR 0-6-4T “Lough Erne”. In store, Whitehead.

A resident of the carriage shed.

No.131 - Ex-GNR(I) 4-4-0 express passenger loco. Assessment of condition, Whitehead.

Some basic dismantling has been done. Mechanically the loco appears to be in reasonable condition, but there are quite a few missing items to be reinstated. The boiler will need the lion's share of expenditure. One problem is the copper firebox, which is in need of renewal except that the correct grade of copper is now difficult to obtain and even more difficult to pay for. Repair of the existing firebox is being investigated.

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

Requires major repairs. Now in store inside the carriage shed.

Diesel Locos**No.1 - "Carlow" Diesel. Ex CSE Ruston & Hornsby diesel shunter. In traffic, Whitehead.**

Still carrying out light shunting duties in spite of a gearbox fault which means that the loco gets tired easily and loses tractive power. So for extensive shunting, Guinness loco 3BG is used.

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

The Planet needs engine and gearbox repairs.



When did Whitehead last see two 2-6-4T locos? No.4 returned from Dublin for re-tubing in August 2006 and is seen here alongside County Donegal class 5 No.5 "Drumboe" on its specially made wagon - a shortened carriage frame. After much preparatory work the engine was lifted off its wheels on 27th Jan 2007. (C.P. Friel)

Unilok ex UTA road-rail shunter. In Traffic, Cultra.

The Unilok is based almost permanently at Cultra, for moving Loco No.74 in and out of the Railway Gallery when required by the Museum to host an entertainment function. It returned briefly to Whitehead for engine and exhaust repairs - the results of which have been most gratifying since it now purrs effortlessly into life and moves No.74 without the former eruption of splutters and backfires.

101 - Hunslet Bo-Bo diesel electric loco "Eagle". In store, Whitehead.

Awaiting decision on future action.

102 - Hunslet Bo-Bo diesel electric loco "Falcon". In store, Whitehead.

There has been little progress with restoration of 102, not least because the team involved with it has suffered more than its fair share of problems, ranging from availability to personal misfortune.

Contract Work.

No.1 - (O&K)

Also under overhaul for DCDR. O&K No.1 has arrived in better condition than did sister loco No.3, which was rebuilt for Downpatrick several years ago. No.3 needed extensive repairs to badly corroded frames, tanks and working parts. No.1 needs renewal of bearings, some missing parts of the valve gear, pipework, lubricator, injector and feed pump, plus vacuum equipment and numerous minor jobs. The loco is being worked on as time and funding become available.



With the Guinness engine in the background, the diminutive No.90 ventures forth after attention to her valve gear. The front buffer beam has been removed to provide access. (I.C. Pryce)

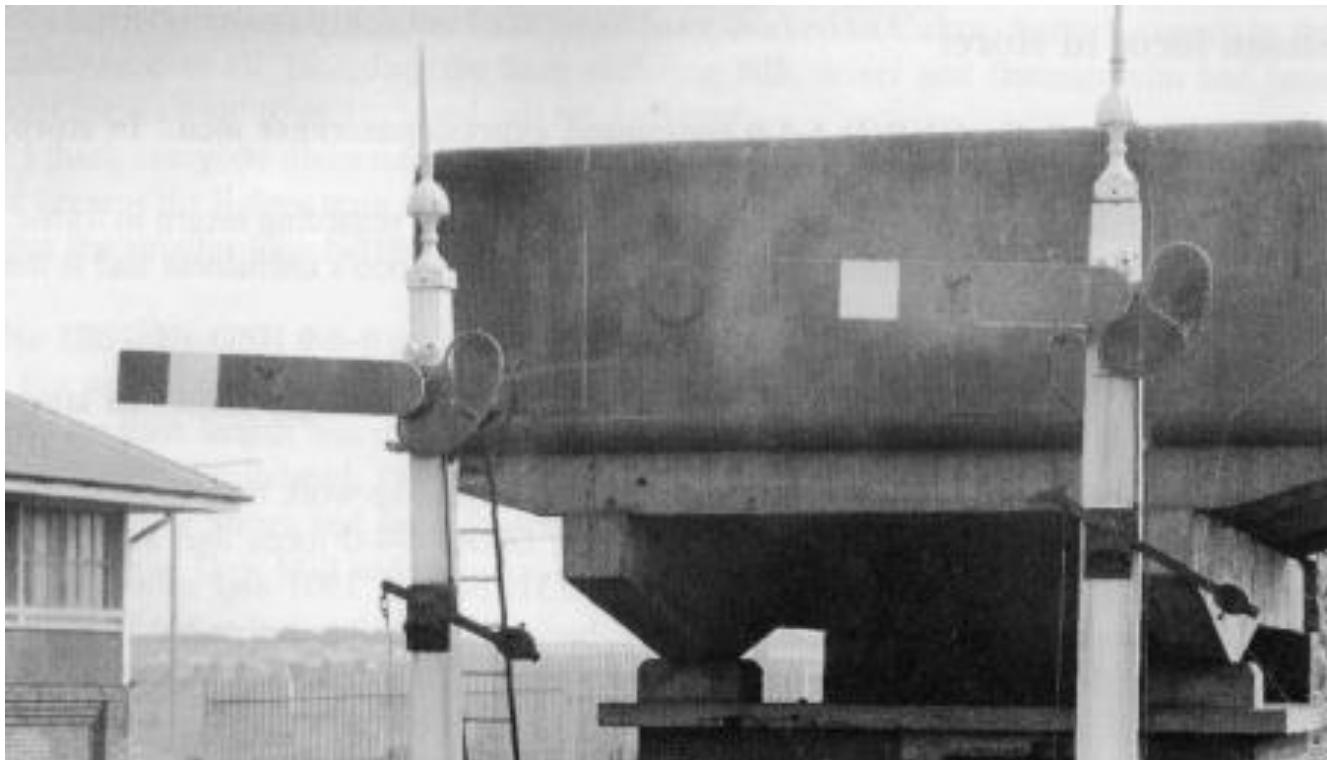
No.5 "Drumboe" - Ex CDR 2-6-4T loco.

A novelty at Whitehead is the presence of a narrow gauge loco. Donegal Railway No.5 was built in 1907 and worked throughout the 3ft gauge CDR system until closure at the end of 1959. Saved from scrap by Dr Cox, whose laudable efforts regrettably came to nothing, the loco lay unprotected and unsecured at Strabane long after the GNR(I) line had closed. Following agreement between the North West of Ireland Railway Society and County Donegal Railway Restoration Ltd, Drumboe was moved to Donegal Town and given some cosmetic restoration. Interreg funding was secured for certain basic overhaul work, with a partnership arrangement between CDRR and RPSI to carry this out. The loco was moved to Whitehead on 30th April.

The work being undertaken includes building new side tanks, dome and boiler cladding, smokebox

door and chimney, replacement of missing valve gear, coupling rod and bearings. Much of this work is now well advanced or under way, and the next move is to bring the loco into the workshop for fitting of the new parts. Certain frame repairs will also be necessary since severe corrosion has rendered the bogie and pony trucks unsafe.

Examination of the loco has revealed some unexpected findings. Upon first inspection, the condition looks unbelievably bad - all brass fittings and some working parts missing, tanks and bunker full of holes, working parts seized, frame stretchers in a state of collapse, springs disintegrating - but closer examination reveals that all is not just so dismal. For instance, the cylinder bores are as good as the day the loco came out of traffic. Likewise the slide valves. Some bearings, nuts and bolts, etc., are seized solid - others readily come apart. The firebox is encouragingly good.



One of the “outside” jobs tackled by our foundry was the casting of new finials for these signals at Portrush. (C.P. Friel)

No.90 - Ex-GSR 0-6-0T loco.

The oldest - and smallest - operational main line steam loco in Ireland. A potted history: built originally in 1875 as a combined loco and coach for the Castleisland railway, subsequently rebuilt as a 0-6-0T loco. Latterly worked on the light railways of West Cork. After withdrawal, was placed on display at Fermoy, then at Mallow. Recovered from there and overhauled by Westrail in 1990, with new boiler built by the Severn Valley Railway. Operated for several years at Tuam/Galway, then at Cork. Brought to Inchicore for the 150 years celebration. Now on loan to DCDR, the loco was transferred from Inchicore to Whitehead for remedial work prior to going to Downpatrick.

The work includes minor boiler repairs and testing, renewal of part of the cladding, provision of a set of firebars, basic painting, new whistle. When steam tested, a problem with the valve gear was identified, rectification of which has produced a very competent if diminutive loco. Another problem is with the regulator - slightly different to the Derry engine since in No.90's case, sudden uncontrollable movement was the problem rather than inability to move at all. This is being addressed by provision of

a new regulator valve with altered ports.

No.90 will go to Downpatrick as soon as the above work is completed, and will be swapped with No.3.

62M - Ex-MGWR 6-wheel coach.

This vehicle is to be loaned to the DCDR. The running gear has been overhauled, including repairs to bearings, suspension, brake gear and buffers.

Foundry Work

Outside work for the foundry is not being actively sought since our staff now has plenty of our own work to do, but suitable contract jobs are undertaken occasionally. Originally set up to make cast iron items like fire bars, the foundry now does a small amount of brass casting as well.

CARRIAGE REPORT (NORTH)

Francis Richards

Belfast area trains were well supported and ran with no problems.

Over the last months a train heating control panel was made and fitted to 180. Warmth can now be enjoyed by all.

Much of the C&W Department's time has been spent on the restoration of Donegal light trailer No.5 which is now resplendent in the interior at least, while waiting for the correct shade of red for the exterior panels.



After a mammoth re-railing exercise, Great Northern 20-ton brake van No.81 was brought to the front of the shed for attention to, well, everything really. "GNRI van" got shortened to "Ivan". Here No.186 works what looks like a broken-down breakdown train comprising "Ivan" with the GN 15-ton crane and its runner wagon. (C.P. Friel)

There has been a major increase in the tools and facilities available with a pillar drill, band saw, drum sander, wood turning lathe and a morticing machine added to the workshop. Johnny Glendinning and his band of helpers are providing wiring in the old stables area so that a Carriage & Wagon workshop

can be set up there. This will improve working conditions and increase storage facilities.

Work has resumed on the diner (547) to complete the bar fittings and fit the additional water tank and its associated plumbing. The wiring for the train line to support 'on journey' battery charging and mains electricity supply for the kitchen is being installed.

462, our 'new' steam generator van, is in the shed with attention being given to roof leaks, down pipes and general tin worm problems. While that is happening on the outside, the electrics are being sorted out on the inside so that the generator can be started and the boilers (for steam heating the train) can be tested.

The Wagon part of Carriage & Wagon has recently been re-activated, with major work being conducted on the GNR(I) brake van No.81 by a team of younger members.

CARRIAGE REPORT (SOUTH)

Tony O'Shaughnessy

My first complete year as carriage officer has been eventful and extremely busy.

We started out with just our wooden-bodied set but shortly afterwards the first three of our Cravens appeared. These required an urgent change of identity, so the much talked about coat of lime green undercoat was hurriedly applied. With five of the wooden coaches 1142, 1419, 1949, 1383 and 1335 out of service, it was necessary to push our three Cravens 1529, 1539 and 1541 into service sooner than we would have wished. Regrettably there was no time to complete the painting and so our set looked multi-coloured.



Niall Kelly and Martin Hoey hard at work at Inchicore. (T. O'Shaughnessy)

Work had commenced on Craven 1541, with several layers of grey undercoat applied, but again, due to the absence of 1419 and 1949, we were obliged to send it out in an unfinished state. Furthermore, when it returned considerable effort was needed to clean off all the dirt which had accumulated before work could begin again in earnest.

Bodies were scarce on the ground but thankfully an appeal to the membership resulted in three new

volunteers signing up to help with the Cravens. (If we can get another three that would be even better!) We encountered many new problems, not the least being the many layers of white stripe which had been applied to 1541 over the years. Unfortunately, the first layer had begun to lift so we were obliged to remove all the stripes and sand down to bare metal. Many different methods were tried until we finally came up with the answer.

Next we had to apply a small mountain of filler to the bodywork and then this required sanding before we could commence the first undercoat.

Just as we could see light at the end of the tunnel and were preparing to transfer 1541 to the wagon shop for the final gloss along the area below the windows we encountered technical problems with our paint. Our supplier brought over an expert from the UK who has provided an alternative.

Unfortunately, the Santa Trains were closing in fast and we had to suspend work on 1541 until the New Year.

Work is progressing nicely on 1142 with all the sides and ends replaced. New glass has been ordered. At the moment the effort is being concentrated on preparation for painting. This involves applying coats of primer and undercoat, after which the whole surface is rubbed down with very fine grade wet and dry sandpaper. Then the process is repeated as many times as necessary until a finish like aluminium is achieved. This is very time-consuming and demanding work and is expertly carried out by George Dempsey, Chas Meredith, and Peter Fletcher - not, of course, forgetting the other members of the carriage team who assist as required.

While it is not possible to give an exact date for return to service, we are hopeful that 1142 will be back in 2007.

During the year Park Royal 1419 returned from its long stay in Mullingar. It required work on the Commonwealth bogies and carriage watering system before running on the Santas. All the stops were pulled out and after many days and sleepless nights it ran on the 2nd and 3rd December. Unfortunately, it suffered from flats on the wheels and had to be withdrawn. Fortunately, IÉ were able to loan us Craven 1510, so we were able to honour all our tickets for the remainder of the Santas.

Apart from the work on the Cravens, 1383 and 1949 were returned to service and also completed was the refit of the kitchen in 88.

The greatest problem facing the carriage crew for 2007 will be manpower. At the moment we have three regular and two occasional volunteers maintaining the wooden-bodied set on Saturdays and Sundays. They have to carry out all the engineering and bodywork repairs to keep the set running. We have a regular team of five working on the bodywork of the Cravens on Saturdays.

When we run a trip all other work has to stop in order to prepare the set for the outing, although we are thankfully blessed with help from some of our stewards who clean the train from top to bottom.

In 2007 we expect to have more Cravens so we will end up with two sets but only the same number of volunteers! We also have to build two catering vehicles to provide the same service that our passengers have become accustomed to.

So if there are any readers with engineering, fitting, or any other skills please contact me through the RPSI website.

BELFAST AREA OPERATIONS REPORT

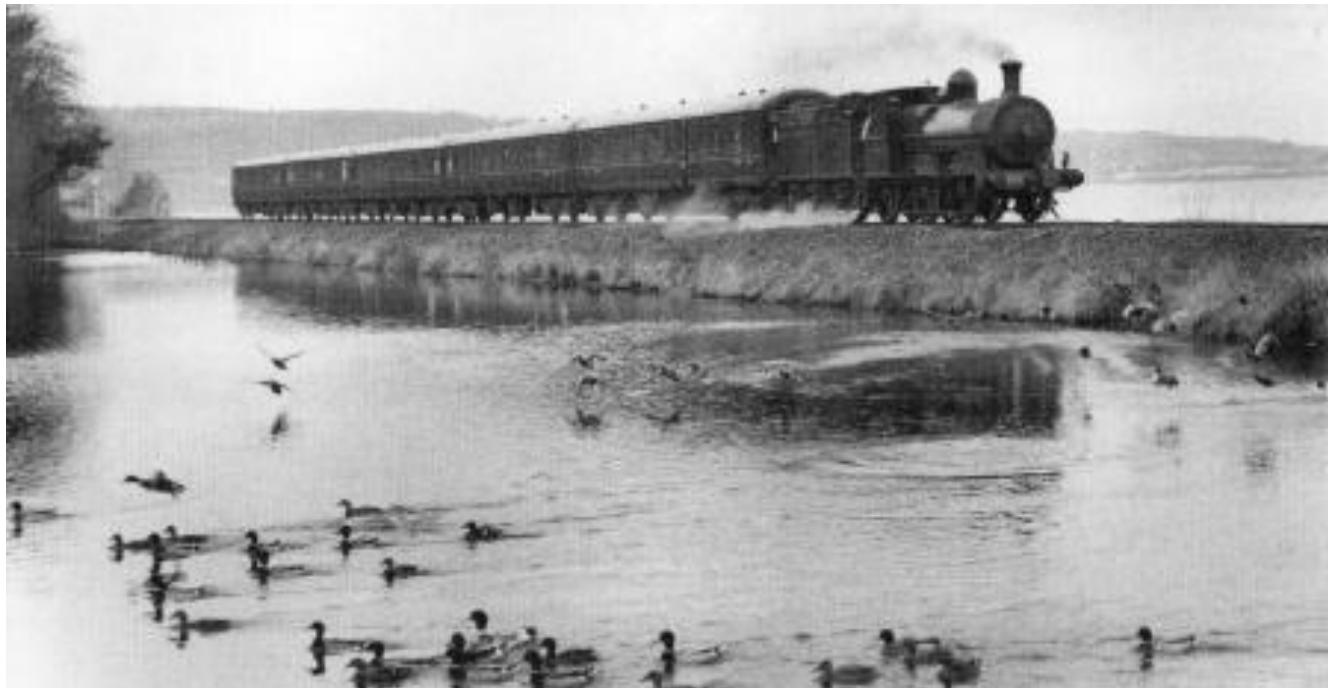
Mervyn Darragh

2006 proved to be another intensive operating year, with 27 northern-based train movements requiring an NIR steam crew. The year brought a wide variety of public trains, along with important charter work.

Locomotive No.186 and her rake of five Mk2 carriages made a triumphant return to Whitehead on Sunday 22nd January after being out-stabled for 10 months. With the Larne Line relaid it was necessary to gauge the carriage footboards against platform faces to and from Larne Harbour. A special word of thanks to NIR for agreeing to the stabling of No.186 and carriages at Lisburn and facilitating our operating programme from there. Also, to Irish Rail for their co-operation in relation to the Earl of Desmond May railtour.

Early in the year the Society was approached to provide a Cultra charter train which ran on 7th April. Two further Cultra charters were secured for 15th November and 8th December.

Easter Monday 17th April saw our tried and tested Easter Bunny operation, with two return trains from Belfast to Whitehead. Loadings were very good, with passenger numbers at 289 and 271.



On the gauging trip on 22nd January 2006, No.186 scatters the wildlife in the lagoon at Magheramorne. (C.P. Friel)

There was much work involved in packaging the Earl of Desmond railtour to Tralee on 6th and 7th May. A special word of thanks to Wilma Cairns, our northern office employee, who dealt with railtour bookings and facilitated many enquiries in addition to her regular duties. Locomotive No.186 and five Mk2s worked a positioning train to Dublin on Saturday 29th April, demonstrating what a strong wee engine she is by providing a spirited climb of the Wellington Bank. Bad news broke early on Saturday 6th May - in the course of preparing No.4 two firebars had collapsed and a third had been damaged. Many feared the worst but Irish Rail, who could have said, "You depart by diesel, with the loco to follow if fit", held off. With the fire thrown out and heroic work done by Society personnel at Inchicore two new firebars were fitted. No.4, duly repaired, backed into Heuston Station and we were eventually off some 2½ hours late. Good engine work and some missed stops, along with an efficient change of engines to No.186 at Mallow, saw us off to Killarney and Tralee, arriving at our destination only some 45 minutes down.

Sunday 7th May was a less fraught day although there was some concern over No.4, with reports about leaking boiler tubes, possibly connected to the fire bar incident. However, once the engine got well warmed the problem appeared to resolve itself and judicious working saw a slightly late return to

Dublin Connolly.

Monday 8th May saw an NIR crew on No.4 for a sound run to Whitehead via Antrim along the former LMS (NCC) main line and over the former GNR Antrim to Lisburn branch, currently closed to regular traffic.

No sooner had the carriages returned to Whitehead than they were off again on 13th May, hired by the Modern Railway Society of Ireland for a train hauled by GM diesel locomotives from the NIR 111 and IÉ 071 class to Rosslare Harbour, Waterford, Limerick Junction and back to Belfast. This turned out to be a very long but rewarding day for the Society and its support crew.

While No.4 was based at Whitehead the opportunity was taken to complete the carriage gauging process required by NIR. Only Bellarena and Londonderry still required clearance testing and this was facilitated on Sunday 21st May when a public train was operated to Castlerock as a Luncheon Train. Over 100 availed of the lunch held in the recently upgraded Castlerock Golf Hotel, while other passengers got off at Coleraine for Portrush. This operation is worth developing. Some issues were identified and future planning will take account of these. No.4 and the empty carriages ran on to and from Derry as an engineer's train for the clearance tests.



The scene at Mallow after the locos swapped places on 6th May 2006 in the course of the Earl of Desmond tour. No.4 is now on the set of three Cravens and generator van which No.186 had brought south, while No.186 is on the main train waiting to leave for Tralee. (C.P. Friel)

To facilitate the return of No.4 to Dublin and No.186 to the north the opportunity was taken on Bank Holiday Monday 29th May to operate a members' "Three Cities" railtour. Consideration is being given to running a repeat operation this year on a Sunday.

Larne Borough Council kindly hired the train on what turned out to be a gloriously sunny Saturday 3rd June. In connection with the Council's "Larne Alive" event shuttles ran between Carrickfergus and Larne. There was great interest in experiencing steam travel again over the Larne Lough section of line.

Mid-summer welcomed another Steam and Jazz train season. This was as popular as ever, with many groups bringing food hampers along with a little something to wash the delicacies down. Loadings

were very encouraging, with the Apex Jazz Band again providing the entertainment on Fridays 16th, 23rd and 30th June.

Whitehead train rides were operated on Sundays 23rd July, 13th August and, to coincide with the European Architectural Day, 10th September. A group of young members looking for added responsibility made a very commendable effort in organising these days.

The early part of July saw a deserved lull in activities. However, the Portrush Flyer season soon began on Saturday 29th July with a fully loaded train. Unfortunately, due to NIR crew holidays, the operation planned for 5th August had to be cancelled but the 19th August Flyer was heavily loaded. A third Flyer was slotted in on Sunday 24th September - another well-filled train with a good on-board atmosphere, no doubt enhanced as word spread that two Council members had been left behind at Portrush, including one who shall remain nameless! Suffice to say that the Ops Officer missed a brisk journey home with an on-time arrival.



Monday 8th May, and No.4 is ready to leave for Belfast with the RPSI's Mk2 coaches. Henry Ritchie and Francis Richards confer prior to departure. (C.P. Friel)

With No.4 needing a boiler re-tube and some other mid-term attention the locomotive moved light engine to Whitehead on Sunday 27th August, returning to Dublin on Sunday 26th November.

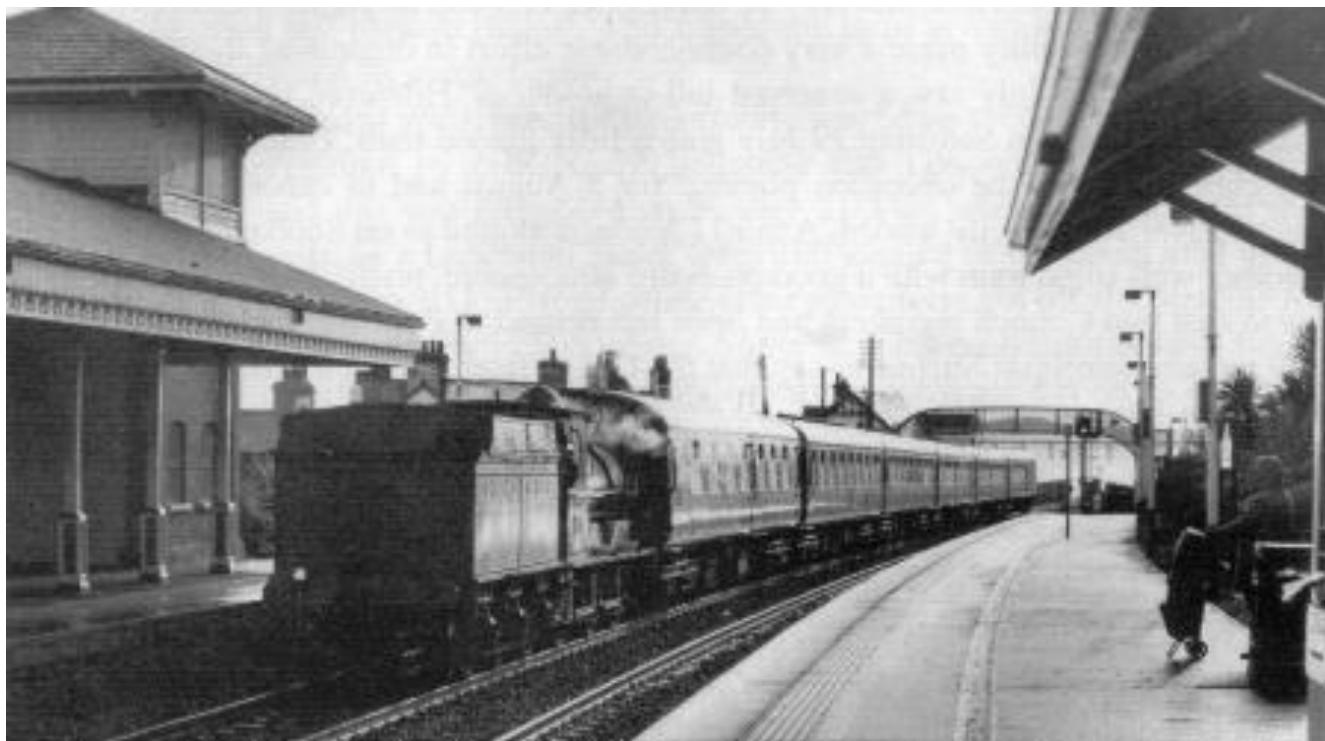
A brilliant sunny day was the setting for the “Country Comes to Town” trains on Saturday 16th September. No.186 was in fine form, hauling three return trips from Lisburn to Portadown for the festival there. The shuttles featured the rare opportunity to pick up and set down at Moira and Lurgan. The crowds were there in their hundreds and it was standing room only on some of the trains. This was an event that Translink bought into and whose support extended to the Society.

The Portadown operation slotted in nicely as a commemoration of the 40th anniversary of the end of steam traction on the former GNR with the closure of Belfast's Adelaide Shed. For the record, the last formal steam-hauled public train out of Great Victoria Street, a football special to Portadown, was operated by Jeep No.51 on Saturday 5th November 1966. Within a few days Adelaide closed and the remaining engines worked to York Road depot.

After the September Portrush Flyer the operations team had a short lull before the demands of the ever-popular Halloween Broomstick Specials were upon us on Sunday 29th October. As ever, the bookings, which were very healthy, did not take off until the week of the train. All enjoyed the atmosphere with on-train entertainers and seasonal goodie presents for the children.

The Christmas season kicked off with the Coleraine Shopper from Belfast Central on Saturday 2nd December. The train wasn't filled there as two carriages had been set aside to pick up passengers at Ballymena where a section of the train assumed Santa Special status. This was the second year of this innovation, with all tickets pre-sold. At Coleraine No.186 and six carriages operated two packed Santa Trains to Castlerock in beautiful winter sunshine. The Coleraine market also appears to be very buoyant. A competent sprint home completed an excellent day's proceedings.

The Belfast Santa season operated on Saturdays 9th, 16th & 23rd and Sundays 10th & 17th December. After the disappointments of Christmas 2005 passenger numbers were back to virtually their previous level. This speaks highly of a resilient public who continue to support the Society, not least since, for the first time, there was no paid advertising.



No.186 catches the winter sun at Whitehead, arriving with the 11:55 Santa train on 9th December 2006. Thankfully, Whitehead and Carrickfergus stations have been renovated in recent years and are the only Larne line stations to retain their original architecture. (C.P. Friel)

2006 saw a significant change to the manning of Society's steam operations. For as long as can be remembered the Locomotive Inspector jobs have been carried out by York Road depot Inspectors. Due to a Translink reorganisation, from November these duties have been taken over by Driver Assessors. A special word of thanks is offered to the outgoing Inspectors, Neville Foster, Billy Gillespie, John Leeman, Barry Pentland, and not forgetting Inspector Barney McCrory. If the new men show the same hands-on enthusiasm as their predecessors then we should move forward in confidence.

As ever, a special word of thanks to the three NIR drivers for covering the Whitehead based steam operations. Without their commitment nothing could operate.

In conclusion, a special word of thanks to the members of the Belfast Area Operations Committee who supported me, and others too many to individually mention who acted as stewards, assisted Santa, ordered presents, provided tea and coffee - and struggled with a less than acceptable temporary bar!

We now look forward to the 2007 operating season - and to seeing you on board.

WHITEHEAD SITE REPORT

Dermot Mackie

After all the previous activity of the NIR ballast workings, January was a quiet month and we were delighted to receive a modest collection of second-hand crossing timbers from the contractors. Early in February Trevor Mounstephen and Maurice Moore helped us to change the bogies below Diner 547 and on the following Saturday we salvaged all of the fish plates from 13 panels of redundant track at Greenisland ready for ultimate removal to Whitehead. Later that month we did track repairs and started to scrap 4112 by removing the gangway ends and three doors. We also removed the mesh wire from the badly vandalised platform fence. March was busy with more scrapping of 4112, a bonfire and laneway repairs ably achieved with the shovel by Alan McRobert and Robin Morton.

April Fool's day saw the last of 4112 in the ferrous skip for recycling and, despite a horrendous thunderstorm complete with lightning and hailstones, the usual suspects lifted all of the broken concrete flags from the platform, helped by Paul Wilkinson and his son Aaron. This allowed the tarmac contractor to fill the 170 metre strip left by the flags and make all ready and safe on the following Saturday - in time for the Easter Bunny train rides. On that day, between trips, we put brake coach 463 into the heavy lift for yet another bogie exchange. On the Saturday of the Two Day Tour the two John W's from Lisburn, Messrs Williams and Wolsley, started to dig a trench for the new supply cable for the soon to be moved electric pole in the yard.

The first Tuesday in May was the start of our regular Summer mid-week evening work and I took the opportunity to do the first weed spray of the site. Earlier in the afternoon I had given the Larne Probus Club a tour of our facilities, which they seemed to enjoy. Later in the month, the Society received a cheque towards our work from the Club. Other Saturdays in May saw the site gang, keenly augmented by Michael McCann and Philip Newell, replacing point timbers before the Castlerock excursion. The highly successful "Larne Alive" trips on a glorious hot Saturday on 3rd June gave us an empty yard and an ideal opportunity to do a scrap drive. Unfortunately, the dynamo on the hard-worked JCB died, but it was fixed the following week with expert electrical advice from Francis Richards. Two weeks later it was all hands to the wheelbarrows when the last part of the concrete floor was poured in the workshop; a fitting tribute to Peter Scott, who had learned that morning that he had been awarded the MBE in the Queen's birthday honours list.

The impending official opening of the workshop created a flurry of activity from the site squad with the ferrous skip getting another filling and 16 tons of stone being used to fill the pot holes in the laneway and other places. It was about this time that the steering ram on the JCB expired but with new seals and help from Ernie Gilmore we soon had the old lady back in action. At this time a contractor was hired to remove spoil from the back of the site and, after the grand opening of the Henry Dunleath Workshop on the 4th July, his team removed almost all of the bank of soil at the Belfast end of the water tower to make room for a shot-blasting area.

August is always a busy operating month but we managed to make a start on the fifth carriage road alignment using Tuesday night work crew. Another bonfire was needed and John Lockett did his annual job of painting all the point levers a fetching bright yellow. We used the JCB to move two recently acquired woodworking machines into the fifth engine road where they have been doing sterling work on a range of projects for the carriage team. On a very wet Saturday, 2nd September, we had a scrap drive for old batteries while in a sunny Coleraine, three of the under-30 brigade replaced

six decking timbers on the turntable with new ones that had been brought up on a Flyer train the previous month. Two weeks later, when the train was away on the “Country Comes to Town” trips to Portadown, we shunted the Mk3 sleeping coach onto the fourth carriage road and put No.4’s old boiler tubes in the ferrous skip.

After further work in October, the fourth carriage siding was finally slewed and joined onto the previously constructed fifth road with additional help from Dennis Jenkinson and Brian Hill. It was with some trepidation that the Mk3 sleeping coach, on temporary bogies, was towed over the section by the JCB, but it all worked so well that the Carlow diesel, carefully driven by Thomas Charters, was subsequently used to move coach 114 over the same track to place her behind the sleeping coach. This freed a lot of space at the front of the site and made it possible for all six operating Mk2 coaches to be stored together as one rake in the third carriage road during the busy Santa season, greatly simplifying the duties of the crews involved. In November I had to spray the site with weed-killer for a third time: something I have never had to do before, and I can only surmise that global warming has reached Whitehead!



Dermot Mackie and Site Gang members Alan McRobert, Paul Wilkinson & John Williams. The multi-function JCB is about to pull the Mk3 sleeper coach out of the newly connected fifth carriage road. (D. Jenkinson)

There now remained one last big job to do before the end of the year. This was to reconnect the supply to the water column, the pipe having been removed during the excavation of the bank. The very wet weather at this time, together with the mud which appeared on digging the trench for the new pipe arrangements, turned this job into something of a nightmare. We were reminded of the terrible conditions in the First World War and we were grateful that we had rubber boots and a warm home to return to after an exhausting day’s work. Fortunately, through the efforts of all concerned, we got the job finished and despite a few teething troubles the new arrangements worked well during the busy operations in December.

At times this year the work of the Site gang has been hard but throughout we have maintained a good sense of humour and our camaraderie has never waned. If you like a challenge and are not afraid of

some healthy outdoor exercise why not come along and give us a hand.

BOBBY QUAIL 1926-2006

Irwin Pryce

Like many small boys Bobby Quail always wanted to be an engine driver. His home near Finaghy station allowed him to study passing traffic on the railway and to cultivate the friendship of locomotive crews. In particular one of the regular crews of the 'Motor Trains' Harry Thompson and Ralph McBrien would take him on the footplate to Lisburn and back. Recognising Bobby's enthusiasm Harry got him an application form for a cleaner's job at Adelaide. And so, abandoning his job as an apprentice electrician, in April 1942 he took the first steps on a railway career. Mr Henry the Superintendent at Adelaide suggested a job in the office as a clerk might suit someone of small stature like Bobby, but this was politely declined. A free pass to Dundalk was duly issued and a test in arithmetic and writing completed successfully. A visit to Dr Coates completed the selection process, but since he had not yet reached the age of 16 a job as messenger was found. On his 16th birthday he was presented with a bucket of cleaning oil and a handful of waste and sent to clean No.85. That completed, the Foreman Cleaner dispatched him off again to do the inside motion. "Once you have done eight hours the rest of the day's your own," he was told. 48 hours a week for 27 shillings was hardly likely to leave a lot of scope for developing expensive tastes in the remaining hours.



Leaving Derry on 28th September, 1991 on No.4. Bobby's fireman that day was George Gaw, also sadly no longer with us. (I.C. Pryce)

By November 1945 a vacancy had appeared for fireman. Any days worked as fireman attracted a higher rate of pay but it was necessary to complete 313 turns before making a permanent jump in wages. Needless to say management made it difficult to get any firing turns at all when your total came anywhere near 313!

Many drivers expected the fireman to carry their "seat box" along to the engine and the 60 minutes allowed for preparation included time to read the notices, collect and fill two oil cans, collect your kit of bucket, shovel, hose bag and coal pick, fill two lamps, oil the engine AND to get down to Great

Victoria Street in time for departure. Enough to sicken anyone not determined enough.

The 1950s saw the arrival of diesel railcars and mass closures. Redundancy, or the prospect of reduction in grade, was an ever-present threat and it was not until April 1965 that a permanent post as driver came. Experience as a fireman on all sorts of work and with all sorts of drivers allowed him to develop a deep understanding of engines. A period firing on the Enterprise was an education in enginemanship. Who can forget how deceptively easy he and Willy McCaughley made nine bogies to Dublin with No.85 look?

Bobby was a man with a deep affection for the railway despite all the foregoing. His skill on the footplate was legendary. No such thing as “open them up and let them make their own way”. Full regulator with the reverser pulled well back when the engine would take it was the order of the day. Combined with a remarkable instinctive ability to judge braking distance accurately this often led to an appreciative audience around the engine at the end of a run.

Perhaps my most abiding memory of all the great runs I enjoyed with him is not in the fastest time category, but in a run from Belfast to Dundalk with VS class No.207. Booked time 80 minutes, time taken 79 minutes 58 seconds. Enough said.

None of this was at the cost of the engine for it was combined with a deep appreciation of the workings of his charges. Never one for understatement, I recall him making his way down the platform at Dundalk announcing, “The motion’s hanging off that engine!”

In fact it was nothing more than a lock nut on an eccentric which had slackened off half a turn against a split pin, but a reminder nonetheless of how carefully he looked at his engine. Whilst at Adelaide he was able to claim a small financial reward for spotting a minute flaw in the crank axle on compound No.86.

After retirement in November 1991 with 49 years’ service he would often make his way down to the station from his holiday home at Portrush to meet the Flyer. The crew were of course thoroughly quizzed on how they had done things that day. Thoughts of putting his experiences down in a book did not ever come to fruition - perhaps it is just as well that he took the advice of another man. “Better get yourself a good lawyer,” he said! Bobby did however record a great many of his experiences on tape and they form a remarkable record of railway life.

As a craftsman and raconteur he leaves behind a host of happy memories for all who knew him.

SOME MORE GNR FAILURES

“Spare Link”

Locomotives fail for many and varied reasons. Unless the loco fails “on shed” or in a station delays to trains are inevitable. Some failures just cannot be foreseen and many are due to bad design. Fitting a main line passenger locomotive with inadequate and poorly lubricated axleboxes is just asking for trouble, and so whole fleets of Derby-designed locomotives suffered low mileage and poor availability throughout their working lives. The driving boxes on the Compound 4-4-0s were of a design which beggared belief. Oil boxes situated on the footplate fed oil via tail trimmings to a long copper pipe which ran horizontally to a point above the axlebox and then turned downwards. It was fitted between the main frames and the firebox and as the engine swayed at speed the pipe got flattened and so delivered no oil to the boxes. Oil pads in the underkeeps could not be got at unless the wheels were dropped, while very short axle journals of 8½” compounded the basic design flaws. It took the recruitment of William Stanier to banish these dreadful Derby designs.

When Sir Josiah Stamp took control of the LMS in 1927 he asked for a breakdown of loco failures (pardon the pun!). The figures showed the most frequent causes of loco failures to be: (1) Tubes, (2) Axleboxes, (3) Injectors and (4) Parts loose or detached. Stamp had come from outside industry and

expected the railway to operate in a similar fashion. Even before hiring Stanier in January 1932 he had been pressing for an improvement in locomotive availability.

The gentlemen of the GNR(I) board had been similarly pressing their CME to improve loco availability and that worthy kept detailed records of the performance of his locomotive stock. Thus today we can see how those much-vaunted GNR engines performed. Whenever any engine failed in service the Running Superintendent, A.W. Dennis, had to make a detailed report to the Chief Mechanical Engineer, G.T. Glover.

Taking the four years 1919 to 1922, George Glover reported 239 loco failures to Mr John Bagwell, his General Manager. We have not got the space to recount every failure and so some of the more unusual or spectacular occurrences must suffice. Many of the drivers mentioned were noted runners and appeared in various railway magazines detailing GNR locomotive performances.

One, Davy Ryan, was the Superintendent's favourite driver and was utilised extensively in various trials. So Davy appears in several failures due to poor quality coal. Labour unrest began sporadically in the British coalfields in 1919 and culminated in the General Strike of 1926. This led to a severe deterioration of fuel supplies and quality. The GNR usually bought coal from Killochan colliery in Scotland and when this was shut down by strikes in 1919 the company sought supplies elsewhere. The results appear below and led to many loco failures and late running.

But Dublin driver Mick O'Farrell was the first casualty on 4th April 1919. Working the 21:00 goods from Dundalk to Dublin with LQG 0-6-0 No.111 and using Rhondda coal, the firebox cross stay bent and the bars fell out of the engine between Skerries and Rush. A note from Glover states, "This coal is so bad that it cannot be used unless mixed with good coal."

Driver Davy Ryan had four cases of firebox lagging catching fire, the first on 23rd May 1919 at Dundalk Junction. Loco 114 (class QL 4-4-0) was working the 09:00 passenger ex-Dublin. He had two cases of lagging fires in 1920, again with 114 and with 113 on 14th July and 14th December respectively. None of these was his fault, any more than the failures he had when testing coal in 1920.

The train involved in the coal testing was the 09:00 Dublin-Belfast passenger. This was a fixed-load train hauled by loco 113 and having the same driver on each trip ensured a fair trial of the coals concerned. Loco 113 failed at Dundalk on 24th February 1920 due to shortage of steam, caused by Barranchie coal. Two days later 113 failed at Drogheda, again due to bad coal. Glover appended a note in red ink stating, "This failure is entirely due to the bad quality of Ardenrigg coal. This is NOT suitable for locomotive use and this failure should NOT be counted against my department."

It was Bob Bruce's turn to suffer shortage of steam on 113 when working the 09:30 Dublin-Belfast express on 24th September 1920. Burning - or attempting to burn - Brucefield coal, he struggled into Dundalk and sought assistance.

Davy Ryan was in bother again on 28th January 1922 on S class 4-4-0 No.171. He failed her in Dundalk and Glover admitted that her tubes had high mileage on them and were overdue for renewal. Five days later the same engine burst a tube as she approached Dunleer with the 14:30 ex-Belfast, Ryan and his mate having a lucky escape from death or serious injury.

Loco No.171 features in nine reports over the four years under review: none in 1919, four times in 1920, three times in 1921 and twice in 1922. Driver Ed Malone had her on four of these occasions, the strangest of which was on 28th February 1920. Standing in Dundalk station waiting to work the 19:30 ex-Dublin forward to Belfast, the cab suddenly filled with steam. Malone and his mate hastily evacuated and summoned the "Ruck" engine to take the train on to Belfast where it arrived 34 minutes late. Meanwhile, as No.171's steam pressure fell, it was found that the steam cock for the tube-cleaning apparatus had opened accidentally. *[For reasons lost in the mists of time, the loco which stood pilot at*

Dundalk was known as the Ruck Engine. - Ed.]

During the period under review, many failures were due to boiler tube failure. Difficulty in obtaining tubes led to deferred maintenance and loco 9 (class NQG 0-6-0) suffered a burst tube one mile south of Tandragee (or, as the GNR spelt it, Tanderagee) on 5th July 1919 when working the 21:30 Adelaide-Dublin goods. A delay of 2 hours resulted.



LQG No.111 at Clones. Like most Irish goods trains, vans outnumber open wagons and the two cattle wagons at the front of the train may be vacuum-braked to form a “fitted head”. (W.T. Scott)

When loco 202 failed with burst tubes on 26th September 1919 at Ballybeg on the Oldcastle branch Glover noted, “This loco is 45 years old and would have been withdrawn if the new locos on order were to hand.” It was another year or so before they came to hand as this venerable 2-4-0, formerly Irish North Western No.72, is recorded as having been withdrawn in 1921, the number 202 then being given to a new class SG3 0-6-0.

A frightening incident happened to Tommy Reilly on 15th November 1919. He was working the 14:10 goods, North Wall to Malahide, when LQG 0-6-0 No.159 suffered a failed regulator valve - it refused to close! Examination led to Works fitters being reprimanded but this type of failure, as Glover emphasised, was very rare.

Loco 103 (class PG 0-6-0) with Driver Willie McMullan failed at Stewartstown en route to Cookstown with the 02:50 goods from Adelaide. Leaking tubes all but extinguished the fire, poor quality coal being blamed. Driver William Spence, working the 20:05 Dundalk goods with PG No.11, had similar problems with poor coal. The fire had to be cleaned several times and, due to the stresses imposed by repeated cooling and heating, several tubes began to leak and at Scarva he requested assistance. The train finally arrived in Dundalk 53 minutes late.

Some men must have felt very badly done by. When LQG No.108 arrived in Dundalk with the 00:01

Belfast-Dublin goods arrived in Dundalk on 9th April 1920 Driver James Taggart found the right-hand driving axlebox very hot due to a broken spring. He was supplied with a replacement engine and suffered no penalty. Yet ten days later Portadown driver Lowry Kyle was fined 2/6d for failing the same engine at Poyntzpass - due to a broken spring. Glover noted the state of 108's springs yet approved the fine!



PG No.103 with an excursion train near Craigavon c.1959. Although built as goods engines their light axle load enabled them to work to Bangor via the "Shaky Bridge" over the River Lagan.
(W.T. Scott)

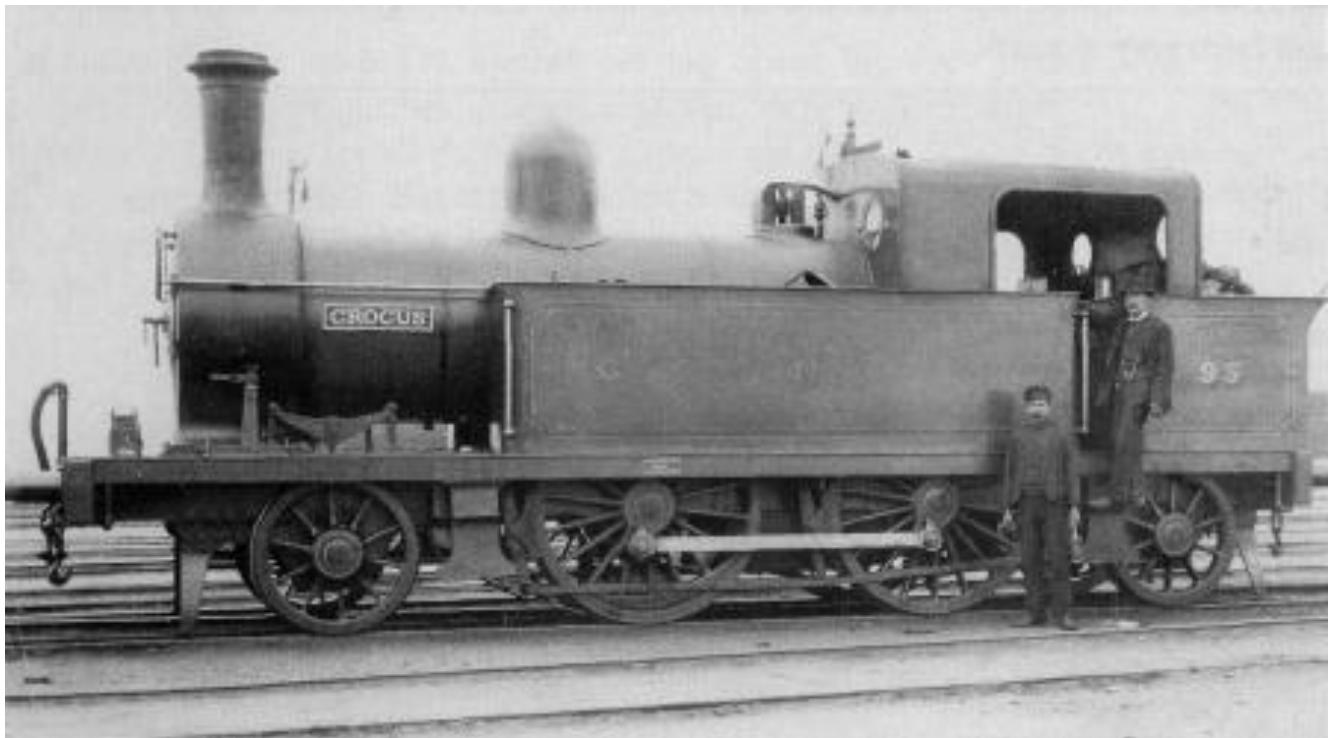
Loco 176 (SG 0-6-0) driven by Billy Foote failed at Howth Junction when working the 11:55 Dublin-Malahide goods. Billy found the steam pipe to the blower broken off at the collar in the smokebox. As 176 was just out of Dundalk Works Glover told the Works Manager a few home truths and that worthy no doubt then tore a strip off his erecting shop foreman. Deferral of repairs led to loco 181 of the same class breaking her piston rings at Mountpleasant, thereby causing a 3-hour delay to the 15:05 goods ex-Dublin. But when No.171 broke her rings on the left-hand side Driver Ed Malone was held accountable, despite Glover noting that these had been broken for some days. Such harsh injustice would surely rankle!

An unusual failure befell class JT 2-4-2T No.95 when working the 08:00 Lisburn-Belfast passenger train. Driver Tom Irwin, a fussy wee man, had just shut off between Derriaghy and Dunmurry when the right-hand coupling rod broke and smashed a hole in the side tank. Tom filled up her boiler before all the water had drained away and crawled on to Adelaide for assistance. However, a 25-minute delay probably led to complaints from season ticket holders - no commuters in those days!

On 8th May 1922 a similar class of passenger, on the 17:30 Dublin-Howth, suffered a 14-minute delay when class T1 4-4-2T No.188 came to a stand at Sutton with both injectors failed. Examination at Amiens Street shed revealed a large amount of canal weed in the tanks. Her driver, Tommy Reilly, was not held to blame. Again we have this contradiction, for when Jimmy Woods of Dundalk, with the 15:40 goods ex-Dublin on 16th June 1922, had to draw the fire on LQG 0-6-0 No.78 at Clontarf due to blocked injectors he was fined 2/6d by Glover. Maybe this was because the goods arrived 100 minutes

late!

Driver Paddy McCullough received a severe reprimand for bad preparation of SG 0-6-0 No.179 when she failed at Skerries with the 16:55 ex-Dundalk. The engine was found to have a hot driving crank pin, a hot leading right coupling rod pin and a hot leading axlebox. And yet poor preparation is laziness or dereliction of duty whereas failed injectors due to poor water supply is no man's fault.



Class JT No.95, believed to be at Dublin, Amiens Street. The nameplate and lined green livery indicate that it was several years before Driver Irwin's incident. (C.P. Friel collection)

Of the 239 failures recorded over the four years the most serious by far occurred on 1st October 1920 when loco 190 (class S2 4-4-0) broke a crank axle at Dunleer. Driver Bob Bruce and the passengers in the 15:00 Dublin-Belfast express had a very lucky escape from death or injury. The CME had to compile a special report for the Board who must have been very worried.

Loco 190 was a most unlucky engine, ending up on her side at Dromiskin after a malicious derailment in February 1933. And again, killing two crew members at Rogerstown viaduct in 1945 when a broken connecting rod pierced the firebox. She ended her days as UTA No.62 in a sadly neglected state.

Some drivers, too, seem to have been unlucky. Of all the names to appear on the Failure Report forms none stands out more than that of Driver Ed Malone. He first appears on 17th February 1920 when 171 had a right-hand big end hot and again eleven days later when 171 had the problem with the tube cleaning cock described earlier. On 20th September the same engine had a broken tender coupling link, for which he received a caution. In the interim, on 14th July, he has had hot big ends on 190 and rounds off the year by having a hot crank pin on 128. Next month, he has broken piston rings on 171.

December 1921 was another bad time for Edward. On the 9th No.192 had a hot right-hand big end; on the 12th loco 156 (QL 4-4-0) had a bad crack on her faceplate and, another three days later, No.192 had a hot left-hand trailing axlebox. After some months respite No.156 failed him again when the steam pipe to the lubricator broke. Next to Ed Malone in frequency is Bob Bruce, then Davy Ryan, Mickey O'Farrell and Tommy Reilly.

Strangely, Edward Malone does not appear on the GNR locomen's seniority lists of 1876 to 1924. The only Malone mentioned is Hugh, employed at Adelaide in June 1906. But Hugh Malone appears in the Failure Records just once, so what happened to Edward?

Disturbingly, our own No.171 appears all too often; big ends over-heating and hot axleboxes seem to plague her. Sounds a bit like her early RPSI days!



S class No.190 "Lugnaquilla", newly painted in blue. Note inside-keyed track in foreground. (Real Photographs/C.P. Friel collection)

Finally, a question for all those GNR experts out there. Several locos are noted as being "crewed engines". But at that time the 8-hour day was in and drivers having their own engines on their own jobs was out. So why does Glover make that note on Failure Reports - any guesses?

Irwin Pryce comments:

The Great Northern did seem to learn something about lubrication as the Compounds were fitted with a Wakefield mechanical lubricator for the driving boxes, although the inaccessibility of the pads remained. Having attended to the pads on No.85, I recall that we did get them out without taking the wheels out, but the tender had to be uncoupled, brake gear taken down, injector pipes uncoupled and the engine jacked up. *[I seem to recall wrestling with springs as well! - Ed.]* A broken oil pipe on a Midland Compound might have been a different thing though. Despite the water and grit collected in the underkeeps the GN compounds did not seem to have a worse record for hot boxes than most other engines although the bogie boxes did have a tendency to run hot.

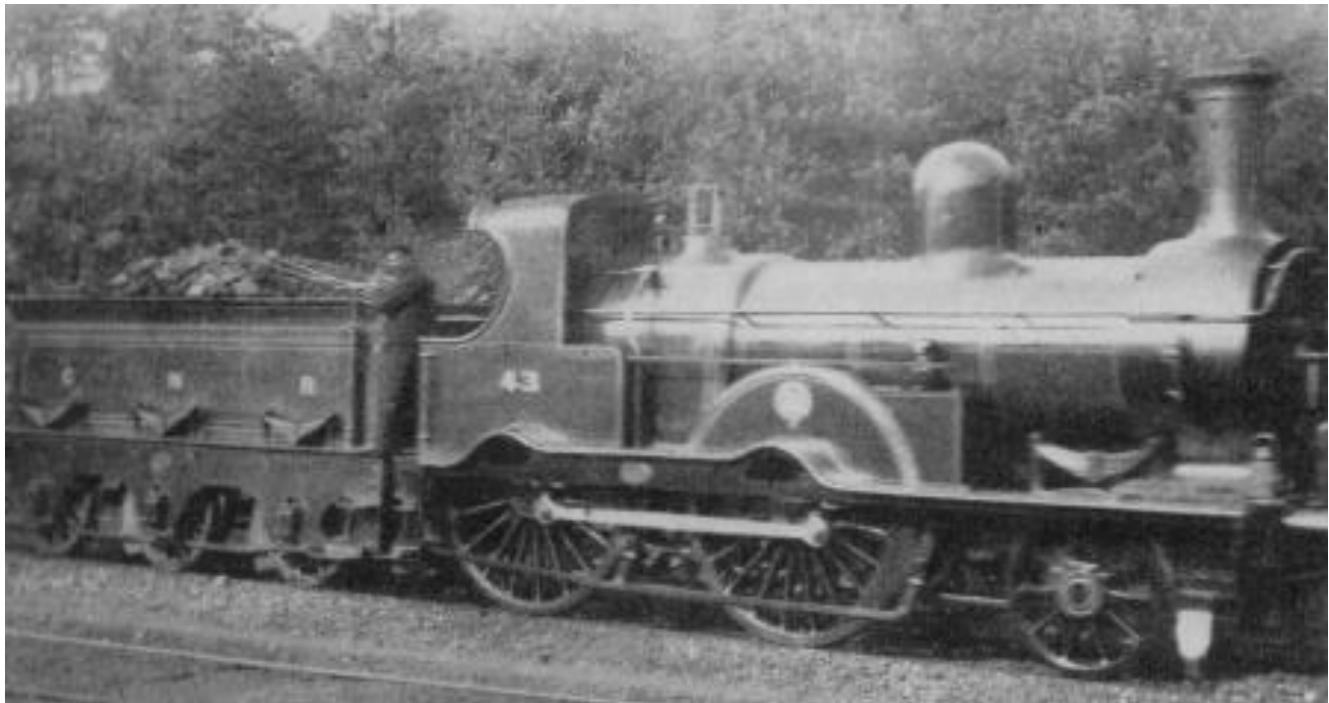
The overall failure rate was not high, though I'm sure that Glover was under continual pressure to explain any failure, while doubtless feeling the purse strings tightening through the 1920s and 1930s. It works out at roughly one failure per engine in three years - if modern traction could reach that figure companies would be well pleased.

The cases of lagging catching fire are a new one on me, although Jeep No.9 and UG 82 were both fire damaged after footboards caught fire and I did see a Bulleid Pacific catch fire at Waterloo. I imagine

sparks from brake blocks were the cause here.

Interestingly, the name appeared as Tandragee on the large station boards and as Tanderagee on the small cast iron signs on the lamp posts - so you could take your choice!

The seemingly random punishment handed out is a reminder of harder times. R.M. Arnold relates in "The Golden Years of the Great Northern" an incident when Glover was driving during the strike and broke a coupling. One of a group of watching strikers called out, "Clean break, Sir" - a clean break indicating that no sign existed of a previous flaw. Had this happened to one of his drivers Glover would no doubt have had no hesitation in punishing the man concerned.



No.72, here numbered 43, one of several numbers it carried during its long life. Rebuilt into this form in 1901, this and the number date the photograph as somewhere between 1901 and 1911. (C.P. Friel collection)

Driver McCullough was indeed lucky to escape with a reprimand for running things so badly hot. Jimmy Woods on the other hand would have had cause for complaint as he could hardly have been held responsible for what went into the tank. I wonder had he not used the injectors as far as Clontarf - but surely he would not have admitted failing to check them before leaving?

The built-up type of crank axle was something of an Achilles heel, having no less than nine separate parts. I note that No.186 has a one-piece solid forged crank axle. Standing instructions from Dundalk were that crank axles were not to be allowed to run more than 500,000 miles, which would have meant renewal every 15-20 years. This was later eased for engines on less strenuous work, no doubt again with an eye on the purse strings. A note from Dundalk reminded Adelaide fitting staff that crank axles were to be given special attention. A financial reward could be claimed by drivers finding a flawed axle - I believe the last to claim it was Bobby Quail whose eagle eye spotted a shifted crank on Compound No.86 in 1960. This was enough to send the engine for scrap.

Nowadays analysis of parts can be done to a very high standard - much better than the largely visual inspection which was once the only thing available. This point might calm the nerves of NIR and IR lest they imagine that our engines might go around the country casting bits into surrounding fields.

Does the record show how Tom Irwin got 95 home? He surely would have had to take the rod down - not a big job on a small engine. A delay of 25 minutes in the circumstances was remarkable and makes one think of what a corresponding failure would cause nowadays.

The failure of 190 at Rogerstown was, I think, due to a big end strap failing due to severe overheating and break-up of the brass. The Driver and Inspector were killed as the rod penetrated the firebox but Fireman Sammy Snowden survived. I once saw the photographs of the parts in Duffners of Dundalk who were the company photographers.

FROM WINGS TO WASH-OUTS

Gary Bell

“You’ll have to pass a test,” the overall-clad figure in front of me stated. My blood ran cold - the only thing I knew about locomotives was that Thomas the tank engine was blue, and his best mate Percy was green. I tried hard to remember back to my high school physics lessons but my thoughts were cut short. “Can you take a joke?” demanded my inquisitor. “Er, yes, I think so,” I stammered, half expecting a custard pie to follow. “Do you like tea?” he pressed. “Yes,” I replied. His face split into a beaming smile and he energetically shook my hand. “Congratulations - you passed!”

It all started with an off-hand conversation I had with a work colleague who happened to be a volunteer at Whitehead. As he recounted the feats of engineering that he had taken part in, I started to get interested. I had served my time as an Aircraft Engineer in the eighties, and despite my career move into IT I still enjoyed brief forays into mechanical matters when my car demanded it. When I got home I searched the web, found the RPSI website and was soon avidly reading the stories on the photo news pages. I made my mind up there and then that I would visit the depot on Saturday and offer my assistance in any way I could.

I learned that my guide was called Francis, and he took me on a tour of the facilities which to be quite honest left me stunned. I had never imagined that the depot would be so big, with so much “serious” engineering work being undertaken. So fired up was I that immediately after my visit, I lodged my membership form in person with a rather surprised Honorary Secretary (who it turns out was a work colleague from many years ago).

My first visit as a member was on the very next Tuesday night when I assisted Joe Galbraith in preparing some of the paintwork in the dining car for painting the next day. When I arrived bright and early the following Saturday, I was surprised to find a hive of activity already underway. I learned that the Society was frantically trying to get engine No.3 ready for a ballast contract (whatever ballast was), and unbelievably to me, it was a commercial contract that was to be operated by volunteers no less!

The eighteen months since I joined have passed in a whirl. I have helped fix fences, shovelled soot from a smoke box mostly into a wheelbarrow (with no air in the tyre), heated things, hammered things and generally had the time of my life.

So, would I recommend volunteering? Absolutely, yes. Although I had served my time, my aircraft skills were not applicable to locomotive engineering and so I basically started off like everyone else - unsure of what I was doing, and hoping that I didn’t make too many mistakes. Apart from steel toecap boots and overalls, all you need to bring to Whitehead is a desire to learn, and a willingness to do any and every job that might need done. Standing in a pit of cold water whilst a misdirected hose streams jets of water in your direction doesn’t seem like a good way to spend a Saturday afternoon, but boiler washouts are a fact of locomotive life, and there is a perverse sense of satisfaction to be gained when the job has been completed satisfactorily. Besides, the other jobs make up for it, especially when shunting is underway and you get a chance to blag a trip on the footplate of one of the engines!

So, whether you are young or old, married with a trainload of kids or blissfully unattached, I appeal to you to come down and give us a hand. If I can do it, anyone can. At least come down once and join in

for a few hours - you don't have to sign any contracts, and you will gain a valuable insight to the amount of effort it takes to keep these locomotives on the road. You don't even have to be a regular attendee (something I was worried about, since I have two young kids and a house that demands continual attention). Just turn up, get stuck in to whatever is happening at the time, and go home tired but contented. And when your friends complain about how many of those awful reality TV programmes were shown over the weekend, you can smirk and take comfort in the fact that even a boiler washout is preferable to watching one of those!



CIÉ Mk2 carriage 4112 was stripped of useful parts before being scrapped at Whitehead. The author is third from left. (C.P. Friel)

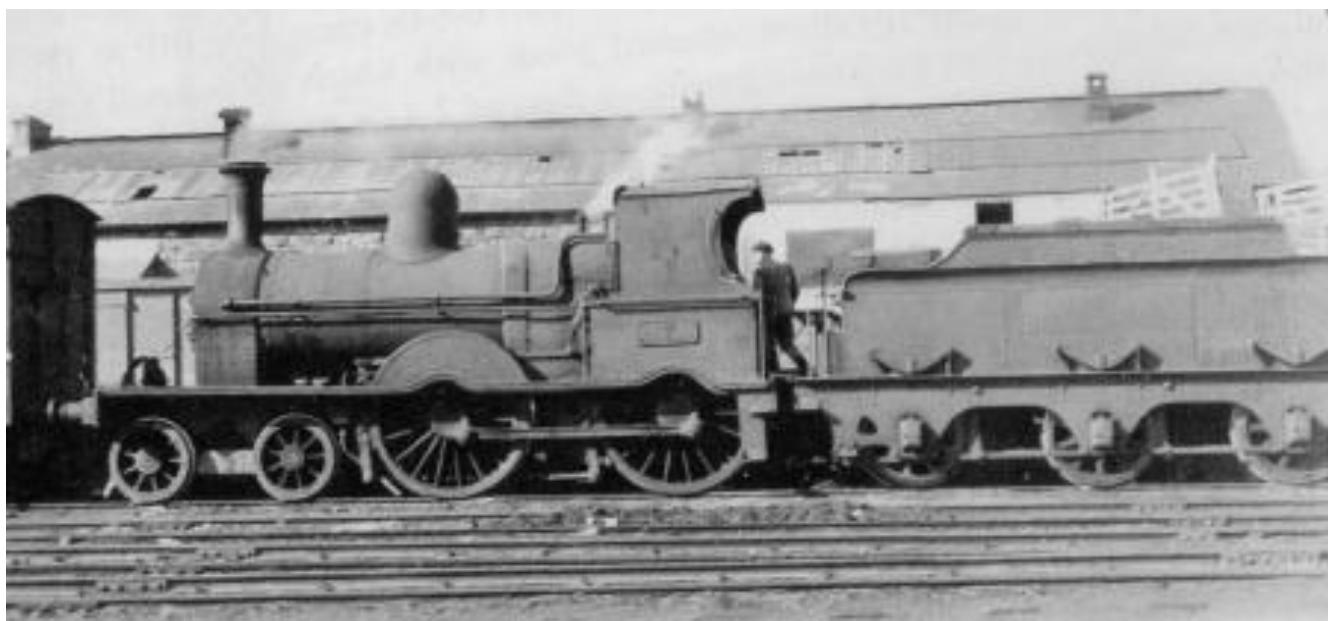
THE GSWR 2 CLASS

W.T. Scott

The GNR "U" class, Ireland's last inside-cylinder 4-4-0s, were covered in an excellent article by I.C. Pryce in Five Foot Three some years ago. Contemporaneous with the new "U"s of 1948 were the VS class, about which I wrote an article in Railway World. These two designs by H. McIntosh were the Omega of bogie four-coupled power in Ireland, but what of the Alpha?

To find this we must go back more than seventy years from the construction of the last GNR(I) locos to 1877 when Alexander McDonnell produced the first of his 2 class and 52 class 4-4-0s. Before considering these tiny progenitors of what was to become Ireland's most popular passenger locomotive wheel arrangement of the late 19th and early 20th centuries a few words about their designer are relevant.

McDonnell differed from the usual run of loco superintendents in that he was a graduate of Dublin University (Trinity) with a MA degree. Most loco men at that time and for years to come worked their apprenticeships through a major loco works - Crewe was a favourite, producing such men as Aspinall, H.A. Ivatt, Webb and Gresley. Before taking high office McDonnell, after coming down from university, worked for the Newport and Abergavenny Railway and then went to Turkey before coming to Inchicore. The directors, conscious of a lack of order and method in Inchicore, wanted a man of administrative ability and a strong sense of economy. McDonnell supplied both.



No.7, carrying U class boiler, at Tralee in 1952. (A. Donaldson)

McDonnell's experience had leaned to the civil rather than the mechanical side of engineering and to correct this he showed sound common sense in taking outside advice from the best - in this case Beyer Peacock. Two 0-6-0s came from BP in 1867 and formed the basis of the 101 class standard goods with which McDonnell's name is always associated. On the passenger side, a class of 2-4-0s with 6'6" driving wheels was produced in 1869-70 aided by drawings from Beyer Peacock and in 1873 a smaller-wheeled 2-4-0, the 21 class, appeared for the branch lines.

Here, however, McDonnell found that the rather rigid 2-4-0 configuration was not ideal for the severe curves of the Kerry branches and to correct this he built the 2 class 4-4-0, of the same size but employing the American pattern swing-link bogie. This gave flexibility and guidance to the engine and eased the flange wear to which the 21 class 2-4-0s were prone. He first tried the bogie out on the 0-4-4Ts, variously called the 4-wheeled tanks or the back tanks, where it was successful - a 0-4-4T is not an ideal vehicle. The 2 class acquired the nickname "the Kerry engines" or "the Kenmare engines" after their area of work.

The 2 class were the first bogie 4-4-0s in Ireland, though not in the British Isles - the NER, for the Scarborough-Whitby line, and the GNSR had got there ten years sooner but the 2 class were well up in the flood of this type which hit the railways in the 1870s.

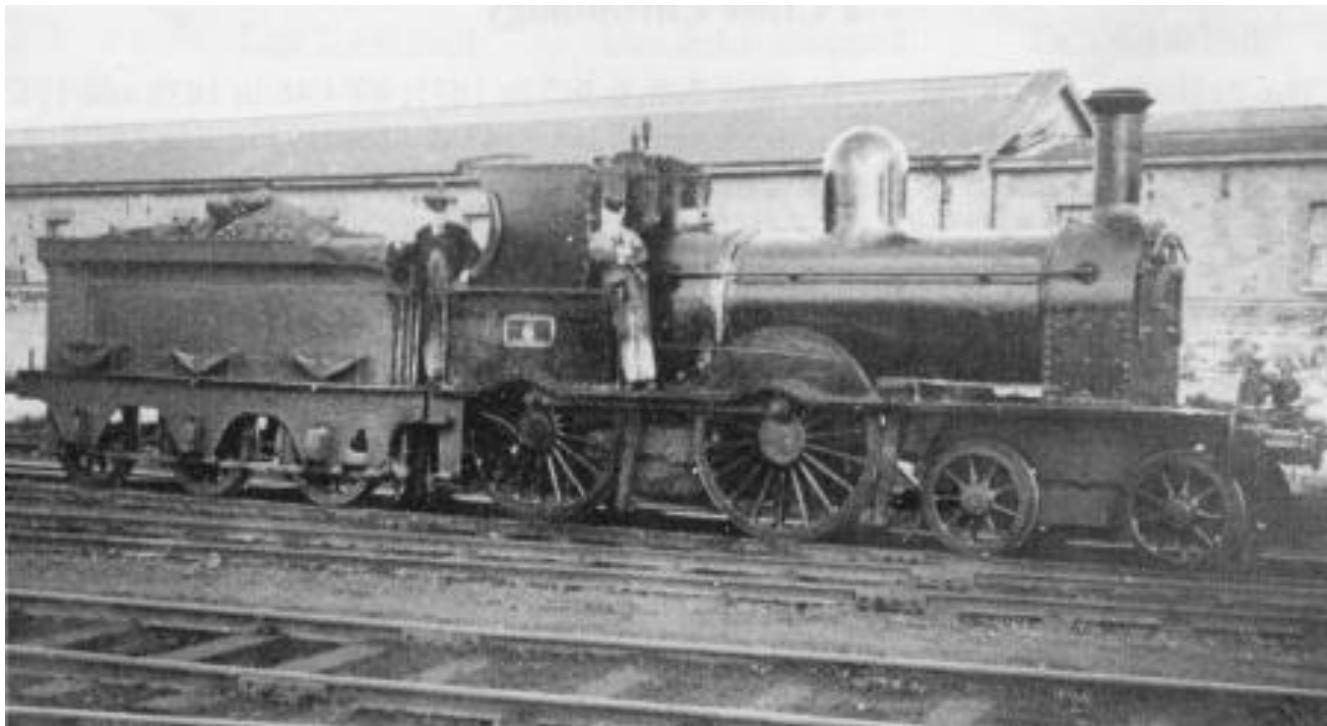
We might now consider the position of the 2 class vis-à-vis 2-4-0s and 4-4-0s of other major Irish railways. Those building 4-4-0s were the GSWR, GNR, BNCR, DSER, WLWR and MGWR. The BCDR and the CBSCR, by reason of their traffic requirements, never built a 4-4-0.

Last 2-4-0 built

Last 2-4-0 scrapped

First 4-4-0 built

GSWR	1876	1928	1877
GNR	1881	1932	1885
BNCR	1894	1944	1897
DSER	1895	1928	1895
WLWR	1894	1959	1886
MGWR	1898	1962	1900



No.6, still with “cupboard door” smokebox, at Inchicore in 1937. (A. Donaldson)

The GSWR were clearly the first to build 4-4-0s and to eradicate the 2-4-0. They were followed by the GNR who retained their H class 2-4-0s until 1932. No.86, of this class, was a player in the Armagh accident of 1889 but was still working out of Warrenpoint 43 years later. Of all the companies, the MGWR produced the most successful 2-4-0 - the 650 class, which could both run and pull, worked the Sligo night mail until 1956 and were the last 2-4-0s in the British Isles. They outlived all MGWR and CIÉ 4-4-0s and saw out steam in 1961/2. The BNCR rebuilt or scrapped all its 2-4-0s save for No.56 which was reprieved by World War II. The DSER and WLWR had few engines, though the latter's 2-4-0s were long-lived - No.291 outlived the 4-4-0s and lasted until 1959. The general picture, however, was that the small 4-4-0s saw off the 2-4-0s, except on the MGWR.

2 Class Chronology

The 2 class were built in three batches: 2, 5, 6 & 7 in 1877; 43-46 in 1878 and 1, 8, 10, 13 & 15 in 1880. No.46 was scrapped in 1935; 8,43 & 45 in 1945; 5 in 1949; 44 in 1950; 10 & 15 in 1951; 6 in 1952 and the last survivors: 2,7 & 13 in 1953.

The 2 class, with the exceptions of Nos.8, 44 & 46, were rebuilt with a U class* Belpaire boiler which was not superheated. [**not to be confused with GNR loco class.*]

	<u>2 class boiler</u>	<u>U class boiler</u>
Diameter	3' 10 $\frac{3}{4}$ " (raised firebox)	4'3" (Belpaire firebox)
Tubes	156 x 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ "	182 x 1 $\frac{3}{4}$ "

Heating surface	685	673 sq ft
Firebox	84 sq ft	83 sq ft
Total	769 sq ft	756 sq ft
Grate area	16 sq ft	16½ sq ft
Boiler pressure	150 psi	150 psi

Engine dimensions

Cylinders	16" x 20"
Driving wheels	5' 8"
Total weight	34½ tons
Adhesion weight	23¾ tons
Max. axle load	12 tons
Tractive effort	9,500 lbs

The U class boiler was only ever used on the 2 class. No.44 was unusual in that for three years she had an enlarged round-top boiler but then reverted to the original 2 class type. Around 1915 a few of the class were rebuilt with boilers made in two telescopic rings instead of the original three rings with butted circumferential joints. A new pattern built-up chimney was also substituted.

The 2 class were originally for the Kerry lines and in the 1920s and 1930s Nos. 7, 8, 10 & 15 had spells on the Kenmare line. No.7 worked on the Newmarket branch and 15 on the Youghal line. No.8 in later years became the Cork loco store pilot and occasionally assisted to Blarney which, however, left her low on steam and water - the Gresham & Craven No.7 injectors took a long time to bring up the water level. In the 1930s No.5 had strayed as far as Westport while the doyen of the class, No.2, was photographed leaving Portarlington with a Galway train.

No.6 was a Tuam engine in 1938 but by 1950 had moved to Tralee as a pilot and was joined by No.7. J. Ducey, Tralee's friendly foreman, had No.6 pulled out to be photographed in 1952 before she went for scrap, prior to which Tralee shed had her cleaned! In her earlier days this engine had worked around Waterford and was derailed between Waterford and Campile during the "Troubles".

No.15 worked the Kerry road in the mid-1930s but finished her days around Limerick and acted as Limerick Junction pilot in 1951. No.44 roamed widely, being found at Kenmare in 1934 and in 1938 was at Rosslare where she became the subject of a railway poem quoted by Laurence Liddle in Five Foot Three No.49, while No.45 got as far as Sligo on WLWR trains.

The 2 class were in power group R where they kept company with the 52 class and the MGWR 530 class - the Achill bogies. In practice this meant 35 empty wagons on the level and 7 loaded wagons from Cork to Rathpeacon. As a comparison, No.186, placed in group J, would have been allowed 17 loaded wagons.

The 2 class served the GSWR, GSR and, briefly, CIÉ and when the last was withdrawn in 1953 the GNR "U" class were only five years old. Sadly, the latter had only another 12 years to live, scrapped as their railway closed under them.

HUNGRY IN HUNGARY?

Tony O'Shaughnessy

The members of the Dublin Catering and Loco crews who competed in the 6th International Steam Grand Prix and 2nd Dining Car Convention in Budapest on 16th/17th September 2006 arrived in Ferigehy Airport laden with smoked salmon and black and white pudding and travelled to their hostel by minibus. The experienced members of the crew, being aware of Hungarian driving standards, opted to belt up tightly in the rear seats leaving Fergus McDonnell as co-pilot with our enthusiastic driver. Let's just say that that the normal journey time of one hour and thirty minutes was completed in fifty

minutes! We checked into our rooms after a lengthy period of hand signals and pencil drawings. Two taxis were called and we went to the city centre to eat and have a few pints of the local brew.

Next morning some of the crew were released to do a bit of sightseeing while the rest went to Vasutorteneti Park Museum to meet with our hosts MAV Nosztalgia and take possession of preserved carriage "Budapest" which was to be our base until Monday.

While we awaited the arrival of the technical team from Liquid Gold Kft to install the cooler for our Draught Guinness, it was off to the stores in the roundhouse where, despite the language difference, we organised our all of our pots, pans, plates, glasses, table cloths, etc.



Tony O'Shaughnessy, Mark Tyrell, Fergus McDonnell, Angela McCracken, Norman Foster and Chas Meredith. Missing is David Carse who may have absconded to the loco roundhouse.
(T. O'Shaughnessy)

Next, the carriage decoration commenced as we transformed MAV “Budapest” to resemble our own 88 with plenty of bunting and flags, not forgetting our two leprechauns, Liam and Niall, who have since absconded to Romania.

While Fergus remained in the carriage with the Nosztalgia lads reconstructing the tables to accommodate the Guinness cooler, Mark Tyrrell and I went shopping with our guide, Feri, also known as Elvis, to purchase the necessary ingredients to provide 280 meals over the following days. We met Feri and his wife Anna last year when he also transported us around Budapest.

This lengthy shopping expedition was hampered by our lack of language and the strange layout of Hungarian supermarkets - how do you say cream in Hungarian? Fortunately Anna speaks excellent English, so after many phone calls to her we managed to get everything. The rest of Friday afternoon and early evening was spent preparing all the ingredients for Saturday morning. After that, a quick change and off to the roundhouse where our hosts had set out tables and served a meal from one of their other carriages. We met up with some old friends from the MAV Nosztalgia crew and the other competing teams.

On the following morning we left our hostel at 06:00 to begin the mammoth task of food and carriage preparation in the knowledge that the judging panel would arrive shortly after 11:00. It was all hands on deck, with our loco crew seconded to catering. David Carse was seen to peel three sacks of potatoes while looking enviously out the window at a circle of steam locos and Chas Meredith found a new career as a kitchen porter. At 10:30 I was called to attend the opening ceremonies, still wearing my kitchen apron. At 11:15 the judging panel was observed in the Serbian coach next door and we knew that the pressure was really on. Quick changes all round, and miraculously our crew looked resplendent in their white shirts, bow ties and black aprons.



*Après le tasting? Norman, Fergus, Tony and Mark with Sandu Iosca of the Romanian team.
(T. O'Shaughnessy)*

The judging panel, led by Laszlo Benke, Olympic Champion Chef and Vice President of the Hungarian Gastronomic Association, was introduced to Mark Tyrrell (our chef) and was served each item on our menu. In the meantime Norman Foster and I were obliged to sample a range of Hungarian poteens and guess which fruit they were made from! This was an essential part of the competition as 20 points were awarded for this tasting and somebody had to do it!

The judges then departed and the visitors arrived. A blur ensued until 15:00 when we declared the kitchen closed and that we would continue as an Irish Bar only.

Mark and I departed to the awards ceremony to accept our 1st place award in the category “Most Typical National Food”, and then on to the Romanians for a quick break and to renew the acquaintances made last year. Unfortunately we then had to visit the Croatians, Hungarians, and, it is believed, a few others as we came back with smiling faces and glazed eyes!

At 17:00 the clearing-up and preparations for Sunday began and finally, at 20:00, we were able to attend the Grand Party in the roundhouse where our hosts again provided food and copious amounts of draught beer. We were entertained by a large troop of belly dancers, after which more general dancing began. All went well until there were technical problems with the draught and, with our extensive

experience, we were obliged to assist and Fergus McDonnell took over the role of barman. This was quite an asset for the Irish crew, considering the queue for a pint.

Sunday morning began bright and early and we began feeding visitors at midday. Chas and Dave went off to compete in their engine class. A total of 10,000 came to the museum over the two days and many came to see us, have a pint of Guinness, a whiskey or an Irish Coffee.



Tony, Norman and Mark display the team's award. (T. O'Shaughnessy)

Around 17:00 we began to clear our tables, wash up and restore the carriage to the condition in which we received it. We returned all of the catering equipment and put out the rubbish. In the meantime some of the other teams departed and many of the coaches were shunted.

We said goodbye to our old and new-found friends and finally boarded the Romanian Diner where we had been invited to a farewell drink and food. Later, having retreated to the hostel, some crew members gathered in one of the rooms and a few final drinks were consumed.

Those who attended last year had tried to explain the hospitality to Fergus and Mark, but they could not have done so adequately. We all agreed that the hospitality and friendship we found was incredible and we trust that we added to this atmosphere and represented our country and the RPSI to the highest standard.

We must thank all of the MAV Nosztalgia Team, including, Andras, Adriann, Georgie, Atila, Feri, Anna, and all the rest whose names we have forgotten. The generosity of our gracious sponsors, Aer Lingus, Tourism Ireland Frankfurt, Liquid Gold Kft Budapest, Heineken Dublin, and Irish Rail is also acknowledged.

In the course of a reasonably long life (my earliest railway memories date from 1920/1) I have heard, or read of, quite a number of remarks by railwaymen which, I think, are worthy of repetition. Here, in no particular order, are a few that I can still remember:

“The big railcar has pupped” - *GNR Buffet Car conductor Tony Gilmore, on seeing a railbus in the loop at Beragh.*



The big railcar's pup: GNR Railcar No.1 was donated to the old Transport Museum in Belfast but decayed in open storage until completely restored by Grimley Bros of Annaghmore. Here it passes Lisburn on 19th April 1993 en route to its new home at Cultra, with former GN driver Jimmy Donnelly at the controls. (M. Kennedy)

“The trouble with these narrow gauge people is that they have narrow gauge minds” - *GNR Chief Accountant Harry Patterson, referring the management of the L&LSR.*

“It's not so bad once you get past Howth Junction” - *Dublin GNR driver Ned O'Grady, when asked if he was not afraid to drive to Belfast during the Troubles (a tribute to the juvenile stone-throwers of Kilbarrack).*

“We are all Great Northern men here” - *Ned O'Grady again, this time at Great Victoria Street, Belfast several years after the GNR had ceased to exist.*

“She's not such a bad old yoke” - *Dublin (Canal Street) driver “The Cobbler” Byrne, after J15 0-6-0 No.197 had brought an unusually heavy “Gas Tanks” up to Inchicore from Westland Row (as it then was).*

“Now the job is to stop them running away with you” - *GNR driver Bob Perry, on reaching the top of the Wellington Bank on a ‘Big D’ at the head of a Dundalk-Portadown goods “equal to fifty-eight”.*

“We should have painted them blue” - *GNR Mechanical Engineer Harry Wilson, referring to the Qs 4-4-0 engines.*

“When an S class came down the Wellington Bank on the Up Mail you just about saw daylight under

the wheels" - *Harry Wilson*

"When I saw the first lorry drive ashore at Larne from the new Preston ferry I realised that we had lost our goods traffic" - *Campbell Baillie, GNR Traffic Manager*.

"Nowadays people put on their cars in the morning, like they put on their overcoats" - *Campbell Baillie*

"The efficiency of a steam locomotive is measured by its ability to boil water" - *H.A. Ivatt, GSWR and GNR(England) Chief Mechanical Engineer*.

"Tell Sir Herbert that I have no objection but that it will make no difference whatsoever to the performance of the engines" - *R.E. Maunsell, CME, Southern Railway to John Elliott, Personal Assistant to Sir Herbert Walker, General Manager of the SR, in answer to a query from the GM as to whether Maunsell would have any objection to the N15 class locomotives being named after the mythical King Arthur and his Knights of the Round Table*.

"The traffic is down one hundred per cent" - *Chief Customs Officer Kearney at Goraghwood, apropos of the decline in passenger traffic in the post-WW2 years*.



CIÉ J4 class No.257 on the turntable at Dublin Broadstone. (C.P. Friel collection)

"When I get to the top of Hainestown I pull her up two and a half turns and let her make her own way" - *Dundalk driver Ned "The Yank" Duffy*.

"I didn't see this" - *Harry McIntosh, GNR Mechanical Engineer, when walking past a derailed loco on his way from his house to his office*.

"The best engines we had were the 500s, the 257s and the DSER 2-6-0s" - *Matt Devereaux, Inchicore CME in the 1960s*.

"There's an engine fallen off the drawbridge" - *Restaurant Car conductor "The Skipper" Jackson, on seeing a loco derailed on Drogheda turntable*.

"Whatever you do, don't go back on the diesel" - *An ex-BCDR driver, as I left his Jeep at Portrush after travelling with him from Belfast*.

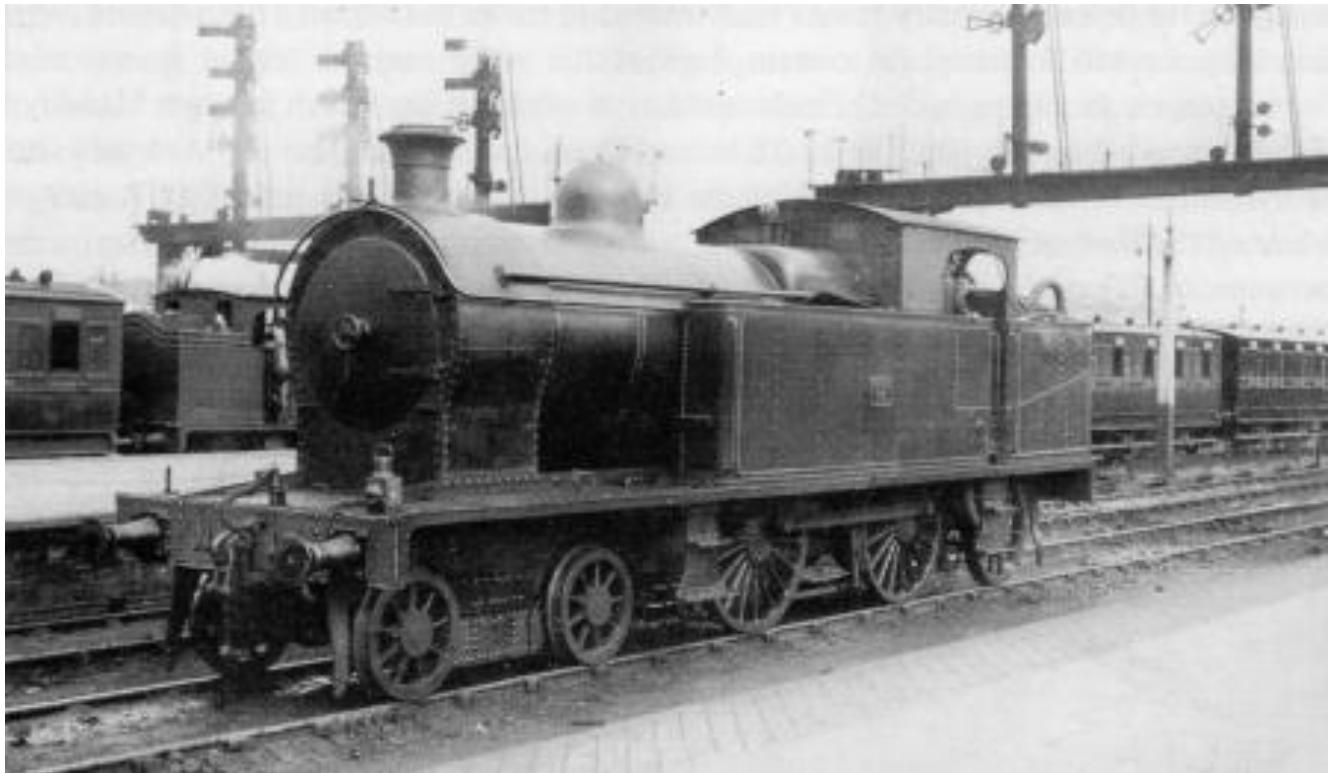
“Throw her over and let out the lever” - *Traditional*

TOURING BY TRAIN ON THE BCDR

Brian McDonald

Almost from the beginning of railway travel in Ireland the railway companies were providing services which enabled holidaymakers to visit the seaside and many of the tourist attractions which the island had to offer. Initially, such services were limited to day-trips but were later expanded to include weekends and holidays of a week or more.

The range of tours on offer reached a peak in the period immediately before the First World War. These were usually advertised in the brochures which were issued by the railway companies each year. Among them was the Belfast and County Down Railway which offered an extensive range of tours in that part of Co Down which it served.



BCDR 4-4-2T No.16 stands in front of the signal gantry - one of the largest in Ireland - at Belfast, Queen's Quay. (A. Donaldson)

The tourist had the choice of day-trips to the coast or to the Mourne Mountains, boat trips on Belfast Lough, holidays in Newcastle and tours around Strangford Lough. The more energetic could avail of combined rail and cycling tours while a wide range of special fares were available to individuals, families and groups of excursionists who wanted to enjoy a day at the seaside.

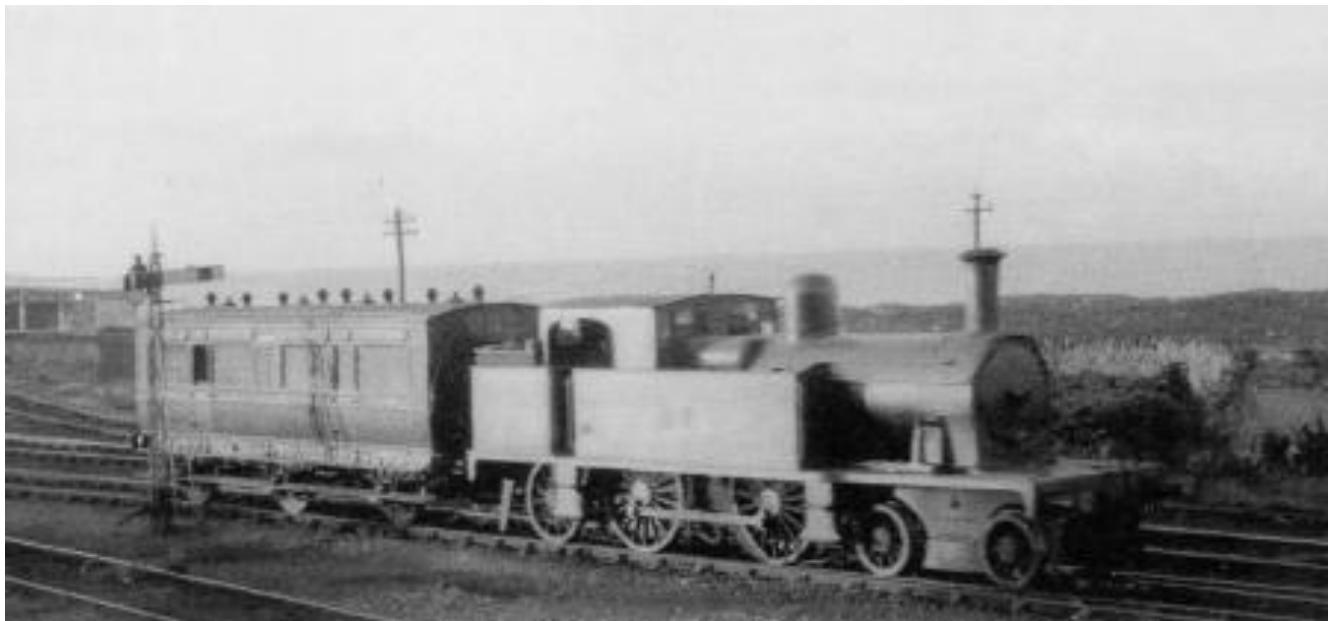
The BCDR programme of day-trips was designed to encourage people from Belfast and inland towns to travel to the coast. Passengers from the city could travel to Bangor, Donaghadee, Killough, Ardglass and Newcastle at special excursion fares on most days of the week. Fares to Newcastle ranged from 20p for first class to 12p for third class while those to Ardglass cost 15p first class, 12p second and 10p third. Holidaymakers could travel to Bangor for the day for as little as 5p return (Bangor and back for a bob!) though they were restricted to trains which left Belfast between 10:30 and 17:30.

They also had the opportunity to travel between Belfast and Bangor by boat. This service began in

1839 when the BCDR introduced a paddle steamer, the "Slieve Donard", onto Belfast Lough. The service was such a success that a second boat, the "Slieve Bearnagh", was introduced in 1894. This enabled the BCDR to operate cruises outside the Lough to Portrush, Larne, Donaghadee, Portaferry and Ardglass. By 1912, both boats had been replaced by a new paddle steamer, the "Erin's Isle".

This boat remained in service until 1915 when it was requisitioned by the Admiralty. It was subsequently sunk by a mine, the BCDR receiving £60,000 in compensation for its loss.

Day excursion fares were also available from intermediate stations to the seaside. These were available every day of the week but were usually even cheaper on Wednesdays. Fares from Comber to Ardglass, for example, were 23p first class, 16p second and 11p third while on Wednesdays the corresponding fares were 13p, 10p and 7p. Special fares were also available for groups of excursionists. A group had to consist of at least six people and they had to travel a distance of at least nine miles. Application for tickets had to be made to the general manager of the railway in Belfast.



4-4-2T No.15 shunts one of the BCDR-built first class saloons of 1916 at Donaghadee on 19th June 1938. (H.C. Casserley)

Fares were determined by the class of travel and by the size and type of group travelling. In this latter category groups were classed as either picnic parties, trades excursionists or bible class and children's parties. All classes of travel were available to the picnic and trades groups while the bible class and children's parties could only travel third class. All parties could make use of the pavilion at Newcastle station where they could have refreshments before returning home. A full range of day return tickets was available for those in country towns who wanted to travel to Belfast. These tickets were normally limited to travel on certain days of the week and on certain trains only. Passengers on the Donaghadee branch could avail of cheap day return fares on Mondays if they travelled on the 10:25 or 13:25 trains. Those on the main line and Ardglass and Ballynahinch branches could avail of the cheaper tickets on any train on Thursdays while on the Bangor branch the cheap tickets were available every day but only on trains between 10:00 and 17:30.

Special family tickets were available for travel from Belfast to Newcastle. They were issued on any day and were valid for return within one month. These tickets were, however, only available for first or second class travel and could be used by up to four people. Examples of fares were 80p for two people travelling first class, £1.20 for three people and £1.50 for four. The corresponding second class tickets

were 60p, 88p and £1.10. The validity of the tickets could be extended on payment of a supplement. All the members of the family were expected to travel together. The horses and carriages of the holders of family tickets would be conveyed to and from Newcastle at single fares.

The BCDR was quick to recognise and exploit the tourist potential of the Mourne Mountains. They operated a number of tours in co-operation with the Great Northern Railway and Norton and Company's horse-drawn cars. These cars operated along road between Newcastle and Warrenpoint with rail travel between these towns and Belfast. Fares for the day-trips were 48p first class, 42p second and 38p third. Tourists could travel out by BCDR and home via the GNR or, if they wished, they could do the tour in the opposite direction, travelling out with the GNR and home by BCDR.



Built by Beyer Peacock in 1921, this was the last of the BCDR's three goods engines. They often found themselves working heavy excursion trains to Newcastle. No.4 is seen here at Comber on 2nd September 1933. (W. Robb)

A typical timetable for this tour was a 07:30 departure from Belfast via the BCDR with arrival in Newcastle at 09:15. Norton's car left the station at 09:20 with arrival in Warrenpoint at 13:20. Tourists departed Warrenpoint on the 15:50 train to Belfast with arrival back in the city at 18:00. For those who didn't want to do the complete tour there were the options of shorter trips to Kilkeel or Rostrevor. Tickets to Kilkeel were valid for return the next day while those for Rostrevor were valid for seven days.

Tickets were available not only from Belfast but from all intermediate stations on the BCDR system. Typical fares from Comber were 38p first class, 32p second and 17p third to Kilkeel and 48p first class, 42p second and 27p third to Rostrevor. Norton's operated three coaches per day between Newcastle and Warrenpoint. For those who wanted to do the coastal tour only, the car company charged 20p single and 35p return.

In the north of the county the BCDR operated another tour which enabled the holidaymaker to enjoy a trip on a horse drawn car. For as little as 14p first class, 10p second or 7p third, the tourist could enjoy a day out travelling by train from Belfast to Bangor, by car through Groomsport to Donaghadee and back from this latter station by train to the city.

For the more energetic, the BCDR organised a wide range of combined rail and cycling tours. The summer programmes offered 14 such tours each of different lengths but all of which could be completed in one day. The cyclist could take the train from Belfast to Bangor, cycle to Newtownards and return to Belfast by train or they could take the train to Ballynahinch and cycle from there to Newcastle before taking the train back to the city.

Longer tours included travelling from Belfast to Donaghadee by train, cycling from there down the Ards Peninsula to Portaferry, taking the ferry boat to Strangford and then cycling to either Ardglass or Downpatrick before getting the train home. Many of the cycling tours were organised in conjunction with the GNR. Cyclists could travel by the BCDR to Ballynahinch and cycle from there to Hillsborough, Dromore or Banbridge from where they could get a GNR train back to Belfast. Similar trips could be made to Newcastle from where the traveller could cycle to Ballyroney, Poyntzpass or Hillsborough and return from any of these stations by train to the city.



Newcastle station in 1936. In the left-hand platform, which had a gateway leading to the Slieve Donard Hotel and the golf links, is a rake of nine BCDR 6-wheelers and at the other a train headed by a GN coach. The station's squat clock tower can be seen and in the distance Slieve Donard beckons the more energetic tourists. (Loco & General)

The tour around the Mourne Mountains could also be completed by bicycle. The cyclist could either travel along the coast road via Kilkeel or go straight through the mountains to Warrenpoint. Fares for the cycling tours ranged from 13p first class for the short journey via Bangor and Newtownards to 40p first class for the tour through the Mourne Mountains. The corresponding second and third class fares were 11p and 9p for the Bangor tour and 35p and 25p for the Mourne tour.

Hotel accommodation was available for those cyclists who wanted to spend longer than one day on their tour. The railway company had negotiated special rates with local hoteliers and the cyclist simply

paid a supplement on their tourist ticket. Each tour also included a leaflet with a brief outline of the chosen route together with note on what could be seen or visited on the journey.

In 1892 the BCDR opened their own hotel, the Slieve Donard, at Newcastle. They could now offer the tourist a wide range of holidays which included overnight and weekend breaks or longer holidays of a week or more. Special offers included seven nights' accommodation in the hotel with first class rail travel for £3.50 per person. This cost included dinner on the first evening, breakfast, lunch and dinner on the six following days and breakfast on the eighth. Weekend breaks were also available at £1.85 per person for Friday to Monday or £1.40 per person for Saturday to Monday. Seven-day tickets were also introduced for those travelling on the coastal tour between Newcastle and Warrenpoint. For 63p first class rail travel, 53p second and 43p third, the tourist could now spend a week in south Down staying at either the Slieve Donard Hotel in Newcastle or the Great Northern Hotel in Rostrevor or, if they wished, splitting their holiday between both towns and staying in both hotels.

In the same year that they opened the Slieve Donard Hotel, the BCDR began operating the "Golfers' Express" which ran non-stop between Belfast and Newcastle. This train left Belfast every Saturday at noon and reached Newcastle about 60 minutes later. As its name suggests, it was originally provided for golfers who wished to play on the course beside the hotel. However, tourists travelling to south Down could also use the express and many holidaymakers began their break at the seaside by travelling on what was the only non-stop passenger service to run on the BCDR.



Former Royal Saloon 153 which subsequently became the Golfers' saloon. When not performing that function it was kept safely inside Queen's Quay station, seen there in 1948. (C.P. Friel)

One of the most interesting tours organised by the BCDR was their Strangford Lough Circular tour. This included travel by rail from Belfast to Newtownards, horse-drawn car to Portaferry, ferry boat to Strangford, car to Downpatrick and train back to Belfast. Fares were 34p first class, 28p second and 23p third. Tickets were valid for seven days but did not include the cost of the hotels nor the fare for the ferry boat between Portaferry and Strangford. The BCDR had reached agreement with local

hoteliers which enabled them to offer the tourist overnight accommodation at greatly reduced rates.

The horse cars were advertised to leave Newtownards station for Portaferry on weekdays on the arrival of the 07:30 and 17:15 trains from Belfast and for Greyabbey and Kircubbin on the arrival of the 13:15 train from the city. Quayle's cars left Strangford at 07:15, 08:05, 12:30 and 17:10, arriving at Downpatrick in time for the 08:42, 10:10, 15:00 and 19:00 trains to Belfast. In the opposite direction a car left Downpatrick on the arrival of the 09:35 train from Belfast. A car also left Portaferry at 14:00, arriving in Newtownards in time for the 16:45 train back to the city. A break of journey was allowed at Greyabbey for those who wanted to visit the monastic ruins.

The tours outlined in this article were normally available during the summer season which lasted from the beginning of May to the end of September. A more limited range of tours and day-trips were offered during the winter months. The outbreak of the First World War led to a severe reduction in the number of tours which the BCDR operated. With the return of peace, however, a full programme was offered once more.

Despite increasing competition from road transport, the railway continued to offer a full programme of tours throughout the 1920s and 30s. These ended only with the outbreak of the Second World War.

Today the railway and its programme of tours have long gone from Co Down. In the days before private cars, cheap air travel and package holidays, they offered people the opportunity to enjoy breaks at the seaside or to explore the rural and scenic delights of this north east corner of Ireland. As such, they played an important role in the development of the tourist trade in County Down and the social life of many people in the early years of the 20th century.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Ulster Transport Authority in Colour by Derek Young, ISBN 1 904242 66 9 128 pages, £22, Colourpoint Books.

For over forty years Derek Young has been a familiar, and highly respected, figure among the brotherhood of Northern Ireland railway enthusiasts. His collection of colour slides, particularly of the 1960s, is legendary, and he has now combined the best of his own work, with that of many others, to give us *The Ulster Transport Authority in Colour*. The selection of material is judicious, imaginative and well balanced, the colour reproduction is excellent, and the captions in particular have been painstakingly researched: in virtually every case we have the date, the train, the location, sometimes even the names of driver and fireman, and always some informative comment on the operation or composition of the train. As the market for quality collections of Irish railway photographs continues to expand, this book sets new standards in almost every way.

There are more than photographs to think about, for in a thought-provoking introduction Derek argues that the UTA was far from being the anti-railway organisation often portrayed in railway literature. He shows that it existed in just about the worst possible of times - encumbered with debt from the day of its formation, and challenged throughout its existence by political masters committed to the road lobby, and by the post-war expansion of private motoring. Derek pays tribute to the men who ran the UTA from day to day - thorough professionals from the old companies, steeped in the best traditions of their calling and anxious to keep the railway moving with the times. More than that, they were for the most part genuinely friendly to enthusiasts. Polite requests to 21 Linenhall Street for information, permits and permission to travel on empty carriage movements were rarely refused, and in retrospect photographers and train-timers of my generation have much to be grateful for.

Turning to the pictures, Derek's subject matter ranges widely over two decades of railway life in Northern Ireland - and there are even some buses as well! The railway appears in its primary role as a mass mover of people. The cover picture shows the legendary annual St Patrick's Parish Sunday

School Excursion from Coleraine to Castlerock. There is coverage of 12th July specials at Antrim, and Ballyclare Junction and Ballinderry, a view of the crowds streaming past the topiary man at Scarva on 13th July, and pictures of Londonderry Waterside packed with trains on 12th August. There are boat trains on the Larne line, Rugby specials on the Great Northern and a gorgeously decorated UG hauling a football special at Sydenham on the County Down. There are double-headed Portrush excursions climbing up to Kingsbog Junction; steam hauled Sunday School excursions on the Bangor line and even the unique NIRRDA enthusiasts outing around Belfast Docks formed of loose-coupled open wagons with platform seats for the passengers!

The book abounds with surprises, not least a series of views of Derry Central goods trains at Cookstown Junction, Randalstown, Magherafelt, Toome and - most amazing of all - shunting the mill siding at Upperlands. There is a fascinating set of photos of the last steam-hauled permanent way trains on the Bangor line before the Middlepath Street bridge was severed in 1965, and a view of the curious auxiliary tank coupled to a "Jeep" during one of its very rare outings to Dublin. High in the scale of rarity value, too, is a picture of "Jeep" No.51 at Amiens Street, Dublin, and what is justly described as John Dewing's "once in a lifetime" footplate shot of two steam hauled goods trains passing near Knockarney. No less remarkable are some colour pictures taken inside York Road works, one of the few railway locations in the 1960s where access was restricted and photography sometimes frowned on.



No.4 at Mullingar at the head of the popular Good Friday excursion in 2006. Signs of disuse are all around the Athlone platforms. This train has been re-scheduled for a Saturday in 2007 to avoid being the sole legal source of alcohol in the Republic! (I.C. Pryce)

Diesel enthusiasts will be interested in a rare view of an MED set under the overall roof at Portrush, as well as coverage of the NCC's early single unit railcars, and the ex-GNR Gardner articulated railcar sets. Throughout the book, the development of MED and MPD diesel railcars, along with the 70 class diesel electric units, is thoroughly explored, and there is coverage of both steam and diesel operation on the Great Northern.

So much that we ignored at the time was, fortunately, being photographed in colour and is now placed on the record. The mixed gauge track at Larne Harbour, the last days of the Ballycastle narrow gauge, steam at Queens Quay shed - including an NCC "Jeep" - during the final years of steam on the Bangor line, the Courtaulds coal trains on the Larne line, unusual locations like Templepatrick signal box, the Market Branch terminus at Omagh, the turntable at Antrim and the goods yard at Lurgan. The Belfast Docks area is carefully covered, as indeed are all the old Belfast termini, and most other UTA terminal stations as well.

The Magheramorne stone trains are briefly covered (possibly to leave the field clear for a future detailed study of this important operation?), but even on this familiar ground we have an unusual picture of the underside of a brand-new stone wagon. How is that? Look at page 73 and see!

The human element is not neglected, for, throughout, railwaymen from managers to shunters are seen going about their daily work, and many well-known enginemen are identified. Most poignantly, two of the pictures feature the late driver Bobby Quail - well known to RPSI members and a regular attender at the Belfast area in his retirement - who died shortly after the book's publication.

This is a book to bring the 1950s and 1960s back to life for those of us fortunate enough to have lived through them, and to introduce these fascinating years to those too young to have any clear memories of the UTA. All of us enthusiasts, younger or older, are in debt to Derek Young, and to Norman Johnston his publisher, for an excellent publication.

JAC

The Waterford, Limerick and Western Railway by Ernie Shepherd, ISBN No: 0-7110-3147-9, £14.99. 160 pages with 111 photographs, maps, track plans, facsimile timetables and tickets. Ian Allan, Hersham, Surrey KT12 4RG.

This is a comprehensive history of the WLR, and whereas some authors are content to rely on recycling published material, Mr Shepherd has quite clearly gone back to primary sources, digging up many fascinating details on the early period, and clearly describing both what was proposed and what was actually built in terms of route miles. He also gives a succinct account of the rather complex Irish railway politics of the mid-nineteenth century, including the convoluted relationships between the WLR, the lines it worked, the Waterford & Kilkenny Railway, and its larger neighbours like the GSWR, and further north the Midland Great Western, a company which anxiously watched what it regarded as a protégé of the GSWR encroaching on its territory. The English Great Western Railway (GWR) was also a significant player, effectively subsidising the dividend on WLR shares to breach the London & North Western monopoly on the Irish traffic by opening up a new cross-channel route through South Wales and Waterford. The WLR however was at times a house divided against itself, with its board split into GSWR and GWR factions, whose spats sound more appropriate to schoolboy pranks than to Victorian businessmen. Compared to other histories of Irish broad gauge lines, which often end rather abruptly in 1925, with another re-telling of the politics of the formation of the Great Southern Railways (GSR) and CIÉ and a list of closure dates, the author does provide a good summary of developments after the amalgamation. In addition to the constitutional history of the line, chapters on services, associated maritime activities, staff and accidents flesh out the bones, the last mentioned including some excellent examples of just how haphazard train control could be before the 1889 Act.

The chapter "Description Of The Line" is a little disappointing, as it is largely a list of the stations, with little attempt to put the routes in the context of the country they traversed and served, and also in this section it is sometimes hard to work out which features are now historical and which are still in position. The WLR had some very odd stations, and the text promises diagrams to explain two of these, Limerick Junction and Newcastle West, but sadly both seem to have been misplaced, and do not appear, although there are very interesting early track plans for both Limerick and Waterford termini.

The locomotive chapter is a very thorough record of the company's rather mixed fleet, and although the rolling stock chapter left me wanting more details (especially of the original American style bogie coaches of 1848 [sic]), I suspect that as Mr Shepherd is such a thorough researcher, no other details have come down to us.

The text is complemented by an excellent selection of photographs. Some are such period pieces that one might argue that the expense of larger format reproduction would be worth paying, but I am aware that cover prices are now rather competitive. One or two are however too dark to be useful and there are one or two mistakes in the captions: "Ballingrane" on page 40 is in fact Ennis looking north. Appendices include very useful tables of stations (although a few of the closure dates are wrong), locomotives, rolling stock, officials and accidents. You may recall that the WLR has already had a book to itself, published in 2000, but that work had significant omissions, whereas the current volume is a thoroughly researched and competently written systematic history. AJOR

Smoke Amidst the Drummins - the Cavan and Leitrim in the 1950s by Anthony Burges ISBN No: 1-904242-62-6, £8.99. 64 pages with 61 photographs, map and facsimile timetable.

Rail Runabout - a look at Northern Ireland railways from 1975 to 2005 by Sam Somerville ISBN No: 1-904242-64-2 £8.99. 64 pages with 68 photographs and maps.

These two volumes form part of a welcome and growing series entitled Irish Railway Photographers, and are providing an excellent introduction to the work of some previously little known cameramen. Between them, they also show just how wide the nostalgia era has become, spanning two generations of enthusiasts. Turning first to the third Volume of Mr Burges's prints, one of the few facts I can remember from school geography is that "drummins" are low hills left by retreating glaciers that produce an undulating "basket of eggs" topography. Such is the country through which much of the CLR ran, and the photographs here take us an atmospheric tour of the line in its closing years, including Arigna. Mr Burges has an uncanny knack of catching the feel of the route, and for those of us who never had the chance to see it in action, I suspect that, barring the discovery of some long-lost cine film, this is the closest we will get to the journey east of Mohill. There are a few shots of items of rolling stock but most pictures are of trains in action and station shots, showing just how attractive the CLR's intermediate calling points are as modelling prototypes. All the main stations are covered, and enough of the minor ones to get a feel for the smaller halts. As with the two previous volumes, this is not a systematic history, but a concise introduction sets the scene, and a facsimile timetable shows that as late as 1957 a return trip from Dublin to either Belturbet or Arigna (but not both!) was possible in one day.

Mr Somerville's book moves on a generation, but is still rather poignant as my first solid memories of Irish railways date from about 1975, although it was nearly another decade before I got north of the border. His work however reflects very well just how much has changed in three decades. His pictures record vanished scenes like CIÉ freight services to Derry; the wonderful display of GNR semaphores at Lisburn and the 70, MED and MPD units. On the other hand, he records the arrivals of the CAF units and 201 class locomotives and the restoration of the Belfast Central link. The captions, a short introduction and good clear maps provide adequate background information for anyone unfamiliar with the NIR network in this period. Most photographs are in black and white and the standard of reproduction is generally good, with colour cover pictures. Although from a later period than Mr Burges's work, this little volume is equally good at capturing the character of the period it covers. Sic transit gloria mundi.

I hope to see this series further expanded, and in fact we are promised two more, including a further volume of Mr Burges's pictures from the Donegal lines. AJOR

**The Ballycastle Railway by Edward Patterson (with additional material by Norman Johnson)
ISBN No: 1-904242-49-9, £14.99. 160 pages with 118 photographs, maps, diagrams, facsimile
timetables and a reproduction colour painting.**

For some forty years the Ballycastle Railway maintained a precarious independence. As with many minor lines, its nemesis was the inability to build up financial reserves to replace its original equipment, and once that was life-expired, it faced closure. In England, it might have become part of Col Stephens' ramshackle empire, but in fact it found a more substantial benefactor in the form of the NCC, who drafted in their surplus 3' stock and kept the line going for another quarter century. It is now over forty years since Dr Patterson's definitive histories of the northern narrow gauge systems were published, so it is very pleasing to see another of them re-issued. Wisely, in view of the scholarship of the original author's research, the text of the first edition is preserved in full, providing a thorough history of the line, its construction, course, operation and equipment. But there are two significant additions. First, a survey by Mr Johnson of what can still be seen along the route of the line, over fifty years after closure, which will be most useful to anyone exploring the remains. Secondly, there are many extra photographs, and the size and quality of the reproductions is now much higher. Similarly, the new edition makes good use of the larger format to enlarge the station layouts and rolling stock diagrams, many of which were rather too small to read clearly in the first edition. **AJOR**

All books available from the Society - see: www.steamtrainsireland.com/shop



No.186 pauses at Farranfore on the Earl of Desmond railtour on 7th May 2006. (C.P. Friel)

LETTERS

Dear Sir,

I wonder if all RPSI members realise the full historic significance of two of the Society's assets: ex SL&NCR 0-6-4T "Lough Erne" and GS&WR 12-wheeled brake compo 861.

"Lough Erne" is not just the only surviving SLNC loco and one of the last two engines to be built for a

private railway company in Ireland, but is also the sole remaining Irish example of a “long boiler” engine, a relatively common type in the mid-1800s. There are two line drawings and a photograph of “long boilers” in Norman Johnston’s “Locomotives of the GNR” (Colourpoint Books 1999) and these clearly show the distinguishing feature of this type of engine; the location of the firebox behind the driving wheels without any carrying wheels under it. The most impressive example of a “long boiler” that I can remember having seen was a large outside-cylinder 0-6-0 built by Timothy Hackworth, a one-time associate of the Stephensons, for the Stockton & Darlington Railway. For many years this splendid machine stood on a plinth at Darlington (Bank Top) station. It must be about forty years since I last saw it; maybe it is still there.

As for 861, it is particularly appropriate that it should be remembered at this time since 2006 was the centenary year of the opening of the Fishguard-Rosslare steamer route, and of the railway extension from Waterford to Rosslare; this carriage was one of the ones built specially for the new passenger service between Cork and Rosslare Harbour. In later years these vehicles no longer ran exclusively on the Rosslare road. One of the brake compos could often be seen at the head of the Down evening Dublin-Limerick train, which ran via Nenagh. This train was divided at Ballybroy, the main portion being taken on to Limerick by a 4-4-0, whilst the solitary brake compo proceeded to Thurles behind the main line engine. If this latter machine happened to be a “500” or a “Woolwich” the ensemble looked somewhat unbalanced! A picture of this Dublin-Limerick train, complete with 12-wheeled Rosslare coach immediately behind the engine, is reproduced in my “Connemara to Cock of the North” (Colourpoint 2002), whilst illustration No.19 of “A Decade of Steam”, by Drew Donaldson, Jack O’Neill and Bill McDonnell, published by RPSI in 1974, shows the Up working of the same train at Portarlington. Here again the 12-wheeled brake compo is at the head of the train, immediately behind “Woolwich” 2-6-0 No.373.

Laurence Liddle

NSW, Australia

Dear Editor,

Harland & Wolff Steam Cranes

Issue 41 of Five Foot Three contained a short item on the last three steam cranes owned by Harland & Wolff, along with photographs of two of them. After being largely unknown during their working lives, the cranes have become better known in recent years and Society members may have seen and heard the frequent references to them in the media. Unfortunately a misunderstanding has arisen regarding their age. It has been stated on television, radio and in the press that the cranes are one hundred years old and were used in the building of the “Titanic”. (Indeed a local TV programme was broadcast in the early part of 2006 based on this belief.) There is no truth in this whatever - H&W did have a fleet of steam cranes in 1912, 10'0" gauge as well as 5'3", but none of those cranes survives. *[Did not the same media also declare, in relation to the Titanic's tender “Nomadic”, that there was no longer anywhere here where riveting could be done - but we know better! Enquiries, from a different source, were made some months ago about possible restoration work on one of the surviving cranes but this appears to have gone quiet. - Ed.]*

The oldest of the three remaining cranes is H&W No.VS23 (Maker's No.14033) and she was built in 1941. H&W placed the order with Thomas Smith (Rodley) Ltd., of Rodley near Leeds, in April 1941, delivery being due in November of the same year. At that time Harlands were under great pressure due to the war effort, also suffering severe air raid damage in May of that year, and were very anxious for VS23 to arrive, even hoping that the delivery date could be brought forward. Understandably, the manufacturers were also under great pressure and delivery was unavoidably delayed with the result that

VS23 did not leave Leeds for Belfast via Heysham until the middle of January 1942.

I don't have exact dates for the other two cranes, VS81 (Smith Rodley No.24472) and VS82 (Smith Rodley No.24473) but they are more recent, from about 1958. VS23 looks noticeably different from the two later cranes in that she has a longer jib (40'0") and the shape of her cab and her carriage are different. The two later cranes had sliding doors on the sides of their cabs and carried their H&W numbers on these. During her last years in service VS81 carried the left-hand cab door from the derelict VS82, with her own number on the right-hand door!



VS23, not in steam, at the seaward end of the Thompson Dock on 28th March 1983. The BR ferries "Galloway Princess" and "St. Anselm" had already been in the dock and would be followed soon by "St. Christopher" the third of the four sisters built by H&W. (C. Sherrard)

It has also been stated on TV that the cranes were in use up to the mid-60s. This is also misleading as two of them were definitely in use up to 1988 and, if I remember right, the first part of 1989 as well. Five Foot Three No.41 has a photo of VS23 at work in the Thompson Dock at Belfast in the early part of 1983. The ship behind her is the m.v. "Galloway Princess", built by Harland & Wolff in Belfast for British Railways in 1980 for the Larne-Stranraer route.

The fact that the cranes have no connection with the "Titanic" doesn't make them any less interesting. What makes them so historic is that they were still working at a time when there couldn't have been many others (working, as opposed to preserved) left elsewhere.

Forty Shades of Steam

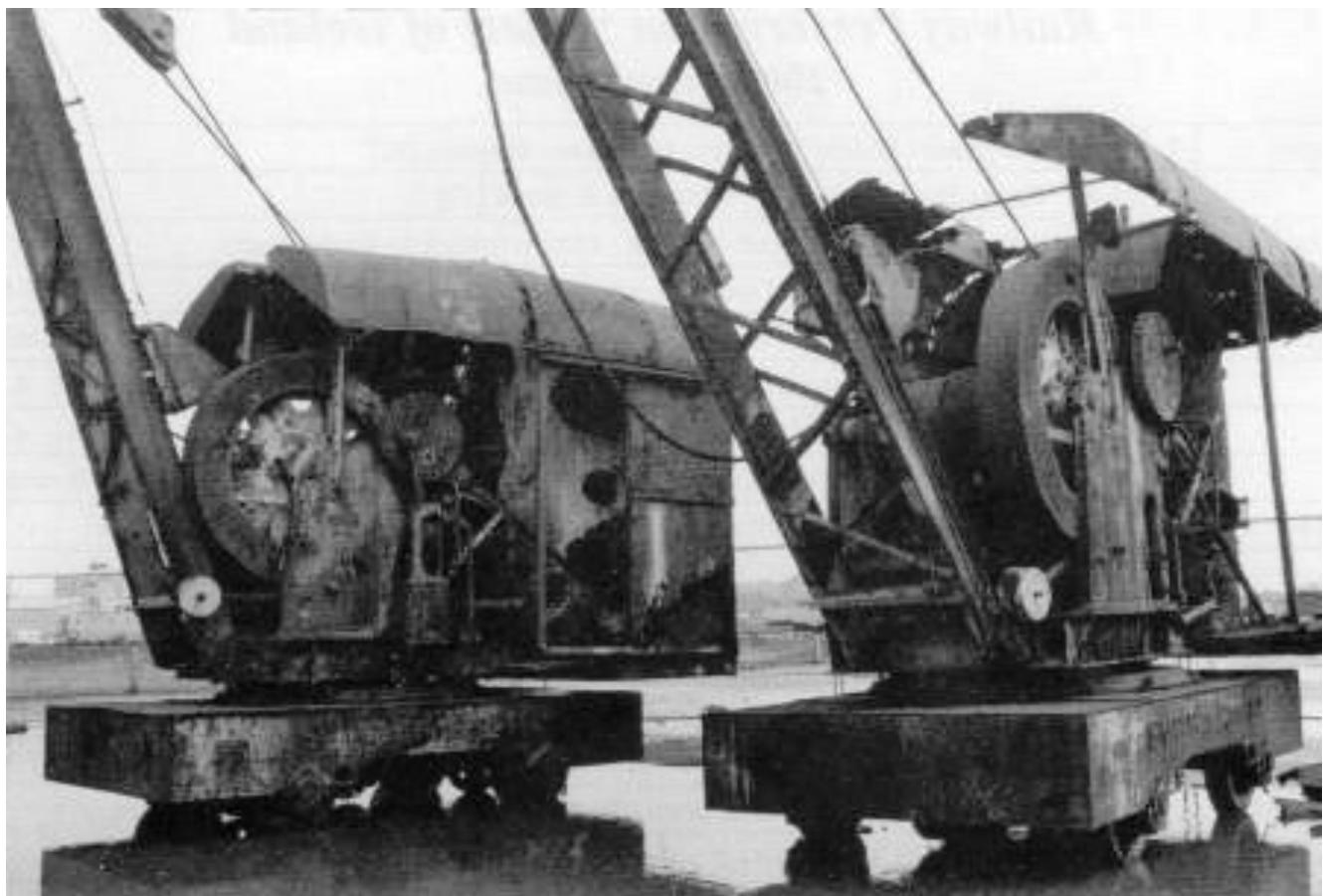
Could I make a very small comment regarding the photo taken at Larne Harbour, which appears on p.94? The ship in the background is the "Antrim Princess" (which I think you already know). The caption refers to "the seafaring version of the BR double arrows symbol" on her funnel. This is a little bit misleading as British Railways' ships actually carried two versions of the logo on their funnels at the same time. The correct BR double arrow logo was carried on the starboard side only, and a mirror

image of the proper logo was carried on the port side. In the photo we are looking at the port side of the ship, therefore we see the back-to-front logo with the arrows pointing the wrong way. In the photo of the "Galloway Princess" referred to above we are looking at the starboard side of the ship and thus the logo is the right way round. Only a small point, but I hope it keeps the record straight.

Yours sincerely,

Colin Sherrard

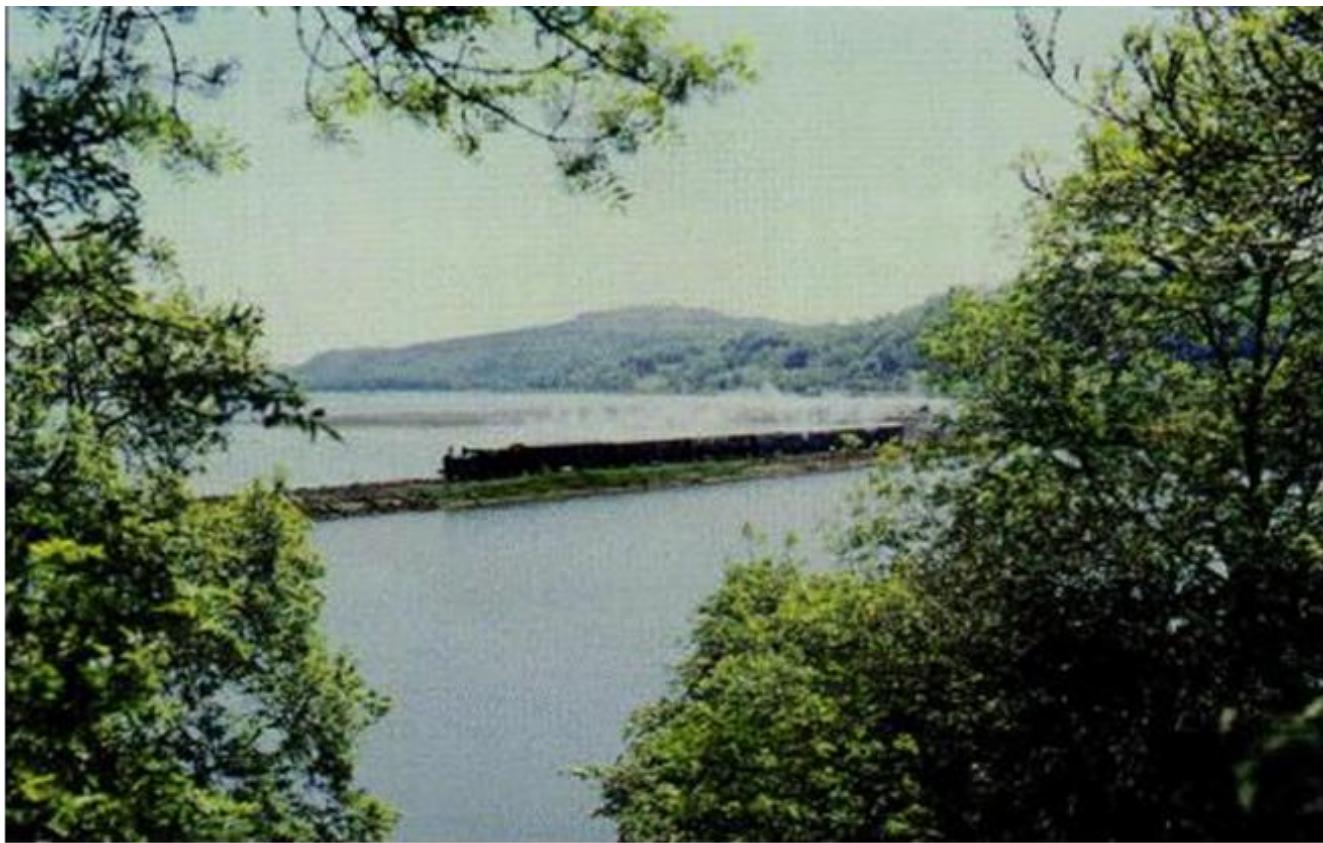
Lisburn



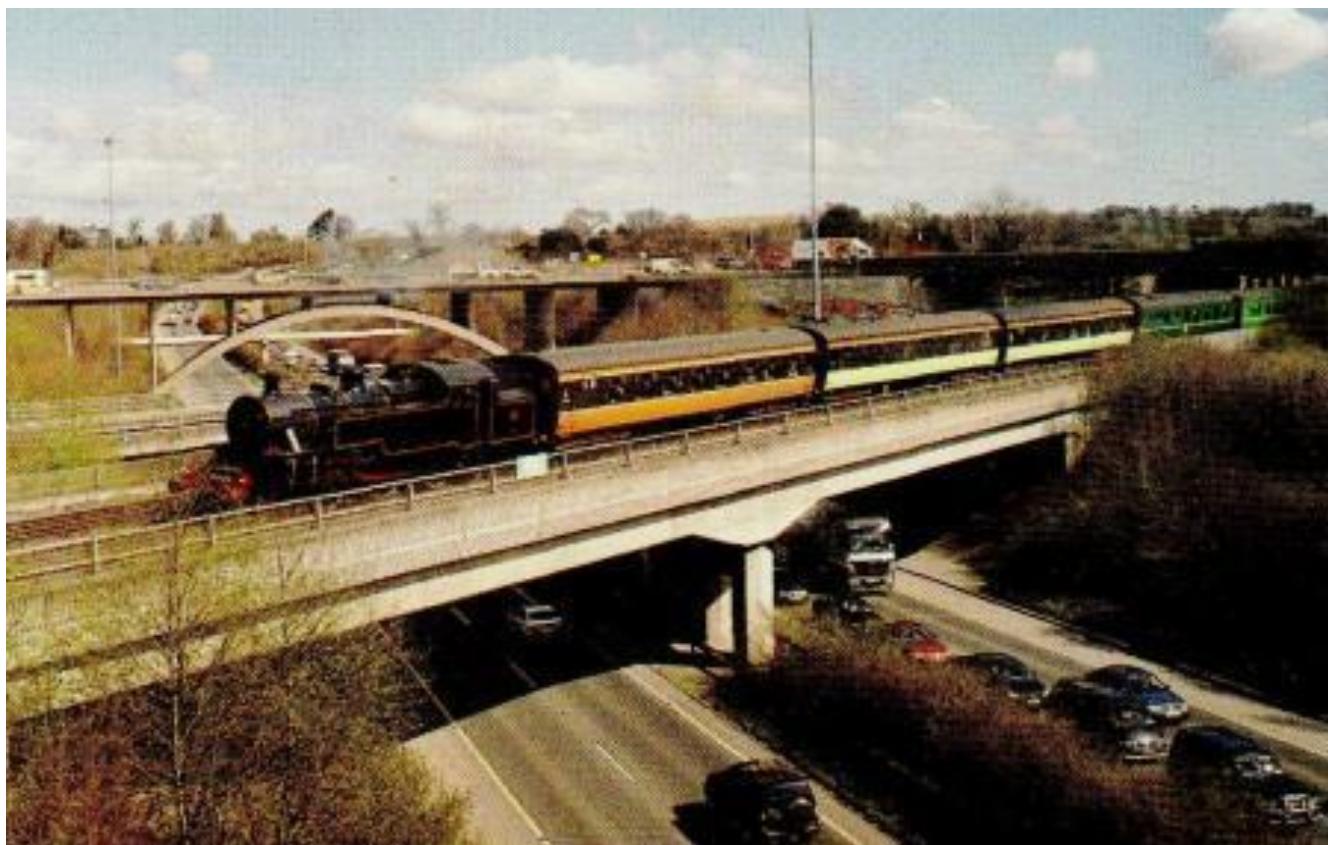
All three cranes now stand forlornly amid the wasteland that used to be a shipyard. VS81 and VS82 were photographed there in December 2006, the latter having lost not only most of its cab but also its cylinders. Note the girder jibs, different from VS23. (N. Poots)



On one occasion when Ireland couldn't stop winning the Eurovision Song Contest Millstreet was a somewhat unlikely venue. Here, on 6th May 2006, No.186 awaits the passage of a Tralee-Mallow railcar set. (G. Mooney)



On the causeway between Glynn and Larne, No.186 is working the 11:40 from Carrickfergus, part of the "Larne Alive" festival on 3rd June 2006. (C.P. Friel)



No.4 crosses Dublin's M50 motorway en route to Mullingar on Good Friday 2006. (B. Pickup)